

PUBLIC COMMENTS

SB 1018

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON ELECTIONS

Hearing Date: April 29, 2021 8:00 AM

Michael Fossum

Self, engineer

Austin, TX

I am opposed to SB 1018, and I ask that you do not vote it out of committee. This bill adds new reviews of absentee/mail in ballots that will eliminate a secure chain of custody for ballots. This invites ballot fraud. The fraud and cheating by the democrats in the 2020 Presidential election must never happen again. Vote no on SB 1018. Thank you.

Michael Fossum

Mary Slaughter

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

Please vote Yes. Voters need to be responsible and make certain to vote correctly. They also should be able to read the directions and sign the carrier envelope. People need to be responsible for registering a change of residence if they want to vote.

Victoria Hanson

self - retired

Corpus Christi, TX

YES – This goes to extraordinary means to ensure every valid vote is counted.

DONNA EYLES

Self

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Vote NO!!! To begin with, elections are not held at the last minute; a voter has AMPLE time to go for early voting - or if they meet the requirements, to request a mail-in ballot. I work on the Ballot Board verifying mail-in ballots. What this bills would do is triple the amount of work to be done, require lots of tracking and WOULD REQUIRE/ALLOW FRADULENT BALLOTS TO BE RETURNED TO THE SENDER SO THEY CAN DESTROY THIS EVIDENCE OF VOTER FRAUD. NO! NO! NO!

shawn flanagan

self/retired

corpus christi, TX

Vote NO, this destroys evidence of voter fraud and adds complexity that is not needed.

Kimberly Bridges Young

Printed on: May 7, 2021 6:22 PM

Self, Retired

CORPUS CHRISTI, TX

Vote NO!!! Elections are not held at the last minute. A voter has plenty of time to early vote - or if they meet the requirements, to request a mail-in ballot. I have a friend who works on the Ballot Board verifying mail-in ballots. What this bill would do is triple the amount of work to be done, requiring lots of tracking and WOULD REQUIRE and ALLOW FRAUDULENT BALLOTS TO BE RETURNED TO THE SENDER SO THEY CAN DESTROY THIS EVIDENCE OF VOTER FRAUD. Whomever wrote this bill (Sen. Zaffirini) obviously endorses and approves of election fraud.

Lauren Gerken

Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities

Austin, TX

Chair Cain and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on SB 1018. My name is Lauren Gerken, and I am a Public Policy Analyst for the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities (TCDD).

Established by state and federal law, TCDD is governed by 27 Governor-appointed board members, 60 percent of whom are individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) or family members of individuals with disabilities. The Council's purpose in law is to encourage policy change so that people with disabilities have opportunities to be fully included in their communities and exercise control over their own lives.

TCDD identified the following public policy priority for the 87th legislative session based on the needs and feedback of the disability community in Texas:

Voting Access: Ensure Texans with disabilities have equal access to voting by establishing more voting locations accessible to the community, considering proximity to bus routes and paratransit drop-off points, and publishing an absentee ballot application in an accessible format. Establish and maintain accountability measures for non-compliant voting locations and poll workers.

Signature curing is a crucial and necessary step in the vote by mail process for people with disabilities. Many people with disabilities cannot produce the same signature twice. In fact, depending on the disabilities, someone's signature on their mail-in ballot may look completely different from the one on the voter registration form. Inconsistencies in their signatures should not result in the vote of a person with a disability being discarded.

Speaking for myself, I am an active participant in my state and federal government systems, and I take the time to educate myself on the issues and candidates before every election. I also have dystonic Cerebral Palsy. Even though I am a mindful voter, I am physically unable to produce a consistent signature. When I voted by mail in 2016, I received a rejection notice based on a signature discrepancy in July of 2017, eight months after the election. My well-considered votes on races up to and down the slate were not counted, and I was never given the opportunity to correct my ballot. People with disabilities have a right to be given that chance that I was not.

TCDD – and I, as a voter with a disability – appreciate the attention Senator Zaffirini, bill co-authors, and the committee are giving to the issue of mail-in ballot rejection and the valuable solutions of signature curing through multiple avenues.

