



TENESHIA HUDSPETH

COUNTY CLERK

Recording the Major Events of Your Life

January 9, 2024

Dear Political Entity,

The Harris County Clerk's Office will not enter into elections services contracts with local governmental entities for the Saturday, May 4, 2024, Uniform Election Date due to legislation that places a strain on the County Elections Department's inventory of voting equipment. [Please be aware this decision does not impact the County Clerk's obligation under TEC Sec. 101.054 (b) to make postal ballot applications received by the County's Elections Department available to the early voting clerks of political entities conducting an election independently.]

Texas Election Code, section 42.0051, requires a number of polling locations for the conduct of countywide elections that exceeds the county's capacity to administer successive countywide elections in a 90-day period. The law eliminated the county's ability to combine precincts in determining the number of polling places which must be opened on Election Day. The County Elections Department is now only allowed to consolidate precincts. Consolidation is permitted if the precincts share federal, state, and county district boundaries, and the consolidation would not result in crossing the boundary of a city with more than a population of 10,000. Also, the consolidated precincts may not exceed 5,000 registered voters who are not on the suspense list.

The County Clerk's Office estimates that the new guidelines would require establishing over 500 countywide polling places on Election Day for each countywide election. As a result, conducting elections on May 4 would present an equipment demand that would jeopardize the legal and successful administration of the March 5 Primary Elections and the May 28 Primary Runoffs, irrespective of whether the proposed May 4 election is subject to the same restrictions. Historically, the Harris County Clerk's Elections Department has never administered local entity elections in May due to its obligation to support the Republican and Democratic Parties in the conduct of the primary elections [TEC, sec. 83.002].

In sum, the county's limited inventory of voting equipment does not allow the Clerk's Office to conduct local government entity elections during the May Uniform Election Date.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Teneshia Hudspeth".

Teneshia Hudspeth
County Clerk, Harris County, Texas