

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 2859

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: April 15, 2021 8:00 AM

Dennis Botkin

John Birch

Richardson, TX

HB 2859

I oppose this Bill that allows the Texas Secretary of State to solicit and accept "gifts, donations and grants from any private source" to set up and manage a an internet database of election information.

Bill Sargent, Former Chief Deputy Clerk for Elections, Galveston County

Self

Galveston, TX

HB 2859 has a provision that authorizes the Secretary of State to solicit private funds to create and then maintain an elections database.

We should not solicit, nor accept, private funds for the purpose of "helping" elections. Along with funds come "strings" and/or "alliances" which can be inappropriate. With what we are seeing with corporations lately, the bullying and the economic threatening of states, we don't want to go down the road, not even a little.

As examples of bullying we need only to point to the state of Georgia where their legislature enacted legislation to strengthen election integrity while expanding the opportunity to vote. In response, the all star game was moved from Atlanta to Denver, Coke and Delta Airlines came out in opposition and attempted to sway, some would say bully, the Georgia state legislature. But they were having none of it! They went ahead and did what was right for the people of their state and election integrity.

Even here in Texas, American Airlines and Microsoft have tried to undercut our efforts to improve election integrity. Representative Beckley noted in a previous hearing their opposition to HB 6. What corporations want, often doesn't align with what is good for citizens, taxpayers, the nation and in some cases, even their shareholders.

I have included here summaries of a couple of recent stories about what other state legislatures are doing about the undue influence from well-funded individuals and organizations. Perhaps we can learn from them.

April 12: The Daily Signal: Arizona Election integrity Law will ban financing from out-of-state sources to run elections

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey has signed significant election integrity legislation into law. "With public confidence in our elections in peril, it's clear our elections must be pristine and above reproach—and the sole purview of government," Ducey said. Arizona's new law prevents private funding from going into elections, such as the \$419 million in donations made by Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Priscilla Chan. The Zuckerbergs gave a total of \$350 million to a left-leaning technology group, that in turn issued grants to 2,500 election offices in 49 states. The spending included \$5 million for Arizona, according to preliminary data from the Foundation for Government Accountability. House Bill 2569 makes Arizona the first in the nation to fully ban billionaires from influencing the administration and management of Arizona elections. According to the sponsor of the legislation, "We have sent a clear message that it doesn't matter how much money you have, Arizona elections are not for sale."

See: April 12: The Daily Signal: After Zuckerberg money, Wisconsin legislature eyes election changes...April 11: The Daily

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Caller: Corporate America plans to
combat election integrity measures

Therefore, I cannot support a bill that seeks to solicit private funding for election-related endeavors, not even a little bit!

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Kimberly Bridges Young

Self

Crp Christi, TX

Vote no!

Kathy Turner

self, retired

McGregor, TX

I am against the bill because of the section relating to soliciting and accepting gifts, donations and grants from private sources. I do support the idea of a easy to find place with election information.

Cathy Jaster

retired / self

Georgetown, TX

My name is Cathy Jaster and I am against this bill. Allowing the SOS to solicit and accept gifts is totally unacceptable and ripe for fraud. Additionally contact information should only be optional for volunteer party offices, such as precinct chairs. We live in a time when the highest offices in our country have stated they are coming after and targeting members of the other party. We need to consider the safety of volunteers.

Monica Carson

self

Bastrop, TX

Please oppose this bill since it allows the Texas Secretary of State to solicit and accept gifts and donations.

Evonne Kohon

Self/retired

Austin, TX

Absolutely oppose this ridiculousness. NO to this absurd bill.

NO NO NO NO NO

Vote No. is this clear enough?

Cissy Sanders

Self

Austin, TX

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I SUPPORT/IN FAVOR of HB 2859. As the Secretary of State's office is a public entity and serves the voters of Texas, it is important that the Secretary of State's office is informative, fair and transparent.

katija gruene
Green Party of Tx
Austin, TX

For

We fully support this bill and have been asking the SoS to publish candidates for convention ballots for 21 years.

Keena Miller
self/education
Austin, TX

SUPPORT

Denise Gordon
TX Dem Veterans
Round Rock, TX

HB 2859 is a no brainer; it needs to be passed to the full house ASAP!

JoAnn Fleming, Executive Director
Grassroots America - We the People PAC
Flint, TX

JoAnn Fleming, Executive Director, Grassroots America - We the People PAC, speaking for the organization:

Grassroots America strongly OPPOSES HB 2859 by Bucy.

Codifying the solicitation of gifts, donations, and grants from any private source by the Texas Secretary of State to set up and manage a database of election information sets up all manner of unethical practices and behaviors. This is an utterly ridiculous but dangerous idea. We need private money OUT of election offices!

We urge the House Elections Committee to reject his bill and not vote it out of committee.

Kathryn Williams
Self/retire
Austin, TX

Support -- this level of transparency is important and that it comes from an official source is paramount.

shawn flanagan
self/retired
corpus christi, TX

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Please vote NO!!! Good idea right up until allows SOS to take private funds to enact. A way for the private sector to use money to affect our election process-VOTE NO

Charles Wiley

Self

Alice, TX

Please Vote no! I particularly object to the allowance of the Secretary of State to solicit and accept gifts, grants and donations from any public or private source for the creation and maintenance of the Internet site database! That leaves the possibility of election interference wide open! Companies or individuals have a lot to gain by "sponsoring" a candidate.

Kathryn Gordon

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

No

Larry Ringler

Self

Portland, TX

Vote NO. It's especially wrong to allow the SoS to seek and take gifts, grants and donations from any source to create and maintain an Internet database. That gives the appearance of letting a corporation, group or person gain undue influence.

Jessie Carlson

self

Corpus Chrsiti, TX

Vote no. I really object to the allowance of the Secretary of State to solicit and accept gifts, grants and donations from any public or private source for the creation and maintenance of the Internet site database. That's just insane.

Amanda Friedeck, Mrs.

Silver Star Food Stores/BRANDS Marketing Group, LLC

ALICE, TX

I, Amanda Sue Friedeck (Jim Wells County) am in favor of HB 2859. This is so that our elections are transparent, accountable and fair.

Amanda Friedeck, Mrs.

Silver Star Food Stores/BRANDS Marketing Group, LLC

ALICE, TX

I, Amanda Sue Friedeck (Jim Wells County) am in favor of HB 2859. This is so that our elections are transparent, accountable and fair.