



**TESTIMONY
LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF TEXAS**

**H.B. 966
March 13, 2013**

The League of Women Voters of Texas, a nonpartisan organization with 29 local Leagues and approximately 1950 members across the state, encourages active, informed participation by citizens in government and believes that such participation is vital to a vibrant democracy.

LWV-TX is opposed to HB 966 (Murphy). Residence for voter registration as specified in the bill would complicate and discourage voter participation of some citizens.

Currently, college students have the option of registering to vote at either a school address or home address. Many students choose to register at a school address but continue to have a home address on their driver's license. Under this bill, residence would be the at driver's license address. An exception in the bill would allow students to continue to use a school address for voter registration as long as they are enrolled full-time. However, many Texas college students must work to afford higher education and may need to reduce their course load or drop out for a semester to work. Unfortunately with this bill, the student's residence for voter registration would vary from semester to semester with the student's course load even if the student remains at the school address and continues to make progress toward the college degree.

In a mobile society, some citizens might encounter difficulties under this bill by slight delays in notifying DPS of address changes and other circumstances which should not complicate a citizen's right to vote.

Texas lags the nation in voter registration and is among the lowest states in voter turnout, 47th in 2008, 50th in 2010, and 48th in 2012ⁱ. Our great state needs to increase voter participation to have effective representative government. LWV-TX believes HB 966 is a move in the wrong direction and urges the Committee to vote against it. We appreciate the opportunity to share our views.

ⁱ American Goes to the Polls 2012, Nonprofit Vote at <http://www.nonprofitvote.org>; 2010 General Election Turnout Rates at http://elections.gmu.edu/Turnout_2010G.html