

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 3696

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

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Hearing Date: April 8, 2021 8:00 AM

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JANIS REINKEN, ATTORNEY

SELF/ ATTORNEY

AUSTIN, TX

THIS IS for HOUSE ELECTIONS COMMITTEE [not IN STATE AFFAIRS, WHICH THIS FORM SHOWS]

HB 3080 (Oliverson)

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