



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF TEXAS**

**TESTIMONY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS**

**House Public Health Committee
February 28, 2017**

I am Lauren Kreeger testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in support of House Bill 10 regarding access to and benefits for mental health and substance use disorders.

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports this proposed legislation with its innovative steps of:

- creating a new ombudsman for behavioral health access to care,
- creating a mental health condition and substance use disorder parity work group, and
- setting new definitions regarding treatment and establishing required benefits to be provided by certain health benefit plans.

Such actions will assist not only those requiring treatment but also clarify the responsibilities of insurance companies and the duties of the Texas Department of Insurance.

The need for such innovations are made abundantly clear in the Interim Report to the 85th Legislature by the House Select Committee on Mental Health. The League appreciates the extensive and in depth work evidenced in this report and the work of all Texas legislators who seek to address the needs of this fragile population in order that these persons may become able to lead productive lives.

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports the right of all persons who have behavioral health conditions and substance use disorders to have access to services designed to help them reach and maintain an optimal level of functioning. The League believes that state government should ensure that services are accessible to such persons.

For additional information, please contact Sherry Lee at rlee7@austin.rr.com 512-328-9161.

The League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) is a nonpartisan citizens' organization that has fought since 1919 to improve our government and engage all citizens in the decisions that impact their lives. It represents more than 5000 members and supporters throughout Texas.

The League of Women Voters never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties. The member-driven organization of women and men encourages the informed and active participation of citizens in government and seeks to influence public policy through education and advocacy of positions based on extensive issue study and consensus.