

**SUBJECT:** Revising provisions on certain county committees and party offices

**COMMITTEE:** Elections — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 8 ayes — Smith, Bucy, Burrows, Capriglione, DeAyala, Manuel, E. Morales, Vo

1 nay — Swanson

**WITNESSES:** For —Raquel Lewis, Montgomery County Republican Party Precinct 96; James Byers, Montgomery County Republican Party Rules Committee; Bryan Christ, Office of the Chairman MCRP; David Luther, Texas Republican County Chairmans Association; Dwayne Wright, TRCCA and San Jacinto County Republican Party; and six individuals

Against — Neda Henery, Montgomery County Precinct Chair 108; and 13 individuals (*Registered, but did not testify*: Andrew Hendrickson, ACLU of Texas; John Beckmeyer, Ed Zenner, RPT; Andrew Eller, State Republican Executive Committee SD24, Republican Party of Texas, Self; Birk Wilkison, Texas Democratic Party; Tom Nobis, The Republican Party of Texas; and eight individuals)

On — Christina Adkins, Texas Secretary of State; Cynthia Van Maanen, Travis County Democratic Party (*Registered, but did not testify*: Alan Vera, Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee; Bradley Hodges)

**BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that more clarity is needed about the roles and functions of county executive committees and county party chairs.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 4636 would revise and add to provisions of the Election Code regarding political party offices and county executive committees.

**Eligibility for party offices.** To be eligible for candidacy for or to serve as an officer of a political party, the bill would require a person to have not been finally convicted of a felony from which the person had not been

pardoned or otherwise released from the resulting disabilities. A county or precinct chair would automatically vacate the office on the chair's failure to meet necessary eligibility requirements. A county or precinct chair could not be removed except under certain circumstances provided by the Election Code.

**Committee composition and vacancy filling.** The bill would allow a county chair to appoint ex officio, nonvoting members to assist the county executive committee in conducting business who would serve at the pleasure of the chair.

The bill would establish that the county chair, in addition to the county executive committee, would fill by appointment any vacancy on the committee. If a vacancy occurred in the office of precinct chair, the county chair would appoint a replacement who met the qualifications for office to serve for the remainder of the term, subject to the committee's confirmation. The county chair could form a vacancy committee to assist in filling vacancies. To be confirmed, rather than elected, a person would be required to receive a favorable vote of a majority of voting members.

**Committee meetings.** The bill would require the county chair to set the schedule for meetings and set the agenda for each county executive committee meeting. Such a meeting could be in person or by videoconference.

**County chair authority.** By the 30th day after the date the term of office of a new county chair began, the bill would require the former county chair to transfer to the new county chair all local party accounts, rather than local party bank accounts over which the former county chair had authority. The county chair would have authority over and would be the administrator of all party accounts and contracts.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2023.