

ELECTION CODE

TITLE 16. MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

CHAPTER 276. MISCELLANEOUS OFFENSES AND OTHER PROVISIONS

Sec. 276.001. RETALIATION AGAINST VOTER. (a) A person commits an offense if, in retaliation against a voter who has voted for or against a candidate or measure or a voter who has refused to reveal how the voter voted, the person knowingly:

(1) harms or threatens to harm the voter by an unlawful act; or

(2) with respect to a voter over whom the person has authority in the scope of employment, subjects or threatens to subject the voter to a loss or reduction of wages or another benefit of employment.

(b) An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1997, 75th Leg., ch. 864, Sec. 256, eff. Sept. 1, 1997.

Sec. 276.003. UNLAWFUL REMOVAL FROM BALLOT BOX. (a) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally removes or attempts to remove voted ballots from a ballot box in a manner not authorized by law.

(b) An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree unless the person is convicted of an attempt. In that case, the offense is a Class A misdemeanor.

Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 489, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Sec. 276.004. UNLAWFULLY PROHIBITING EMPLOYEE FROM VOTING.

(a) A person commits an offense if, with respect to another person over whom the person has authority in the scope of employment, the person knowingly:

(1) refuses to permit the other person to be absent from work on election day or while early voting is in progress for the purpose of attending the polls to vote; or

(2) subjects or threatens to subject the other person

to a penalty for attending the polls on election day or while early voting is in progress to vote.

(b) It is an exception to the application of this section that the person's conduct occurs in connection with an election in which the polls are open on election day or while early voting is in progress for voting for two consecutive hours outside of the voter's working hours.

(c) In this section, "penalty" means a loss or reduction of wages or another benefit of employment.

(d) An offense under this section is a Class C misdemeanor. Acts 1985, 69th Leg., ch. 211, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 1986. Amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 728, Sec. 80, eff. Sept. 1, 1993.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 7.02, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 276.005. VOTER'S PRIVILEGE FROM ARREST. A voter may not be arrested during the voter's attendance at an election and while going to and returning from a polling place except for treason, a felony, or a breach of peace.

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

Sec. 276.006. CHANGING ELECTORAL BOUNDARIES OF CERTAIN POLITICAL SUBDIVISIONS. A change in a boundary of a territorial unit of a political subdivision other than a county from which an office of the political subdivision is elected is not effective for an election unless the date of the order or other action adopting the boundary change is more than three months before election day.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 472, Sec. 59, eff. Sept. 1, 1987.

Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 995, Sec. 1, eff. Jan. 1, 2000.

Sec. 276.007. STUDENT ELECTION AUTHORIZED. (a) An election for the participation of students in kindergarten through 12th grade may be held in conjunction with a general, special, or primary election as provided by this section.

(b) A student election may be ordered by:

(1) the commissioners court, for a student election

held in conjunction with an election ordered by the governor or a county authority;

(2) the governing body of a political subdivision, for a student election held in conjunction with an election of the political subdivision; or

(3) the county executive committee, for a student election held in conjunction with a primary election.

(c) A student election may be held only on election day or the day before election day.

(d) The authority ordering a student election shall specify in the order each grade that may participate in the election. A student in a specified grade may enter a precinct polling place for the purpose of casting an unofficial ballot in the student election on the same offices and measures that appear on the official ballot.

(e) The authority ordering a student election shall make the results of that election available to the public but only after the polling places are closed on election day.

(f) The election officers serving in the official election may not serve in the student election. The authority ordering a student election shall appoint a separate set of election officers to conduct the student election, supervise the participating students, and tabulate and report the results of that election.

(g) Expenses incurred in the conduct of a student election, including any personnel expenses, may be paid only from private grant funds or donations.

(h) The secretary of state shall prescribe any procedures necessary to implement this section and ensure that the conduct of a student election does not affect the proper and efficient conduct of a general, special, or primary election.

Added by Acts 1991, 72nd Leg., ch. 887, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1991.

Sec. 276.008. INFORMATION PROVIDED TO TEXAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. (a) On the written request of the Texas Legislative Council, the secretary of state, a county clerk or county elections administrator, a city secretary, or a voter registrar shall provide without charge to the council information or data maintained by the appropriate officer relating to voter registration, voter turnout,

election returns for statewide, district, county, precinct, or city offices, or county election precincts, including precinct maps.

(b) The appropriate officer shall provide the requested information or data to the council as soon as practicable but not later than the 30th day after the date the request is received by that officer.

(c) The information or data shall be provided in a form approved by the council.

Added by Acts 1987, 70th Leg., ch. 167, Sec. 2.11(a), eff. Sept. 1, 1987. Amended by Acts 1989, 71st, ch. 114, Sec. 16, eff. Sept. 1, 1989. Renumbered from Government Code, Sec. 323.013 and amended by Acts 1993, 73rd Leg., ch. 107, Sec. 3A.02, eff. Aug. 30, 1993; Amended by Acts 1999, 76th Leg., ch. 1585, Sec. 3, eff. June 20, 1999.

