

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 3281

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: April 8, 2021 8:00 AM

Rebecca Mallory

Self, Administrative Coordinator

Manor, TX

I believe that Voting by Mail should only be permitted for those that are physically impaired and unable to attend a polling location or by those who are serving in our Military or are travelling outside of their polling jurisdiction for work reasons. In the cases where a ballot by mail is warranted, I believe the process to request the ballot should include a verification step for it's legitimacy and then once the ballot is received and filled out, it should require an independent certification as to the person's identity casting the vote such as a witness signature and notarization. Notarizations can be done online in many states and this should be allowed in all states so that the legitimacy and identity of the voter can be verified. This is the only way to ensure that ballots cast by mail are secure.

Shannon Malburg

Self/Consultant to Nonprofits and Small Business

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.

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.

Charlene Woody

- Self - Proud American

Garland, TX

We must protect the integrity of all elections in Texas and:

- 1) Prohibit public officials from distributing unrequested vote-by-mail applications.
- 2) Ban ballot harvesting
- 3) Requiring voter identification for mail-in and absentee ballots
- 4) Routine verification of voter rolls and new registrations
- 5) Require mandatory verification of signatures of all mail in and absentee ballots.

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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.

John Sefcik

self

Fairview, TX

April 5, 2021

Re: Support for HB3281

I support HB3281 to codify the time limits for applying for and submitting early voting ballots by mail and the time limits for counting early voting ballots in person and by mail. This will make application, submission, and counting deadlines clear to all voters and election officials.

I ask that you vote for this bill in its present form and for its provisions in committee and on the floor of the House.

John Sefcik

(972)365-4394

jds@sefcik.net

Member of the Republican Club at Heritage Ranch

www.republicanclubatheritageranch.com

Kirk Pate

Self

Flatonia, TX

This registered voter in Fayette County is the county tabulation supervisor. HB3281 is a disaster.

First, existing law considers ballots timely if they are postmarked by Election Day and received by the following day. That provision should remain unchanged.

Moving the deadline to apply for a mail ballot from 11 days before Election Day to 15 days before Election Day constricts voter participation. Eleven days is ample time to apply, receive and return a ballot. Again, voter expansion is my goal.

The requirement of counties to count all mail ballots between 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. on Election Day is absurd. We check USPS at 7:00 p.m. for ballots by mail and then scan them ASAP. We scan election day ballots after 7:00 p.m., though the polls close at 7:00 p.m. Mail ballots picked up at 7:00 p.m. from the USPS should be treated no differently.

Larry Ringler

Self-retired

Portland, TX

Vote YES to adjust time frames for early voting, giving more time for election officials to respond and process ballots. Voters should be held to deadlines if they want the privilege of early voting.

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Carrie Moore
Self
Corpus Christi, TX

Vote Yes- more time for early voting ballots is a good thing

Jessie Carlson
self
Corpus Chrsiti, TX

Vote yes. Deadlines are necessary for a safe and fair election.

Beverly Johnson
self/retired
Corpus Christi, TX

Necessary for timely elections.

shawn flanagan
self/retired
corpus christi, TX

Vote yes. Mail in ballots is where most of the fraud occurs. We need this security

Gyla Fowler, Ms
Gyla Fowler
Austin, TX

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

Richard Smith
Self
Corpus christi, TX

I vote yes. This needs to be clear and concise.very important to integrity.

Amanda Friedeck, Mrs.
Silver Star Food Stores/BRANDS Marketing Group, LLC
Alice/Jim Wells County, TX

I am in favor with HB 3281. Please consider to pass this House Bill to cut the loopholes in the election system.

Jo Foley
Self N/A

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Henderson, TX

I support HB 3281. 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

What is the reason to require ballots by mail to be received this early? I like the current law, because someone voting by mail will essentially have the same deadline as people voting in person. I see no reason to change the law.

Victoria Hanson

self - retired

Corpus Christi, TX

Vote Yes on HB 3281

Ensuring ballots are in and able to be counted within reasonable time frames, providing exceptions for those mailed from foreign countries, allows for effective and organized counting and administration of the voting process, lessening the possibility of error or unnecessary delays.

Kelly Schlesinger

Self - Retired

The Woodlands, TX

This is a terrible idea. Vote No on 3281.

Kelky Waswil

Self

Katy, TX

No absentee voting, massive fraud. Paper ballots only. Massive evidence fraud using machines all cities; Dallas, TX, Antrim MI. Who ordered counting to stop Nov 3/4 at exact time? Fractured votes, 68.5% adjudication for Republican ballots, weighted vote 1.26 Biden, .74 Trump, internet, vote switching, foreign interference. Until you fix 2020, no 2022. Top priority no absentee ballots, no harvesting, signature verification. Republican ballot counters. We are now Venezuela

DONNA EYLES

Self

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Vote yes. This is a bill that is exceptionally important to me as a regular ballot board volunteer. Voters have 2 weeks (or more) to vote by mail-in ballot. If they truly want to vote, there is ample time to do so.

