

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the provision of voter registration applications to graduating high school students and incoming college students; providing a criminal penalty.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. The heading to Subchapter B, Chapter 13, Election Code, is amended to read as follows:

SUBCHAPTER B. VOLUNTEER DEPUTY REGISTRARS; HIGH SCHOOL AND COLLEGE  
DEPUTY REGISTRARS

SECTION 2. Sections 13.046(d) and (h), Election Code, are amended to read as follows:

(d) At least twice each school year, a high school deputy registrar shall distribute an officially prescribed registration application form to each student who is or will be 18 years of age or older during that year, subject to rules prescribed by the secretary of state. In addition, a high school deputy registrar shall distribute an officially prescribed registration application form to each student who is or who will be 18 years of age or older during that year, at the time the student applies for or submits any required documentation for graduation.

(h) The secretary of state shall prescribe any additional procedures necessary to implement this section. The secretary of state may prescribe procedures for the electronic provision and submission of a registration application under this section, to the extent authorized by this code.

SECTION 3. Subchapter B, Chapter 13, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 13.047 to read as follows:

Sec. 13.047. COLLEGE DEPUTY REGISTRARS. (a) Each public or private institution of higher education shall designate at least one person for each county in which the institution is located to serve as a deputy registrar for that county.

(b) In this code, "college deputy registrar" means a deputy registrar serving under this section.

(c) A college deputy registrar may distribute registration application forms to and receive registration applications submitted to the deputy in person from students of the institution only.

(d) A college deputy registrar shall distribute an officially prescribed registration application form to each student who is enrolling in the institution for the first time, is a resident of this state, and is or will be 18 years of age or older during that year, subject to rules prescribed by the secretary of state.

(e) Each application form distributed under this section must be accompanied by a notice informing the student that the application may be submitted:

(1) in person or by mail to the voter registrar of the county in which the student resides;

(2) in person to a college deputy registrar for delivery to the voter registrar of the county in which the student resides; or

(3) in person to a volunteer deputy registrar of the county in which the student resides for delivery to the voter registrar of that county.

(f) If a student of an institution of higher education does not reside in the college deputy registrar's county, the deputy may accept the student's registration application and shall deliver the application to the registrar of the county in which the student resides, as indicated by the application.

(g) Except as provided by this subsection, Sections 13.039, 13.041, and 13.042 apply to the submission and delivery of registration applications under this section, and, for that purpose, "volunteer deputy registrar" in those sections includes a college deputy registrar. A college deputy registrar may review an application for completeness out of the applicant's presence. A college deputy registrar may deliver a group of applications to the appropriate registrar by mail in an envelope or package, and, for the purpose of determining compliance with the delivery deadline, an application delivered by mail is considered to be delivered at the time the deputy sends the application.

(h) A college deputy registrar commits an offense if the deputy fails to comply with Section 13.042. An offense under this subsection is a Class C misdemeanor unless the deputy's failure to comply is intentional, in which case the offense is a Class A misdemeanor.

(i) The secretary of state shall prescribe any additional procedures necessary to implement this section. The secretary of state may prescribe procedures for the electronic provision and submission of a registration application under this section, to the extent authorized by this code.

SECTION 4. This Act takes effect September 1, 2005.