Sec. 276.009. VOTING BY SEQUESTERED JUROR. (a) The judge of a court that has issued an order that a jury not be allowed to separate shall permit a juror reasonable time to vote on election day.

(b) The court may provide the juror with a means of transportation to and from the appropriate polling place.

Added by Acts 1995, 74th Leg., ch. 236, Sec. 1, eff. Sept. 1, 1995.

Sec. 276.010. UNLAWFUL BUYING AND SELLING OF BALLOTING MATERIALS. (a) A person commits an offense if the person buys, offers to buy, sells, or offers to sell an official ballot, official ballot envelope, official carrier envelope, signed application for an early voting mail ballot, or any other original election record.

(b) This section does not apply to a person who executes a written contract for the procurement of election supplies necessary to conduct an election under Section [51.003](#).

(c) An offense under this section is a state jail felony unless a voter sells a ballot, ballot envelope, or carrier envelope that has been provided to the voter by government, in which event the offense is a Class B misdemeanor.

Added by Acts 2003, 78th Leg., ch. 393, Sec. 19, eff. Sept. 1, 2003.

Sec. 276.012. ENGAGING IN ORGANIZED ELECTION FRAUD ACTIVITY. (a) A person commits an offense if, with the intent to establish, maintain, or participate in a vote harvesting organization, the person commits or conspires to commit one or more offenses under Titles 1 through 7.

(b) Except as provided by Subsection (c), an offense under this section is one category higher than the most serious offense listed in Subsection (a) that is committed, and if the most serious offense is a Class A misdemeanor, the offense is a state jail felony.

(c) At the punishment stage of a trial, the defendant may raise the issue as to whether in voluntary and complete renunciation of the offense the defendant withdrew from the vote harvesting organization before commission of an offense listed in Subsection (a) and made substantial effort to prevent the commission of the offense. If the defendant proves the issue in the affirmative by a preponderance of the evidence, the offense is the same category of offense as the most serious offense listed in Subsection (a) that is committed.

(d) In this section, "vote harvesting organization" means three or more persons who collaborate in committing offenses under Titles 1 through 7, although participants may not know each other's identity, membership in the organization may change from time to time, and participants may stand in a candidate-consultant, donor-consultant, consultant-field operative, or other arm's length relationship in the organization's operations.

(e) For purposes of this section, "conspires to commit" means that a person agrees with one or more persons that they or one or more of them engage in conduct that would constitute the offense and that person and one or more of them perform an overt act in pursuance of the agreement. An agreement constituting conspiring to commit may be inferred from the acts of the parties.

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., R.S., Ch. 828 (H.B. [1735](#)), Sec. 62, eff. September 1, 2017.

Redesignated from Election Code, Section 276.011 by Acts 2019, 86th Leg., R.S., Ch. 467 (H.B. [4170](#)), Sec. 21.001(11), eff. September 1, 2019.

Sec. 276.013. ELECTION FRAUD. (a) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally makes any effort to:

(1) influence the independent exercise of the vote of another in the presence of the ballot or during the voting process, including by altering the ballot of another or by otherwise causing a ballot to not reflect the intent of the voter;

(2) cause a voter to become registered, a ballot to be obtained, or a vote to be cast under false pretenses;

(3) cause any false or intentionally misleading statement, representation, or information to be provided:

(A) to an election official; or

(B) on an application for ballot by mail, carrier envelope, or any other official election-related form or document;

(4) prevent a voter from casting a legal ballot in an election in which the voter is eligible to vote;

(5) provide false information to a voter with the intent of preventing the voter from voting in an election in which the voter is eligible to vote;

(6) cause the ballot not to reflect the intent of the voter;

(7) cause a ballot to be voted for another person that the person knows to be deceased or otherwise knows not to be a qualified or registered voter;

(8) cause or enable a vote to be cast more than once in the same election; or

(9) discard or destroy a voter's completed ballot without the voter's consent.

(b) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor, unless:

(1) the person committed the offense while acting in the person's capacity as an elected official, in which case the offense is a state jail felony; or

(2) the person is convicted of an attempt, in which case the offense is a Class B misdemeanor.

(c) An offense under this section is increased to the next

higher category of offense if it is shown on the trial of an offense under this section that:

(1) the defendant was previously convicted of an offense under this code;

(2) the offense involved a voter 65 years of age or older, and the actor was not:

(A) related to the voter within the second degree by affinity or the third degree by consanguinity, as determined under Subchapter B, Chapter 573, Government Code; or

(B) physically living in the same dwelling as the voter at the time of the event; or

(3) the defendant committed another offense under this section in the same election.

(d) If conduct that constitutes an offense under this section also constitutes an offense under any other law, the actor may be prosecuted under this section, the other law, or both.