Mary Mabry

self

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Spring, TX

Restricting the amount of time a voter has to vote by mail is undemocratic. Voter restrictions like this in Texas are dishonorable and not worthy of our legislature.

Sherri Duchin

Self

Tx, TX

I oppose hb 3281 because it makes it harder to vote by mail. There isn't a problem to fix. This is just trying to limit voting by mail.

Kimberly Bridges Young

Self, Retired

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Vote yes! This bill adjusts time frames for early voting ballots, giving election officials more time to respond and process them. Voting itself is a privilege, and early voting is an exceptional privilege, so voters should be held to deadlines if they want to exercise these privileges.

Carol Ortiz

Self/retired

Montgomery, TX

I OPPOSE HB 3281. Don't advance this unnecessary bill. It's not fair to treat mailed in ballots differently than in-person ballots. If you can vote in person before (early) or on Election Day and have your voted counted, the same should apply to a mailed ballot up to Election Day. Once a person places their ballot in the mail it's out of their control and it must count if mailed before Election Day. There is no evidence of voter fraud through voting by mail.

Linda Evans, Ms

Self-retired

Conroe, TX

OPPOSE HB 3281. If a mail-in ballot is postmarked by Election Day and received by 5 pm the day after election that is fine. What is the need to shorten the deadline to last day of early voting? NO NEED for this bill except to try and not count votes! Not good for democracy!
Vote NO HB 3281

bill sargent, Former Chief Deputy Clerk for Elections, Galveston County

self

Galveston, TX

I OPPOSE THIS MEASURE BY MY FRIEND DENNIS FOR ONE REASON AND ONE REASON ONLY. I WANT TO ENSURE THE INTEGRITY OF THE ELECTION PROCESS AND I DON'T WANT ANYBODY, INCLUDING ELECTION ADMINISTRATORS, COUNTY CLERKS, AND ELECTION OFFICIALS, TO KNOW WHAT THE VOTE COUNT IS UNTIL 7PM ON ELECTION NIGHT.

WHEN I WAS SERVING AS THE PRESIDING JUDGE OF CENTRAL COUNT IN 2010 I CAUGHT THE COUNTY OFFICIAL IN CHARGE OF THE ELECTION GIVING THE COUNTY JUDGE INSIDE INFORMATION. I TOOK ON

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BOTH OF THEM AND TOLD THEM THEY WERE OUT OF LINE.

IN MEDIUM-SIZE COUNTIES LIKE GALVESTON IT ONLY TAKES A FEW MINUTES TO TALLY THE EARLY VOTING AND ABSENTEE VOTES. WE TYPICALLY REPORTED THE RESULTS BY 7:15. KEEP IN MIND ALL THE BALLOTS WERE PROCESSED, THAT IS SCANNED AND RESOLVED, AHEAD OF TIME. ONLY THE TABULATION WAS HELD UNTIL 7PM.

BECAUSE OF THE CONCERN ABOUT THE TIMELINESS OF REPORTING RETURNS FROM LARGE COUNTIES, IF DENNIS WOULD AMEND HIS LEGISLATION TO NOT START THE TABULATION PROCESS UNTIL A HOUR BEFORE THE POLLS CLOSE IN COUNTIES OF OVER A MILLION PEOPLE, I WOULD BE WILLING TO CHANGE MY OPPOSITION TO SUPPORT.

Rebecca Broughton

Self

Seguin, TX

I am in Favor of HB 3281. Per SOS and Texas Association of Counties - No significant fiscal implication to the State or Counties is anticipated. Pass this Bill.

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

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Vote yes, this gives officials more time to process early votes. Makes sense to make sure it is accurate

Michelle Anderson, State Organizer

The Afiya Center

Dallas, TX

I Michelle Anderson 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.

Cindy Dashnaw

self - self-employed copywriter

Burnet, TX

IF the intent is to prevent voter fraud, which has been proven NOT TO EXIST, then rushing the process is in direct opposition to doing so. Accuracy and completeness for any endeavor require time. I urge you to oppose HB 3281.

Martina Sutton

Self

Cedar Park, TX

I am AGAINST this bill.

