



CITY OF HOUSTON

Sylvester Turner

Mayor

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May 15th, 2019

The Honorable Stephanie Klick
Chair, House Committee on Elections
Texas House Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Chairwoman Klick,

Today I write to express my opposition to Senate Bill 9, as it is not in the best interest of Texas. I do want to express support for the goal that Senator Hughes has called the “heart” of the bill: having a paper backup for recount purposes. Had the bill been limited to this provision, it would have attracted wide support. However, Senate Bill 9 threatens to make it harder for some people to vote by mail, for disabled voters to receive assistance, and would require people giving rides to the polls to sign sworn affidavits.

Several provisions are both unnecessary and suppressive in their effects, including:

- **Expanding the ability of the Secretary of State to share personal information,** including social security numbers and birth dates, is questionable at best. The current Secretary of State should not have his failed efforts to systematically remove voters from the rolls rewarded with expanded powers.
- **Escalating the penalty for mistakes on a voter registration form** from a Class B misdemeanor to a state jail felony is bad policy, specifically as it could affect transgender or divorced citizens. Is changing the penalty from 180 days in state jail and a \$2,000 fine, to 2 years and \$10,000 fine, really designed to do anything other than suppress registrations?
- **Adding needless obstacles regarding the person providing transportation for curbside voting.** This fails in any way to recognize the practical application in delays this would cause. The Metropolitan Multiservice Center (MMSC) has served as the busiest early-voting location in Harris County for over a decade. The MMSC is the headquarters for the Houston Parks and Recreation Department’s Adaptive Recreation Section. This provision could create significant delays in an already busy city facility.

I urge you to join with Disability Rights Texas, the Texas Civil Rights Project, and the League of Women Voters in opposing this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sylvester Turner". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "T".

Sylvester Turner
Mayor