

Legislative Priority Progress Report: Election Integrity

Updated 5-31-21 (Last day of 87th Texas Legislative Session)

Senate Bills

Six of seven Senate bills that met the Republican Party of Texas election integrity goals (marked with an “*”) moved through the Senate committee process: **SB 7**, **SB 155**, **SB 598**, **SB 1113**, **SB 1234**, and **SB 1235**. Five passed the Senate in April; two made it to the governor’s desk.

One, SB 1514 (companion to HB 574), did not receive a committee hearing. Many other key election reform bills were filed; most are dead.

[Senate Bill 598*](#) by State Sen. [Lois Kolkhorst](#) (R–Brenham), a carryover from last session, requires voting systems that produce auditable paper trails be phased in by September 2026, initiates risk-limiting audits, and offers state funds to help counties buy or upgrade equipment. It also bars the SOS from waiving any requirements of SB 598 and confirms that voting systems may not be capable of connecting to a network or permitting wireless communication.

SB 598 unanimously **passed the Senate** April 12 and **passed the House** with near-unanimous support May 26. It was signed in the Senate May 30 and signed in the House May 31.

→**Status: Sent to the Governor** May 31.

Several election integrity bills were filed by State Sen. [Paul Bettencourt](#) (R–Houston), who formerly served as Harris County’s voter registrar, as part of his “[Integrity Seven](#)” package of reforms:

[Senate Bill 1111](#) clarifies voters must register at a place they actually inhabit—not at a post office box or commercial address—and may not establish residency to influence the outcome of an election.

→**Status: Sent to the Governor** May 27.

[Senate Bill 1113*](#) authorizes the secretary of state’s office to withhold state funding from county election officials who fail to follow rules for canceling registrations of ineligible voters.

→**Status: Sent to the Governor** May 29.

The following Senate election integrity bills DIED during the legislative process:

[Senate Bill 7*](#) by State Sen. [Bryan Hughes](#) (R–Mineola)—**Republicans’ top-priority bill on election integrity, declared an emergency item by the governor**—contains dozens of reforms intended to make voting more secure, accurate, and transparent. The omnibus bill beefs up prohibitions on paid vote harvesting and revises procedures to verify mail ballots are legitimate. It allows voter registrars to use more citizenship data to maintain voter rolls and adds penalties for registration officials who don’t follow rules to keep rolls clean.

SB 7 also requires electronic voting systems to include auditable paper trails by 2026, bans most private funding of election offices, adds livestream video surveillance of ballot counting, and clearly disallows drive-thru and 24-hour voting and mass distribution of unsolicited mail-ballot

applications—makeshift procedures implemented temporarily during the Chinese coronavirus outbreak that Democrats hoped to make permanent. A controversial provision lets poll watchers record election officials' activities.

SB 7 [passed the Senate](#) April 1 on a party-line vote. On April 29, the House Elections Committee [substituted the entire contents of SB 7 with the language in House Bill 6](#), making the bills identical and killing all the provisions in SB 7 (most of which were not included in HB 6).

The substitute SB 7 (with HB 6 language) was considered in lieu of HB 6. It [passed the House](#) May 7 [with 18 amendments](#) and was **returned to the Senate** May 17. The Senate refused to concur with the House-passed version of SB 7 and requested a [conference committee to reconcile differences](#) and hammer out a version that both chambers needed to approve by May 30.

→**Status: DEAD:** The Senate [passed the conference committee report](#) May 30. With just hours left in the session, SB 7 [died in the House](#) when Democrats walked out, breaking quorum and preventing a vote on the bill.

[Senate Bill 155](#)* by State Sen. [Charles Perry](#) (R–Lubbock) is a voter roll cleanup bill that adds the attorney general to the list of officials who review noncitizens and nonresidents excused from jury service [to identify and remove ineligible people from voter rolls](#).

→**Status: DEAD:** SB 155 **passed the Senate** April 6. It [passed the House](#) (as amended) May 18. The Senate adopted the conference committee report May 30 but the House didn't vote on it.

[Senate Bill 1112](#) adds a misdemeanor penalty for local election officials who suspend the law requiring ballot boards to verify voters' signatures on mail ballots or applications.

→**Status: DEAD:** SB 1112 **passed the Senate** April 12 but died on the House Calendar May 25.

[Senate Bill 1114](#) codifies current voter roll maintenance practices implemented in accordance with a settlement agreement regarding how the SOS will use DPS citizenship data.

→**Status: DEAD:** SB 1114 **passed the Senate** April 12 but died on the House Calendar May 25.

[Senate Bill 1234](#)* by Hughes requires all Texas elections to use voting systems that produce auditable paper trails by September 2026, and offers state funds to help counties buy or upgrade equipment. *Similar provisions are included in SB 598.*

→**Status: DEAD:** SB 1234 unanimously **passed the Senate** April 12 and was referred to the House Elections Committee April 15.

[Senate Bill 1235](#)* by Hughes establishes a process for the SOS and DPS to regularly compare data to verify the accuracy of voter rolls.

→**Status: DEAD:** SB 1235 was reported out of Senate committee April 1.

[Senate Bill 1340](#) by State Sen. [Dawn Buckingham](#) (R–Lakeway) proposes a major overhaul of the state's voter registration system, putting the secretary of state in charge and adding online registration; implements procedures for verifying voter data, including citizenship, and for maintaining accurate voter rolls.

→**Status: DEAD:** SB 1340 **passed the Senate** April 14 and received a public hearing in the House Elections Committee April 29.

Senate Bill 1508 by State Sen. [Brandon Creighton](#) (R–Conroe) establishes an election integrity division within the Texas attorney general’s office to work with local law enforcement on election fraud investigations.

→**Status: DEAD:** SB 1508 **passed the Senate** April 28 and was referred to the House Elections Committee May 4.

Senate Bill 1509 by Creighton adds a voter ID requirement for voting by mail that is in line with identification rules for in-person voting. A committee substitute calls for voters to include an ID number on vote-by-mail applications and ballots (an earlier version required a photocopy of the voter’s ID). *Similar RPT-priority HB 2478 DIED in the House Calendars Committee.*

→**Status: DEAD:** SB 1509 **passed the Senate** April 28. A committee substitute was sent to the House Calendars Committee May 18.

Senate Bill 1589 by Bettencourt establishes trained election marshals to investigate alleged election code violations and intervene to prevent ongoing criminal offenses, and sets a process for expedited court action in election-related cases filed during the voting period.

→**Status: DEAD:** SB 1589 **passed the Senate** April 28 and was referred to the House Elections Committee May 4.

Senate Bill 1675 by State Sen. [Donna Campbell](#) (R–New Braunfels) prohibits changing state vote-by-mail laws other than by the legislature.

→**Status: DEAD:** SB 1675 **passed the Senate** April 26 but died on the House Calendar May 25.

Details about bills are available at [Texas Legislature Online](#).