

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
79R7532 DRH-D

S.B. 1051
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State Affairs
3/23/2005
As Filed

AUTHOR'S/SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Current Texas law requires applications for a ballot by mail for every step in the election process for primary, general, and run-off elections. This causes overwhelming amounts of calls for applications by senior citizens during elections. Many of these voters feel disenfranchised trying to access the system. Additionally, disabled and absentee voters could benefit from automatically receiving applications for ballots by mail, if a county sees a benefit to exercising this tool to increase voter participation.

S.B. 1501 authorizes voters over the age of 65 to receive a ballot by mail for all elections in an election cycle, once an application for a mail-in ballot is received the first time. It also authorizes counties to send to voters eligible for mail-in ballots under Section 82.001 (Absence from County of Residence) and 82.001 (Disability) an application for a ballot by mail after the initial application has been received.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Subchapter A, Chapter 84, Election Code, by adding Section 84.014, as follows:

Sec. 84.014. APPLICATION SENT TO CERTAIN VOTERS BY COUNTY CLERK.

(a) Authorizes the commissioners court, in a year in which a general election for state and county officers is held, to authorize the county clerk to send by mail an application to vote by mail to:

(1) each person in the county eligible to vote by mail under Section 82.003 (Age) other than a person whose name appears on the suspense list; or

(2) each person who has previously voted by mail in that voting year and was eligible under Section 82.001 (Absence from County of Residence) and 82.001 (Disability).

(b) Provides that a voter who completes an application sent under Subsection (a)(1) and requests a ballot for a party primary election is also considered to have requested a ballot for any resulting runoff election and the general election for state and county officers held in the same year.

(c) Provides that a voter who completes an application sent under Subsection (a)(1) and requests a ballot for a runoff primary election is also considered to have requested a ballot for the general election for state and county officers held in the same year.

(d) Requires the secretary of state to prescribe the form of an application sent under this section and adopt any other procedures necessary to implement this section.

SECTION 2. Effective date: September 1, 2005.