Added by Acts 2017, 85th Leg., 1st C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 5), Sec. 17, eff. December 1, 2017.

Amended by:

Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 7.03, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 276.014. OTHER ELECTION OFFENSES. (a) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly or intentionally makes any effort to:

(1) count votes the person knows are invalid or alter a report to include votes the person knows are invalid; or

(2) refuse to count votes the person knows are valid or alter a report to exclude votes the person knows are valid.

(b) An offense under this section is a felony of the second degree.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., R.S., Ch. 202 (H.B. 574), Sec. 1, eff. September 1, 2021.

Sec. 276.015. VOTE HARVESTING. (a) In this section:

(1) "Benefit" means anything reasonably regarded as a gain or advantage, including a promise or offer of employment, a

political favor, or an official act of discretion, whether to a person or another party whose welfare is of interest to the person.

(2) "Vote harvesting services" means in-person interaction with one or more voters, in the physical presence of an official ballot or a ballot voted by mail, intended to deliver votes for a specific candidate or measure.

(b) A person commits an offense if the person, directly or through a third party, knowingly provides or offers to provide vote harvesting services in exchange for compensation or other benefit.

(c) A person commits an offense if the person, directly or through a third party, knowingly provides or offers to provide compensation or other benefit to another person in exchange for vote harvesting services.

(d) A person commits an offense if the person knowingly collects or possesses a mail ballot or official carrier envelope in connection with vote harvesting services.

(e) This section does not apply to:

(1) an activity not performed in exchange for compensation or a benefit;

(2) interactions that do not occur in the presence of the ballot or during the voting process;

(3) interactions that do not directly involve an official ballot or ballot by mail;

(4) interactions that are not conducted in-person with a voter; or

(5) activity that is not designed to deliver votes for or against a specific candidate or measure.

(f) An offense under this section is a felony of the third degree.

(g) If conduct that constitutes an offense under this section also constitutes an offense under any other law, the actor may be prosecuted under this section, the other law, or both.

(h) Records necessary to investigate an offense under this section or any other section of this code shall be provided by an election officer in an unredacted form to a law enforcement officer upon request. Records obtained under this subsection are not subject to public disclosure.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 7.04, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 276.016. UNLAWFUL SOLICITATION AND DISTRIBUTION OF APPLICATION TO VOTE BY MAIL. (a) A public official or election official commits an offense if the official, while acting in an official capacity, knowingly:

(1) solicits the submission of an application to vote by mail from a person who did not request an application;

(2) distributes an application to vote by mail to a person who did not request the application unless the distribution is expressly authorized by another provision of this code;

(3) authorizes or approves the expenditure of public funds to facilitate third-party distribution of an application to vote by mail to a person who did not request the application; or

(4) completes any portion of an application to vote by mail and distributes the application to an applicant.

(b) An offense under this section is a state jail felony.

(c) Subsection (a)(2) does not apply if the public official or election official engaged in the conduct described by Subsection (a)(2) by providing access to an application to vote by mail from a publicly accessible Internet website.

(d) Subsection (a)(4) does not apply if the public official or election official engaged in the conduct described by Subsection (a)(4) while lawfully assisting the applicant under Section 84.003.

(e) Subsection (a) does not apply if the public official or election official:

(1) provided general information about voting by mail, the vote by mail process, or the timelines associated with voting to a person or the public; or

(2) engaged in the conduct described by Subsection (a) while acting in the official's capacity as a candidate for a public elective office.

(f) The remedy provided under this chapter is cumulative, and does not restrict any other remedies provided by this code or by law. A violation of this section is subject to injunctive relief or mandamus as provided by this code.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 7.04, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 276.017. UNLAWFUL DISTRIBUTION OF EARLY VOTING BALLOTS AND BALLOTING MATERIALS. (a) The early voting clerk or other election official commits an offense if the clerk or official knowingly mails or otherwise provides an early voting ballot by mail or other early voting by mail ballot materials to a person who the clerk or official knows did not submit an application for a ballot to be voted by mail under Section 84.001.

(b) An offense under this section is a Class A misdemeanor. Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 7.04, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 276.018. PERJURY IN CONNECTION WITH CERTAIN ELECTION PROCEDURES. (a) A person commits an offense if, with the intent to deceive, the person knowingly or intentionally makes a false statement or swears to the truth of a false statement:

(1) on a voter registration application; or  
(2) previously made while making an oath, declaration, or affidavit described by this code.

(b) An offense under this section is a state jail felony. Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 7.04, eff. December 2, 2021.

Sec. 276.019. UNLAWFUL ALTERING OF ELECTION PROCEDURES. A public official or election official may not create, alter, modify, waive, or suspend any election standard, practice, or procedure mandated by law or rule in a manner not expressly authorized by this code.

Added by Acts 2021, 87th Leg., 2nd C.S., Ch. 1 (S.B. 1), Sec. 7.04, eff. December 2, 2021.