



## TESTIMONY

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

THURSDAY, 3/23/2023

### HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

I am testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas in SUPPORT of HB 2351. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today.

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports election laws that facilitate citizen participation and voter convenience. In Texas, a big barrier to voting is the voter registration process. While we would prefer online voter registration to address this barrier, short of that, we support making it seamless for Volunteer Deputy Registrars to renew their registration.

Volunteer deputy registrars (VDRs) are a big part of the League's volunteer base. VDRs help register voters in high schools, movie theaters, farmers markets and many other places where voters might be. VDRs also help register voters in naturalization ceremonies, where volunteers help new citizens to get ready to exercise one of the United States' most cherished rights: the right to vote.

In order to register voters, VDR's must be certified in each county in which they intend to register voters. Each county in Texas decides when and how to certify VDR's, as long as the county follows minimum procedures established by the SOS. Some counties offer training classes, others provide self-guided training options followed by a test, and many require an appointment to take the test. Needless to say, this process is rather burdensome to individuals who want to register voters in more than one county.

VDR Certificates are valid from the day of appointment through the last day of the next even-numbered year. For instance, all VDR certificates for the 2021-2022 cycle expired on the 31st of December of 2022. Once the certificate expires, a VDR cannot register any more voters until they get certified for the new cycle. Therefore, allowing individuals to renew their VDR certificate via mail at the end of the 2 year cycle would reduce the burden on individuals who would like to continue to volunteer to register voters and would improve VDR retention rates for counties.

Another issue that this bill would help address is the delay in certifying VDR's at the beginning of the year. Once their certificate expires, a VDR cannot register any more voters until they get certified for the new cycle. However, it is not uncommon for counties to have their first training or appointment in February or later, often offered only once a month, creating a gap in the beginning of a cycle. This significantly reduces the window of time to help voters for the May election. This bill would ensure that active VDRs that intend to continue registering voters can apply for renewal before the term expiring, eliminating the typical gap in the beginning of the cycle.

Therefore, the League does support HB 2351 as we feel it will make the state's VDR system easier to navigate and will help improve VDR retention rates for counties.

We urge you to support this bill.

**For additional information, please contact: Stephanie Swanson, Voting Rights Issue Chair,**  
[sswanson@lwvtexas.org](mailto:sswanson@lwvtexas.org).

The League of Women Voters is one of America's oldest and most trusted civic nonprofit organizations. Formed in 1919, the League of Women Voters of Texas represents over 13,000 grassroots advocates and 34 local Leagues across the State of Texas.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties. We encourage the informed and active participation of citizens in government and seek to influence public policy through education and advocacy. Membership in the League is open to people 16 and older of all gender identities.