

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 2478

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

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Hearing Date: April 8, 2021 8:00 AM

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Rachel Muir

Self - I work for nonprofits

Austin, TX

I am a voter, a taxpayer, a working mom and I OPPOSE house bill 6 & senate bill 7!!!

Republicans are desperate to strip away people's voting rights, making it harder for people to vote.

This is an assault on our democracy!

??????

House Bill 6 and Senate Bill 7 are anti-democratic, anti-voter assaults on the right to vote. These bills:

- \*Strip voter rights
- \*Financially burden local governments
- \*Discourage poll workers
- \*Elevate partisan poll watcher power above election official authority
- \*Ban drive-through and outdoor voting
- \*Restrict voters from dropping off completed absentee ballots
- \*Shrink early voting periods
- \*Create new costs for disabled voters
- \*Increase burdens on voters with disabilities to access assistance at the polls

Oppose them!

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Oppose them!

Rachel Muir

Self

Austin, TX

Stop trying to take away the right to vote!

By any rational analysis at best this bill purposes to solve a problem that doesn't exist- our state suffers from low voter participation.

As has been the case of bills of similar design in other states the results of this bill if passed would disproportionately disenfranchise voters of color and young voters which raises serious questions of the intentions of bill's authors and sponsors on whose actions History will judge harshly.

I fervently urge you all to vote NO and restore dignity to the increasingly sullied reputation of our great State.

Morgan Peretti

self

New Braunfels, TX

This bill is trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist and only prevents or discourages qualified people from voting. Our state already suffers from low voter participation. I question the intentions of this bill as the outcome would only disproportionately impact voters of color and young voters who are more vulnerable. If there is in fact a problem, it's your duty to find solutions that serve and protect everyone. Because of the disproportionate impact, this is not the right solution. As your constituent, I fervently urge you all to vote NO on this bill.

Darlene Towe

SELF

Pampa, TX

**WE DESPERATELY NEED VOTER ID TO PROTECT THE AMERICAN PEOPLE FROM ANYONE VOTING WHO IS NOT AN AMERICAN CITIZEN**

Crisarla Houston

Self, Attorney

Waco, TX

Texas voters have a right to vote that should not be limited. Please do not pass voting laws that make it harder for people to exercise their constitutional right to vote. We are watching our leaders, and we will not be deterred from voting. We will work hard to vote out leaders who limit people's ability to vote in any way. Thank you.

Carrie Moore

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

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Vote Yes-this, along with thumb print and signature verification should cut voter fraud down exponentially.

Jessie Carlson

self

Corpus Chrsiti, TX

Vote yes. Adding a copy of the photo ID just increases security.

shawn flanagan

self/retired

corpus christi, TX

Vote yes, voter ID for all forms of voting

Larry Ringler

Self-retired

Portland, TX

Vote YES to improve voting security by adding a photo ID copy to the application for early voting ballots. Comparing the photo ID to what's on file for the DPS will add further scrutiny in case someone gets a copy of someone else's photo ID to use it for voter fraud.

Amanda Friedeck, Mrs.

Silver Star Food Stores/The Friedecks Home Bakes

Alice/Jim Wells County, TX

I am in favor with HB 2478. Please consider to pass this House Bill to cut the loopholes in the election system.

Richard Smith

Self

Corpus christi, TX

I vote yes. This is for increased integrity to our voting system.

Jo Foley

Self N/A

Henderson, TX

I support HB 2478. I am asking the committee to bring forth HB6 and vote it out of committee to calendars. It is an extremely important bill. Word is that our House Republicans have become weak toward this bill due to democrat voices bombarding them with negative views. Please do not submit to that. We NEED HB6. Please review during this hearing and vote it out of committee.

Sylvia Campbell

self

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The Woodlands, TX

Requiring a person to submit photocopies may sound easy. But for a person who is elderly or disabled or very low income, this is a burden. Let's not add burdens to these precious people. Our state is better than that!

Kelly Schlesinger

Self - Retired

The Woodlands, TX

This is a terrible bill. Vote No on2478.

Victoria Hanson

self - retired

Corpus Christi, TX

Vote yes on HB 2478

A photo ID is reasonable to include with early voter applications and ballots to provide a means of assisting in establishing the identity of the actual voter.

