

2024 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 319

BY REPRESENTATIVES NEWELL AND CHASSION

ELECTIONS/POLLING PLACES: Provides relative to notice of the reason for changes to polling places

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 18:536(A)(introductory paragraph) and (C), relative to notice of
3 change in polling place; to provide for including the reason for the change when
4 giving notice of a change in polling place; to provide for an effective date; and to
5 provide for related matters.

6 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

7 Section 1. R.S. 18:536(A)(introductory paragraph) and (C) are hereby amended and
8 reenacted to read as follows:

9 §536. Notice of change of location of polling place

10 A. When a parish governing authority or parish president, in accordance with
11 the provisions of R.S. 18:534, changes the location of a polling place during the
12 period commencing on the date the qualifying period opens and ending on the date
13 of the general election or during the period commencing on the forty-sixth day prior
14 to an election and ending on the day of the election for an election date exclusively
15 for bond, tax, or other propositions or questions, the governing authority shall give
16 adequate notice of the change of the location and the reason for the change to each
17 voter registered to vote at that polling place and to each candidate to be voted on at
18 that polling place, if applicable, in the following manner:

19 * * *

1 C. The governing authority shall inform the secretary of state of all polling
 2 place location changes and the reason for each change. The secretary of state shall
 3 list polling place location changes and the reason for each change as provided by the
 4 governing authority on his website in a sortable format ~~and the parish election~~
 5 ~~officials, including the registrar of voters and clerk of court, may publish polling~~
 6 ~~place location changes on their website.~~ A parish registrar of voters or clerk of court
 7 that maintains a website may publish a list of polling place location changes within
 8 the parish and the reason for each change on his website and provide a clearly visible
 9 link to the list on the secretary of state's website. Each website shall also include
 10 instructions on how a voter may subscribe to receive electronic notifications of
 11 polling place location changes.

12 Section 2. This Act shall become effective on July 1, 2025.

DIGEST

The digest printed below was prepared by House Legislative Services. It constitutes no part of the legislative instrument. The keyword, one-liner, abstract, and digest do not constitute part of the law or proof or indicia of legislative intent. [R.S. 1:13(B) and 24:177(E)]

HB 319 Reengrossed

2024 Regular Session

Newell

Abstract: Requires the notice of the change of a polling place to include the reason for the change.

Present law (R.S. 18:534) provides that an established polling place may only be changed by a vote of the parish governing authority, and only before the opening of qualifying for a general election or the 46th day prior to an election exclusively for propositions. Further provides that the parish president may change the location of the polling place after the specified dates due to an emergency caused by an act of God or when privately owned property being used as a polling place becomes unavailable through no fault of the governing authority.

Present law provides that when a parish governing authority or parish president changes the location of a polling place, the governing authority shall give adequate notice of the change of the location to each voter registered to vote at that polling place and to each candidate to be voted on at that polling place, if applicable. Provides that notice shall be given to the candidate immediately, that signage and an employee of the parish governing authority shall be stationed at the former polling place, and that the notice shall be published in the official journal of the parish or other newspaper of general circulation, time permitting.

Present law requires the governing authority to inform the secretary of state of all polling place location changes.

Proposed law requires the parish governing authority or parish president to include the reason for the change with his notice of the change of a polling location.

Present law requires the secretary of state to list polling place location changes on his website and authorizes the parish election officials, including the registrar of voters and clerk of court, to publish polling place location changes on their website. Requires each website to include instructions on how a voter may subscribe to receive electronic notifications of polling place location changes.

Proposed law requires the secretary of state to also list the reason for polling location changes on his website as provided by the governing authority and to provide the list of polling place changes in a sortable format. Further authorizes the parish registrars of voters or clerks of court that maintains a website to publish a list of polling place location changes within the parish and the reason for each change on their websites and provide a clearly visible link to the list on the secretary of state's website.

Effective July 1, 2025.

(Amends R.S. 18:536(A)(intro. para.) and (C))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The Committee Amendments Proposed by House Committee on House and Governmental Affairs to the original bill:

1. Authorize, rather than require, the parish registrars of voters or clerks of court that maintains a website to publish a list of polling place location changes.
2. Change the effective date.

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Provide that the reasons for polling location changes the secretary of state is required to publish are those provided by the governing authority.