

1 **SENATE FLOOR VERSION**

2 February 25, 2025

3 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE  
4 FOR

5 SENATE BILL NO. 656

6 By: Paxton

7 An Act relating to the State Election Board; amending  
8 26 O.S. 2021, Sections 2-101, 2-101.1, 2-101.2, 2-  
9 101.3, 2-101.6, and 2-101.7, which relate to the  
10 number of members, appointment of members, filling of  
11 vacancies, salary of the Secretary of the State  
12 Election Board, and terms of officers; modifying  
13 number of Board members after certain time; modifying  
14 appointment authority for members; directing  
15 membership appointments; establishing quorum and  
16 voting requirements; requiring certain notarized  
17 lists be provided to the Governor; defining term;  
18 providing timeline of appointments; directing manner  
19 to fill vacancies; clarifying language; modifying  
20 appointing authority of the Secretary of the State  
21 Election Board; requiring Senate confirmation;  
22 authorizing assistant secretary to assume duties upon  
23 certain vacancy; directing manner to fill vacancy;  
24 requiring Board to establish salary for Secretary;  
setting certain date for meeting; updating statutory  
language; making language gender neutral; repealing  
26 O.S. 2021, Section 2-101.5, which relates to chair  
and vice chair of State Election Board; and providing  
an effective date.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF OKLAHOMA:

SECTION 1. AMENDATORY 26 O.S. 2021, Section 2-101, is  
amended to read as follows:

1 Section 2-101. ~~The~~ A. Until July 1, 2027, the State Election  
2 Board shall be composed of three (3) members and two (2) alternate  
3 members, each of whom shall be appointed by the Governor upon advice  
4 and consent of the Senate. An alternate shall serve on the State  
5 Election Board at any meeting that a member for whom the person is  
6 an alternate is unable to attend. Any person serving as a member or  
7 alternate member of the State Election Board on the effective date  
8 of this act shall continue to serve in his or her position until  
9 July 1, 2027.

10 B. Beginning July 1, 2027, the State Election Board shall be  
11 composed of five (5) members, each of whom shall be appointed  
12 pursuant to the provisions of Section 2-101.1 of this title.

13 SECTION 2. AMENDATORY 26 O.S. 2021, Section 2-101.1, is  
14 amended to read as follows:

15 Section 2-101.1. A. Beginning July 1, 2027, the State Election  
16 Board shall consist of the following members:

17 1. One member who is a registered voter of this state appointed  
18 by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate;

19 2. One member who is a registered voter of this state appointed  
20 by the Speaker of the House of Representatives; and

21 3. Three members appointed by the Governor, subject to the  
22 advice and consent of the Senate, as follows:

23 a. one member from the list provided pursuant to  
24 subsection C of this section who is a registered voter

1 of the political party with the largest number of  
2 registered voters in this state based on the latest  
3 January 15 voter registration report,

4 b. one member from the list provided pursuant to  
5 subsection C of this section who is a registered voter  
6 of the political party with the second largest number  
7 of registered voters in this state based on the latest  
8 January 15 voter registration report, and

9 c. one member who is a registered voter of this state but  
10 who is not a registered voter of either of the two  
11 political parties with the largest number of  
12 registered voters in this state.

13 B. A majority of the State Election Board shall constitute a  
14 quorum, and action taken by a majority of members voting at any  
15 meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the action of the  
16 Board.

17 C. 1. No later than ~~March 1, 2015~~ January 31, 2027, and every  
18 four (4) years thereafter, the state central committee of the  
19 recognized political ~~party~~ parties having the largest and second  
20 largest number of registered voters, based upon the latest January  
21 15 registration report, shall submit to the Governor a list of ten  
22 ~~(10)~~ nominees for membership on the State Election Board, ~~and the~~  
23 ~~state central committee of the political party having the second~~  
24 ~~largest number of registered voters, based upon the latest January~~

1 ~~15 registration report, shall submit to the Governor a list of ten~~  
2 ~~(10) nominees for membership on the State Election Board. The list~~  
3 ~~of nominees shall be signed by a majority of the members of the~~  
4 ~~state central committee, whose signatures shall be notarized by a~~  
5 ~~notary public.~~

6 ~~The Governor shall be confined to the lists of names submitted~~  
7 ~~by each party and shall appoint two (2) members and one (1)~~  
8 ~~alternate member of the State Election Board from one political~~  
9 ~~party and one (1) member and one (1) alternate member of the State~~  
10 ~~Election Board from the other political party.~~

11 2. For the purposes of this title, a political party's state  
12 central committee shall consist of the party's chair, vice chair,  
13 national committeeman and national committeewoman, or the equivalent  
14 position under the party's rules.

