

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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C.S.S.B. 251
By: Ellis
State Affairs
4/14/2015
Committee Report (Substituted)

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Currently, to be eligible to serve as an interpreter, a person must be a registered voter of the county in which the voter needing the interpreter resides.

However, this provision conflicts with Section 64.032(c) of the Election Code which says that on a voter's request, a voter may be assisted by any person selected by the voter other than the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of a labor union to which the voter belongs.

The functions of an interpreter and assistant are substantially similar and the requirement for a person to be registered to vote in the same county as the voter is contingent on whether a voter says the person they brought with them is their assistant or interpreter.

C.S.S.B. 251 will align the requirements of a person who is serving as an interpreter with the requirements of serving as an assistant so there will not be any undue confusion on the part of the voter or election officer.

C.S.S.B. 251 will also allow counties to expand the pool of people eligible to serve as interpreters by allowing a person registered to vote in the adjacent county to be eligible as well. This will benefit the ability of rural counties to recruit interpreters who have issues finding individuals qualified to serve as interpreters in their own county.

C.S.S.B. 251 amends current law relating to eligibility to serve as an interpreter in an election.

RULEMAKING AUTHORITY

This bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, institution, or agency.

SECTION BY SECTION ANALYSIS

SECTION 1. Amends Section 61.032, Election Code, as follows:

Sec. 61.032. INTERPRETER PERMITTED. Authorizes the voter, if an election officer who attempts to communicate with a voter does not understand the language used by the voter, to communicate through an interpreter selected by the voter or, if the voter has not selected an interpreter, an interpreter appointed by an election officer.

SECTION 2. Amends Section 61.033, Election Code, as follows:

Sec. 61.033. ELIGIBILITY TO SERVE AS INTERPRETER. Provides that to be eligible to serve as an interpreter, a person:

- (1) if selected by the voter, may be any person other than the voter's employer, an agent of the voter's employer, or an officer or agent of a labor union to which the voter belongs; or

(2) if appointed to serve as an interpreter by an election officer, must be a registered voter of the county in which the voter needing the interpreter resides or a registered voter of an adjacent county.

SECTION 3. Effective date: upon passage or September 1, 2015.