

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 701 (HB 506)

2024 Regular Session

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

Existing 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.

Prior law specifically required the secretary of state to provide for the voluntary registration of individuals or entities that conduct voter registration drives.

New 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. Specifies that the registration of third-party voter registration organizations pursuant to new law shall not require a response from the secretary of state. Further, new law does not apply to a voter registration drives conducted by third-party voter organizations using the electronic voter registration application provided for in existing law (R.S. 18:115.1) provided the organization only provides access to the electronic voter registration application and does not capture the information provided.

Existing 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 a certain period of time after receipt of the completed application. Prior law provided that the time period to submit the application was 30 days.

New 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 or the date provided in existing law (R.S. 18:135(A)(1)) for the close of registration records prior to an election, whichever occurs first.

Existing law provides that a person who violates existing law regarding specified election offenses 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 new law are subject to the existing law penalties.

New law creates the election offense prohibiting a person from knowingly, willfully, or intentionally filling out information on another person's voter registration application except when providing assistance to an applicant in the manner authorized by existing law.

Existing law provides that a person who violates existing law regarding election offenses affecting registration shall be fined not more than \$2,000 or be imprisoned, with or without hard labor, for not more than two years, or both, for the first offense. On a second offense, or any subsequent offense, the penalty shall be a fine of not more than \$5,000 or imprisonment at hard labor for not more than five years, or both. Violations of new law are subject to the existing law penalties.

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, and 1461.2(A)(10))