

ELECTION CODE

TITLE 4. TIME AND PLACE OF ELECTIONS

CHAPTER 43. POLLING PLACES

SUBCHAPTER A. NUMBER AND LOCATION OF POLLING PLACES

Sec. 43.001. ONE POLLING PLACE IN EACH PRECINCT. Each election precinct established for an election shall be served by a single polling place located within the boundary of the precinct. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986.

Sec. 43.002. DESIGNATION OF LOCATION: GENERAL OR SPECIAL ELECTION USING COUNTY PRECINCTS. (a) For a general or special election in which the use of county election precincts is required, the county clerk shall recommend the location of the polling place for each county election precinct, except as provided by Subsection (b). The commissioners court shall designate the recommended location as the polling place unless the court finds good cause to reject the recommendation. In that case, the commissioners court shall designate another location.

(b) If county election precincts are consolidated, the commissioners court shall designate the location of the polling place for the consolidated precinct.

(c) In making a designation under this section, the commissioners court of a county with a population of more than 175,000 may not designate a location as a polling place that would require a voter in the precinct to travel more than 25 miles from the voter's residence to the polling place.

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

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 742 (H.B. [2759](#)), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2005.

Sec. 43.003. DESIGNATION OF LOCATION: PRIMARY ELECTION. The county chair of a political party holding a primary election shall designate the location of the polling place for each election precinct in the primary unless the precinct is one that is

consolidated. In that case, the county executive committee shall designate the location.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 43, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 43.004. DESIGNATION OF LOCATION: ELECTIONS OF OTHER POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS. (a) The governing body of each political subdivision authorized to hold elections, other than a county, shall designate the location of the polling place for each of its election precincts.

(b) If a political subdivision holds an election on a uniform election date and is required to use the regular county election precincts, the political subdivision shall designate as the polling places for the election the regular county polling places in the county election precincts that contain territory from the political subdivision.

(c) If a political subdivision holds an election jointly with an election described by Section 43.007(a)(1), (2), (3), or (4) and is required to use countywide polling places under Section 43.007, the governing body of the political subdivision may designate as the polling places for any required runoff election only the polling places located in the territory or in and near the territory of the political subdivision where eligible voters reside.

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

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 1042 (H.B. 1209), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2005.

Acts 2007, 80th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1261 (H.B. 2926), Sec. 3, eff. September 1, 2007.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1169 (S.B. 578), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2015, 84th Leg., R.S., Ch. 549 (H.B. 2027), Sec. 4, eff. September 1, 2015.

Sec. 43.005. DESIGNATION OF LOCATION: CERTAIN SPECIAL ELECTIONS. The authority establishing election precincts under

Section 42.062 shall designate the location of the polling place for each precinct.

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

Sec. 43.006. CONFLICTS WITH OTHER LAW. A law outside this subchapter supersedes this subchapter to the extent of any conflict.

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

Sec. 43.007. COUNTYWIDE POLLING PLACE PROGRAM. (a) The secretary of state shall implement a program to allow each commissioners court participating in the program to eliminate county election precinct polling places and establish countywide polling places for:

(1) each general election for state and county officers;

(2) each election held on the uniform election date in May and any resulting runoff;

(3) each election on a proposed constitutional amendment;

(4) each primary election and runoff primary election if:

(A) the county chair or county executive committee of each political party participating in a joint primary election under Section 172.126 agrees to the use of countywide polling places; or

(B) the county chair or county executive committee of each political party required to nominate candidates by primary election agrees to use the same countywide polling places; and

(5) each election of a political subdivision located in the county that is held jointly with an election described by Subdivision (1), (2), (3), or (4).

(b) The commissioners court of a county that desires to participate in the program authorized by this section shall hold a public hearing on the county's participation in the program. The commissioners court shall submit a transcript or electronic

recording of the public comments made at the hearing to the secretary of state. A county that has previously participated in a similar program and held a public hearing on the county's participation in that program is not required to hold a hearing under this subsection.

(c) In conducting the program, the secretary of state shall provide for an audit of the direct recording electronic voting units before and after the election, and during the election to the extent such an audit is practicable.

(d) The secretary of state shall select to participate in the program each county that:

(1) has held a public hearing under Subsection (b);

(2) has submitted documentation listing the steps taken to solicit input on participating in the program by organizations or persons who represent the interests of voters;

(3) has implemented a computerized voter registration list that allows an election officer at the polling place to verify that a voter has not previously voted in the election;

(4) uses direct recording electronic voting machines;
and

(5) is determined by the secretary of state to have the appropriate technological capabilities.

