HOUSE BILL NO. HB0038

Election offenses and penalties.

Sponsored by: Joint Corporations, Elections & Political Subdivisions Interim Committee

A BILL

for

AN ACT relating to elections; amending elements and penalties for registration offenses and false voting; specifying procedures for investigating and prosecuting registration offenses and false voting; and providing for an effective date.

Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Wyoming:

Section 1. W.S. 22-26-102(a)(intro), (i) and by creating new subsections (b) through (e), 22-26-106(a)(intro), (i), (iii) and by creating new subsections (b) through (e) and 22-26-121(a) and by creating a new subsection (c) are amended to read:

22-26-102. Registration offenses.
(a) Registration offenses consist of performing any of the following acts with the intent to deceive a registration official or to subvert the registration requirements of the law or rights of a qualified elector in connection with or related to the election process or an election:

(i) Signing or offering to sign an application to register when not a qualified elector or to register under a false name or residence address;

(b) Unless otherwise provided in subsection (c) of this section, registration offenses are misdemeanor offenses punishable by a fine of not more than two hundred dollars ($200.00).

(c) Registration offenses committed with the intent to deceive a registration official are high misdemeanor offenses punishable by not more than one (1) year imprisonment, a fine of not more than five thousand dollars ($5,000.00), or both.
(d) Second or subsequent offenses under subsection (c) of this section are felony offenses punishable by not more than five (5) years imprisonment, a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars ($10,000.00), or both.

(e) The county sheriff shall investigate registration offenses at the request of a county clerk who has reasonable cause to believe that a person has committed a registration offense. After an investigation and a finding that the allegation has merit, the county sheriff shall refer the matter to the district attorney for prosecution in the appropriate courts of this state.

22-26-106. False voting.

(a) False voting consists of performing any of the following acts in connection with or related to the election process or an election:

(i) Voting, or offering to vote, with the knowledge of when not being a qualified elector entitled to vote at the election;
(iii) **Knowingly** Voting, or offering to vote, in a precinct other than that in which qualified to vote;

(b) Unless otherwise provided in subsection (c) of this section, false voting is a misdemeanor offense punishable by a fine of not more than two hundred dollars ($200.00).

(c) False voting committed with the knowledge of not being a qualified elector entitled to vote at the election or in that precinct is a high misdemeanor offense punishable by not more than one (1) year imprisonment, a fine of not more than five thousand dollars ($5,000.00), or both.

(d) Second or subsequent offenses under subsection (c) of this section are felony offenses punishable by not more than five (5) years imprisonment, a fine of not more than ten thousand dollars ($10,000.00), or both.

(e) The county sheriff shall investigate acts of false voting at the request of a county clerk who has reasonable cause to believe that a person has committed
false voting. After an investigation and a finding that the allegation has merit, the county sheriff shall refer the matter to the district attorney for prosecution in the appropriate courts of this state.

22-26-121. Complaint by aggrieved elector; chief election officials.

(a) Except as otherwise provided in subsection (c) of this section, any qualified elector aggrieved by any violation of the Wyoming Election Code of 1973, as amended, may file a written complaint of the violation with the secretary of state or with the district attorney for the county in which the elector resides. If the secretary of state or the district attorney fails or refuses for any reason to take action on or prosecute the elector's complaint, the elector may file the complaint with the Wyoming attorney general. If the attorney general finds that the elector's complaint has merit, he may prosecute the complaint in the appropriate courts of this state.

(c) A complaint of a violation of W.S. 22-26-102 or 22-26-106 shall be filed with the county clerk for the
county in which the elector resides and be investigated by the county sheriff as provided in those sections. If the county clerk or other appropriate official specified in W.S. 22-26-102(e) or 22-26-106(e) fails or refuses for any reason to take action on the elector’s complaint, the elector may file a complaint with the Wyoming attorney general.

Section 2. W.S. 22-26-101(a)(i) and (v) is repealed.

Section 3. This act is effective July 1, 2018.