

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
86R12350 JRJ-F

S.B. 1254
By: Bettencourt
State Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Interested parties contend that the current voter registration process does not provide the Texas secretary of state (SOS) with a method for effectively verifying a person's citizenship. Interested parties contend that improvements in the law are needed for not only when the voter on the registration list is deceased, or has been excused or disqualified from jury service because the voter is not a citizen. Among other changes, S.B. 1254 provides for improvements and changes to processes SOS is required to adhere to when verifying a person's citizenship.

As proposed, S.B. 1254 amends current law relating to verification of the citizenship status of certain registered voters.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority previously granted to the secretary of state is modified in SECTION 2 (Section 18.068, Election Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 16.0332(a), Election Code, as follows:

(a) Requires the registrar, after the registrar receives notification, rather than a list, under Section 18.068 (Comparison of Information Regarding Ineligibility) of this code or Section 62.113 (Compilation of List of Noncitizens), Government Code, of persons excused or disqualified from jury service because of citizenship status or who have indicated a lack of citizenship status in connection with a motor vehicle record, to deliver to each registered voter whose name appears on the list a written notice requiring the voter to submit to the registrar proof of United States citizenship in the form of a certified copy of the voter's birth certificate, United States passport, or certificate of naturalization or any other form prescribed by the secretary of state (SOS).

SECTION 2. Amends Sections 18.068(a) and (b), Election Code, as follows:

(a) Requires SOS to quarterly compare the information received under Section 16.001 (Death) of this code, Section 62.113, Government Code, and Section 730.005(9) (relating to voter registration or the administration of elections by SOS), Transportation Code, to the statewide computerized voter registration list. Requires SOS, if SOS determines that a voter on the registration list is deceased, has been excused or disqualified from jury service because the voter is not a citizen, or has indicated the voter is not a citizen in connection with a motor vehicle record, to send notice of the determination to the voter registrar of the counties considered appropriate by SOS. Makes nonsubstantive changes.

(b) Requires SOS to by rule determine what information combinations identified as common to a voter and to an individual for whom SOS has received information under this section, rather than to an individual who is deceased, constitute a weak match or a strong match in order to produce the least possible impact on Texas voters and fulfill its responsibility to manage the voter rolls.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2019.