(e) Each countywide polling place must allow a voter to vote in the same elections in which the voter would be entitled to vote in the county election precinct in which the voter resides.

(f) In selecting countywide polling places, a county must adopt a methodology for determining where each polling place will be located. The total number of countywide polling places may not be less than:

(1) except as provided by Subdivision (2), 50 percent of the number of precinct polling places that would otherwise be located in the county for that election; or

(2) for an election held in the first year in which the county participates in the program, 65 percent of the number of precinct polling places that would otherwise be located in the county for that election.

(g) A county participating in the program must establish a

plan to provide notice informing voters of the changes made to the locations of polling places under the program. The plan must require that notice of the location of the nearest countywide polling place be posted on election day at each polling place used in the previous general election for state and county officers that is not used as a countywide polling place.

(h) In adopting a methodology under Subsection (f) or creating the plan under Subsection (g), the county shall solicit input from organizations or persons located within the county who represent minority voters.

(i) The secretary of state may only select to participate in the program six counties with a population of 100,000 or more and four counties with a population of less than 100,000.

(j) Not later than January 1 of each odd-numbered year, the secretary of state shall file a report with the legislature. The report must include any complaints or concerns regarding a specific election that have been filed with the office of the secretary of state before the preparation of the report and any available information about voter turnout and waiting times at the polling places. The report may include the secretary of state's recommendations on the future use of countywide polling places and suggestions for statutory amendment regarding the use of countywide polling places.

(k) Each county that previously participated in a program under this section is authorized to continue participation in the program for future elections described by Subsection (a) if:

(1) the commissioners court of the county approves participation in the program; and

(2) the secretary of state determines the county's participation in the program was successful.

(l) Subsections (b), (c), and (d) do not apply to a county participating in the program under Subsection (k).

(m) In adopting a methodology under Subsection (f), the county must ensure that:

(1) each county commissioners precinct contains at least one countywide polling place; and

(2) the total number of permanent branch and temporary

branch polling places open for voting in a county commissioners precinct does not exceed more than twice the number of permanent branch and temporary branch polling places in another county commissioners precinct.

(n) To the greatest extent possible, countywide polling places shall be located in a precinct where the political party that received the greatest number of votes in the last gubernatorial election is the same political party with which the presiding judge is affiliated.

(o) Each countywide polling place must post a notice of the four nearest countywide polling place locations by driving distance.

(p) If a court orders any countywide polling place to remain open after 7 p.m., all countywide polling places located in that county shall remain open for the length of time required in the court order.

Added by Acts 2009, 81st Leg., R.S., Ch. 606 (H.B. 719), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2009.

Amended by:

Acts 2011, 82nd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1002 (H.B. 2194), Sec. 8, eff. September 1, 2011.

Acts 2013, 83rd Leg., R.S., Ch. 1169 (S.B. 578), Sec. 2, eff. September 1, 2013.

Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 828 (H.B. 1735), Sec. 11, eff. September 1, 2017.

Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 1188 (H.B. 3965), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2019.

SUBCHAPTER B. BUILDING FOR USE AS POLLING PLACE

Sec. 43.031. POLLING PLACE IN PUBLIC BUILDING. (a) In this subchapter, "public building" means a building owned or controlled by the state or a political subdivision.

(b) Each polling place shall be located inside a building.

(c) The building selected for a polling place shall be a public building if practicable. The entity that owns or controls a public building shall make the building available for use as a

polling place in any election that covers territory in which the building is located. If more than one authority requests the use of the building for the same day and simultaneous use is impracticable, the entity that owns or controls the building shall determine which authority may use the building.

(d) If a suitable public building is unavailable, the polling place may be located in some other building, including a building on a federal military base or facility with the permission of the post or base commander, and any charge for its use is an election expense. A polling place may not be located in a building under this subsection unless electioneering is permitted on the building's premises outside the prescribed limits within which electioneering is prohibited, except that a polling place may be located in a building at which electioneering is not permitted if it is the only building available for use as a polling place in the election precinct.

(e) A polling place may not be located at the residence of a person who is:

(1) a candidate for an elective office, including an office of a political party; or

(2) related within the third degree by consanguinity or the second degree by affinity, as determined under Chapter 573, Government Code, to a candidate described by Subdivision (1).

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 976, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 1350, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1997; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1316, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1999; Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 516, Sec. 1, June 20, 2003.

Sec. 43.032. BUILDING ACQUIRED BY COUNTY FOR POLLING PLACE.

