

2016 Regular Session

HOUSE BILL NO. 593

BY REPRESENTATIVE DANAHAAY

REGISTRARS OF VOTERS: Provides relative to the appointment of registrars of voters

1 AN ACT

2 To amend and reenact R.S. 18:51(A), (B), and (C)(1) and to enact R.S. 18:51.1, relative to  
3 registrars of voters; to provide relative to the manner of appointment of the registrar  
4 of voters; to require notice; to provide for the form of the notice; to provide relative  
5 to the powers, duties, and responsibilities of the parish governing authority relative  
6 to the appointment of the registrar of voters; and to provide for related matters.

7 Be it enacted by the Legislature of Louisiana:

8 Section 1. R.S. 18:51(A), (B), and (C)(1) are hereby amended and reenacted and  
9 R.S. 18:51.1 is hereby enacted to read as follows:

10 §51. Registrar for each parish; appointment; ~~tenure; books and records;~~  
11 commission; bond and oath

12 A. There shall be a registrar of voters for each parish in the state, who shall  
13 be appointed by the governing authority of the parish in the manner provided in this  
14 Section and R.S. 18:51.1.

15 B.(1) ~~The~~ Upon receipt of notice and supporting documentation from the  
16 governing authority that show the governing authority complied with the  
17 requirements of this Section and R.S. 18:51.1 in appointing the registrar, the  
18 governor shall issue a commission to ~~each~~ the registrar, who thereupon shall make  
19 the bond, subscribe to the oath, and receive the compensation prescribed in this  
20 Chapter.

1           (2) If the governing authority fails to submit notice and documentation  
 2           pursuant to Paragraph (1) of this Subsection or if the notice and documentation  
 3           submitted by the governing authority is not sufficient to show the governing  
 4           authority complied with the requirements of this Section and R.S. 18:51.1 in  
 5           appointing the registrar, the governor shall not issue a commission to the registrar  
 6           but shall instead send notice to the governing authority that it has failed to show  
 7           compliance.

8           C.(1)(a) A vacancy for any cause in the office of registrar shall be filled by  
 9           the parish governing authority within thirty days after the date on which the vacancy  
 10           occurs. The parish governing authority shall advertise the vacancy and solicit  
 11           applications for the office in the manner provided in R.S. 18:51.1.

12           (b) Until the appointment is made, the chief deputy shall perform the duties  
 13           of the registrar in a parish having a chief deputy. If there is no chief deputy, within  
 14           forty-eight hours after the office becomes vacant, the parish governing authority  
 15           shall appoint a person temporarily to perform the duties of the registrar until the  
 16           parish governing authority fills the vacancy as ~~herein~~ provided in this Section.  
 17           However, if the parish governing authority neither fills the vacancy nor, in a parish  
 18           having no chief deputy, designates a person temporarily to perform the duties of  
 19           registrar within forty-eight hours after the office becomes vacant, the State Board of  
 20           Election Supervisors shall appoint a person to perform the duties until the parish  
 21           governing authority fills the vacancy. A person appointed temporarily to perform  
 22           the duties of registrar shall have authority to register voters in accordance with law.

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24           §51.1. Manner of appointment of the registrar

25           A. The parish governing authority shall appoint the registrar of voters for the  
 26           parish in accordance with the provisions of this Section.

27           B.(1) The parish governing authority shall take all reasonable steps to make  
 28           as many people in the parish as possible aware of the upcoming appointment of a  
 29           registrar, including without limitation by issuing press releases to local news services

1        and other media outlets and, if the governing authority has a website, by posting  
2        notice on its website.

3                (2)(a) At a minimum, the parish governing authority shall publish notice of  
4        the upcoming appointment together with a request for the submission of applications  
5        to fill the office on two separate days at least one week apart in the official journal  
6        of the governing authority and in another newspaper with a larger circulation within  
7        the parish than the official journal if there is such a newspaper.

8                (b) The notice shall comply with the following requirements:

9                (i) Prominent placement in a section other than the classified advertisement  
10        or public notice section.

11                (ii) Formatting in a box with a bolded outline.

12                (iii) A size of not less than two inches by four inches.

13                (iv) Print in bold face type.

14                (c) The notice shall contain the deadline for submitting applications, which  
15        shall be no later than seven calendar days following the last day of publication of  
16        notice as provided in this Paragraph.

17                C. In appointing the registrar, the governing authority shall offer to interview  
18        each applicant who meets the qualifications provided by law for the office of  
19        registrar of voters.

20        Section 2. This Act shall become effective if and when the proposed amendment of  
21        Article XI, Section 5 of the Constitution of Louisiana contained in the Act which originated  
22        as House Bill No. 459 of this 2016 Regular Session of the Legislature is adopted at a  
23        statewide election and becomes effective.

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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 593 Engrossed

2016 Regular Session

Danahay

**Abstract:** Provides for the manner of appointment of the registrar of voters.

Present law (R.S. 18:51) provides that there shall be a registrar of voters for each parish in the state, who shall be appointed by the governing authority of the parish. Present law (R.S. 18:52) provides that each registrar shall be a resident and qualified voter of the parish in which he is to perform his duties.

Present law requires the parish governing authority to fill a vacancy in the office of registrar of voters within 30 days. Provides that until the appointment is made, the chief deputy shall perform the duties of the registrar in a parish having a chief deputy. Provides that if there is no chief deputy, within 48 hours after the office becomes vacant, the parish governing authority shall appoint a person temporarily to perform the duties of the registrar until the parish governing authority fills the vacancy. Provides, however, that if the parish governing authority neither fills the vacancy nor, in a parish having no chief deputy, designates a person temporarily to perform the duties of registrar within 48 hours after the office becomes vacant, the State Bd. of Election Supervisors shall appoint a person to perform the duties until the parish governing authority fills the vacancy. Provides further that a person appointed temporarily to perform the duties of registrar shall have authority to register voters in accordance with law.

Proposed law retains present law and provides for the manner of appointment of the registrar.

Proposed law requires the parish governing authority to take all reasonable steps to make as many people in the parish as possible aware of the upcoming appointment of a registrar, including without limitation by issuing press releases to local news services and other media outlets and if the governing authority has a website, by posting notice on its website.

Proposed law provides that at a minimum, the parish governing authority shall publish notice of the upcoming appointment together with a request for the submission of applications to fill the office on two separate days at least one week apart in the official journal of the governing authority and in another newspaper with a larger circulation within the parish than the official journal if there is such a newspaper. Provides requirements for the notice. Requires the governing authority to offer to interview each applicant who meets the qualifications provided by law for the office of registrar of voters.

Present law requires the governor to issue a commission to the registrar upon appointment.

Proposed law provides that if the governing authority fails to submit notice and documentation pursuant to proposed law or if the notice and documentation submitted by the governing authority is not sufficient to show the governing authority complied with the requirements of proposed law in appointing the registrar, the governor shall not issue a commission to the registrar but shall instead send notice to the governing authority that it has failed to show compliance.

Effective if and when the proposed amendment of Article XI, Section 5 of the Constitution of La. contained in the Act which originated as House Bill No.459 of the 2016 R.S. is adopted at a statewide election and becomes effective.

(Amends R.S. 18:51(A), (B), and (C)(1); Adds R.S. 18:51.1)

Summary of Amendments Adopted by House

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

1. Make technical amendments.