

**TESTIMONY**  
**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS**  
**HOUSE SELECT COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS & REMEDIES**  
**8 am MONDAY, AUGUST 23, 2021**

I am Cinde Weatherby, speaking as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas, in opposition to SB 1. I speak for many League members all across Texas who are listening and concerned. More would be here today if not for concern about the rapidly increasing COVID -19 and mutation variants, and presence in Austin and the Capitol itself.

The League is a nonpartisan organization whose mission is empowering voters and defending democracy. We have 34 local leagues throughout Texas and work with thousands of volunteers who provide essential information on voter registration and voting. It's hard to vote in Texas. It takes an army of trained, dedicated election officials and volunteers to ensure that all eligible voters can exercise their right to vote. Our democracy is stronger when every eligible voter has the opportunity to safely cast a vote and have it count.

During the last election cycle, Texans all over the state benefited from more voting opportunities, such as expansion of early voting, extended hours at the polling places, and more options to return vote-by-mail ballots. These are the kinds of measures that Texans want. Instead, SB 1 adds to the morass of our election laws by using broad and confusing language, creating barriers to voting, and adding criminal offenses.

The list below summarizes the highest priority League concerns. They are shared by a number of other nonpartisan groups as well. We include references to HB 3, as we assume your actions on SB 1 will possibly include insertion of some, or all, of that bill.

1. **Poll Watchers** -- Because SB 1 and HB 3 provide opportunities to disrupt the process, watchers should be required to take SOS poll watcher training and affirm that in an oath to uphold election laws similar to all other election workers.
2. **Election Judges** -- SB 1 and HB 3 would create numerous criminal and civil penalties that leave judges in fear for their personal liberty and property.
3. **Exposing Personal Information** -- SB 1 and HB 3 would allow members of the signature verification committee to take home any notes they keep in performing their duties -- including sensitive personal information.
4. **Personal ID Number** -- Unless amended, SB 1 and HB 3 would risk increasing ballot rejections for voters that do not remember which identification number they used when registering to vote.
5. **Signature Verification** -- SB 1 and HB 3 would expand the subjective pseudoscience of signature verification, and risk the franchise of voters due to age, medication or medical condition.
6. **Cure Provisions** -- The cure provisions of SB 1 and HB 3 would fall short of what is necessary to protect the franchise of seniors and voters with disabilities. [SB 1 comes to you with a provision to connect ballot application and ballot cures with the electronic ballot tracking process approved in the 87th regular session. We need additional refinements to make the cure process uniformly available in all 254 counties and the addition of a method to alert voters about problems requiring attention.]

7. **Lost Ballot Provision** -- SB 1 would force a voter to vote provisionally if that voter's ballot is lost in the mail -- even if that voter properly canceled the mail-in ballot.
8. **Voter Purges** -- SB 1 would cancel voter registrations and expose voters to criminal investigation based on data that may predate the voter's actual registration.
9. **Vote "Harvesting"** -- SB 1 would criminalize ordinary civic engagement activity such as the distribution of applications to vote by mail.
10. **Voter Assistance** -- SB 1 and HB 3 would criminalize legitimate voter assistance such as for those with language barriers and voters with disabilities.

While we oppose those measures, we implore you to instead consider election law reforms to make voting simpler and safer for both the voter and those who administer the elections -- election officials and poll workers. Election officials are unsung heroes who spend untold hours implementing the myriad of laws that ensure safe and secure elections. The Election Code already contains detailed assurances of security, bipartisan oversight and transparency. Bigger positive impacts can be achieved by approving overdue reforms that:

- Provide for online voter registration;
- Allow and expand proven voting options such as extended early voting, temporary polling places, and VBM for anyone requesting it;
- Work with USPS to adopt more realistic voting-related deadlines for VBM ballot requests and returning ballots;
- Provide guidelines and resources to support sustained recruitment and training of poll workers; and
- Provide sufficient funding and resources to assure election-related cyber security in all 254 counties.

The League looks forward to supporting such legislative actions that we know voters and election officials wholeheartedly endorse and deserve.

Thank you for your consideration.

For additional information, please contact: Cinde Weatherby, Voting Rights and Election Law Issue Chair, [cindeweatherby@gmail.com](mailto:cindeweatherby@gmail.com), 512.560.1334.

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 more than 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.