

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Elections
For HB 3159

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 4, 2023 2:55 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: April 4, 2023 10:30 AM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if

Lucy Frost, MS
Self / Writer - Producer - Marketer
Manchaca, TX

All Texans should be able to vote by absentee ballot. Many states have done this successfully for years.

BILL SARGENT, Former Galveston County Chief Deputy Clerk for Elections

Self

Galveston, TX

WRITTEN TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM SARGENT

[Former Galveston County Chief Deputy Clerk for Elections]

AGAINST HB 3159

Section 82.002 establishes who may vote by mail because of a disability or childbirth. It also sets forth the things that do not constitute a disability for the purpose of absentee voting. In the real world, nobody will ever question whether a person is, or is not, disabled. We had an incident in Galveston County where an individual claimed to be disabled and received a ballot by mail based upon that claim. In that same election this person served on the Early Voting Ballot Board and came to the Justice Center numerous times (where there was an Early Voting polling place). She wasn't disabled and could have voted in person, but nobody was willing to question her actions. And there were no sanctions against such behavior even if someone was willing to press the issue.

What this means is that any voter could claim being disabled and vote by mail, nobody will ever question it. Under Chairman Leach's bill that means that anybody could absentee vote electronically by downloading their ballot, completing it, and submitting it. Doing this raises major concerns.

The first concern is that this is slippery slope where the eventual goal is to allow the use the internet to complete and cast votes (as opposed to doing so by mailing it in).

We have taken major efforts to ensure that NO voting machine, or machines creating ballots or counting them, can have the capability to be connected to the internet. Any machines that can connect to the internet cannot be certified for use in the State of Texas. Moving in the direction of online voting flies in the face of these safeguards and opens the opportunity for major security risks while weakening our efforts to ensure integrity of the voting process.

But let's take a look at the back end process as well. Back in the day when I was the Chief Deputy Clerk for Elections in Galveston County we used Democracy Live's system to allow armed services personnel to submit ballots to us from overseas. Because these ballots were emailed to us or sent to us by snail mail, it required us to duplicate them on to ballot paper so that they could be scanned and tabulated electronically. This took time and opened the possibility of human error in the transcription process. It also cost the county \$1 per voter who used this system. If we were to increase the number of voters by allowing anyone claiming to be disabled to vote electronically, the process will be bogging down, it will increase the possibility of errors, and it will increase the cost of conducting our elections.

This bill, although well intentioned, is misguided and going down the wrong path from an election integrity point of view. I oppose this bill and respectfully ask that it be left pending with no action being taken this session.

Kathy Haigler

Self - election consultant

Dale, TX

PLEASE OPPOSE HB3159. "An accessible absentee mail system must be an electronic system, including software, used for the sole purpose of enabling ANY voter" means online voting available to EVERYONE. This is a terrible, terrible bill. Cloaked using the work "disabled", it still says ANY VOTER. No, No, NO! What kind of Republican carries a bill for online voting???

Melanie Brunson
self, retired
Livingston, TX

I am totally blind and for the past couple of years, I have had to rely on other people to fill out my ballots for me. On a couple of occasions, I discovered after my ballot was sent off that the person who had read me my ballot and attempted to mark my choices had misread something on the ballot, which meant that I cast my vote for something that I was actually against. I support this legislation because it would enable me to cast my votes independently, That would mean that if I make a mistake and cast my vote in error, it will be due to my own carelessness and not someone else's. Please support this bill and allow me the same right to cast my vote according to my own convictions and and with same degree of secrecy that voters who can see have. Thank you!

Mike Jackson
self - retired, RPT Angelina county Precinct 25 Chairman
Lufkin, TX

I strongly oppose this bill

Bettye Lemon, Ms
Self & Nueces Co Election Integrity Project
Kilgore, TX

Against because early voting electronically expands the possibility of fraud. As we are trying to eliminate processes that make fraud easier to accomplish, this bill appears to want to expand the possibility of fraud. With mail-in ballots and early (in person curbside voting), we don't need this.