15 3. Appointments shall be made by the Governor and submitted to  
16 the Senate no later than ~~March 15, 2015~~ March 1, 2027, and every  
17 four (4) years thereafter. ~~Provided, for appointments to be made in~~  
18 ~~2011, such submissions shall be provided to the Governor within five~~  
19 ~~(5) business days of the effective date of this act and such~~  
20 ~~appointments shall be made by the Governor within ten (10) business~~  
21 ~~days of the effective date of this act.~~

22 4. Appointments shall be made by the President Pro Tempore of  
23 the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives no later  
24 than June 1, 2027, and every four (4) years thereafter.

1        D. The terms of the State Election Board members appointed in  
2 the manner described in this section shall begin on July 1, 2027,  
3 and shall be for a period of four (4) years. Provided, a member  
4 whose term has expired shall continue to serve until a successor is  
5 lawfully appointed and confirmed, if applicable.

6        SECTION 3.        AMENDATORY        26 O.S. 2021, Section 2-101.2, is  
7 amended to read as follows:

8        Section 2-101.2. In the event of a vacancy of a State Election  
9 Board member created by death ~~or~~, removal, change of political party  
10 affiliation, resignation, or any other reason provided by law, the  
11 vacancy shall be filled within thirty (30) days in the same manner  
12 as the member was appointed. If the Governor was the appointing  
13 authority, he or she shall, within thirty (30) days after such  
14 vacancy occurs, appoint, ~~upon~~ with the advice and consent of the  
15 Senate, a member of the same party to fill the unexpired term from a  
16 list of five (5) nominees submitted by the party's state central  
17 committee within fifteen (15) days after ~~said~~ the vacancy occurs.  
18 If the vacancy occurs for the member who is not affiliated with  
19 either of the two political parties with the largest number of  
20 registered voters in this state, the Governor shall make the  
21 appointment, with the advice and consent of the Senate, from the  
22 registered voters in this state.

23        SECTION 4.        AMENDATORY        26 O.S. 2021, Section 2-101.3, is  
24 amended to read as follows:

1 Section 2-101.3. ~~Should~~ If a state central committee ~~fail~~ fails  
2 to submit nominees in the manner and within the period prescribed,  
3 the Governor shall make ~~his~~ the appointment from within the ranks of  
4 ~~said~~ the party.

5 SECTION 5. AMENDATORY 26 O.S. 2021, Section 2-101.6, is  
6 amended to read as follows:

7 Section 2-101.6. ~~The~~ A. 1. Until January 1, 2026, the  
8 Secretary of the Senate shall serve as Secretary of the State  
9 Election Board at a salary established annually by the Legislature.  
10 ~~However, the~~ On January 1, 2026, the position of Secretary of the  
11 State Election Board shall be vacant. To fill such vacancy, a  
12 person shall be appointed by the State Election Board with the  
13 advice and consent of the Senate to serve the remainder of the term  
14 vacated pursuant to this subsection.

15 2. Beginning on January 1, 2027, and every four (4) years  
16 thereafter, the Secretary of the State Election Board shall be  
17 appointed by the State Election Board with the advice and consent of  
18 the Senate for a term of four (4) years.

19 B. 1. In the event of a vacancy in the position of the  
20 Secretary of the State Election Board, the assistant secretary of  
21 the State Election Board employed by the Secretary as authorized  
22 pursuant to Section 2-107 of this title shall serve as Acting  
23 Secretary and shall perform the duties of the Secretary until the  
24 vacancy is filled in the manner provided by this section.

1        2. To fill a vacancy in the position of the Secretary of the  
2 State Election Board, a person shall be appointed by the State  
3 Election Board with the advice and consent of the Senate.

4        C. The Secretary of the State Election Board shall not be a  
5 member of the State Election Board. Beginning on January 1, 2026,  
6 the salary of the Secretary shall be established by the Board.

7        SECTION 6.        AMENDATORY        26 O.S. 2021, Section 2-101.7, is  
8 amended to read as follows:

9        Section 2-101.7. ~~On the first Monday in April, 1983~~ No later  
10 than July 15, 2027, and every four (4) years thereafter, the State  
11 Election Board shall meet upon the call of the Secretary of the  
12 State Election Board to seat newly appointed board members and to  
13 elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman chair and vice chair. ~~Terms of~~  
14 ~~the Chairman, Vice Chairman and member shall begin at that time.~~

15        SECTION 7.        REPEALER        26 O.S. 2021, Section 2-101.5, is  
16 hereby repealed.

17        SECTION 8. This act shall become effective November 1, 2025.

18 COMMITTEE REPORT BY: COMMITTEE ON JUDICIARY  
19 February 25, 2025 - DO PASS AS AMENDED BY CS  
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