

March 27, 2017

**The Honorable Lieutenant Governor of Texas, Dan Patrick**  
**The Honorable Members of the Texas Senate**

RE: Senate Bill 5 and Related Election Reform Legislation

Lt. Governor and Senators:

This coalition letter expresses our deep interest and full support for legislative election reform bills filed this session that will bring integrity to all elections in Texas. The election integrity and ballot security we seek **begins** at the point of voter registration, **follows** through the process of the actual casting of votes, and **ends** with the preservation of each voter record in a manner that ensures ***every vote cast is a legal vote and verifiable***, should the election results of any race be called into question.

Fortunately, for Texans, our election statutes originate in our State Constitution Article 6, Section 4: *"In all elections by the people, the vote shall be by ballot, and the Legislature shall provide for the numbering of tickets and make such other regulations as may be necessary to detect and punish fraud and preserve the purity of the ballot box..."*

As part of the 85<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session's array of election reform bills designed to ensure integrity in our elections, ***we write to express our support for the efforts of Senator Huffman to save Voter ID with Senate Bill 5.*** We strongly supported the common sense Voter ID law in Senate Bill 14 from 2011; however, the full Fifth Circuit agreed with the Department of Justice that the state law violates federal voting law because it does not contain an affidavit procedure. Now, the Department of Justice has informed the district court that the enactment of Senate Bill 5 should allow Texas to win the entire case because it contains the affidavit procedure the Fifth Circuit specified.

In addition to Senate Bill 5, the Legislature is currently considering other lawful, essential election reforms. First, ***we support legislation that would restore the ability of Texas to participate in programs like Interstate Crosscheck.*** Such programs ensure voters are citizens and are not on multiple voter rolls. However, Texas cannot enforce a current law that allows it because of a court ruling that sharing of information such as dates of birth violates the state's open records laws. Legislation could make that information public and allow Texas to participate in crosscheck programs.

Second, ***we support legislation that would increase penalties for election crimes.*** Many important offenses in the Election Code are only misdemeanors. These low penalties dis-incentivize prosecutors from pursuing these important crimes and incentivize criminals to commit them.



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Third, we support legislation that would address the issue of organizations that harvest ballots by enacting a conspiracy statute. Courts have recognized that mail-in ballots pose a serious risk for fraud. Current laws are so focused on individuals that commit election crimes that they are ineffective at addressing criminal organizations. Copying the type of organized crime statute we have in the Penal code into the Election Code would enable prosecutors to more effectively address the organizations that unlawfully harvest mail-in ballots.

**We believe the passage of Senate Bill 5 and these additional reforms will ensure the validity of Voter ID and help restore election integrity this session.** Texans possess an entirely reasonable expectation that our legislature will do everything in its power to ensure confidence and trust in Texas election results.

We respectfully ask for your most earnest support for these election accountability measures.

For Liberty – for Texas,



JoAnn Fleming	Executive Director, Grassroots America
Teresa Beckmeyer	GOP County Chair, Mitchell County
Trayce Bradford	President, Texas Eagle Forum
Dr. Dwayne Collins	President, Edom TEA Party
Connie Curry	Conservative Leadership Lubbock County
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Suzette Griffin	President, Clear Lake TEA Party
Jeremiah Hunter	Chair, We the People – Longview TEA Party
Bill Hussey	Founder/Past President, Llano Tea Party
Robin & Jim Lennon	President & Director, Kingwood TEA Party
Matt Long	President, Fredericksburg TEA Party
Julie McCarty	President, NE Tarrant TEA Party
Stacy McMahan	Exec. Director/Pres. East Texans for Liberty
Ray Myers	President, Kaufman County TEA Party
Pat Tibbs	President, Montgomery County TEA Party
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