

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 3080

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: April 8, 2021 8:00 AM

ANDRES ORTIZ

A TEXAS CITIZEN / SELF

HOUSTON, TX

HOUSE BILL 6

ELECTION REFORM

For Fair and Honest elections HOUSE BILL - 6

election integrity 02 April 2021

Voter Integrity. We now MUST have a shot card (COVID-19) Why not a Voter Card with INTEGRITY.
IN FAVOR OF HB 6 will provide the Integrity Texans need an if a law needs to be put in place for this to happen, then be it done.

Shannon Malburg

Self, Nonprofit and small business consultant

Waco, TX

Please do not pass this bill. What a shame to live in a country with a history of citizen participation and a democracy of the people, by the people and for the people, yet to restrict the right and ability to vote our seniors, disabled making the process more cumbersome and confusing and dissuading honest voting people from casting their ballot and voice. You are on the wrong side of history with this bill. Looking back this will be a shameful time in the history of this state and this nation.

Rachel Muir

Self

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

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*Increase burdens on voters with disabilities to access assistance at the polls

Oppose them!

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

THE AMERICAN PUBLIC WANT TRUSTED OFFICIALS TO DOCUMENT VOTES BY MAIL, TO NOT ALTER THEM IN ANY WAY, BUT TO FAITHFULLY TURN THEM OVER TO THE PROPER PEOPLE TO BE COUNTED AND NO LONGER TRY TO MANIPULATE OR INFRINGE ON A PERSONS' CIVIL LIBERTIES BY USING THEM OR ALTERING THEM IN ANY WAY FOR CRIMINAL GAIN!!!!

Lisa Hale

Self

Liberty Hill, TX

In favor of

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.

Catherine Bratic

Catherine

Houston, TX

This bill is impracticable. I have voted by mail in the past while I was temporarily working abroad, and I can tell you that it would not have been possible for me to satisfy the requirements of this bill. I did not have fingerprinting equipment on-hand, nor would I have felt comfortable sending something as personal as my fingerprints and signature through the mail in a foreign country. There is also no chance that it would have arrived in a usable condition - working as an elections employee, I have seen the state that many ballots arrive in after getting handled by the USPS and foreign mail carriers. They are bent, scraped, and may have water damage. If the fingerprint is unreadable due to handling by mail carriers, would that voter's vote be invalidated? And if it were, how would the voter know and be able to correct it in time?

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Carrie Moore
Self
Corpus Christi, TX

VOte Yes- Everything that helps increase security to insure the person voting is the correct person is a bonus to avoid fraud.
Love HB 4369

Larry Ringler
Self-retired
Portland, TX

Vote YES to increase scrutiny, in step with HB 4369, when verifying the actual voter's signature against whoever signed the ballot application and carrier envelope. Add thumbprint checking for even greater verification.

Jessie Carlson
self
Corpus Chrsiti, TX

Vote yes! Increasing signature security is always a good idea.

Beverly Johnson
self/retired
Corpus Christi, TX

too easy for people to steal ballots and cheat.

shawn flanagan
self/retired
corpus christi, TX

Vote yes!!! Mail in ballots is where most voter fraud occurs. This helps prevent it.

Ryon Price, Rev.
Broadway Baptist Church
Fort Worth, TX

I wish to express my strong opposition to all bills which will have the obvious effect of suppressing lawful voter turnout. Additional roadblocks and hurdles put in place to curtail the free flow of electoral information and due process of enfranchisement is not only unnecessary, it is also wrong. Please, I ask you the Legislature to stand on the right side of this issue and say no to this bad bill.

Gyla Fowler, Ms
Gyla Fowler
Austin, TX

The changes you're proposing is antithetical to the excercise of each person's right to vote. By making this process more
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diifficult, you are suberting democracy.

Gyla Fowler, Ms

Gyla Fowler

Austin, TX

The changes you're proposing is antithetical to the excercise of each person's right to vote. By making this process more diifficult, you are suberting democracy.

Richard Smith

Self

Corpus christi, TX

Absolutely vote yes

Amanda Friedeck, Mrs.

Silver Star Food Stores/BRANDS Marketing Group, LLC

Alice/Jim Wells County, TX

I am in favor with HB 3080. Please consider to pass this House Bill to cut the loopholes in the election system.

Jo Foley

Self N/A

Henderson, TX

I support HB 3080. 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

The Woodlands, TX

This bill is clearly an attempt to reduce ballots by mail. On behalf of the elderly and disabled people in our state, please oppose this bill. It just makes life harder.

Kelly Schlesinger

Self - Retired

The Woodlands, TX

This is a terrible idea. Vote no on 3080.

Victoria Hanson

self - retired

Corpus Christi, TX

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Vote yes on HB 3080

Early voting ballots should only be provided to those individuals who request them. This lessens the possibility of voting more than once in an election, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Having the early voter include a fingerprint and a signature further ensures purity of our election process.

