

FINAL BILL REPORT

ESHB 1716

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Synopsis as Enacted

Brief Description: Concerning locations at which ballots may be cast.

Sponsors: House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations (originally sponsored by Representatives Valdez, Dolan and Pollet).

House Committee on State Government & Tribal Relations
Senate Committee on State Government & Elections

Background:

Voter Registration.

A person who wishes to register to vote or change their a residential address for voting must submit a registration application electronically, by mail, or in person. In-person submissions must be done at a county auditor's office, the division of elections if in a separate city from the county auditor's office, a voting center, a student engagement hub, or other locations designated by the county auditor. Registration applications must be submitted no later than 8 p.m. on the day of the primary, special election, or general election if submitted in person, and received no later than 8 days before the primary, special election, or general election if submitted by mail or online.

The county auditor must register voters in person at each of the following locations:

- the county auditor's office;
- the division of elections, if located in a separate city from the county auditor's office;
- and
- for each presidential general election, at a voting center in each city with a population of 1,000 or greater and which does not already have a voting center.

Voting Centers.

County auditors must open a voting center for each primary, special election, and general election. Each voting center must provide, among other things, ballot materials and in-person voter registration services.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Beginning 18 days before an election and through the end of the election, a person may not, within a voting center, influence or interfere with a voter attempting to vote in a voting center by:

- suggesting or persuading a voter to vote a certain way;
- circulating political materials or soliciting signatures;
- engaging in any practice that disrupts the administration of the voting center; or
- obstructing doors or entries to a voting center or ballot drop location.

Summary:

Voter Registration.

The list of places that a person may register to vote or change their address in person is modified to include the division of elections if it is in a different location from, rather than different city than, the county auditor's office. For special elections, a person wishing to register to vote in person or submit a change of address in person must do so by the deadline on the day of the special election in which the county is conducting an election.

The county auditor must open a voting center, rather than only conduct in-person voter registration, at certain locations. The list of locations is narrowed and includes, among other places, the county auditor's office or the division of elections if located in a separate location from the auditor's office, rather than at both the county auditor's office and the division of elections if located in a separate city than the auditor's office.

Voting Centers.

The requirement for county auditors to open a voting center for each special election only applies if the county is conducting one.

The locations where a person may not influence or interfere with a voter by means prohibited by law is expanded to include:

- a student engagement hub and any public street or room within a 100-foot radius of a voting center; and
- any public street or room within a 25-foot radius of a ballot drop box.

A person may not influence or interfere with voters by means prohibited under law by using electronic amplification if the person can be understood within:

- 100 feet of the voting center or student engagement hub; or
- 25 feet of a ballot drop box.

The prohibitions on certain political activities at or near a voting center, student engagement hub, or ballot drop box do not restrict authorized political party observers from observing the election process.

The county auditor must designate a specific point or points as the entrance to each voting

center to ensure voters are unimpeded in arriving and departing the voting center. The auditor must also post a sign at the designated entrance to provide notice of the prohibition against influencing or interfering with voters near voting centers, student engagement hubs, and ballot drop boxes.

Votes on Final Passage:

House	92	3
Senate	48	0

Effective: June 9, 2022