



TESTIMONY

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

THURSDAY, 03/30/2023

HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

I am Stephanie Swanson, the Issue Chair of Voting Rights for the League of Women Voters of Texas. Today, I will be testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas Against HB 2020. 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 of Women Voters of Texas believes that HB 2020 will infringe on the rights of county governments. We believe the decision to both use and select an Elections Administrator should be made by the duly elected officials of each county. Having the Secretary of State step in and remove a county-appointed official would demean the meaning of local governance.

The League believes that the bill is currently written too broadly and would lead to subjective interpretation. The bill does not specify who can file a complaint or what evidence must be provided to the Secretary of State to verify that the complaint is valid. This would create a system that is fraught for abuse by bad actors trying to undermine elections. The bill also neglects to define how these complaints should be investigated. It merely states that the Secretary of State can remove an Elections Administrator if they "believe that a recurring pattern of problems with election administration exists in the county."

While the problems listed in the bill are serious problems that should be addressed, these problems are poorly defined in the legislation. Examples of "problems" include any "malfunction of voting system equipment; unfair distribution of election supplies; errors in the tabulation of results; delays in reporting election returns; and discovery of voted ballots after the polls close." Some of these examples may be out of the control of local elected officials. For example, unforeseen problems with voting machines can arise at any time. Would that make a county susceptible to this penalty? Delays in reporting election returns could occur in geographically large counties where traffic is an issue.

Finally, the bill does not clearly define how long the replacement administrator would serve for or establish how and when a county could regain their authority, meaning that this takeover could be indefinite.

The League believes that HB2020 threatens local control of already-secure elections, allows state leadership to micromanage our election systems, and undermines the authority of trusted local election officials.

For additional information, please contact: Stephanie Swanson, Voting Rights Issue Chair, sswanson@lwwvtexas.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.