

State of Texas
Texas Senate

P.O. Box 12068
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-2068
(512) 463-0107
FAX (512) 463-8810



11451 KATY FREEWAY, SUITE 209
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77079
(713) 464-0282
FAX (713) 461-0108

Paul Bettencourt
DISTRICT 7

Paul.Bettencourt@senate.texas.gov

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Contact Information
Robert Flanagan | (713) 464-0282
Robert.Flanagan@senate.texas.gov

Senator Bettencourt Advances Legislation To Maintain Public Confidence In The Voter Roll

SB1190 closes the loophole that allows voters to register where they do not reside, such as a UPS store!

AUSTIN- The Texas Senate passed SB 1190, by Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston), to protect the integrity of the voter roll in our election process. The legislation prohibits a voter from establishing residence for the purpose of influencing the outcome of an election and prohibits voters from using a commercial post office box as their residence. In 2018, several real world examples of this behavior were uncovered at UPS stores throughout Houston. One UPS store located at 1302 Waugh Drive in Harris County, had 84 people registered to vote and 100 additional stores were reported to have 10+ people registered to vote at commercial addresses.

"Under Texas law you are required to vote where you physically live and having people registered in bulk where they do not live opens up the opportunity for a candidate or party to pack a targeted area," said Senator Bettencourt. **"This is a major threat to the integrity of the voter roll and is also detrimental to public trust in validity of elections,"** he added.

Senate Bill 1190 defines the characteristics of a voter's residence address and provides a clear standard in a post-registration challenge to a voter's registration. The vague description of a residence address in the current Texas Election Code has allowed voters to register at addresses corresponding with vacant lots, mail box stores, and commercial locations. If a voter of the same county challenges another voter, the challenged voter has 30 days to submit a signed response confirming their residency.

"The fairness of the voter roll is critical to our election process and entire system of government," continued Senator Bettencourt. **"This legislation is not intended to take away voting rights from ranchers or those living in RV parks, it just requires an affidavit that gives a description of where you actually live so that can be verified by the registrar,"** he added.

The voter roll is not only critical to our democracy but also serves a vital function in the judicial system. The voter roll is used to create our jury pools. If someone who is registered at a Harris County mailbox store, but lives outside of Harris County, winds up on a jury that is grounds for the entire case to be thrown out as they are ineligible to serve on that jury.

"Public confidence in the voter roll has to be maintained because without that, we have nothing!" continued Senator Bettencourt. **"Let's get this mess cleaned up so we can confidently rely on voters rolls, jury lists and restore trust in the electoral process."** he concluded.

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