Rodney Taylor, Sfc. Retired

Tarrant County

Fort Worth, TX

Push to secure our elections. Voter Id is not a hard thing to provide, must have ID for fishing or drivers license, to open a bank account or cash a check. Surely voting security, and verifying the one voting is the one that is on the ballot is worth it.

Yavonne Martinez, Dr

self, clinical pharmacy specialist

Porter, TX

Regarding the majority of the bills listed above, in the State of Texas voter fraud does not occur to the degree as to begin hindering Texans' rights to vote in a reasonable, sensible and simple fashion. Every Texan that is 17 years old and 10 months prior to an election should be able to vote. In Montgomery County (especially East Montgomery County) a portion of the elderly citizens do not have access to print a mail-in ballot application and the mail system has become extremely unreliable since mid-2020. Thus, HB 3080 and HB 4331 will take away the access that Texas residents in their 70s and above rely upon. HB 3281 is dependent upon the USPS delivering mail in a timely fashion and as stated in the previous sentence, the USPS has been dismantled during 2020 (with the new federal Postmaster, appointed under the previous Federal Administration. Unless you (as a committee) have solid proof, that mail-in ballots have been fraudulent, requiring people to have access to a copier, is applying a financial hardship on some and others just don't have access based on where they live. Texas has many rural areas and a lot of the elderly people don't have easy access to a copier. Politicians are elected to serve the people and what is good for the people. Politicians SHOULD NOT be in office to just secure their spot to REMAIN in office by any means necessary. In this case, any means necessary is stifling the voice of the people.

Carol Ortiz, Ms.

Self/retired

Montgomery, TX

OPPOSE HB 3080. Do not advance this bill. It is absurd to make it a crime to give someone an application to vote by mail just because they didn't ask for it. It's unreasonable and unnecessary to require a registered voter provide a thumbprint. Texas already has the most restrictive, secure voting system it ever had. There's no evidence of voter fraud.

DONNA EYLES

Self

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Vote yes. Currently, signature verifications are done by comparing the request for a mail-in ballot signature to the carrier envelope signature. If a person requested a mail-in ballot for someone other than them self and signed the voters name - and signed the carrier envelope, as well, then the signatures will match and the actual voter never voted at all. As a ballot board regular worker, we should be comparing the carrier envelope signature to the VOTER REGISTRATION CARD! Requiring a thumbprint will bypass this issue as it should be required for the mail-in ballot request.

Calvin Overstreet

Self Retired

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The Woodlands, TX

I OPPOSE HB 3080, HB 4331, HB 3281, & HB 2478 as they all impose conditions that reduce the free exercise of citizen registration and voting. Let's create effective ways for all citizens to register to vote and various methods that make it easy for them to vote. Thank you.

Kimberly Bridges Young

Self, Retired

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Vote yes! In conjunction with HB 4369, this bill HB 3080 increases scrutiny when verifying the actual voter's signature against whomever signed the ballot application and the carrier envelope. Adding thumbprint verification is even better.

Linda Evans, Ms

Self-retired

Conroe, TX

Oppose HB 3080. Giving out mail-in ballots is a good way to spread democracy and increase voter participation. A good thing! It is especially helpful for older or disabled voters to get a ballot at church. Why fear more votes? Our last election proves there is no fraud with more mail-in ballots. Vote NO HB 3080

Jesse Suarez

Rabalais I&E Constructors

Corpus Christi, TX

US citizens should not automatically be provided a ballot. Its wasteful and encourages voter fraud by having a bunch of official ballots floating around waiting to be harvested. Also glad to see our first world election system will catch up to the fingerprint identity verification system of Iraq and certain banks. Please vote yes on HB 3080

Marlow Newton

Self

The Woodlands, TX

Dear Congress,

I am in full support of this bill. There is no place for unsolicited ballots being mailed out to residents of Texas. This is one of the most significant areas of potential voter fraud. I do believe that a signatures matches on both envelope and ballot is paramount to prevent voter fraud. The language around thumbprints is okay to include. I am assuming that this is a start to requiring thumbprints as a further avenue for voter matching, but will be long process to obtain all registered voters thumbprints (could take a decade or so).

I propose adding language that each mail-inballot have a unique barcode. This will ensure that every ballot mailed out to registered voters can be accounted upon receipt.

Thank you for your service to our state.

Sincerely,

Marlow Newton

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

Self

Galveston, TX

ONE OF THE CHALLENGES WE HAVE IN PROCESSING BALLOTS BY MAIL IS THE SIGNATURE VERIFICATION PROCESS. NONE OF US ARE HANDWRITING EXPERTS. BY USING BIOMETRICS THIS PROBLEM GOES AWAY BECAUSE EACH PERSON'S FINGERPRINT OR PALM PRINT IS UNIQUE. NO LONGER IS THE PROCESS SUBJECTIVE.

