



We've All Read the Bill: How SB 7 Imperils Texas Democracy

- **Giving partisan poll watchers free rein to disrupt voting despite their notorious track record of intimidating Black voters and voters of color:** Watchers are agents of political campaigns whose role should be limited to monitoring voting, but who have a well-documented history of intimidating voters in Texas, particularly those from communities of color. Yet Section 3.08 would give bigoted watchers a dangerous new power to videotape voters at the polls, which will unleash more voter harassment and threaten ballot secrecy. Other parts would embolden these partisans by giving them new rights over voting operations (Sec. 3.03, 3.10, and 4.03) and by punishing poll workers when they try to exercise their traditional authority to prevent bigoted watchers from interfering with voting (Sec. 3.04, 4.01, and 4.02).
- **Eliminating methods of voting that are critical for people of color, working people of all stripes, and those with heavy family responsibilities, and which made our elections safer during COVID:** Section 3.06 would force Texas' largest counties to move polling locations out of communities of color and into whiter suburbs and make voting megacenters impossible. Section 3.15 would prohibit expanded early voting hours past 9pm, including Harris County's popular overnight voting program, which helped people whose background or schedules made voting during "regular" hours too difficult. Sections 3.07, 3.20, and 3.21 would ban drive through voting, which allowed people to vote safely from their vehicles. Both drive through voting and expanded early voting hours were used disproportionately by people of color, and taking these options away from them is a direct attack on their right to vote.
- **Targeting voters with disabilities and limited English proficiency:** Section 3.10 seeks to smother curbside voting with onerous and unnecessary new requirements that serve no purpose other than to make it harder for people to cast a ballot. People who give three or more curbside voters a ride to the polls would have to fill out useless new paperwork. Every other passenger would have to exit a vehicle before curbside voting can be administered, potentially forcing small children, the elderly, or other passengers with disabilities to wait outside in the rain or in extreme temperatures. Both of these provisions would gravely endanger Souls to the Polls programs that are popular in Black communities and offer rides to the polls after Sunday worship. Section 3.11 would require those who assist voters to disclose the medical conditions that render voting assistance necessary and their relationship to the voter--private information that shouldn't be required in order to vote.
- **Imposing new and unnecessary barriers on voting by mail:** Section 2.01 would forbid election officials from doing anything that could be considered "soliciting" a vote by mail application. Election officials could not even mention the mere existence of voting by mail -- or the process for applying for and submitting a mail ballot -- without fear that they will be accused of breaking the law. Generic words of encouragement, such as a county posting "Don't forget to turn in your ballot applications by the deadline" on social media, would now be illegal. Further, Section 2.04 prohibits election officials from "distributing" a ballot application without a request from a voter first, a broad prohibition that forbids even passively distributing application forms, such as leaving them out on a table for voters to pick up or posting the forms online. Further, county elections offices could no longer provide nonpartisan civic engagement groups, churches, or grassroots volunteers with applications for *them* to distribute to voters.



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Organizations Signing On to This Statement

ACLU of Texas
ADAPT of Texas
ADL Texas
All on the Line
allgo
Avow
Brennan Center for Justice
Center for Civic & Public Policy Improvement
Children's Defense Fund - Texas
Civitech
Clean Elections Texas
Common Cause Texas
Common Ground for Texans
Dallas V.O.T.E.S.
Deeds Not Words
El Paso Desert ADAPT
Engage Action
Faith Commons
Faith Forward Dallas
Faith in Texas
Gulf Coast ADAPT
Houston Food Bank
Houston in Action
Indivisible TX Lege
JCRC of the Jewish Federation of San Antonio
Jolt Action
Korean American Voters League
Lake Highlands Area Moms and More Against Racism
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law
League of Women Voters of Texas
Local Elections in America Project, Rice University
LULAC
March to the Polls
Mi Familia Vota
MOVE Texas Action Fund
National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter
National Council of Jewish Women
National Council of Jewish Women San Antonio
OCA-Greater Houston
Personal Attendant Coalition of Texas
Planned Parenthood Texas Votes
Progress Texas
Public Citizen Texas office
REV UP Texas
SEIU Texas
Sierra Club, Houston Regional Group
Texans Against Gerrymandering
Texas AFL-CIO
Texas AFT
Texas Alliance for Retired Americans
Texas Civil Rights Project
Texas Freedom Network
Texas Impact
Texas NAACP
Texas Organizing Project
Texas Poor People's Campaign
Texas Progressive Action Network
Texas Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism (RAC-TX)
Texas State Teachers Association
UnidosUS
Voting Rights Lab
Workers Defense Action Fund
Young Black Lawyers' Organizing Coalition (YBLOC)