Lynne Walters, Dr.

self

Spring, TX

This bill places an unconscionable burden on ALL voters. I am a university professor with a PhD and have many devices in my home, but I do not have a copier. It would be difficult for me to find and use a commercial copier. Tens of thousands of Texans are in the same situation. If I were not impelled to vote (and I am), I probably would give up. I thought the point of this bill and others in this vein was to make voting more secure, not more impossible. Please be reasonable. reject this bill.

DONNA EYLES

Self

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Vote yes. The photo ID must be one with a signature on it or it's no good. This bill would ensure additional election integrity and no one should be able to complain about it. You need a photo ID to access your bank account, get your medicine... **THERE IS NO REASON NOT TO REQUIRE A PHOTO ID!**

Mary Mabry

self

Spring, TX

Additional restrictions like submitting a photocopy disadvantage seniors and those without home office equipment. Layered impediments are undemocratic and not worthy of Texas.

Sherri Duchin

Self

Spring, TX

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I oppose HB 2478. I vote by mail as a senior citizen and do not want to send a photocopy of my personal id with my ballot. That is unnecessary. The current system works.

Kimberly Bridges Young

Self, Retired

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Vote yes! Adding a copy of photo ID to the application for early voting ballot adds another layer of security to this process. If the photo ID is compared to what is on file for the DPS, that adds further scrutiny. It is possible that someone could obtain a copy of someone else's photo ID, and use it for voter fraud, but with signature verification and thumbprint verification, all of these increase voters' confidence in the Texas voter system.

Cinde Weatherby, Voting Rights/Election Law Issue Ch.

League of Women Voters of Texas

Austin, TX

I am Cinde Weatherby, speaking as a member and on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Texas. We speak AGAINST HB 2478. We oppose HB 2478 because it imposes an unnecessary requirement on vote by mail voters, one that is very hard to comply with. Many individuals voting by mail do not possess the capacity to produce copies of photo IDs. Many also have expired photo IDs. This bill states that any false statement or false information submitted will subject the voter to perjury prosecution.

If any application or returned ballot fails to include the required ID, the early voting clerk shall reject them. No notification of that rejection is required. The existing checks in the system comprehensively verify that the voter's participation is legitimate.

This bill, like many others claiming to enhance election integrity, is insulting to the electorate. Many voters from all political parties in Texas use the vote by mail process. They have reliably participated in elections for decades. They deserve your respect, not your insults to their integrity.

Melissa Spence

Precinct Chair

Allen, TX

I support this bill. My mom votes by mail and it is not an undue burden for her to copy her state ID to send with the application. It provides another signature and data to authenticate the ballot.

Rebecca Hill

Self-Acupuncturist

Austin, TX

Why this isn't already required is beyond me! Please be reasonable and require photo ID to cast a ballot!

Carol Ortiz, Ms

Self/Retired

Montgomery, TX

I OPPOSE HB 2478. Please vote NO to advance this unnecessary and unfair bill out of committee. Many people who must rely on Voting by Mail don't have access to a copier at home or conveniently nearby. There is no evidence of voter fraud by mail in Texas. A registered voter has already met the requirements to vote and that should be sufficient.

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Linda Evans, Ms

Self-retired

Conroe, TX

OPPOSE HB 2478! How many people, especially elderly, disabled or low income, have easy access to a copier? Why make it harder to vote, especially these groups which include veterans who fought for this country? Last election proved mail-in ballots work and there was NO fraud! Why try to limit civic engagement with voter suppression tactics? Vote NO HB 2478!

Shelba Richardson

Democratic Party

Conroe, TX

I oppose this bill and all related bills that requires an ID for mail in ballots which is designed to disenfranchise certain voters. Every qualified voter should be allowed to vote which is a right of every American. These discriminatory laws should not be passed.

