

* Action Alert: New Election Requirements for Voters

HB 218 (Betty Brown) & HB 626 (Phil King)

The League of Women Voters of Texas (LWV-TX) is asking all members to oppose HB 218 and HB 626. HB 218 would require a voter to show, in addition to their voter certificate, a photo id or a combination of other documents, in order to vote. HB 626 would require, when registering to vote, that an applicant provide a certified copy of a document proving United States citizenship. HB 218 and HB 626 are on the Calendar of the Texas House on Tuesday, April 17, 2007.

The League of Women Voters of Texas Opposes HB 218 because:

Requiring a voter to show a specific photo ID or a combination of specific documents in addition to a voter registration card will have a disproportionate impact on minorities, elderly, rural, disabled and poor voters who are less likely to have a photo ID or the other documents required.

Substantial voter fraud is the argument used to push this legislation. The facts are, that voter impersonation at the polls is a non issue. Since the 2004 Election the Texas Attorney General's office has indicted 11 people for voters fraud, all concerning mail-in ballots. One daughter filled in and mailed her dead mother's ballot. The other 10 were indicted under a new law passed in the last Legislative Session which required that if you help someone by taking their mail-in ballot to the post office, you must sign your name on the outside of the envelope.

Roger Williams, Texas Secretary of State, in January 2006 stated that the new HAVA requirement for a statewide database significantly reduces opportunities of those seeking to commit voting fraud by using the names of duplicate, fictional, invalid or deceased voters.

HB 218 is a solution in search of a problem but it has the potential to impact voters of all political parties, races and in every part of our state.

The League of Women Voters of Texas Opposes HB 626 because:

To register to vote today, one must affirm that they are a United States citizen. The penalties for incorrectly claiming citizenship are clearly spelled out in the form the prospective voter signs. The evidence of non citizens trying to vote is non existent.

HB 626 will effectively end all voter registration drives by the League of Women Voters and other groups in the state of Texas.

What you can do:

Today, April 16, or April 17, 2007 please call or email your Texas District House of Representative and tell them you oppose HB 218 and HB 626. It is very important that your State Representative hear from you on HB 218 and HB 626. If a Representative is receiving a lot of calls or emails on an issue, it gets around quickly.

Numbers do count!

Here is a way to contact your representative:

- 1) Log on to the State House website at www.house.state.tx.us
- 2) Click on “Members” and then the name of your representative.
- 3) Then get the phone number or click on the “send email” on the page.
- 4) If calling you can ask to talk to the Representative or their aide that handles specific issues or you can leave a message with the clerk:

If calling, you can ask to talk to the Representative or their aide that handles the specific issue, in this case “Elections” or you can leave your message with the clerk: **e.g.:**

“I am (your name) and I live (or am a voter) in Representative (name) district.

I oppose HB 218 and HB 626 because ‘HB218 will make it harder for many or our citizens to vote and HB 626 will stop all registration drives by civic groups.’” See other reasons above.)

Do not mention that you are a League member. It is much more important for them to know that you live and vote in their district!