



2019 ACTION PAPER - VOTING RIGHTS & ELECTION LAWS

We envision a democracy where every person has the desire, the right, the knowledge and the confidence to participate. We believe democracy works best when eligible voters can participate.

LWVVTX urges the 86th Legislative Session to improve the safety and security of Texas voter registration, voting equipment and systems. Our priorities include:

Improved Safety, Security & Accuracy of Texas Voter Registration & Voting

Texas should take advantage of the modern technology of **electronic voter registration** to improve voting system security, voter roll accuracy and save millions of dollars compared to outdated paper registration. After a decade of other states using these systems, we know they are beneficial to voters and the state and county governments alike.

While we have yet to see evidence of cybersecurity breaches in Texas elections, we request actions to ensure against them in the future. We support moving to **improved voting equipment & systems** that include:

- voter-verified **paper audit trail equipment**, where voters can verify their intended selections before casting their ballot
- **audits after each election** to ensure ballots are correctly counted
- improved **voter registration database security**
- increased **cybersecurity and physical security resources and training** of election officials

Needed Tweaks to Reflect Realities of Today

- Adjust the time period & mechanisms for requesting **ballots by mail and the return ballot** (post office delivery commitments have changed and the laws should reflect them)
- Offer more clearly stated and **easier to read election forms**

Maintain Our Quality System While Making Improvements

While there are improvements that can be made, there is much about our voting system that is admired by others around the country. We celebrate these:

- Texas is **a leader in returning suffrage** to its citizens who have been in the criminal justice system and fulfilled their punishment
- Our important **early voting period** provides opportunities, especially on weekend days, to those unable to vote on Election Day.

Voting Available to All Texas Citizens

Each eligible Texan should be able to easily cast a vote. There are many election laws proposed each Texas Legislative Session to amend the Texas Election Code. Among those we support are those to maximize use of **uniform election dates**, efficiently **share polling locations**, or make **ballot by mail documents more convenient/accessible and understandable** along with proper safeguards. To follow legislation underway on these and other issues regularly visit <https://my.lwv.org/texas/advocacy-issues/voting-rights-election-laws-texas>.

*Cinde Weatherby, Voting Rights & Election Law Chair
cindeweatherby@gmail.com; 512/560-1334*