
DIGEST

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HB 962 Reengrossed

2024 Regular Session

Billings

Abstract: Provides for the procedure for selecting parish board commissioners to assist the parish board of election supervisors with the preparation, verification, tabulation, and counting of absentee by mail and early voting ballots and a prohibition on the recording or broadcasting of the process and for notice of meetings of the board of election supervisors.

Present law requires each parish board of election supervisors to conduct its business in the presence of a quorum, subject to the Open Meetings Law (R.S. 42:11, et seq.), which requires written public notice of any regular, special, or rescheduled meeting not later than 24 hours, exclusive of Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays, before the meeting.

Proposed law requires that all members of the board must be given actual notice of all board meetings not later than 24 hours before each meeting.

Present law requires the parish board of election supervisors to conduct the preparation verification, tabulation, and counting of absentee by mail and early voting ballots in the parish. Authorizes the board to utilize and select parish board commissioners to count the ballots. Proposed law retains present law.

Present law requires a majority of the parish board of election supervisors to be present to determine whether an absentee by mail or early voting ballot is invalid and requires the inspection by a candidate of certificates removed from valid absentee by mail and early voting ballots be done in the presence of a majority of the parish board of election supervisors. Proposed law retains present law.

When the preparation verification, tabulation, and counting is conducted on election day and a majority of the members of the board are not present and no parish board commissioners were previously selected, present law (R.S. 18:1313) authorizes the members present to select a sufficient number of parish board commissioners on election day to assist.

Proposed law instead requires the board, through the registrar of voters, to receive approval from the commissioner of elections to select a sufficient number of commissioners to assist.

Present law (R.S. 18:1313.1) authorizes parishes to conduct preparation and verification the day prior to the election and conduct tabulation and counting on election day. In such circumstances, if less than a majority of the parish board members are present, present law authorizes the members present to select a sufficient number of parish board commissioners three days before the election or on election day, as applicable, to assist in both the preparation and verification process and the

tabulation and counting of the ballots.

Proposed law instead provides that if less than a majority but at least two of the members of the board are present for the preparation and verification process and the board cannot locate an alternate designee or appointee, the board shall, through the registrar of voters, so inform the commissioner of elections and request approval from the commissioner of elections for the appointment of a parish board commissioner to serve as a board member. The board shall receive approval of the commissioner of elections before proceeding with the preparation and verification process without a majority present.

Proposed law also provides that if an insufficient number of parish board commissioners were previously selected for the preparation and verification process or to count the absentee by mail and early voting ballots, the board, through the registrar of voters, may request approval from the commissioner of election to select a sufficient number of parish board commissioners three days before the election or on election day, as applicable, to assist in the preparation and verification process for the tabulation and counting of absentee by mail and early voting ballots and the tabulation and counting of the ballots.

Present law (R.S. 18:1313(E) and 1313.1(E)) authorizes candidates, their representatives, and qualified electors to be present during the preparation, verification, counting, and tabulation of absentee by mail and early voting ballots. If the counting and tabulation of ballots begin prior to the closing of the polls, the board shall inform any person who wants to be present during the preparation, verification, counting, and tabulation that no person will be allowed to leave or to communicate with any other person outside, until such time as the polls are closed. Further prohibits a person who is present from possessing a cellular telephone or electronic communication device.

Proposed law further prohibits the possession of an electronic recording device during preparation, verification, counting, and tabulation and provides that the process shall not be video, audio, or tape recorded, filmed, or broadcast live.

(Amends R.S. 18:423(I), 1302(2), 1313(B) and (E), and 1313.1(B) and (E))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Prohibit the possession of an electronic recording device during preparation, verification, counting, and tabulation and provides that the process shall not be video, audio, or tape recorded, filmed, or broadcast live.