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STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**TRAVIS CLARDY**

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DISTRICT 11

Thank you, Chairman Raskin and Ranking Member Sessions, for the opportunity to speak about election integrity in Texas. For the record, my name is Travis Clardy, and I am proud to represent the people of House District 11 and Cherokee, Nacogdoches, and Rusk Counties in the Texas House of Representatives. The right to vote by a secure, private ballot is a fundamental right in this country that should be protected, and the laws protecting the vote should be debated honestly and vigorously. That is exactly what we have desired to do for the last 8 months.

While I am grateful for the invitation to be here, I believe this conversation is best suited for the Texas House floor in our state's capitol in Austin, rather than a committee hearing room in Washington, D.C. But I must take some exception to the premise of why we were invited to testify. There is no assault on voting rights in Texas. But there is a real danger posed to our democracy. Not the well-intentioned and reasoned provisions in HB 3 to better secure our election processes, but instead the growing threat of practices too long tolerated to deprive individuals of voting for the candidates of their choice and diluting the essential democratic concept of one person, one vote.

Moreover, while I appreciate the hard work and effort trying to pass a one size fits all federal omnibus election bill, I am reminded of that familiar Texas adage to be leery of those who pronounce they are with the federal government and are here to help!



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The fact is, Texas has on her books, a very strong and effective set of election laws, and a dedicated group of election professionals that I believe can or should be the envy of every state in the union. This is most recently reflected in the outcome of this Tuesday's runoff election for CD6 and the victory of our Texas House colleague, Jake Ellzey. Once again, Texans enjoyed a safe, secure, timely, and well-run election in which we can all take pride with trust and confidence.

But first, to my Democratic colleagues: it's time to come home. Enough is enough; you've had your fun; it's time to get back to work. You know, as well as I do, this legislation has been negotiated in good faith.

House Bill 3, the reason we are here today, is a sound and tailored bill to improve existing law. And like every bill, it can get better through debate and deliberation. But unfortunately, until our colleagues decide to come home, that is not possible. In Texas, we allow everyone to submit amendments to be argued during floor debates. This is an inclusive process that has served us well and is available to those who want to participate.

Simply put, we all should want to make it easier to vote and harder to cheat. House Bill 3 expands voting hours, makes it possible for voters to correct their mail-in-ballots, penalizes vote harvesting, extends identification requirements to mail-in-ballots.

In fact, it is such a good bill that the professional associations representing election administrators and county clerks testified favorably that with a few



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technical, process changes, they would change their formal position from neutral to supporting the bill, which we should all want.

Now, let me address some of the misconceptions that have made their way around the national media concerning House Bill 3:

First- House Bill 3 does not limits hours of voting. Actually, House Bill 3 expands voting time from current law of 7am-7pm to 6am-10pm, an increase of 4 hours per day. Further, employers are required to allow employees to vote or face criminal sanctions.

Second- House Bill 3 not does eliminate curb-side voting. In Texas, curbside voting is only allowed for disabled voters, an accommodation that allows these citizens to drive to the polls and participant in-person rather than mailing in their ballot, which remains an option.

Third- Poll watchers cannot intimidate voters. This bill does not permit voter intimidation, and observers cannot watch a voter actually cast his or her ballot in the booth, nor can they film election activity. Election observers can be ejected from the polling place if they interfere in the election process or commit a breach of the peace or violation of law.

Fourth- House Bill 3 does not allow mail in ballots to be thrown out automatically. Rather, for the first time, it allows for the voters to cure mistakes.



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Fifth- House Bill 3 does not impose unreasonable burdens on voting assistance. It simply expands current law regarding the required information and the assistant's oath before aiding the voter.

But folks, let's make no mistake about it: illegal voting does occur in the State of Texas and cannot be tolerated. Confidence in our elections, like faith in our judiciary and trust in our law enforcement, is vital to the perpetuation of the American experiment and it is our best and utmost assurance to the future of our Republic. This is the duty we all have to our constituents and the oath to our country. I believe we are up to the task. Thank you for the opportunity to be here today.