



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®
OF TEXAS**

**TESTIMONY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS**

**Senate Health and Human Services Committee
March 1, 2017**

I am Lynn League 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 Senate Bill 674 regarding an expedited licensing process for certain physicians specializing in psychiatry.

The League of Women Voters of Texas supports this proposed legislation because it aims at speeding up the processing of the applications for medical licensure for those applicants who specialize in psychiatry. This then would potentially allow them to more quickly provide services to persons with mental health issues.

There is a long-standing shortage of psychiatrists in Texas with 185 of our 254 counties without even one psychiatrist. The result is that an estimated 3 million Texans have no access to psychiatric services. The hope is that some of these new fast track licensees will address this serious lack of services by establishing their practices in these counties.

The League appreciates the work of all Texas legislators who seek to address the needs of persons with mental health conditions in order that this fragile segment of our population 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, rlee7@austin.rr.com, 512-217-3374

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.