

## RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

**HB 704**

**2021 Regular Session**

**Hodges**

Present law provides that a candidate may designate watchers to serve at every precinct on election day where the office he seeks is voted on in an election. Further provides for the procedure of designating such watchers. Authorizes a candidate to appoint a super watcher who shall be admitted to every precinct in the parish where the candidate is on the ballot.

Proposed law would have authorized the state central committee of a political party recognized as having at least 25% of the registered voters in the state to:

- (1) Designate one watcher at every precinct on election day where a candidate affiliated with the political party is on the ballot.
- (2) Designate super watchers in each parish in which a candidate affiliated with the party is on the ballot. Would have provided for the number of super watchers that could be designated by a recognized political party based on the number of registered voters in the parish.
- (3) Designate an early voting watcher at each early voting location, as space permits, at which a candidate affiliated with such political party is on the ballot. Further would have provided for the qualifications, powers, and duties of such a watcher and the procedure for nominating such a watcher.

(Proposed to amend R.S. 435(A)(4) and (B)(2); proposed to add 18:435(A)(1)(c) and (5) and (B)(1)(c) and 1309(N))

VETO MESSAGE: This bill attempts to address election integrity by providing for a political party “watcher” in every precinct on election day and political party “super watchers” in every parish. The watchers and super watchers would be designated by the state central committee of a recognized political party having at least 25% of the registered voters in the state. However, there are five recognized political parties in Louisiana presently. If this bill were signed into law, it would be impossible for every recognized political party to have a watcher in every precinct or super watchers in every parish. Current law authorizes each candidate to have one watcher at every precinct on election day where the office he seeks is voted and additionally authorizes the candidate to designate a super watcher to have access to every precinct in a designated parish where the office the candidate seeks is on the ballot. There is no good reason to further politicize the operation of elections by inserting the state central committee of certain parties into the poll watching process.