



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

TESTIMONY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS HOUSE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

HB 2899

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2017

I am Lauren Keeger, testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas in opposition to HB 2899.. Thank you for allowing us to appear before you today to share the League of Women Voters of Texas position on this bill. Our national position on Equal Opportunity, like other League positions, is derived through a lengthy and thoughtful process involving the participation of 25 local Leagues in Texas representing more than 5,000 members and supporters throughout the state of Texas.

We oppose this bill because the League of Women Voters believes in **equal protections for all, not just some**. The bill would nullify all currently existing non-discrimination ordinances that provide those protections for LGBT persons in public restrooms. If the Texas Legislators do not intend to discriminate why support a bill that only nullifies non-discrimination ordinances?

This legislation strips protections that some Texas cities have had for LGBTQ people for more than a decade: Dallas since 2002, Austin since 2004, and Fort Worth since 2000.

HB 2899 is one-sided in its prohibition. Under the proposal, only the *protection* of “a class of persons from discrimination” is forbidden. But cities and schools may choose to *permit* or even *mandate* discrimination against “a class of persons” in bathrooms, showers, and other changing facilities.

HB 2899 codifies discrimination in Texas law by forbidding enforcement of policies and ordinances that “protect a class of persons from discrimination.” The result is an unprecedented form of exclusion from legal protection.

The League of Women Voters of Texas strongly opposes HB2899 and urges you to allow local municipalities the right to protect the equal rights of their residents, regardless of their sexual orientation or gender identity.

For additional information, please contact: Amber Briggles Equal Opportunity Issue Chair, amber@somadenton.com

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.