

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center

S.B. 30
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State Affairs
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Enrolled

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Increasingly across the state, taxing entities are requiring voters to vote on substantial bonds, some approaching a billion dollars. As property values and taxes increase, voters are often unaware of the implications of voting for such enormous bond packages, and are not well informed of the subsequent tax increases associated with approval of such bonds. Statute currently requires bond proposals to describe the "general purpose" and allows for multiple distinct projects to be consolidated into one proposition. This legislation would provide more specificity in bond descriptions and require each single specific bond project to be placed on the ballot as a separate proposition.

S.B. 30 would require local taxing entities to write more transparent and detailed ballot language for propositions to issue bonds or impose or increase a tax. S.B. 30 amends Chapter 52 of the Election Code by requiring taxing entities to list out each specific purpose for which bonds are being approved. These bonds proposals must be printed on the ballot as separate propositions, allowing each issue up for voter approval to be considered individually. The ballot must also list the rate of any tax that will be increased or imposed should that proposition gain voter approval. (Original Author's/Sponsor's Statement of Intent)

S.B. 30 amends current law relating to ballot language requirements for a proposition seeking voter approval for the issuance of bonds.

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 Section 45.003, Education Code, by adding Subsections (g) and (h), as follows:

(g) Authorizes the question of whether to approve the issuance of bonds for the construction, acquisition, and equipment of school buildings in the district, the purchase of new school buses, and the purchase of necessary sites for school buildings, notwithstanding Section 1251.052, Government Code, to be submitted to the voters in a single ballot proposition, except that the bonds for each of the following purposes are required to be stated in a separate proposition:

- (1) the construction, acquisition, or equipment of a stadium with seating capacity for more than 1,000 spectators;
- (2) the construction, acquisition, or equipment of a natatorium;
- (3) the construction, acquisition, or equipment of another recreational facility other than a gymnasium, playground, or play area;
- (4) the construction, acquisition, or equipment of a performing arts facility;

(5) the construction, acquisition, or equipment of housing for teachers as determined by the district to be necessary to have a sufficient number of teachers for the district; and

(6) an acquisition or update of technology equipment, other than the equipment used for school security purposes or technology infrastructure integral to the construction of a facility.

(h) Requires the question of whether to approve the issuance of bonds for a building described by Subsection (g)(1), (2), (3), (4), or (5) to be printed on the ballot as a separate ballot proposition regardless of whether that building is proposed as part of the same complex or building that contains traditional classroom facilities. Requires each separate ballot proposition required by this subsection to state the principal amount of the bonds to be issued that constitutes the cost for construction of that portion of the building or complex attributable to the building described by Subsection (g)(1), (2), (3), (4), or (5) or to the traditional classroom facilities, as applicable.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 52.072(e), Election Code, as follows:

(e) Requires a proposition submitted to the voters for approval of the imposition, increase, or reduction of a tax, in addition to any other requirement imposed by law for a proposition, including a provision prescribing the proposition language, to specifically state, as applicable:

(1)–(2) Redesignates existing Subdivisions (2)–(3) as these subdivisions and makes no further changes.

Deletes existing text relating to a proposition submitted to voters for the approval of the issuance of bonds and proposition language stating the total principal amount and a general description of the purposes for the bonds.

SECTION 3. Amends Chapter 1251, Government Code, by designating Sections 1251.001, 1251.003, 1251.004, 1251.005, and 1251.006 as Subchapter A and adding a subchapter heading to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER A. PROVISIONS RELATING GENERALLY TO COUNTY AND MUNICIPAL BOND ELECTIONS

SECTION 4. Amends Chapter 1251, Government Code, by adding Subchapter B, as follows:

SUBCHAPTER B. BALLOT FOR DEBT OBLIGATIONS ISSUED BY POLITICAL SUBDIVISION

Sec. 1251.051. DEFINITIONS. Defines "debt obligation" and "political subdivision."

Sec. 1251.052. FORM. (a) Requires the ballot for a measure seeking voter approval of the issuance of debt obligations by a political subdivision to specifically state:

(1) a plain language description of the single specific purposes for which the debt obligations are to be authorized;

(2) the total principal amount of the debt obligations to be authorized; and

(3) that taxes sufficient to pay the principal of and interest on the debt obligations will be imposed.

(a-1) Requires each single specific purpose for which debt obligations requiring voter approval are to be issued to be printed on the ballot as a separate proposition. Authorizes a proposition to include as a specific purpose one or more structures or improvements serving the substantially same purpose and to include

related improvements and equipment necessary to accomplish the specific purpose.

SECTION 5. Repealer: Section 1251.002 (Contents of Proposition), Government Code.

SECTION 6. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 7. Effective date: September 1, 2019.