

2025 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 502

BY REPRESENTATIVE BUTLER

Prefiled pursuant to Article III, Section 2(A)(4)(b)(i) of the Constitution of Louisiana.

REGISTRARS OF VOTERS: Provides for the compensation, evaluation, duties, and removal of registrars of voters

## 1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 18:53(A) and (B)(1) and (2), 55(A)(4)(b), 59(B)(4)(b) and  
3 (C)(4)(b), 60, and 134(A), relative to the compensation, evaluation, duties, and  
4 removal of registrars of voters; to provide for grounds for removal; to provide for  
5 allegations brought by the commissioner of elections; to provide for a firing freeze  
6 during the pendency of removal proceedings; to provide for merit evaluations; to  
7 provide for salary increases; to provide for office closures; to provide for the  
8 performance of duties by the registrar of voters during office closures; and to provide  
9 for related matters.

10 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

11 Section 1. R.S. 18:53(A) and (B)(1) and (2), 55(A)(4)(b), 59(B)(4)(b) and (C)(4)(b),  
12 60, and 134(A) are hereby amended and reenacted to read as follows:

13 §53. ~~Tenure; removal~~ Removal from office; may not be own immediate successor

14 A. A registrar shall be subject to removal by the State Board of Election  
15 Supervisors for cause for any of the following reasons:

16 (1) Willful ~~willful~~ misconduct relating to his official duty;\_17 (2) Willful ~~willful~~ and persistent failure to perform his duty;\_

18 (3) Persistent ~~persistent~~ public conduct prejudicial to the administration of  
19 the laws relative to the registration of voters that brings the office into disrepute; ~~or~~\_

20 (4) Incompetence.

1           (5) Consistent under-performance.

2           (6) Abuse of leave policies established by the secretary of state.

3           (7) Violation of substance abuse policies established by the secretary of  
4           state.

5           (8) A finding of "unsuccessful" on a merit evaluation for two successive  
6           years.

7           (9) Conviction ~~conviction~~ of a felony.

8           B.(1) A registrar accused of any of the types of conduct set forth in  
9           Subsection A of this Section ~~or convicted of a felony~~ shall be subject to immediate  
10          suspension from office, with or without pay, by majority vote of the State Board of  
11          Election Supervisors.

12          (2)(a) If the board receives a resolution from a parish governing authority as  
13          provided in this Paragraph accusing the parish registrar of any of the types of  
14          conduct set forth in Subsection A of this Section, the board shall schedule a hearing  
15          on the accusations contained in the resolution within thirty days of the receipt of such  
16          resolution. Such resolution must be adopted by a favorable vote of at least two-  
17          thirds of the membership of the parish governing authority and transmitted to the  
18          chairman of the board by certified mail, return receipt requested. The provisions of  
19          this Paragraph shall in no way be construed to limit the powers conferred upon the  
20          board by Paragraph (1) of this Subsection.

21          (b) If the commissioner of elections raises allegations that the parish registrar  
22          has engaged in any conduct set forth in Subsection A of this Section, the board shall  
23          schedule a hearing on the allegations brought by the commissioner of elections  
24          within thirty days of the receipt of the accusations. If the commissioner of elections  
25          serves as a regular member of the board, he shall not serve for the purposes of such  
26          hearings, and the secretary of state shall designate a member of the Registrars of  
27          Voters Association to serve in the commissioner's place and shall notify the board  
28          in writing of any such designation as provided in R.S. 18:23.

29                                   \*           \*           \*

§55. Compensation of registrar of voters; amount and manner of payment; reduction during tenure prohibited; prohibited increase

A.

