



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF TEXAS**

**TESTIMONY
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HOUSE COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JURISPRUDENCE

RE: HJR97

Tuesday, March 29, 2011

The members of the League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Joint Resolution 97 (HJR97). LWV-TX has a position that supports an equitable system of criminal justice in Texas.

The LWV-TX supports HJR97 that will allow the citizens of Texas to vote for or against a constitutional amendment relating to a moratorium on the execution of persons convicted of capital offenses. Since LWV members came to consensus on a moratorium in 2002, more evidence has come to light that raises additional concerns about the Texas capital punishment system indicating that a moratorium on all Texas executions is needed.

Five times in the past seven years Texans have learned about a person being wrongly convicted and removed from death row or a person convicted and executed on antiquated forensic science. Examples of wrongful or highly suspect convictions include Claude Jones in 1989, Cameron Todd Willingham in 1992, and Michael Blair in 1994.

Most Texans do not support state killing of innocent people. Capital punishment is irreversible. The public is not safe with a murderer-at-large, and justice is not served.

LWV-Texas urges you to vote favorably on HJR97 as a proposed amendment to the Texas Constitution for a moratorium on the death penalty.