Thank you for your time and consideration regarding these recommendations. Please do not hesitate to reach out to TCDD with any questions or if you would like any additional information.

Lauren Gerken, M.A.

Public Policy Analyst

Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities

Sharon Burnett

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Self

Ingleside, TX

Hon Zaffirini,

Please vote YES. We need voters to sign their ballots and even the envelope that it was mailed with. Why are we burdening our election officials to make sure that tardy voters get a second or third chance to correct a mistake?

Thank you!

Kelley Burnett

Zenobia Joseph, U.S. Citizen

Self

Austin, TX

1. SB 1018 Position: On (Neutral). I support "Sec. 87.0411. OPPORTUNITY TO CORRECT DEFECT: EARLY VOTING BALLOT BOARD" but recommend 6-foot poll watcher observation distance.

2. Amendment Recommendation. SECTION 2. Subchapter B, Chapter 87, Election Code, is amended by adding Section 87.0271 to read as follows: Sec. 87.0271. OPPORTUNITY TO CORRECT DEFECT: SIGNATURE VERIFICATION COMMITTEE. (a) This section applies to an early voting ballot voted by mail:

a. Original Language: "(d) A poll watcher is entitled to observe an action taken under Subsection (b)."

b. Amend Lines 23-24 (p. 2); Lines 3-4 (p. 4): Specify 6 feet for poll watcher observation as noted in brackets. "(d) A poll watcher is entitled to observe [within 6 feet] an action taken under Subsection (b)."

c. Justification: In prior "election integrity" testimony on SB 7 and HB 6, I made the same 6-foot poll watcher observation recommendation. I agree with Vice Chair Jessica González's reminder to Chair Cain before members went to the Floor April 29, 2021: "The bills are substantially different."

3. Anecdote: I served on Travis County's Ballot Board and am aware of the detrimental impact of subjective signature verification. I, therefore, appreciate Sen. Zaffirini's efforts to permit the voter to cure defects during the early voting period in SB 1018. In my service as a Volunteer Deputy Registrar, I witnessed a similar rejection process. Though SB 1018 does not address voter registration, the rejection anecdote is germane. On or about 2012, I conducted homeless voter registration at Austin Resource Center for the Homeless ("ARCH"). I registered a lady who showed me a photo of her child, wanting to reconnect. When I submitted yellow registration cards, the voter registrar employee noticed an error (e.g., PO Box home address, as best I recall). I knew which lady made the error in the alley beside Salvation Army and asked to return to the ARCH but was told, "No." Unfortunately the employee said, "We'll send her a rejection letter." I returned then resubmitted her card. The same callous process occurs for ballot-by-mail rejections.

4. Bottom Line: When a voter registers or submits a ballot-by-mail, he/she expects the process to be without fail—that nothing more is required. SB 1018 specifies, "(b) Before deciding whether to accept or reject a timely delivered ballot under Section 87.041, the early voting ballot board may: . . . (1) return the carrier envelope to the voter by mail . . . (2) notify the voter of the defect by telephone or e-mail and inform the voter that the voter may come to the early voting clerk's office in person to: (A) correct the defect; or (B) request to have the voter's application to vote by mail canceled under Section 84.032." Rather than receiving a letter showing a ballot-by-mail did not count, SB 1018 would permit voters to cure errors in advance of election day. Poll watchers should observe the process within 6 feet in accord with CDC's new norm. Thanks!

David King

self

Austin, TX

Honorable Members of the House Elections Committee, Please support SB 1018! It will help to ensure that all valid mail-in ballots are counted! It will strengthen the integrity and improve the accuracy of elections in Texas. Thank you for considering my comments and for your service.

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

Self

Galveston, TX

I was opposed to this bill in the Senate. I still have concerns.

It is good IF you let a voter correct his or her mail in ballot carrier envelope, you MUST do so for every voter's ballot in similar situation.

As an aside, I don't remember collecting phone numbers or email addresses for ballot by mail applications, that leaves us only one option, doing so by mail.