Here are my detailed HB3281 Objections:

- 1) Section 1: shortens application deadline by 4 days (nearly one business week)
- 2) Section 3: shortens marked ballot receipt deadline by 4 days plus 5pm to poll closing time on election day AND removes ability to accept marked ballots that DO bear a cancellation mark of a common or contract carrier or courier indicating time not later than 7pm at location of election on election day (so if a marked ballot DOES have a valid cancellation mark but is held up somewhere before getting to the early voting clerk's office, through no fault of the voter, the ballot will get rejected anyway). Previously these ballots would have the same 5-day grace period as ballots from overseas but this change would remove that grace period for mail-in ballots that are NOT from overseas. We all know that mail delays are often a problem with domestic mail AS WELL AS international mail. It is unfair to treat domestic mail-in ballots differently from international mail-in ballots.
- 3) Section 7 & 8: removes ability to start counting early voting ballots at the end of early voting period for counties larger than 100,000. Cannot start counting until 3pm on election day. Note that the wording of Section 8 proposed change would require ALL early voting ballots (both in-person and mail-in) to wait until 3pm on election day to be counted. This does not make sense AT ALL because these are the counties that require MORE time to count MORE ballots. There is no reason to delay their counting until 3pm on election day, especially when the vast majority of them are already received prior to election day. Waiting until 3pm on election day only puts more pressure on and makes more room for error by ballot counters on election day. This change also means that early voters will not find out until after 3pm on election day if there is a problem with their ballot and so they have less time to remedy the issue to have their ballot validated and counted. This means higher probability for more early voting ballots to be rejected overall.
- 4) Section 9: Adds a deadline for early voting ballots voted by mail to be counted by no later than 7pm on election day!!! This means ALL mail-in early voting ballots must be counted between the hours of 3pm to 7pm on election day – that is only 4 hours to count these early voting ballots!!! This is UNACCEPTABLE. What then happens to the ballots that can't all be counted during that impossibly short time-frame?? It is EGREGIOUS voter suppression to just throw out ballots that were properly applied for, marked and received directly because these election code changes do not allow enough time to count all early voting ballots.

This bill would make so many negative changes to our voting system; changes that do NOT serve and support our voters. This

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bill should be completely struck down.

Erica Lawrence

self

Spring, TX

My name is Erica Lawrence. I am a Native Texan, a voter, and am an Election Poll Worker. I'm writing to urge you to OPPOSE HB 3281. HB 3281 would shorten the mail-in ballot receipt deadline to where a mail in ballot must be received by the last day of early voting and although this seems like a reasonable expectation, there are way too many hands in the pot to make this realistic. Our current law allows a mail-in ballot to be counted if it is received by 5:00pm the day after the election, so long as it is postmarked by election day. I am an election worker and I know that Election Central, here in my county is slammed with mail-in ballots during the voting period. Instituting this bill would leave the onus on the Election Workers but that responsibility does not leave any time for other emergencies such as sick/bereavement days. HB 3281 would also be costly because more staff would be needed to count the ballots coming in. Let's face it, sometimes mail is delayed. I would be livid if I did my due diligence and mailed in my vote for it to be delayed in the mail and then not counted due to HB 3281. Lastly, HB 3281 assumes that Election Central workers would have the capacity, the know-how, and a system in place to notify voters that their mail-in ballot was received too late and to go vote in person; smaller counties do not have funds for that and therefore HB 3281 would be more expensive to tax payers and Texas to implement. Please oppose HB 3281. Thank you, Erica

Staci Mendelsohn

Self

Plano, TX

I am opposed to HB 3281. It creates an early deadline for mail voters by requiring them to deliver their ballots four days before Election Day. This holds seniors and people with disabilities who vote by mail to a different standard than all other voters. We are supposed to help not hinder voting. Vote NO to this bill and any voter suppression bills.

Kristin Miles

Bastrop County Elections Administrator

Bastrop, TX

Section 7 states that ballots may not be counted until 3 p.m. on Election Day. Section 8 states that early voting ballots by mail must be counted and results released not later than 7 p.m. on Election Day. If section 7 would prohibit the counting of any early voting in person or by mail ballots, this is an impossible timeframe.

Veronica Morales

Self

Dallas, TX

Vote NO to this. Early voting is my right & becomes more important to me as I age. Stop voter suppression!

Kathy Turner

self, retired

McGregor, TX

I support this bill and efforts to make sure that voting by mail is limited to those who truly need it as it is susceptible to fraud and misuse.

Kathryn Williams

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self/retirement

Austin, TX

OPPOSED , No reason for this attack on current law. No harm demonstrated, except anecdotal with no contextual or quantitative information given.

Tanya Robertson, Senate District 11 SREC

Self

Taylor Lake Village, TX

IN FAVOR of HB 3281

Eric Opiela

self Attorney

Austin, TX

The Committee Substitute for HB 3281 addresses a number of the problems in the as filed version. First, the CS fixes the drafting error which precluded acceptance of cast EVBM on Election Day, fixes the drafting error which allowed overseas ballots to be cast after Election Day, and clarifies that preliminary procedures other than actual accumulation of votes and generating results reports can occur prior to Noon on Election Day. The bill recognizes the delay in mail processing and delivery and moves the entire EVBM acceptance period back by 4 days to accommodate this.