

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence
For HB 3166

Compiled on: Sunday, March 26, 2023 3:26 PM

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Hearing Date: March 22, 2023 8:00 AM

Sarah Berel-Harrop
self / Seminarian / Director of Religious Education & Intern Minister
Farmers Branch, TX

I oppose this bill. If there is a caseload issue, creating a new court that is geographically based seems fair. However to create a court of appeals and carving out suits involving state agencies does not make sense. There is no specialized knowledge needed to hear these cases.

Ware Wendell, Executive Director
Texas Watch
Austin, TX

I am the Executive Director of Texas Watch, a statewide, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that has worked to protect consumers and our courts for nearly 25 years. We write today in opposition to HB 3166 because it is a solution in search of a problem.

Stated plainly, we believe HB 3166 is not necessary. Texas simply does not need a Fifteenth Court of Appeals. The Third Court of Appeals is handling its caseload well and fulfilling all of its duties; there is no compelling reason to single this court out or strip it of its jurisdiction over matters involving the state.

If something isn't broken, the government shouldn't "fix" it. Governmental meddling and misadventures often produce many unintended consequences. For example, the creation of the Fifteenth Court and the use of other courts' facilities may very well impede their important work.

Furthermore, taking power from local appellate justices and shifting it to statewide justices will create pressure on those judicial candidates to raise even more money to run and serve. This will empower wealthy interests in our urban centers but disempower the less wealthy, rural parts of our state.

Importantly, Art. 5, Sec. 6 (b) of the Texas Constitution requires local appellate courts with justices "elected by the qualified voters of their respective districts," not statewide courts. Therefore, we believe the legislation runs afoul of our state's highest law. Precious legislative time and energy should not be wasted on unconstitutional measures.

For these reasons, we respectfully oppose HB 3166. We appreciate your consideration of our concerns and urge you to vote no.

Roger Borgelt
CALA of Central Texas
Austin, TX
I support this bill