

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Voter ID Proposal Is Unnecessary, Costly And Unfair To Students, Poor And Minorities

Vote Set for Monday, March 21

AUSTIN – A coalition of civic organizations, including the League of Women Voters-Texas, Texas NAACP, Mexican American Legal Defense Fund (MALDEF), and the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Texas believe proposed legislation requiring voters to show photo identification at the polls is a waste of resources because it would spend state money to fix a problem that doesn't exist. **The bill is expected to come before the House of Representatives Monday, March 21.**

Quick quotes:

Anita Privett of the League of Women Voters-Texas: "The measures proposed are costly and unnecessary. They would only serve to discourage and disenfranchise legitimate voters across the state. Texas already ranks last, out of all 50 states, when it comes to voter turnout. Texas needs to increase voter turnout, not enact new measures to further suppress citizen participation."

Gary Bledsoe of the Texas NAACP: "Senate Bill 14, known as Voter ID, is intended to address a '*potential*' loophole' in current voter laws that *might* result in problems by requiring all persons to provide a voter ID. There is no evidence, however, suggesting that voter impersonation is a problem in Texas."

Terri Burke, Executive Director of the ACLU of Texas: "There are significant barriers to obtaining a photo ID for many Texas citizens, including students and young people, seniors, minorities, people with disabilities, those juggling several jobs, and rural voters. The burden will be greatest for those citizens who cannot afford to take time off work, get transportation, or stand in line to apply for a photo ID. While the bill makes some concessions for those over 70, it does not address the fundamental disenfranchisement it will cause. The bill will have a negative impact on rural voters, many of whom must drive long distances to secure a valid ID since many DPS offices are hundreds of miles from small ranching and farming communities."

Luis Figueroa of MALDEF: "SB 14 would create the most restrictive voter identification requirements in the nation virtually ensuring expensive implementation, legal challenges, and disenfranchisement of eligible voters."

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