



## TESTIMONY

### LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

#### HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, MAY 4, 2023

I am testifying on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas in opposition to SB 1039. 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.

The League supports election laws and procedures that uniformly and regularly produce honest and accurate results. . . Unfortunately, SB 1039 as currently written, is so vague that partisan actors could flood county election offices with claims of irregularity that county officials would be forced to explain with documentation. If in sole discretion of that partisan actor, the explanation is not satisfactory, the Secretary of State would be required to review the matter which could result in an audit and even the appointment of a conservator. . Without better safeguards, this procedure is neither uniform in its application nor regular in its process.

The League also believes that election administration should include reasonable costs for conducting elections. Over the past two years we have seen that organized efforts to challenge voter registrations and review voted ballots are costly, to the extent that some counties have created new positions to manage the influx. This bill would add to those costs at the county level and would place a new burden on the Secretary of State to audit results if a requester is not satisfied. This bill makes no provision for funding those costs.

Furthermore, while the bill defines the persons who can make a request, it does not require that those persons have any connection to a particular polling location or precinct. This raises the possibility of targeting particular communities including communities of color..

We are also concerned that the head of a political action committee is one of the individuals granted authority to make a request for explanation.. This provision would potentially expose our elections system to a range of national actors that want to influence and possibly even challenge election results.

Finally, while the League supports a single county election authority responsible to a central state authority, we oppose the use of a conservator to oversee county elections as a cure for irregularities, especially given the vagueness of the language in this bill. Local county governments are best positioned to address the needs of their local communities. In counties that use a County Clerk and Tax Assessor to run their elections, this bill would overturn the will of the voters who elected those local officials.

Therefore, the League encourages the committee to oppose SB 1039. Instead, we encourage legislators to ensure that county's receive proper funding and resources that they need to run effective, efficient, accessible, and fair elections.

**For additional information, please contact: Stephanie Swanson, House Elections Committee 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.