Shantia Reese

Self

Austin, TX

Corporations are not people and do not get to vote with their dollars. People are people and use their voices to vote in the ballot box. These laws are anti-democratic and you need to vote no on it as it bans 24-hour voting, adding extra verification is taking away the ease of voting by mail especially when it is unnecessary, these laws not create more barriers to legal voting. The republican party thinks it should be easier to own a gun than it is to vote. You said that you are for common-sense laws that protect voting. In the U.S. Constitution, it is a right and a privilege, and your party is trying to limit that, which is disturbing as you condemn democrats for adding in gun laws that protect people from dangerous weapons. How are the proposed bills by the republican party for Texas common-sense bills? They are restricting access because you all want to control who elects you. If you want to protect voting rights for the people, you will get rid of the redlining that limits and determines who represents us in the senate and house that disenfranchises minority communities by lumping them into districts Republican voters. You would be allowing their voices to be heard by creating a system that allows them to vote for who they want. I am for increasing access for more people to vote and not less. It should not be harder to vote in this country or state than to buy a gun. Voting allows us to determine who decides how our government will function to protect us; buying a gun allows you to hurt people with that gun. It appears that the Republican party is aiming to control who has the ability to put them in power but the most recent laws that add restrictions to voting. There has been no evidence of voter fraud from the 2020 election, and your party choosing to use the Big Lie to enact these restrictions is Ludacris. The slogan is "Don't Mess with Texas" please refrain from altering how Texans choose their leadership by enforcing laws and restrictions that do not help the people use their voting rights. You should vote in favor of S.4263 - John Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act, and you should also make the election day a state holiday. Hence, individuals get the day off to have access to go vote, and service workers (who work in groceries, fast food, etc.) who cannot get off can submit absentee ballots and cast their votes. This would be the correct way to ensure all Texans and Americans can use their right as there is no voter fraud with the system we have other than when the Russians hacked the 2017 elections when Trump won, and those investigations were not changed. It appears that republicans only want to change voting laws when mass amounts of minority people use their voice. You should be voting yes on the John Lewis voting rights act as it is clear the federal government cares more about protecting voting rights than many state leaders. We need to stop putting party over people and have more social ethics when creating laws.

Ebony Johnson, Policy Associate

The Afiya Center

Dallas, TX

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I Ebony Johnson write to you representing myself and The Afiya Center. Why are we changing a perfectly fraud-free election system which would only create more voter suppression? This suppression will definitely be seen and identified in communities that have been historically left without their voices being heard. The results of creating criminals will not and should not be the avenue in which we treat the elections process, instead, elections should be transparent in the fact that person/persons may not and can not leave their homes, have debilitating illnesses and numerous reasons why being present is impossible. These and others should not be punished. Senior's, disabled, low-income communities need access to better voting procedures and ballot protections. There is not add to an already seamless system that has shown no voter fraud.

Julie Kellogg

self

Corpus Christi, TX

Vote Yes, photo ID is needed for nearly everything, to get on a plane, to open a bank account, and more! Our elections matter more than these things, a person who values their vote will not have a problem with providing a valid ID

Rebecca Broughton

Self

Seguin, TX

I am in Favor of HB 2478. Per SOS - No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated. Please Vote Yah on HB 2478. Again Please restore Election Integrity / Fair & Equal Voting Rights. I still beleive (unlike some) in our system with additional tweeks like HB 2478.

Erica Lawrence

self

Spring, TX

My name is Erica Lawrence. I am a Native Texan and a voter. I'm writing to urge you to OPPOSE HB 2478. HB 2478 requires a person to have access to a copier in order to vote by mail. My parents live in rural South Texas and do not have internet access, much less a printer or a scanner. Seeking to penalize our farmers and ranchers and even our older voters who aren't able to easily make a photocopy of their drivers license is idiotic. HB 2478 states that a voter must submit a photocopy of an acceptable form of Voter ID or a reasonable impediment declaration for both the application and submission of a ballot by mail. The bill would also subject voters to felony punishment for perjury. A felony! That's outrageous. Please oppose HB 2478. This bill does not take in to account all voters in Texas. I don't think this is a fair bill to implement. Thank you for your time, Erica

WILMA JOY PUTNAM

SELF; RETIRED

GEORGETOWN, TX

i support HB-2478 IN THAT I THINK IT WILL PREVENT THE FRAUD ASSOCIATED WITH THE 2020 ELECTION IN THE SIX STATES WITH THE MOST UNPRECEDENT FRAUD. WE MUST LEARN FROM ALL OF THE ISSUES FOUND IN THEIR RESULTS SO THAT THIS DOES NOT HAPPEN IN TX IN FUTURE ELECTIONS..

Staci Mendelsohn

Self

Plano, TX

I am opposed to HB 2478. The bills constitute a full scale assault on senior citizens and people with disabilities who vote by

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mail. Texas law is clear: Seniors and people with disabilities are allowed to vote by mail and their votes must be counted. These bills impose a poll tax on mail voters by requiring them to pay for additional means of identification just to cast a ballot. And the bills would make it possible to easily throw out mail ballots by comparing older voters' signatures to those from decades before. The bills force anyone voting by mail to submit a photocopy of their ID when they apply to vote. This means that voters must bear the expense and burden of getting photocopies. Voting is a right and a privilege, and we are treating people like they are not American citizens. VOTE NO to voter suppression.