\* \* \*

(4)

\* \* \*

(b) Each registrar whose salary is at the level of step one or higher shall be evaluated as to merit in January. The merit evaluation shall result in a finding of "excellent", "successful", "unsuccessful", or "not assessed". The criteria and procedure for the merit evaluation shall be determined by the secretary of state in conjunction with the Registrar of Voters Association. Each registrar shall be evaluated by the secretary of state or his designee acting on his behalf. Upon a finding of "excellent" on a merit evaluation, the registrar shall receive a salary increase to the next step until the registrar's salary is equal to the highest step of the appropriate population range. Upon a finding of "excellent" on a merit evaluation of each registrar whose salary is at the level of step twelve, the registrar shall receive an annual salary increase of five percent; however, such annual salary increase shall not serve as a basis for the additional salary increase provided for in R.S. 18:59.4. No registrar shall receive more than five such annual salary increases. A registrar may appeal the finding on a merit evaluation to the State Board of Election Supervisors in accordance with rules promulgated by the board. If a member of the board participates in the merit evaluation of a registrar, the member shall not participate in an appeal of the evaluation.

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§59. Deputies, confidential assistants, and other permanent office employees; temporary employees; appointment and compensation; prohibited increase in compensation

\* \* \*

B.

\* \* \*

1 (4)

2 \* \* \*

3 (b) Each chief deputy whose salary is at the level of step one or higher shall  
4 be evaluated as to merit in January. The merit evaluation shall result in a finding of  
5 "excellent", "successful", "unsuccessful", or "not assessed". The criteria and  
6 procedure for the merit evaluation shall be determined by the Registrar of Voters  
7 Association. It shall provide that each chief deputy will be evaluated by the registrar  
8 of his parish. Upon a finding of "excellent" on a merit evaluation, the chief deputy  
9 shall receive a salary increase to the next step until his salary equals the highest step  
10 of the appropriate population range. Upon a finding of "excellent" on a merit  
11 evaluation of each chief deputy whose salary is at the level of step twelve, the chief  
12 deputy shall receive an annual salary increase of five percent; however, such annual  
13 salary increase shall not serve as a basis for the additional salary increase provided  
14 for in R.S. 18:59.4. No chief deputy shall receive more than five such annual salary  
15 increases.

16 C.

17 \* \* \*

18 (4)

19 \* \* \*

20 (b) Each confidential assistant whose salary is at the level of step one or  
21 higher shall be evaluated as to merit in January. The merit evaluation shall result in  
22 a finding of "excellent", "successful", "unsuccessful", or "not assessed". The criteria  
23 and procedure for the merit evaluation shall be determined by the Registrar of Voters  
24 Association. It shall provide that each confidential assistant be evaluated by the  
25 registrar of his parish. Upon a finding of "excellent" on a merit evaluation, the  
26 confidential assistant shall receive a salary increase to the next step until the  
27 confidential assistant's salary is equal to the highest step of the appropriate  
28 population range. Upon a finding of "excellent" on a merit evaluation of each  
29 confidential assistant whose salary is at the level of step twelve, the confidential

assistant shall receive an annual salary increase of five percent; however, such  
annual salary increase shall not serve as a basis for the additional salary increase  
provided for in R.S. 18:59.4. No confidential assistant shall receive more than five  
such annual salary increases.

5 \* \*

6 §60. Removal of deputies and employees

7                   Subject to applicable civil service law, a registrar may remove any ~~deputy,~~  
8                   ~~clerk,~~ deputy registrar, confidential assistant, or other employee. However, no  
9                   registrar who is subject to removal by the State Board of Election Supervisors  
10                  pursuant to R.S. 18:53 may remove a deputy registrar, confidential assistant, or other  
11                  employee from the time the registrar is made aware that he is subject to removal until  
12                  after the State Board of Election Supervisors makes a final determination on the  
13                  removal of the registrar.

14 \* \* \*

15            §134. Office hours

A.(1) A registrar shall keep his principal office open for business on those days that state departments are open. A registrar shall observe the holidays that are provided by law or proclaimed by the governor for state departments. On days that a registrar's office is open, his office hours shall be from 8:00 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Notwithstanding any provision of this Subsection, any registrar may keep his principal office open during additional hours and on additional days.

22                   (2) A registrar may close his principal office on days that state departments  
23                   are open only in extreme circumstances. However, on such days the registrar shall  
24                   still perform essential functions.