(a) If a public building is unavailable for use as the polling place for a county election precinct, the commissioners court may purchase or construct a building in the precinct for that purpose.

(b) The commissioners court may permit a building purchased or constructed under Subsection (a) to be used with or without charge for purposes other than as a polling place.

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

Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 976, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1989.

Sec. 43.033. CONSIDERATION FOR USE OF PUBLIC BUILDING AS POLLING PLACE. (a) No charge, including a charge for personnel, utilities, or other expenses incurred before or after regular business hours, may be made for the use of a public building for a polling place if the day of the election is a day on which the building is normally open for business. If the day of the election is a day on which the building is not normally open for business, a charge may be made only for reimbursement for the actual expenses resulting from use of the building in the election.

(b) The reimbursing authority is entitled to an itemized statement of expenses before making remittance.

(c) A person commits an offense if the person assesses a charge for the use of a public building for a polling place in violation of Subsection (a). An offense under this subsection is a Class C misdemeanor.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 481, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987; Acts 1989, 71st Leg., ch. 976, Sec. 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1989; Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 728, Sec. 12, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Sec. 43.034. ACCESSIBILITY OF POLLING PLACE TO THE ELDERLY AND PERSONS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES. (a) Each polling place shall be accessible to and usable by the elderly and persons with physical disabilities. To be considered accessible, a polling place must meet the standards established under Article 9102, Revised Statutes, including the following standards:

(1) the polling place must be on the ground-level floor or be accessible from the ground-level floor by an elevator with doors that provide an opening of at least 36 inches in width;

(2) doors, entrances, and exits used to enter or leave the polling place must have a minimum width of 32 inches;

(3) any curb adjacent to the main entrance to a polling place must have curb cuts or temporary nonslip ramps;

(4) any stairs necessary to enter or leave the polling place must have a handrail on each side of the stairs and a nonslip

ramp; and

(5) the polling place may not have a barrier that impedes the path of a person with physical disabilities to the voting station.

(b) The commissioners court shall provide a polling place that complies with Subsection (a) in each county election precinct. The site shall be made available for use as a polling place on every day that an election may be held within the precinct by any authority that holds elections. The commissioners court may make expenditures from either the general fund or the permanent improvement fund to bring an existing county-owned site into compliance with Subsection (a).

(c) The governing body of each political subdivision that holds elections shall cooperate with the commissioners court in its respective county in implementing this section and is subject to the same requirements for compliance as prescribed by Subsection (b). If the authority holding an election rejects a county-designated polling place that is available and chooses to use a different site of its own designation, it shall provide a polling place that complies with Subsection (a) at its own expense. A political party that is holding a primary election may not reject an available county-designated polling place without the prior consent of the secretary of state.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 622, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1993; Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 809, Sec. 1, 2, eff. Sept. 1, 1999.

SUBCHAPTER C. INFORMATION REGARDING LOCATION OF POLLING PLACE

Sec. 43.061. NOTICE OF CHANGE OF LOCATION OF POLLING PLACE.

(a) This section applies only to a general or special election that is ordered by the governor or the county judge.

(b) If the location of a polling place changes after notice of an election is given under Section 4.003, the county clerk shall give notice of the change not later than the earlier of:

- (1) 24 hours after the location is changed; or
- (2) 72 hours before the polls open on election day.

(c) Notice required by Subsection (b) must be given by:

(1) notifying each candidate whose name appears on the ballot in the election or, in the case of an office filled by voters of more than one county, notifying the county chair or, for an independent candidate, the county judge of the county in which the change occurs; or

(2) posting the notice in a listing used specifically to inform the public of changes to the location of a polling place on any Internet website that the county clerk maintains to provide information on elections held in the county.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 802, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Amended by:

Acts 2005, 79th Leg., Ch. 709 (S.B. 427), Sec. 2(a), eff. September 1, 2005.

Sec. 43.062. NOTICE AT PREVIOUS POLLING PLACE. If the location of the polling place for an election precinct is different from the location used for the precinct in the preceding election ordered by the same authority, the authority responsible for giving notice of the election shall, if possible, post notice at the entrance to the previous polling place stating that the location has changed and providing the location of the new polling place.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 802, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.

Sec. 43.063. USE OF COMPUTERIZED INFORMATION. In an election in which detailed poll location information is available at a polling place through a computer, an election officer shall provide that information to assist voters in determining the correct polling place location for the voter's election precinct.

Added by Acts 2001, 77th Leg., ch. 802, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 2001.