Bettye Lemon, Ms
Self & Nueces Co Election Integrity Procect
Kilgore, TX

Favor.. Credit card contributions are still political campaign contributions. Reporting the receipt of these contributions and the expenses to process the credit card payments is an ethical and good business practice

Christina Drewry
Texas Freedom Coalition, self
Flint, TX

I oppose this bill. We do not need more electronic devices used in our elections. Mail in ballots are already a vulnerable segment of the election. I believe this piece of legislation will amplify the problem.

Patricia Tarpey
"Self and Election Integrity Project of Nueces County"
Houston, TX

NO. I am against this bill. I am against early voting electronically because it expands the possibility of fraud. As we are trying to eliminate processes that make fraud easier to accomplish, this bill appears to want to expand the possibility of fraud. With mail-in ballots and early (in person curbside voting), we don't need this

Kenneth Kasper
Self
New Braunfels, TX

I oppose this bill and want to go on record as such.

Michael Rittgers
Self Nueces County EIP
Corpus Christi, TX

No. I am against this bill. I am against early voting electronically because it expands the possibility of fraud. As we are trying to eliminate processes that make fraud easier to accomplish, this bill appears to want to expand the possibility of fraud. With mail-in ballots and early (in person curbside voting), we don't need this.

Cindy Adams
self/self-employed
New Braunfels, TX

Please support this bill to help persons with disabilities exercise their right to vote.

Lisa Covington
Self
San Antonio, TX

OPPOSE

Debbie Bowers
Na
Plano, TX

I oppose this bill....

This is not the right solution for this issue. It will open the door for mail-ballot fraud and is a trojan horse bill that will open up remote electronic voting.

Samue Aundrá Fryer
Self / Election Integrity Project of Nueces County
Corpus Christi, TX

No. I am against this bill regarding the accessible absentee ballot system for early voting electronically because it increases the possibility of fraud. Implementing processes to prevent fraud is essential to restoring public confidence in our election process. The legal use of mail-in ballots and in-person curbside voting makes measures outlined in this bill moot. This bill merely opens another avenue to election fraud.

Wendy McRoberts
Self
Danbury, TX

As a disabled 51 year old woman in Texas, most of the time I'm able to get to a county wide voting place during early voting gwhen my husband is off work and can drive me. However, sometimes th is isn't possible. During Nov 2022 elections, my Dad had been in the hospital for 6 weeks. He never received his mail in ballot and there was no remedy for him to vote. Three disabled people trying to juggle brain surgery, lung cancer and treatments is more than a burden. My Aunt lives in assisted care and no one drove her to vote in time. In 2020, my Dad's "curbside voting" involved hauling his oxygen inside the voting location and showing ID to hand over his mail in ballot. We have NEVER had issues voting before. Please make it easier for eligible voters to vote.

Chris Donofrio

Self

The Woodlands, TX

I strongly support HB 3159.

I urge you to pass it out of committee.

This bill provides a necessary tool to increase the number of voters and decrease disenfranchisement. The goal and methods provided are non-partisan.

Hopefully HB 3159 will increase confidence in our election system among those who believe the 2020 Presidential election was filled with fraud.

Respectfully,

Chris J. Donofrio

Monica Dean

Myself

Houston, TX

I Do NOT support this bill - it could lead to fraud

charles Cooper

Self

Joshua, TX

Please Reconsider this Bill! As a person with SEVERE disabilities I do not support this bill. While good intentioned, it is ripe for future mail in / Accessibility issues that make it easy to perpetrate fraud. While ADA forms of accessibility and accommodations are necessary they should NEVER come at the expense of election security. Thank you

Sheryl Miller

Self Homemaker

College Station, TX

I oppose this bill, because it causes further problems with election integrity.

Alexandra Lovett, Miss

Self. Private childcare

Fort Worth, TX

Only an idiot would vote in favor of this or think it's a good idea.