It is also good that allowing voters to correct their mail in ballots is PERMISSIVE and NOT MANDATORY because this could add additional costs and resources for County Clerks in counties that do this.

That leaves the question, is it the Early Voting Ballot Board that makes the decision?

I believe the County Clerk should have a say, since it is his or her resources that are being expended. As I read the bill, the County Clerk HAS NO SAY!

I much prefer Representative Jacey Jetton's bill, HB 3200 and its approach. That's the bill you should pass, not this one!

Jennifer Lane

Self

Denton, TX

This bill establishes a process by which voters can cure errors in mail ballots.

Please also recall Senate Bill 7 and accept Representative Beckley's amendment.

Jennifer Lane

Self

Denton, TX

Please pass SB 1018. It is good to see a bill that helps voters rather than hindering them.

Brenda McGahagin

Self, Registered Dietitian

Austin, TX

Dear House Elections Committee Members,

I am writing to ask that you ensure that SB 1018 passes out of committee. This bill provides options for voters to supply missing information or vote in person in instances of missing or mismatched voter signature, missing statement of residence, or missing witness information.

Thank you.

Richard Caldwell, Mr.

n/a

Boerne, TX

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I support this bill

Georgia Keysor, Ms.

Self - Retired

Austin, TX

Please support this bill. TEXAS DESERVES BETTER THAN JIM CROW

Carrie Moore

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

Vote yes. This doesn't go far enough. Americans are very able to fill out forms properly in order to vote. If we are not, we should not be voting.

Liudmila Homen

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

~~-----YES-----~~

But...What happened to personal responsibility?

Voting is a BIG DEAL. It's a voter's responsibility to make sure it's done correctly - why we demand so much extra work from the officials to make sure early voting ballots are correct?

That's not kindergarten.

Anyway, I expect this bill to have strong bipartisan support - so, YES

Richard Smith

Self

Corpus christi, TX

No,no,no.

shawn flanagan

self/retired

corpus christi, TX

This bill is not needed. Pass SB7 and HB6 and this not needed at all. Please do not waste time on this bill.

Larry Ringler

Self

Portland, TX

Vote YES! But voters also need to sign the carrier envelope. Failure to do so likely is a fraud warning sign. Additionally, the wording of (a-1) is suspect. The clerk should be required to "provide a form for a statement of residence who indicated a change of address within the county on the voter's application for an early voting ballot to be voted by mail." A change of address is a big deal, and should be done well before someone requests an early voting ballot. Also we shouldn't put our election officials in a

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position where they have to give uncooperative voters a second and third chance to fix their mistakes.

Paul Laudadio

Self

Corpus Christi, TX

Yes! Voters need to confirm that they voted correctly and sign a carrier envelope! Otherwise, it invites fraud!

Julie Kellogg

self

Corpus Christi, TX

Vote yes, but only because of the howling about "voter suppression" Voters need to take voting seriously, and do it correctly. It is a sorry situation when laws must be passed to accommodate not taking care to protect your vote. Signing the carrier envelope is a means of ensuring the vote is legitimate. If they don't sign it, this is probably an indication of fraud, like someone else is trying to vote for them. Why in (a-1), is the clerk not required to "provide a form for a statement of residence who indicated a change of address within the county on the voter's application for an early voting ballot to be voted by mail"? A change of residence is a big deal, that's how double votes happened in GA and NV, and needs to be handled long before someone asks for an early voting ballot. Why should election officials have to coddle voters? It is not their responsibility to deal with lazy, uncooperative voters who get a second chance, and maybe third chance to fix their mistakes. Take your vote seriously, do it responsibly, the rest of us just go vote in person. Anything made too easy, or given away is not valued.

Lesha Roberts

self

Hockley, TX

Texans are fed up with voter fraud and we demand real change. We WILL NOT forget 2020. We WILL NOT move on. We DEMAND enforcing laws on the books and passing legislation to make elections safer and harder to cheat. We need much stronger penalties for voter fraud. Ballot Harvesting should be illegal and NO drop boxes! One Person One Vote. Our elected officials need to do their job and protect voter integrity.