THE SECOND THING USING BIOMETRICS ACCOMPLISHES IS THAT IT KEEPS A PERSON FROM VOTING TWICE OR HARVESTING BALLOTS IN NURSING HOMES. WE HEARD LAST WEEK ABOUT HOW VOTE HARVESTERS OPERATE IN HARRIS COUNTY. MOVING TOWARD USING BIOMETRICS WILL STOP THEM IN THEIR TRACKS.

BIOMETRICS EQUALS ELECTION INTEGRITY.

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE MAY END UP LOOKING LIKE BUT IF IT MOVES US CLOSER TO STOPPING VOTE HARVESTING AND ENSURING ONE PERSON, ONE VOTE, THEN I AM FOR IT.

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, it allows poll watchers to film voters, it requires proof of disabilities for easier access of our constitutional right, and allows the Attorney General to purge voters. 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.

Julie Kellogg

self

Corpus Christi, TX

Vote Yes, along with HB 4369 & HB 3080 this increases the security and scrutiny needed to verify signatures and ensure only

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legal votes are included in an election, that is the best thing for everyone

Rebecca Broughton

Self

Seguin, TX

I am in Favor of HB 3080. Per SOS and DPS - No significant fiscal implication to the State is anticipated. The cost of thumbprint kits etc are nominal when it comes to a Fair & Secure Election. I will be using this system soon. Please Vote Yah for HB 3080.

Ebony Johnson, Policy Associate

The Afiya Center

Dallas, TX

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.

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 3080. I oppose all Voter Suppression Bills that are being heard in committee and being put forth through our Texas legislative system. HB 3080 seeks to criminalize people that are trying to vote and that's just silly. You shouldn't even consider, that in this great state of Texas--which has been Republican led for many years, any house bills that make it harder for our older voters to cast their ballot. My parents, who live in a rural area, do not have internet access and therefore would have trouble making contact with someone to get their ballot to them. I am not a criminal and HB 3080 would make me out to be one: instituting a thumbprint verification policy is expensive, unnecessary, and an invasion of privacy.

Cindy Dashnaw

Self - self-employed copywriter

Burnet, TX

Every individual deserves the right to be allowed to make his or her own decision with all the facts and options available. Offering someone a legal mail-in ballot does nothing but inform them of a legal option. To criminalize such an act is ludicrous. Moreover, I strongly object to placing my unique thumbprint on a piece of paper that gets mailed off to any organization. Who will verify that the thumbprint is actually mine? Even experts take much training to be able to identify and match fingerprints. I urge you to vote against HB 3080.

Chelsea Hernandez

Self

Austin, TX

House Bill 3080 is government over reach and impeding on privacy rights. Requiring a thumbprint for a mail-in ballot is like handing over a social security card through the mail with no verification of delivery. My democracy is not dependent on my

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fingerprints. I am a voter and not a criminal. There is no need to give my fingerprints by mail. Also, by making fingerprints mandatory for mail-in ballots, the state will now have to spend money on hiring and enforcing the processing of fingerprint verification. Put our tax-money toward public safety rather than fingerprints on mail-in ballots.

Martina Sutton

Self

Cedar Park, TX

I am AGAINST this bill.

This bill would require a thumbprint on the ballot envelope for all mail-in ballots. A thumbprint is another unique piece of personal identification that should only be used with utmost confidentiality. For driver's licenses the DPS only takes prints IN-PERSON and NEVER requires them to be shared by mail. Same with police departments. It should not be required to be put on any item that passes through many hands, making it susceptible to theft in any number of places (postal carrier, theft of mail by any person on the street (thieves DO go through mailboxes), employees of the state processing mail-in ballots, etc...). This is such an irresponsible requirement that would set citizens up for further identity theft.

Staci Mendelsohn

Self

Plano, TX

I am opposed to HB 3080. It criminalizes civic organizations and even spouses and children for encouraging eligible individuals to vote by mail, threatening them with class A misdemeanor charges for providing an application for an absentee ballot to someone who didn't specifically request it (the same class of misdemeanor as assault). This is just trying to suppress voting and shouldn't be such a high penalty for trying to help someone. VOTE NO!

Staci Mendelsohn

Self

Plano, TX

I am opposed to HB 3080. The bills constitute a full scale assault on senior citizens and people with disabilities who vote by 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 thumb print when they apply to vote. This means that voters must bear the expense and burden of traveling to get fingerprinting services. Voting is a right and a privilege, and we are treating people like they are not American citizens. VOTE NO to voter suppression.

Lisa Nilsson

Self, Bexar County Republican Election Integrity Committee

Boerne, TX

I support this bill.

