



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 24, 2017

## Texas Voter ID Law Discriminates!

### *President of the League of Women Voters of Texas Makes Statement On SB5 - Voter ID Bill*



Elaine Wiant

Austin, Texas, League of Women Voters of Texas President Elaine Wiant made the following statement on SB 5 passed in the Texas House of Representatives May 23, 2017:

Yesterday the Texas House of Representatives debated and passed a version of Voter Photo ID law, SB 5. Make no mistake, this continued conversation about Voter Photo ID does nothing to improve the Texas voting system.

The Texas Voter ID law has been shown time and time again to be purposely discriminatory against minorities and the poor. There is no evidence of rampant voter impersonation at the polls in Texas or elsewhere in the US. Instead, Texas political leaders have purposefully misled Texans and exaggerated the myth. Texans do things in a big way. Not only was the myth perpetuated in a gargantuan way, the 2011 Voter ID law was the most extreme in the land.

Nothing short of repealing Texas Voter Photo ID law will create a free and open environment for all Texas citizens to feel welcome to vote. Texas has long required that voters show identification at the polling place – a voter registration card or some other document. The voter identification rules in place prior to the 2011 Photo ID law worked well. Putting in place difficult to understand rules and creating penalties for not following them, creates fear and diminishes interest in participation. Non-citizens are not lining up at polling places to impersonate voters; instead, Texas citizens are fearful of doing something wrong or that their vote does not count.

It is time for us to heal our broken voting system. Passage of SB 5 in the 85th Session only prolongs the continued hemorrhaging of our tax funds on court battles to defend this indefensible process. Our state leaders should respect Texas citizens and do what is right and sensible. This applies not only to the falsehood of voter impersonation but also a number of other phantom issues during this disgraceful session. As long as we have extremely gerrymandered districts and a voter registration and voting system that seeks to disenfranchise its citizens rather than engage them, our democracy is broken. The League seeks to Make Democracy Work® by engaging all Texas citizens.

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### **The League of Women Voters of Texas**

The League of Women Voters of Texas represents over 5,000 grassroots advocates across the State of Texas. The Texas League has been "educating and agitating" since 1919. The League is a nonpartisan organization - it does not support or oppose any candidates or parties. Instead, the League encourages active and informed civic participation in government and increased understanding of major public policy issues. The League of Women Voters' non-partisan Voters Guide is highly respected and sought after by voters in local and statewide elections in Texas.

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