

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 1114
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State Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

The current voter registration process does not provide the Secretary of State (SOS) with a method for effectively verifying a person's citizenship. However, the Texas SOS is in the process of implementing a more proactive way to find ineligible voters and remove them from the voter rolls. The SOS is doing so pursuant to the authority provided by the legislature in Section 730.005(9) of the Transportation Code, which requires the Texas Department of Public Safety to disclose motor vehicle data to SOS for voter registration purposes.

Interested parties contend improvements in the law are needed in processes of removing ineligible voters from the voter rolls. This bill would provide additional statutory support for the SOS's efforts to match information obtained from DPS and compare it to the voter rolls.

While current law provides authority for the removal of voters ineligible due to being deceased or disqualified from jury duty, S.B. 1114 strengthens the integrity of the voter rolls by requiring voter registrars to additionally cross-reference voter rolls with personal information provided in motor vehicle records, where a person has indicated on that record that he or she is not a U.S. citizen, and remove an ineligible voter accordingly.

The information from DPS will be matched with the voter rolls and the SOS would send matching records to the counties so that they can review the voter records for eligibility.

The current passive approach removes an average of about 250 persons from the voter rolls each year. It is anticipated that the more proactive approach outlined in this bill will find and remove many more ineligible voters while producing the least possible impact on eligible voters.

As proposed, S.B. 1114 amends current law relating to verification of the citizenship status of certain registered voters.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

Rulemaking authority is expressly granted to secretary of state in SECTION 1 (Section 16.0332, Election Code) of this bill.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 16.0332, Election Code, by amending Subsection (a) and adding Subsection (d), as follows:

- (a) Requires the registrar, after the registrar receives notification, rather than a list, under Section 18.068 (Comparison of Information Regarding Ineligibility), Election 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 notification of persons 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).

(d) Requires SOS to prescribe rules for the administration of Section 16.0332 (Cancellation Because of Citizenship Status).

SECTION 2. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2021.