

ELECTION CODE

TITLE 12. ELECTIONS TO FILL VACANCY IN OFFICE

CHAPTER 203. VACANCY IN LEGISLATURE

Sec. 203.001. APPLICABILITY OF CHAPTER. This chapter applies to the offices of state senator and state representative. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 203.002. VACANCY FILLED AT SPECIAL ELECTION. An unexpired term in office may be filled only by a special election in accordance with this chapter. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 203.003. MAJORITY VOTE REQUIRED. To be elected in a special election for an unexpired term, a candidate must receive a majority of the total number of votes received by all candidates for the unexpired term. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 203.004. DATE OF ELECTION. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (b), a special election shall be held on the first uniform election date occurring on or after the 36th day after the date the election is ordered.

(b) If the election is to be held as an emergency election, it shall be held on a Tuesday or Saturday occurring on or after the 36th day and on or before the 64th day after the date the election is ordered.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 389, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 711 (H.B. [3107](#)), Sec. 88, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 203.005. APPLICATION REQUIRED. (a) To be entitled to a place on a special election ballot, a candidate must make an application for a place on the ballot.

(b) An application must, in addition to complying with

Section 141.031:

(1) state the political party with which the candidate is aligned or, if the candidate is not aligned with a party, state that fact; and

(2) be accompanied by:

(A) a filing fee in the amount prescribed by Section 172.024 for a candidate for nomination for the same office in a general primary election; or

(B) a petition that satisfies the requirements prescribed by Section 141.062.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 203.006. APPLICATION FILED WITH SECRETARY OF STATE. An application for a place on a special election ballot must be filed with the secretary of state.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 203.007. NUMBER OF PETITION SIGNATURES REQUIRED. The minimum number of signatures that must appear on the petition authorized by Section 203.005(b)(2)(B) is 500.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 203.008. CIRCULATION OF PETITION. A petition authorized by Section 203.005(b)(2)(B) may not be circulated before the day after the date the vacancy occurs.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 203.009. CERTIFICATION OF CANDIDATES FOR PLACEMENT ON BALLOT. (a) Except as provided by Subsection (c), the secretary of state shall certify in writing for placement on the special election ballot the name of each candidate who files with the secretary an application that complies with Section 203.005(b).

(b) As soon as practicable after the deadline for filing applications, the secretary of state shall deliver the certification to the authority responsible for having the official special election ballot prepared in each county in which the special election is to be held.

(c) A candidate's name may not be certified if, before delivering the certification, the secretary of state learns that the name is to be omitted from the ballot under Section [145.094](#).

(d) This section does not apply to the certification of candidates for a runoff election.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 203.010. TIME FOR CERTIFICATION OF RUNOFF CANDIDATES. The certification of the names of the runoff candidates for placement on a runoff ballot shall be delivered not later than the fifth day after the date the final canvass is completed.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 203.011. PARTY ALIGNMENT ON BALLOT. The party alignment of each candidate shall be printed on the official ballot next to the candidate's name.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 203.012. TIME OF CANVASS. (a) The commissioners court shall convene to conduct the local canvass not later than the 10th day after election day.

(b) The governor shall conduct the state canvass not later than the 14th day after election day.

(c) The secretary of state shall post, on the secretary of state's Internet website, a notice of the date, hour, and place of the canvass at least 24 hours before the canvass is conducted.

(d) Section [1.006](#) does not apply to this section.
Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 472, Sec. 50, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 163, Sec. 5, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 728, Sec. 73, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 1315, Sec. 53, eff. Jan. 1, 2004.

Amended by:

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1052 (H.B. [933](#)), Sec. 14, eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 203.013. EXPEDITED ELECTION. (a) This section

applies to a special election to fill an unexpired term if a vacancy occurs:

(1) during a regular session of the legislature and more than 25 days before the last possible day of the session; or

(2) during the 60 days immediately prior to the date of convening any session of the legislature.

(b) This section supersedes other provisions of this title to the extent of any conflict.

(c) The election must be held on a Tuesday or Saturday occurring not earlier than the 21st day or later than the 45th day after the date the election is ordered.

(d) If the election is to be held before the 36th day after the date the election is ordered, the governor shall set the deadline for filing candidates' applications for a place on the ballot, which must be 5 p.m. of a day not earlier than the fifth day after the date of the order and not later than the 16th day before election day.

(e) If a runoff election is necessary, it must be held on a Tuesday or Saturday occurring not earlier than the 12th day or later than the 25th day after the date the election is ordered.

(f) If a runoff election is to be held before the 21st day after the date the election is ordered, an election notice given by posting shall be posted not later than the seventh day after the date of the order.

(g) If a runoff election is to be held before the 16th day after the date the election is ordered, an election notice given by publication shall be published not later than the third day before election day.

(h) The order of the candidates' names on the runoff election ballot shall be the relative order of names on the original expedited election ballot.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Amended by:

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 266 (S.B. [1779](#)), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 203.014. DISPOSITION OF FILING FEES. The secretary of

state shall deposit the filing fees received under Section [203.005](#) in a suspense account with the comptroller until after election day. The funds remaining in the account after any refunds are made shall be deposited to the credit of the General Revenue Fund.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1423, Sec. 6.02, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.