

GREEN SHEET REDIGEST

HB 506

2024 Regular Session

Thomas

VOTING/REGISTRATION: Provides relative voter registration applications collected through registration drives.

DIGEST

Proposed law defines "third-party voter registration drive" as the solicitation, distribution, or collection of voter registration applications by a third-party voter organization.

Proposed law defines "third-party voter registration organization" as any individual or entity that solicits, distributes, or collects voter registration applications and that is not required by law to do so. Further provides that "third-party voter registration organization" does not include an individual who only seeks to encourage or assist a member of his immediate family in registering to vote, a registrar of voters or an employee of the registrar of voters, the secretary of state or employee of the secretary of state who performs election duties, or any other individual or entity required by law to perform voter registration activities.

Present law provides that the secretary of state shall administer the laws relating to custody of voting machines and voter registration, and for this purpose he shall perform enumerated functions and duties. Present law specifically requires that the secretary of state provide for the voluntary registration of individuals or entities that conduct voter registration drives.

Proposed law provides instead that the secretary of state shall provide for the registration for third-party voter registration organizations that conduct voter registration drives. Further requires each third-party voter registration organization that intends to conduct a voter registration drive to first register with the secretary of state either directly or through a registrar of voters in the manner prescribed by the secretary of state. Requires the registration to include an acknowledgment of the requirements applicable to voter registration activities as well as the election offenses applicable to voter registration and voter registration activities.

Present law prohibits a person from knowingly, willfully, or intentionally failing to submit a completed voter registration application collected through a registration drive to the registrar of voters within 30 days of receipt of the completed application from the applicant.

Proposed law changes the time period a person has to submit the completed form obtained third-party voter registration drive to within 30 days of receipt of the completed application from the applicant, or the date provided in present law (R.S. 18:135(A)(1)) for the close of registration records prior to an election), whichever occurs first.

Present law provides that a person who violates present law shall be fined not more than \$1,000 or be imprisoned for not more than one year, or both. On a second offense, or any subsequent offense, the penalty shall be a fine of not more than \$2,500 or imprisonment for not more than five years, or both. Violations of proposed law are subject to the present law penalties.

Proposed law creates the election offense of filling out information on another person's voter registration application except when providing assistance to an applicant in the manner authorized in present law.

Proposed law does not apply to electronic voter registration drives conducted by third-party voter organizations provided the organizations only provide access to the electronic voter registration application and do not capture the information provided for any purpose.

Effective August 1, 2024.

(Amends R.S. 18:18(A)(9) and 1461.7(A)(1); adds R.S. 18:2(16) and (17), 119, 1461.2(10))

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

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

1. Provide that an individual or entity that conducts voter registration drives may register with the secretary of state either directly or through a registrar of voters.
2. Change the proposed new deadline to submit a completed voter registration application from no later than the day prior to the close of registration records for the first election that occurs after the completed registration application is collected to no later than the date provided in R.S. 18:135(A)(1) for the close of registration records prior to an election.

The House Floor Amendments to the engrossed bill:

1. Provide that proposed law does not apply to electronic voter registration drives.
2. Provide for effectiveness.

Summary of Amendments Adopted by Senate

Committee Amendments Proposed by Senate Committee on Senate and Governmental Affairs to the reengrossed bill

1. Make technical changes.
2. Define the terms "third-party voter registration drive" and "third-party voter registration organization".
3. Provide for the registration of third-party voter registration organizations that conduct third-party voter registration drives in the state.
4. Require each third-party voter registration organization that intends to conduct a voter registration drive to first register with the secretary of state.
5. Provide that a voter registration drive conducted using the state's electronic voter registration application system is not required to pre-register with the secretary of state so long as the third-party voter registration organization only provides access to the electronic voter application and does not capture the information provided for any purpose.
6. Create the election offense of filling out information on another person's voter registration application, except when providing assistance to an applicant in an authorized manner.
7. Provide that failure to submit a completed voter registration application collected through a third-party voter registration drive within 30 days of receipt of the completed form is an election offense.
8. Remove language specifying that the provisions of the proposed law shall not be effective June 30, 2025.