



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF TEXAS

Testimony
SB 362
Committee of the Whole Senate
March 10, 2009

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports full voter participation and opposes efforts that may create barriers blocking this participation. We have real concerns that SB 362 does create needless barriers to citizen voter participation and does not address the issue of election fraud.

It has been suggested that, with the requirement of a photo ID at the polling place, election fraud will be eliminated; however, Attorney General Greg Abbott, after a \$1.4 million investigation, found only 26 minor cases of election fraud, mostly involving mail-in ballots. In all of these cases, a photo ID would not have reduced fraud.

If we are to rely on a driver's license for a photo ID, we find that those who do not have a driver's license are more likely to be elderly, disabled, poor, a member of a minority community, or have an illness that makes it unsafe to drive. Also, there are many Texas women who have both a valid voter registration card and a Texas driver's license, but the names do not match because of marriage or divorce. These women will be inconvenienced when they attempt to vote, and it is entirely possible it could keep some away from the polls.

Currently the Texas OnLine Poll Worker Training can be completed in 60 minutes or less. Section 3E of this training, "**Qualify Voters**," indicates that there are 10 possibilities, with instruction on how to handle each one. What would it take to get this training expanded to include the many possibilities to look for while determining whether the photo and accompanying documents meet the photo ID requirements? The goal must be to provide training so that reasonable people will come to the same conclusion when qualifying voters.

Obviously there are costs to Texas in this bill that are not addressed. Some costs include issuing photo ID's for those who don't have them, writing and providing training, and making sure that each citizen knows about any changes that have been thrust upon them. Only 1/3 of the counties in Texas have websites that can get information to the citizens in their county.

Voting is the most fundamental expression of citizenship. Breaking down barriers to citizen voter participation, from literacy tests to the poll tax, has been a constant battle for those of us who believe that all citizens should be able to exercise their right to vote. We support full voting participation by all eligible Americans, not restrictions.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our views.