

ELECTION CODE

TITLE 16. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

CHAPTER 276. MISCELLANEOUS OFFENSES AND OTHER PROVISIONS

Sec. 276.001. RETALIATION AGAINST VOTER. (a) A person commits an offense if, in retaliation against a voter who has voted for or against a candidate or measure or a voter who has refused to reveal how the voter voted, the person knowingly:

(1) harms or threatens to harm the voter by an unlawful act; or

(2) with respect to a voter over whom the person has authority in the scope of employment, subjects or threatens to subject the voter to a loss or reduction of wages or another benefit of employment.

(b) An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 256, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 276.003. UNLAWFUL REMOVAL FROM BALLOT BOX. (a) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally removes or attempts to remove voted ballots from a ballot box in a manner not authorized by law.

(b) An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree unless the person is convicted of an attempt. In that case, the offense is a Class A misdemeanor.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 489, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 276.004. UNLAWFULLY PROHIBITING EMPLOYEE FROM VOTING.

(a) A person commits an offense if, with respect to another person over whom the person has authority in the scope of employment, the person knowingly:

(1) refuses to permit the other person to be absent from work on election day for the purpose of attending the polls to vote; or

(2) subjects or threatens to subject the other person

to a penalty for attending the polls on election day to vote.

(b) It is an exception to the application of this section that the person's conduct occurs in connection with an election in which the polls are open on election day for voting for two consecutive hours outside of the voter's working hours.

(c) In this section, "penalty" means a loss or reduction of wages or another benefit of employment.

(d) An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 728, Sec. 80, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Sec. 276.005. VOTER'S PRIVILEGE FROM ARREST. A voter may not be arrested during the voter's attendance at an election and while going to and returning from a polling place except for treason, a felony, or a breach of peace.

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

Sec. 276.006. CHANGING ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES OF CERTAIN POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS. A change in a boundary of a territorial unit of a political subdivision other than a county from which an office of the political subdivision is elected is not effective for an election unless the date of the order or other action adopting the boundary change is more than three months before election day.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 472, Sec. 59, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 995, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 2000.

Sec. 276.007. STUDENT ELECTION AUTHORIZED. (a) An election for the participation of students in kindergarten through 12th grade may be held in conjunction with a general, special, or primary election as provided by this section.

(b) A student election may be ordered by:

(1) the commissioners court, for a student election held in conjunction with an election ordered by the governor or a county authority;

(2) the governing body of a political subdivision, for a student election held in conjunction with an election of the political subdivision; or

(3) the county executive committee, for a student election held in conjunction with a primary election.

(c) A student election may be held only on election day or the day before election day.

(d) The authority ordering a student election shall specify in the order each grade that may participate in the election. A student in a specified grade may enter a precinct polling place for the purpose of casting an unofficial ballot in the student election on the same offices and measures that appear on the official ballot.

(e) The authority ordering a student election shall make the results of that election available to the public but only after the polling places are closed on election day.

(f) The election officers serving in the official election may not serve in the student election. The authority ordering a student election shall appoint a separate set of election officers to conduct the student election, supervise the participating students, and tabulate and report the results of that election.

(g) Expenses incurred in the conduct of a student election, including any personnel expenses, may be paid only from private grant funds or donations.

(h) The secretary of state shall prescribe any procedures necessary to implement this section and ensure that the conduct of a student election does not affect the proper and efficient conduct of a general, special, or primary election.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 887, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Sec. 276.008. INFORMATION PROVIDED TO TEXAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. (a) On the written request of the Texas Legislative Council, the secretary of state, a county clerk or county elections administrator, a city secretary, or a voter registrar shall provide without charge to the council information or data maintained by the appropriate officer relating to voter registration, voter turnout, election returns for statewide, district, county, precinct, or city offices, or county election precincts, including precinct maps.

(b) The appropriate officer shall provide the requested information or data to the council as soon as practicable but not later than the 30th day after the date the request is received by

that officer.