Martina Sutton

Self

Cedar Park, TX

I am AGAINST HB2478.

This bill requires a photocopy of photo ID to be included with an early voting ballot application. More copies of personal ID distributed allows for more susceptibility to theft. Currently, an early voting ballot application is required for EVERY voting session for a person out of state (such as a person in the military, a college student, an employee on remote assignment) who is under the age of 65 to submit a separate early voting ballot application for each voting session. So, for example, a separate application is needed for May elections and for Nov elections of the same calendar year. Hence this requires a voter to submit personal photo ID info each time (multiple times in the calendar year) increasing opportunities for identity theft. This is unfair to voters who have a right to vote but must be out of town during voting periods for legitimate job and school reasons. It is also unfair to elderly and disabled who have a right to vote by mail but are very susceptible to identity theft.

Michael Openshaw

Self

Plano, TX

I strongly SUPPORT this bill.

Wherever possible, mail-in ballots should require as much voter identification as in-person voting. The two main issues with mail-in balloting from a security perspective are voter ID and chain of custody. This bill takes care of the former, the latter is best taken care of by using certified mail techniques.

Lisa Nilsson

Self, Bexar County Republican Election Integrity Committee

Boerne, TX

I support this bill.

Susan Schultz

League of Women Voters of Texas

AUSTIN, TX

I am Susan Schultz, Board member of the League of Women Voters of Texas, testifying on behalf of the League in opposition to HB 2478. I speak for the many League members across Texas who are unable to appear before you today because of the pandemic.

We oppose HB 2478. This bill requires a voter wishing to vote by mail to submit a photograph or copy of a photo ID, as prescribed for persons voting in person, with the application for a mail ballot and when returning the ballot. A voter is subject to perjury prosecution for any false statement or false information on these documents. If either the application or returned ballot fails to include the required ID, the early voting clerk shall reject them.

This bill unnecessarily burdens those dependent on voting by mail and will prevent some from using the process all together. Most voting by mail are seniors or have disabilities. There is no envelope sent with the application to vote by mail; thus no

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designated envelope in which to place a photo ID. Access to printers or copiers is unlikely for a high percentage of these voters. Failure to provide a copy of a photo ID means rejection of the application. In addition, voters can easily be confused about which photo ID meets the requirement, since older voters' legal IDs may be expired and not have updated information. Would that be false information resulting in perjury prosecution?

Early voting clerks already verify an applicant's voter registration status before mailing the ballot or accepting it upon return. This match also applies to the address of the registrant and signatures on file. There is no need for additional barriers, especially ones that create more confusion and place many voters' ballots in jeopardy.

For additional information, please contact: Cinde Weatherby, Voting Rights and Election Law Issue Chair,  
cindeweatherby@gmail.com, 512.560.1334.

Kathy Turner

self, retired

McGregor, TX

I support this bill. Voting by mail should be reserved for people whose identity can be verified. Penalties are important to deter nefarious activity.

Kathryn Williams

Self/retired

Austin, TX

OPPOSED - This circumvents the ethic of expanded voting by disadvantaged, elderly and disabled voters . It requires access to equipment and services they don't have and would have to pay for. This constitutes a poll tax. This is a terrible bill.

Jo Foley

Self N/A

Henderson, TX

I support HB 2478. We need photo ID to vote. You need an ID to get a bank account, board a plane, and do many things and go many places. All these people coming forward saying that their friends and family don't have a printer, probably mean they don't have an American citizen ID.

Jo Foley

Self N/A

Henderson, TX

I support HB 1026. When so many of the witnesses are testifying Against HB1026, all I hear is ' Not right that a voter has to prove American citizenship. Not right that they have to have photo ID or signature verification' - regardless that they have to do all of that for even minor acts in life. All I am hearing is that even though they totally support voter ID to get on a plane, get bank acct., write a check, enter a concert, etc. they don't want to have to do so to vote for the people who will be governing our state and nation. And WHY is that? We all know why it is. If someone wants to vote, and are legally allowed to vote, then they should apply ahead of time in order to vote in the next election. Voting is a privilege for AMERICAN CITIZENS that want to vote in the appropriate area. I support HB 1026.