

- SUBJECT:** Requiring the use of a county early voting polling place
- COMMITTEE:** Elections — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Klick, Cortez, Bucy, Burrows, Cain, Fierro, Israel, Middleton, Swanson
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Glen Maxey, Texas Democratic Party; (*Registered, but did not testify*: Cinde Weatherby, League of Women Voters of Texas; Daniel Gonzalez, Texas Realtors; Deece Eckstein, Travis County Commissioners Court; Adrian Shelley, Public Citizen)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Fatima Menendez, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund)
- On — Alan Vera, Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee; Chris Davis, Texas Association of Elections Administrators; Christina Adkins, Texas Secretary of State Elections Division
- BACKGROUND:** Election Code sec. 85.010 requires certain political subdivisions to designate any early voting polling place established by the county and located in the political subdivision as an early voting place for a November election.
- This requirement applies only to political divisions other than counties that are holding an election on the November uniform election date in which the political subdivision:
- is not holding a joint election with a county; and
 - has not executed a contract with a county elections office under which the county and political subdivision share early voting polling places for an election.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1048 would require certain political subdivisions, other than

counties, that were holding an election on a uniform election date to designate an eligible county polling place located in the political subdivision as an early voting place for the election.

An eligible county polling place would be defined as an early voting polling place established by a county, other than moveable temporary branch polling places established with the approval of the county clerk.

A political subdivision would be prohibited from designating a location other than an eligible county polling place as an early voting place. This prohibition would not apply if each eligible county polling place in the political subdivision was designated as an early voting polling place.

For an election held on the May uniform election date, a political subdivision would be required to designate an eligible county polling place established by a county for the most recent election held on the November uniform election date, to the extent possible.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2019.

**SUPPORTERS
SAY:**

CSHB 1048 would eliminate confusion regarding early voting by ensuring voters could cast their ballots in the same location for all elections to be held on a certain day.

Currently, a political subdivision such as a school district or hospital district may choose to hold an election using a different early voting polling place than that used for a county election occurring on the same day. This bill would lift the burden this places on individuals voting in more than one election by requiring political subdivisions to designate an eligible county polling place as an early voting polling place for the election, removing the need to vote at two different polling places.

The bill would not prevent political subdivisions from opening early voting polling places that were not eligible county polling places, so long

as every eligible county polling place located in the subdivision was also designated as an early voting polling place.

OPPONENTS
SAY:

CSHB 1048 would not go far enough to ensure that individuals did not end up visiting two separate locations in order to vote in different elections held on the same day. Under the bill, political subdivisions still could create polling locations exclusively for local elections if all eligible county polling places in the subdivision had also been designated. If a voter did go to a polling location for local elections only, that voter still would need to travel to a second location to vote in the county election.