



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS

## TESTIMONY LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

**MONDAY, MARCH 13, 2017**

I am Cinde Weatherby, testifying as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas on SB 5. We appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today. Thank you for allowing us to share the League of Women Voters of Texas position on this bill.

- We appreciate that Chair Huffman's bill incorporates most of the U.S. District Court ruling on the subject. We commend the recognition that the process adopted in 2011 did disenfranchise voters and necessitates change.
- The Texas voting system existed without photo IDs from the time of its founding and the League does not believe they are necessary today. However, offering the impediment declaration is definitely an improvement.
- We support including all of the court order provisions, and request you to include:
  - the opportunity to use photo IDs that are expired up to four years, and
  - note that no identification document shall be rejected based on the fact that the address on such document does not match the address recorded in the official list of registered voters.
- We also believe that there should be additional photo IDs added, such as the Tribal ID, all federally issued IDs, and all Texas government issued IDs, including state university IDs. Those last two are accepted in Indiana, and to our knowledge neither has led to any problems, nor been considered for repeal.
- Because of the great possibility for continued confusion over the requirements, we do believe the level of the criminal penalty is overly harsh.
- The League is committed to continuing its factual voter ID education. just as we did immediately after the U.S. District Court ruled in August 2016. However, we witnessed misinformation offered by both progressives and fervent voter ID supporters, including local elected officials. From our members who worked the polls and the calls we received, we are convinced election workers and the general public did not receive adequate education on the Court ordered process. We believe this confusion may have led to misuse of the process and under-utilization of the alternatives offered by the court order.
- Surely you agree with us that every Texas citizen has the right to vote in any election. The League strongly believes in our democracy and is dedicated to Making Democracy Work®. It works best when no eligible citizens are denied that right.
- We ask that you consider these and other suggestions you will hear today, as you weigh actions on this bill.

**For additional information, please contact: Cinde Weatherby, Voting & Elections Issue Chair, [cindeweatherby@gmail.com](mailto:cindeweatherby@gmail.com), 512.560-1334.**

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 5,000 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. 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.