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# Family Participation in Elections Act

## HB 18 – SB 22

## Bill Analysis

**BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE**

Though current law allows a child under 18 years of age to accompany their parent to the voting station, the law is silent as to whether a child accompanying their parent to a voting station may mark a ballot under parent direction. Additionally, the bill author has informed the committee that many voters are unaware of this provision and that increasing public awareness could help parents involve their children in the electoral process and teach them about the important right and responsibility of voting while complying with the law. This bill seeks to promote civic engagement and encourage early exposure to the voting process by authorizing a child under 16 years of age accompanying their parent to a voting station to read or mark the ballot under the direction of their parent and by requiring the development and posting on the secretary of state's and county's websites, as applicable, of related voter education materials.

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE IMPACT**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly create a criminal offense, increase the punishment for an existing criminal offense or category of offenses, or change the eligibility of a person for community supervision, parole, or mandatory supervision.

**RULEMAKING AUTHORITY**

It is the committee's opinion that this bill does not expressly grant any additional rulemaking authority to a state officer, department, agency, or institution.

**ANALYSIS**

This bill amends the Election Code to authorize a child under 16 years of age accompanying the child's parent to a voting station to read or mark the ballot at the direction of the parent. The bill establishes that these procedures do not constitute assisting a voter for purposes of applicable state election law.

This bill requires the secretary of state to develop voter education materials for parents on the procedures allowing a child under 16 years of age to read and mark the ballot while accompanying the child's

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parent to a voting station. The bill requires the secretary of state to make the materials available on the secretary's website and requires the county officer responsible for administering elections in a county to make the materials available on the county's website, if applicable.

**EFFECTIVE DATE**

January 1, 2027.