
DIGEST

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HB 704 Original

2021 Regular Session

Hodges

Abstract: Provides relative to elections.

Present law provides that the secretary of state shall administer the laws relating to custody of voting machines and voter registration and shall prescribe uniform rules, regulations, forms, and instructions as to the use of electronic voting machines in the conduct of early voting.

Proposed law removes the reference to "electronic" relative to voting machines.

Present law provides that a candidate may designate watchers to serve at every precinct on election day where the office he seeks is voted on in an election. Further provides for the procedure of designating such watchers. Authorizes a candidate to appoint a super watcher who shall be admitted to every precinct in the parish where the candidate is on the ballot.

Proposed law provides that each recognized political party having at least 25% of the registered voters in the state may designate super watchers in each parish in which a candidate affiliated with the party is on the ballot. Further provides for the number of super watchers that may be designated by a recognized political party based on the number of registered voters in the parish.

Proposed law retains present law and adds a provision allowing the state central committee of a political party having at least 25% of the registered voters in the state to have an early voting watcher at each early voting location, as space permits, at which a candidate affiliated with such political party is on the ballot. Further provides for the qualifications, powers, and duties of such watcher. Also provides for the procedure for nominating such watcher.

Present law provides definitions relative to voting, voting machines, and vote counting equipment; to provide requirements for voting systems.

Proposed law removes the definition of "electronic voting machine"; defines "vote-capture device" and "voter verified paper record"; modifies the definitions of "voting machine", "voting system", and "official ballot".

Proposed law provides for requirements for voting systems as follows:

- (1) Voting machines shall not be capable of establishing a wireless connection or connecting to the internet.

- (2) Access to physical ports shall be restricted and sealed during an election.
- (3) Software or firmware updates shall be loaded using a non-network connection.
- (4) Tabulation of fractional votes shall be prohibited.
- (5) The voting system shall produce an auditable voter-verifiable paper record of the voter's ballot selections, presented in a human-readable format.
- (6) The voting system shall deploy procedures for the secretary of state to verify that the software and firmware, was not altered after it was installed.
- (7) The voting system shall maintain an internal record of the number of ballots tabulated.
- (8) The voting system servers shall be located within the state.
- (9) Paper ballots shall have counterfeit protection.
- (10) The voting system vendor shall provide documentation to the secretary of state regarding financial disclosures, equity holdings, and ownership structure.

Effective January 1, 2022.

(Amends R.S. 18:18(A)(7), 435(A)(4) and (B)(2), and 1351; Adds 18:435(A)(5) and (B)(1)(c), 1309(N) and 1366)