



**LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS®  
OF TEXAS**

**TESTIMONY  
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS**

**State Affairs Committee  
March 7, 2017**

I am Anne Rioux testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding SB 6 and speak to you today.

The League of Women Voters of Texas opposes SB6. Our position on equal opportunity, like other League positions, is derived through a lengthy and thoughtful process involving the participation of 25 local leagues representing more than 5,000 members and supporters throughout the state of Texas.

**The League of Women Voters of Texas strongly opposes any legislation meant to discriminate against ANY group of people, especially a minority group such as transgender or gender non-conforming people.** We support equal opportunity for all, and discriminatory bathroom bills are designed not to protect women and children, but to prevent transgender people from fully participating in public life. This is unacceptable and we are opposed to this bill 100%.

Separate is never equal, and the League of Women Voters has a long history of fighting for equality -- from women's suffrage, to Title IX, to fighting voter suppression in minority communities -- and this fight continues today in the form of LGBTQ equality.

Transgender people face a much higher risk of bullying, discrimination, violence, suicide, and murder than the average Texan. In fact, according to a 2014 study done by the National Center for Transgender Equality, 41% of transgender youth in the United States have attempted suicide at least once.<sup>1</sup> That is more than 2 in 5. Is it really the place of our legislators to continue this systemic discrimination against transgender people, when we ought to instead be ensuring their equal rights and treatment in our society today?

We recognize that the protection and safety of women and children is incredibly important. The safety and privacy of women in public spaces would be better addressed through stronger penalties for sexual predators and lewd acts in those spaces instead of singling out transgender Texans who are just trying to use the facilities as discreetly as the rest of us.

It should not matter which zip code a transgender Texan finds themselves in. That person deserves the same rights as any other Texan across this great state, and the League of Women Voters of Texas would like to voice our strong opposition to this bill. We stand on the side of equality, not on the side of discrimination and state sanctioned bullying. When you get down to it, SB6 is not about bathrooms, just as Jim Crow laws were never about water fountains. The League of Women Voters has a long history of standing on the side of equality and justice and we stand on the side of equality and justice today.

We urge you to stand with us for fair treatment of our transgender and gender nonconforming family members, friends, neighbors, and fellow Texans.

1. <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/AFSP-Williams-Suicide-Report-Final.pdf>

**For additional information, please contact: Amber Briggie, Equal Opportunity Issue Chair. [amber@somadenton.com](mailto:amber@somadenton.com) or 940 536 8720**

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.