



December 19, 2024

Re: The Speaker of the House race and the rights of Texas voters

Dear members of the Texas House of Representatives,

As January 14 approaches, we know that each of you is carefully considering how you will cast your vote for Speaker of the House. We are a group of nonpartisan organizations working on voting rights in Texas, and we ask you to carefully consider how each Speaker candidate approaches this crucial topic.

Representatives of both parties have an interest in helping Texans vote. Preliminary data indicates that only 11.3 million Texans, or 61% of registered voters, cast ballots in the November 2024 election.¹ Our state’s voter turnout was down from 2020 in both solid red counties *and* big blue counties.² As House Representatives weigh the Speaker candidates, we ask each of you to consider each individual’s record on and commitment to voter access for all Texans.

To be qualified to serve as Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, a candidate must agree to protect the voting rights of all eligible Texans. Specifically, candidates must oppose any legislation that creates new barriers to voting and ensure that such proposals never reach the House floor.

Candidates should also demonstrate a strong commitment to safeguarding widely supported voting accessibility practices and programs, including the 12-day Early Voting period, curbside voting, the Countywide Polling program, voting by mail, existing voter registration rights, and the high school voter registration law.

The ideal candidate will take proactive steps to expand voter access. This includes advocating for reforms such as expanding voting by mail, expansive public education around the state’s voter ID

¹ Pooja Salhotra & Yuriko Schumacher, “Texas Voter Turnout Falls in 2024 despite Record Registration.” *Texas Tribune*, Nov. 6, 2024, www.texastribune.org/2024/11/06/texas-voter-turnout-election-2024-registration/.

² *Id.*

laws for voting in-person and by mail,³ and adopting an online voter registration system, bringing Texas in line with the 42 other states that have already implemented this practice.

We ask all House members to seek out a Speaker candidate who will not place new burdens on voters in our state. As nonpartisan groups who do democracy work year-round, we believe that such a promise is crucial to the future of Texas. Thank you for continuing to support the voters who elected you to serve.

Sincerely,

ACLU of Texas

Mary Ibarra, Policy and Advocacy Strategist

Clean Elections Texas

Dave Jones, President

Common Cause Texas

Emily Eby French, Policy Director

Every Texan

Luis Figueroa, Chief of Legislative Affairs

Houston Area Urban League

Ray Shackelford, Vice President of Equitable Justice

League of Women Voters of Texas

Joyce LeBombard, President

Legal Defense Fund

Christina Das, Counsel, Black Voters on the Rise

Progress Texas Institute

Reagan Stone, Advocacy Manager

Texas Civil Rights Project

Veronikah Warmes, Voting Rights Policy Attorney

VoteRiders

Vicente Martinez, Texas State Coordinator

³ Cora Henry, “Citizens in Texas and Georgia Don’t Understand Voter ID Laws, Survey Shows.” *Brennan Center for Justice*, Dec. 2, 2024, <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/citizens-texas-and-georgia-dont-understand-voter-id-laws-survey-shows>.