Veronica Morales

Self

Dallas, TX

Vote by mail is important to the elderly like me; this appears to be voter suppression. Please vote against.

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JANIS REINKEN, ATTORNEY

SELF/ ATTORNEY

AUSTIN, TX

HB 3080 (Oliverson) HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE

I oppose HB 3080 as introduced, and if a CSHB is forthcoming, it is not posted online for public access.

It is logistically impossible to have all voters go to a DPS office to provide a thumbprint to satisfy voting requirements for the SOS. It proposes to obtain a thumbprint of as many registered voters as possible. This would be an overwhelming task if it could even be done at all. The DPS is not the handmaiden of the Secretary of State; it is first and foremost a law enforcement agency. The main reason that the DPS retains the driver license division is to implement REAL ID and that requires proof of US citizenship. Texas is not a nation, and so there is no proof of Texas citizenship. The DPS has a multiple-year rotation for driver license renewal and ID cards. The ID card must be renewed every 6 years. Driver licenses must be renewed every 8 years for anyone between the ages 18 and 84. Some persons renew online, some by mail, some in person.

This Bill is about keeping a person from obtaining an absentee BALLOT, by making it difficult to obtain the APPLICATION form. The Bill makes it a Class A misdemeanor (meaning not just a civil fine but prospective jail time) for a person who "mails or otherwise provides an application form for an early voting ballot to a person who did not solicit the form." This would exclude a child or a spouse of a person who would vote by mail but may not be aware of the deadlines to obtain the application for the absentee ballot. This would exclude a helpful neighbor or friend from a Sunday School class from helping voters by obtaining the application for their use, then letting them use and return the APPLICATION and wait for the ballot to arrive.

One day in the future, you too may have a stroke; multiple sclerosis; Parkinson's disease; arthritis; macular degeneration, or other infirmities that make it necessary to rely on friends and family to help you with life activities. You too may one day stop driving or stop using the Internet. But you may still wish to vote, and you may need the help of another person to help obtain the absentee ballot application.

This Bill may be well-intentioned, but misdirected and it will deny many persons, not just individuals of one political party, of the opportunity to vote by mail. Please vote NO on HB 3080. Janis Reinken 04-08-21

Kathryn Williams

self/retired

Austin, TX

HB 3080 -- OPPOSED This bill will disenfranchise millions of voters. I have seen no convincing evidence that mail ballot voter fraud exists., and even if it does this bill would not fix it. I have worked as an election clerk and have not seen evidence of fraud or attempts. I have helped voters fix issues when they are marked as having already voted in person or by mail. Some had to vote provisional ballots, but had time to cure that ballot and having it count. I am 71 years old currently equipped with technology to vote the way this bill proposes, but that could change quickly, In 2020, I worked on the Voter Assistance Hotline. I helped so many people who could not negotiate the already complex process. I voted absentee myself because I would be out of the country during the Primary and then COVID hit. I am high risk, but I can't imagine going through all these hoops to vote to be able to vote by mail. Biometrics is not the answer. The author just said signatures don't work because everyone who is on the ballot board is not an FBI trained expert on signatures. Isn't it harder for a lay person to examine a fingerprint match than a signature? People's fingerprints change as they age. People sometimes don't have thumbs or sustain injuries or burns that change their fingerprint. Fingerprint recorders could be dirty. Finding a way to record one's fingerprint is more difficult than getting an ID and they face the same barriers which current law has relieved. I have fingerprint technology on my phone and it doesn't always work. Please vote against this bill.

Kathy Turner

self, retired

McGregor, TX

I support this bill. Only the registered voter should be able to request an application for ballot by mail. Verification of the identity of the mail-in voter is needed. Criminal penalties are needed to deter nefarious practices.

Nancy True

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Self

Hickory Creek, TX

OPPOSE HB 3080

From 2010 through 2019, I have observed a broad range of election/voter fraud and irregularities while serving in an official capacity as both Election Clerk and Poll Watcher in Dallas County General and Primary Elections, as well as City of Dallas Municipal Elections, during both Early Voting and Election Day, to include local polling locations and Dallas County Central Count. Generally speaking, I support election reform, legislation that improves transparency, limits opportunity for fraudulent/tampering activity, and enhances assurances every LEGAL vote counts in our elections to ensure proper representation in elected government positions. However, I am vehemently OPPOSED to the use of biometric data (thumbprint, et.al.) for verification of identity to achieve those ends. Therefore I respectfully urge rejection of HB 3080.

Joey Gidseg

Texas Democrats with Disabilities Caucus

Austin, TX

Texas Democrats with Disabilities Caucus strongly opposes HB 3080. It criminalizes those trying to help ensure eligible voters remember to do so, and further complicates the voting process. We should all welcome more participation in our government, and not make it harder on voters to make their input known.