

Own Your Vote: New Laws & What They Mean for You

A reference guide for the new changes to the Texas Election Code

Things for Voters to Know About SB 1

Goes into effect December 2, 2021

Voter Registration

- If you are registered to vote in Texas and move within the state, you can use the existing [change of address portal](#) to update your voter registration address online -- until SB 1 goes into effect, it is currently limited to address changes within the county.

Vote by Mail Applications & Ballots

- Voters must provide either their Texas Driver's License number, State ID card number, election ID certification number, or the last four digits of their social security number on the mail-in ballot application and the ballot carrier envelope.
 - If the voter does not have any of those, they must attest on the application and the carrier envelope that they do not have any of them
 - If the ID numbers match and/or identify the same person, then your ballot should be counted, barring any other issues.

Mail-in Ballot Cure

- You will have the opportunity to fix the issue or vote a new ballot if there is a problem with your mail ballot for one of the following reasons:
 - Missing or has an incorrect ID number
 - Missing a required Statement of Residency form
 - Missing witness information (if applicable)
 - Missing or has a mismatched voter signature
- **Ballots.** Election officials must mail a ballot back if they determine there is enough time for the voter to correct the defect and mail their ballot back before the deadline. Otherwise, clerks are allowed to notify voters that they may cancel their ballot application and vote in person or go to the clerk's office and correct the defect during the post-election cure period.
 - To cancel, the voter must fill out the required paperwork after the close of early voting at either their polling place or the early voting clerk's office indicating that they received a notice of defect on their ballot. They will vote a provisional ballot, which will be counted once the deadline for the mail ballot to arrive has passed.
- **Applications.** If an election official is going to reject a mail-in ballot application, they must notify the voter within two business days and let them know they can correct or provide their ID numbers online in order to receive a mail ballot.

At the Polling Place

- **Poll watchers are still not allowed to look at your ballot or communicate with you.**
- If a voter receives assistance from someone else, that person will need to fill out some new, additional paperwork.
- New limits on voting hours:
 - In all counties, early voting must be conducted for at least nine hours per weekday, between 6am and 10pm
 - Population of 55,000+:
 - Voting for at least 12 hours during last five days of EV, between 6am and 10pm
 - Voting for 12 hours on Saturday AND six hours on Sunday, between 9am and 10pm
- No drive-thru polling places (curbside still available for those that qualify)

Things for Activists and Volunteers to Know About SB 1

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Assisting voters

- Creates a new standard form for people assisting voters with their mail-in ballot and modifies the existing oath they must take.

- In order for an activity to qualify as vote harvesting, the activity must be performed in exchange for compensation or benefit, must directly involve an official ballot or ballot by mail, be conducted in person, and be designed to deliver votes for or against a measure.
- Requires any person transporting seven or more curbside voters at once to complete a form unless they are related to each voter.

Voter Registration

- If you're sharing voter registration options, more voters will be able to change their registration online -- anyone who is already registered to vote in Texas and has a DPS ID can change their address using the [Secretary of State's online change of address system](#).
 - When registering to vote, certain information must be supplied by the person desiring to register. If you want to mail people voter registration forms with their name and address (for example) pre-filled, do **not** pre-fill any of the eligibility criteria and please do this in collaboration with the Texas Democratic Party so we can help you navigate these rules.

Important Things for Poll Workers to Know About SB 1

Goes into effect December 2, 2021

Poll Watchers

- Poll watchers are only able to be removed for violating a provision in the Election Code or for breaching the peace. If necessary, law

enforcement may be called to remove a poll watcher.

- Poll watchers are now explicitly allowed to observe curbside voting.
- If a poll watcher has been duly appointed to the polling place, be sure to accept them into your polling place. Make sure that they have completed the poll watcher training and present the certificate of completion with their certificate of appointment.
- Be careful not to obstruct or distance a poll watcher unless they are violating the election code in some way (i.e. speaking to voters, too close to voters in the voting booth).

Vote by Mail

- If they received notice from the early voting clerk of a defect on their mail-in ballot, a voter may cancel their application before the close of early voting and vote in person on Election Day.
- If a voter surrenders their mail-in ballot at the polling place, they will be allowed to vote a regular ballot. Otherwise, they will be asked to vote provisionally and it will be counted once the deadline for the mail ballot to arrive has passed.

Voters Receiving Assistance

- Double check to make sure that anyone assisting a voter with their ballot fills out both the required form AND the oath needed to lawfully assist a voter.

- Anyone bringing 7 or more voters to vote curbside must fill out a separate form unless they're related to each voter.
- Voters with disabilities are able to request reasonable accommodations and modifications of election procedure to which they are entitled to under federal or state law.

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