(c) The information or data shall be provided in a form approved by the council.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 167, Sec. 2.11(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st, ch. 114, Sec. 16, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Renumbered from Government Code, Sec. 323.013 and amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, Sec. 3A.02, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1585, Sec. 3, eff. June 20, 1999.

Sec. 276.009. VOTING BY SEQUESTERED JUROR. (a) The judge of a court that has issued an order that a jury not be allowed to separate shall permit a juror reasonable time to vote on election day.

(b) The court may provide the juror with a means of transportation to and from the appropriate polling place.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 236, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 276.010. UNLAWFUL BUYING AND SELLING OF BALLOTING MATERIALS. (a) A person commits an offense if the person buys, offers to buy, sells, or offers to sell an official ballot, official ballot envelope, official carrier envelope, signed application for an early voting mail ballot, or any other original election record.

(b) This section does not apply to a person who executes a written contract for the procurement of election supplies necessary to conduct an election under Section [51.003](#).

(c) An offense under this section is a state jail felony unless a voter sells a ballot, ballot envelope, or carrier envelope that has been provided to the voter by government, in which event the offense is a Class B misdemeanor.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 393, Sec. 19, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 276.012. ENGAGING IN ORGANIZED ELECTION FRAUD ACTIVITY. (a) A person commits an offense if, with the intent to establish, maintain, or participate in a vote harvesting organization, the person commits or conspires to commit one or more offenses under Titles 1 through 7.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), an offense under this section is one category higher than the most serious offense listed in Subsection (a) that is committed, and if the most serious offense is a Class A misdemeanor, the offense is a state jail felony.

(c) At the punishment stage of a trial, the defendant may raise the issue as to whether in voluntary and complete renunciation of the offense the defendant withdrew from the vote harvesting organization before commission of an offense listed in Subsection (a) and made substantial effort to prevent the commission of the offense. If the defendant proves the issue in the affirmative by a preponderance of the evidence, the offense is the same category of offense as the most serious offense listed in Subsection (a) that is committed.

(d) In this section, "vote harvesting organization" means three or more persons who collaborate in committing offenses under Titles 1 through 7, although participants may not know each other's identity, membership in the organization may change from time to time, and participants may stand in a candidate-consultant, donor-consultant, consultant-field operative, or other arm's length relationship in the organization's operations.

(e) For purposes of this section, "conspires to commit" means that a person agrees with one or more persons that they or one or more of them engage in conduct that would constitute the offense and that person and one or more of them perform an overt act in pursuance of the agreement. An agreement constituting conspiring to commit may be inferred from the acts of the parties.

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 828 (H.B. [1735](#)), Sec. 62, eff. September 1, 2017.

Redesignated from Election Code, Section 276.011 by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 467 (H.B. [4170](#)), Sec. 21.001(11), eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 276.013. ELECTION FRAUD. (a) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally makes any effort to:

(1) influence the independent exercise of the vote of

another in the presence of the ballot or during the voting process;

(2) cause a voter to become registered, a ballot to be obtained, or a vote to be cast under false pretenses; or

(3) cause any intentionally misleading statement, representation, or information to be provided:

(A) to an election official; or

(B) on an application for ballot by mail, carrier envelope, or any other official election-related form or document.

(b) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor.

(c) An offense under this section is increased to the next higher category of offense if it is shown on the trial of an offense under this section that:

(1) the defendant was previously convicted of an offense under this code;

(2) the offense involved a voter 65 years of age or older, and the actor was not:

(A) related to the voter within the second degree by affinity or the third degree by consanguinity, as determined under Subchapter B, Chapter 573, Government Code; or

(B) physically living in the same dwelling as the voter at the time of the event; or

(3) the defendant committed another offense under this section in the same election.

(d) If conduct that constitutes an offense under this section also constitutes an offense under any other law, the actor may be prosecuted under this section, the other law, or both.

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 5), Sec. 17, eff. December 1, 2017.