I had to check the box above to give my opinion but one thinks it would be a good idea to check the box above to vote? Hint: not a good idea

Shannon Ayres

Self

Frisco, TX

I am strongly opposed to HB 3159 and, in fact, to ALL forms of electronic voting. We need precinct level voting on paper ballots that are hand-counted. NO MORE MACHINES and absolutely no online voting. It's high time Texas treats our vote like the sacred privilege that it is rather than a nuisance that requires dangling reckless and dangerous carrots in order to entice people to exercise their right to elect our leaders. What's wrong with the way handicapped people have always voted?? We have sacrificed security for convenience long enough. No more. Vote NO on HB 3159. Thank you.

Angela Robertson
family
Dallas, TX
oppose

Tom Nobis
The Republican Party of Texas and Self
Houston, TX

I am Against this bill. It expands mail voting that has been known to have issues with fraud. The issue is the ability for seniors to vote. This is NOT the right solution for this issue. It will open the door for mail-ballot fraud and is a trojan horse bill that will open up remote electronic voting.

Elva Camacho
Self
Fort Worth, TX
OPPOSE!

Mary Fallert, RN retired or Mrs.
American/ citizen of the USA and a resident of Texas
Crandall, TX

I think this is a very bad bill. This bill does nothing but open up disabled citizen to cyber attacks and stolen identities. Nothing, Nothing ,nothing needs to be placed on the World Wide Web. It is ludicrous. Rep Leach needs to pull the bill and figure out how the disabled citizen can vote. I am disabled myself but if I can still get up and out of my house to go to my doctor I can figure out how to get to a voting place. I suspect anyone else can also.

Robert Jacoby
Dallas County Republican Party Election Integrity Committee
Addison, TX

Dear Chairman Smith, Vice Chair Bucy and Committee,

HB 3159 if passed into law, will set a dangerous precedent; electronic voting NOT at an official poll location.

Even if the goal is sending electronic ballots, via email, to be printed by the voter, marked and US mailed in, this starts the slippery slope of ALL electronic voting, outside of polling locations.

Voting is a vital citizen duty. Voting in person for the vast majority of voters, helps demonstrate transparency in elections.

Transparency is already in question by many in the electorate. Do not lesson transparency by promoting email ballots, future electronic signatures for those not at the polls.

If computer hacks are real, what could go wrong, sending ballots via email?

Julie Lawrence
district 98
Grapevine, TX

This bill increases the likelihood of voter fraud. At this time, there isn't a technical way to validate the voter or ballot integrity. Additionally, it is a gateway to universal online voting. Talk about a bill waiting to be hacked and affecting the future of the great state of Texas. Please do not send or release this bill to the chamber floor.

Sincerely, Julia Lawrence, District 98, citizen of Texas

Mary Lowe
Families Engaged
Colleyville, TX

This is NOT the correct solution. It opens the door for more mail in ballot fraud. Which is already a huge problem
Vote NO and go back to the drawing board

Kim Worley, mrs
self real estate
Arlington, TX

I oppose this bill This is ridiculous and leaves so much room for voter fraud. Mr Leach has been under a lot of scrutiny and this would only help his platform. We vote NO and ask for you to do the same.

Charlene Reagan
Self and True Texas Project
SPICEWOOD, TX

AGAINST 3159. We don't need to add any additional absentee measures. As a poll watcher, I have witnessed that there are already many options available to those needing help to vote. Mail in ballots are available and much of what is proposed in this bill is already available on site to those needed during both early voting and election day voting.

Leslie Hooper
Families Engaged
Palo Pinto, TX

I oppose this bill. All voting should be done in person. Quit opening up our elections to fraudulent voters.

Clay Drury
Myself
Dallas, TX

This is an extremely bad idea that will lead to more voter fraud.

Cyrena Nolan
Texas First! Leader in Secure Elections
Dallas, TX

This is going in the wrong direction !
Our current elections are not secure and the machines need to be removed . This bill opens the door for cell phone / internet voting , yet another avenue to disenfranchise voters. Enough! Secure our elections - we need a public hearing on HB5234 NOW . Texans deserve elections they can trust

Tonya McCrary
Self
Argyle, TX

I highly oppose HB 3159 as I feel it will cause even more overall issues with voter fraud.

