



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

## TESTIMONY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS HOUSE ELECTIONS

MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2017

I am Cinde Weatherby, testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas IN OPPOSITION to HB 4131. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you for allowing us to share the League of Women Voters of Texas position on this bill.

We simply do not believe it is necessary to impose any procedures to make it more difficult for voters to be assisted, especially by those they trust and bring with them to the polls. The imposition of a voter assistance affidavit and creating a criminal offense in this instance is threatening to those voters who would most likely be in need of such assistance and likely be a barrier to their taking advantage of their right as a Texas citizen.

We fervently believe that the participation of every eligible citizen as a voter is not only their legal right, but also important in a functioning democracy. The League believes the individual who is voting should have the ability to make the decision on whom they trust to assist them as they carry out this important task.

The Courts recently struck down state law that placed this kind of barrier before our Texas citizens requiring assistance. That case concerned a naturalized citizen just three years ago in Williamson County. Mallika Das was born in India and spoke and read Bengali, but was not proficient in reading English. She had found it difficult to vote in the past, and wanted to assure that she was completely informed that time in 2014, so she requested her son's assistance. Because her son was registered to vote in Travis County, the Williamson County poll worker would not allow him to provide interpreter assistance as the Election Code specifies. This bill would also call for even more stringent barriers than that which the Courts have already shown to be improper.

We respectfully request that you decline to approve this bill for further consideration.

**For additional information, please contact: Cinde Weatherby, Voting & Elections Issue Chair,  
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The League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) is a nonpartisan citizens' organization that has fought since 1919 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. It represents more than 5,000 members and supporters in the 25 Local Leagues throughout Texas.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties. The member-driven organization of women and men encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and seeks to influence public policy through education and advocacy of positions based on extensive issue study and consensus.