25 \* \* \*

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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)]

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HB 502 Engrossed

2025 Regular Session

Butler

**Abstract:** Provides for grounds for removal of a registrar of voters; for removal procedures when the commissioner of elections raises allegations of conduct subject to removal; for a firing freeze during the pendency of a removal; for evaluations of registrars, chief deputies, and confidential assistants; for pay increases for registrars, chief deputies, and confidential assistants; and for requirements of a registrar upon the closure of the registrar's office in certain circumstances.

Present law provides the grounds for which a registrar of voters may be removed by the State Board of Election Supervisors (state board), including willful misconduct relating to his official duty, willful and persistent failure to perform his duty, persistent public conduct prejudicial to the administration of the laws relative to the registration of voters that brings the office into disrepute, and conviction of a felony.

Proposed law retains present law and provides additional grounds for removal to include incompetence, consistent under-performance, abuse of leave policies established by the secretary of state, violation of substance abuse policies established by the secretary of state, or a finding of "unsuccessful" on a merit evaluation for two successive years.

Present law provides that if the state board receives a resolution from a parish governing authority accusing the parish registrar of any conduct that is grounds for removal, the state board shall schedule a hearing on the accusations contained in the resolution within 30 days of the receipt of such resolution.

Proposed law retains present law and further provides that if the commissioner of elections raises allegations that the parish registrar has engaged in any conduct that is grounds for removal, the state board shall schedule a hearing on the allegations brought by the commissioner of elections within 30 days of the receipt of the accusations. If the commissioner of elections serves as a regular member of the state board, he shall not serve for the purposes of such hearings and the secretary of state shall designate a member of the Registrars of Voters Association (association) to serve in the commissioner's place and shall notify the state board in writing of any such designation.

Present law provides for 12 salary levels for registrars, chief deputies, and confidential assistants. Provides that each registrar, chief deputy, and confidential assistant whose salary is at the level of step one or higher shall be evaluated as to merit in January. Provides that criteria and procedures for evaluation of registrars are determined by the secretary of state in conjunction with the association and that a registrar is evaluated by the secretary of state. Provides that criteria and procedures for evaluation of chief deputies and confidential assistants are determined by the association and that a chief deputy or confidential assistant is evaluated by the registrar. Requires an evaluation of "excellent" to receive a salary increase to the next step.

Proposed law retains present law and further provides that merit evaluations shall result in a finding of "excellent", "successful", "unsuccessful", or "not assessed".

Proposed law further provides that upon a finding of "excellent" on a merit evaluation of a registrar, chief deputy, or confidential assistant whose salary is at the level of step 12, the registrar, chief deputy, or confidential assistant shall receive an annual salary increase of 5%.

Provides that no registrar, chief deputy, or confidential assistant shall receive more than five such annual salary increases.

Present law provides for a Voter Registration Administrators' Certification Program providing certification for registrars, chief deputies, and confidential assistants that meet certain educational and experience requirements. Provides that a registrar, chief deputy, or confidential assistant that receives such certification shall be granted a 7% increase in his annual salary.

Proposed law provides that the additional 7% increase shall not apply to the 5% annual increase provided for in proposed law.

Present law provides that, subject to applicable civil service law, a registrar may remove any deputy, clerk, or other employee.

Proposed law retains present law, except to provide that no registrar who is subject to removal by the state board may remove a deputy registrar, confidential assistant, or other employee from the time the registrar is made aware that he is subject to removal until after the state board makes a final determination on the removal of the registrar.

Present law provides that a registrar shall keep his principal office open for business on those days that state departments are open.

Proposed law retains present law and further provides that a registrar may close his principal office on days that state departments are open only in extreme circumstances. However, on such days the registrar shall still perform essential functions.

(Amends R.S. 18:53(A) and (B)(1) and (2), 55(A)(4)(b), 59(B)(4)(b) and (C)(4)(b), 60, and 134(A))

#### Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

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

1. Provide for a finding of "not assessed", rather than "unrated", as it relates to evaluations of registrars, chief deputies, and confidential assistants.
2. Specify that the salary increase provided for in proposed law is provided annually, and does not serve as a basis for the additional salary increase provided in present law to certified registrars, deputy registrars, and confidential assistants.