Larissa Mears
Self
Leander, TX

I oppose this bill. This sets up even more election fraud. Thank you

Daniel Bernal

Self

Fairview, TX

We are opposed to this Bill

I is not the right way to help people vote

Will only open the door to more cheating

Very opposed to this

Thank you

Richard McKenzie

self - retired fixed income derivatives trader

Austin, TX

I oppose this bill.

HB3159 requires the creation and allows the use of a electronic system for mail-in voting by anyone who, without requiring proof of Their condition, "may require help" or may have their health "endangered" by voting in person; or by anyone who works for a government entity. The description of those eligible allows virtually anyone to participate. The act calls for a system to mark and submit paper ballots, which presumably would need be done remotely using the "software" the act references. This sounds like a recipe for creating security vulnerabilities. A software system that necessarily replicates the functions of in-person voting and makes those functions remotely accessible to anyone who claims even a temporary disability creates myriad opportunities for abuse.

Let's restore citizens' confidence in the integrity of our elections by re-instituting serially numbered paper ballots cast in our precincts on one day by registered citizens who prove their identity, and count those ballots in each precinct in the presence of high-resolution video viewable by all.

Rebecca McGee

Self

Conroe, TX

I strongly Oppose HB3159 as it will create opportunities for fraud.

Sarah Reichardt

Self - implementation

Keller, TX

I do not support this. There are better solutions to address voting accessibility than moving to online voting. It will open the door for electronic ballot fraud.

Patricia Yeager

Self

Southlale, TX

Do not pass this bill! It will only open the door to fraud and illegal mail -in ballots.

Kelly Simpson

Self

Southlake, TX

I oppose this bill due to opens door to electronic and mail in ballots. This is'nt the solution.

Pamela Woods
Election Integrity Nueces County
Corpus Christi, TX

No. I am against this bill. I am against early voting electronically because it expands the possibility of fraud. My personnel opinion is that all electronic voting needs to be ended. Anything that has a wifi connection is perfect for manipulation, locally and internationally

Stacey Braden
Self, Agent
Benbrook, TX

I oppose this bill!

Stacie Matson
Bexar County Election Integrity and self
Boerne, TX

DO NOT PASS THIS BILL. This is electronic, which needs IP address. The idea is good but this is not the way to do it. They mentioned this would be for dyslexia people, this is crazy. Too many loop holes in this particular format even if SOS is in control. Looks like Absolutely no accountability is in the bill.

susan Lucas
self
BRYAN, TX

Please vote NO!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Kimberly Bridges Young
Self, and Election Integrity Project of Nueces County
Corpus Christi, TX

No. I am against this bill. I am against early voting electronically because it expands the possibility of fraud. As we are trying to eliminate processes that make fraud easier to accomplish, this bill appears to want to expand the possibility of fraud. With mail-in ballots and early (in person curbside voting), we don't need this.

Cynthia Dwyer
The Tarrant Together Project
Fort Worth, TX

Hello,

All US citizens have the right to vote if they meet the requirements. Some folks with disabilities require additional accommodations to cast their votes. Voting by mail should be an option for ALL Texans regardless of need. At a minimum Texans with disabilities that have mobility issues should have the right to vote via mail if required. Please pass HB 3159 out of committee today. Thank you.

Debbie Duke, SREC
self
McGregor, TX

With current law, an individual merely needs to declare they have a disability. We have no standard for disability, it is what the voter says it is and cannot be questioned therefore the potential for fraud and abuse is without bounds. I am firmly against this bill.

Kayla Lain
Families Engaged
Godley, TX

I oppose HB 3159 because it opens the door for ballot fraud and is a trojan horse bill that will open up remote electronic voting.

Roberta LeMore, Mrs.
Myself
Rockwall, TX

Writing you about HB 3159 ---PLEASE don't do this. There's enough fraudulent voting as it is. If you open it up to online voting it will be a circus. What did disabled people used to do? Did they just not vote? I'd like to know. This is slightly daft thinking. Please give this more time and think of a better way.