

BILL ANALYSIS

Senate Research Center
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S.B. 30
By: Birdwell
State Affairs
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As Filed

AUTHOR'S / SPONSOR'S STATEMENT OF INTENT

Increasingly across the state, taxing entities are requiring voters to vote on substantial bonds, some approaching a billion dollars. As property values and taxes increase, voters are often unaware of the implications of voting for such enormous bond packages, and are not well informed of the subsequent tax increases associated with approval of such bonds. Statute currently requires bond proposals to describe the "general purpose" and allows for multiple distinct projects to be consolidated into one proposition. This legislation would provide more specificity in bond descriptions and require each single specific bond project to be placed on the ballot as a separate proposition.

S.B. 30 would require local taxing entities to write more transparent and detailed ballot language for propositions to issue bonds or impose or increase a tax. S.B. 30 amends Chapter 52 of the Election Code by requiring taxing entities to list out each specific purpose for which bonds are being approved. These bonds proposals must be printed on the ballot as separate propositions, allowing each issue up for voter approval to be considered individually. The ballot must also list the rate of any tax that will be increased or imposed should that proposition gain voter approval.

As proposed, S.B. 30 amends current law relating to ballot language requirements for a proposition seeking voter approval for the issuance of bonds.

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 52.072, Election Code, by amending Subsection (e) and adding Subsection (f), as follows:

(e) Requires a proposition, in addition to certain other requirements, submitted to the voters for approval of the issuance of bonds or the imposition, increase, or reduction of a tax to specifically state, if applicable:

(1) with respect to a proposition seeking voter approval of the issuance of bonds:

(A) makes a nonsubstantive change;

(B) a plain language description, rather than general description, of the single specific purpose, rather than the purposes, for which bonds are to be authorized if approved; and

(C) the rate of any tax that will be increased or imposed to pay the principal of and interest on bonds;

(2)–(3) makes no changes to these subdivisions.

(f) Requires each single specific purpose of which bonds requiring voter approval are issued to be printed on the ballot as a separate proposition.

SECTION 2. Makes application of this Act prospective.

SECTION 3. Effective date: September 1, 2019.