



TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JACEY JETTON

DISTRICT 26

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HB 6 Protects Voters in Vulnerable Communities

AUSTIN, TX – State Representative Jacey Jetton expressed his full support for House Bill 6, following extensive and thorough public testimony in the House Elections Committee. Jetton also expressed concern over the rampant misinformation surrounding Chairman Briscoe Cain's bill.

"House Bill 6 does not impact your ability to vote, but instead protects your vote from theft and fraud." Jetton said. "The Elections Committee heard testimony from the Attorney General's Office stating the primary victims of ballot harvesting and voter assistance fraud are the elderly, members of minority communities, and those who live in low-income areas. This is completely unacceptable. House Bill 6 increases protections for vulnerable communities by implementing common sense election reforms."

Members of the bipartisan Elections Committee received testimony from across the state. Individuals with a variety of political affiliations shared their personal experiences with voter fraud and many asked the committee members to support HB 6. Some commentators and businesses condemned the bill, though much of the criticism of HB 6 actually centers around misinformation and issues not discussed in this particular bill. Rather, House Bill 6 will accomplish reforms regarding:

- **Stop Paid Ballot Harvesting/Trafficking:** A bipartisan commission on election reform, chaired by President Jimmy Carter and James Baker, advised, "Fraud occurs in several ways. Absentee ballots remain the largest source of potential voter fraud...Vote buying schemes are more difficult to detect when citizens vote by mail." President Carter reaffirmed this concern in May 2020, but ballot harvesting is not explicitly prohibited by state law. HB 6 would criminalize those attempting to exploit vulnerable communities by creating penalties for individuals paying for ballot harvesting/trafficking.
- **Stop Voter Assistance Fraud:** HB 6 strengthens the security of voters needing assistance by requiring a voter assistant to complete a form describing their involvement. Voters with vision limitations, who do not speak English as their first language, and voters who require assistance for other reasons, are the individuals most likely to be victimized by Voter Assistance Fraud. HB 6 protects those voters by requiring information from the assister.
- **Accountability in the Polls:** Poll workers are assigned by political parties and poll watchers help to ensure there is accountability in following our election laws.
- **Preventing Voter Intimidation:** The Election Code does not clearly define which individuals are allowed in polling locations, ballot board facilities, or central count locations. HB 6 does not change who can access these areas, but summarizes the information currently scattered throughout the election code and adds an offense for individuals unlawfully loitering in election locations. Jetton filed HB 1128 with nearly identical language, which passed unanimously out of the Elections Committee.



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Chairman Cain presented House Bill 6 to the bipartisan Committee on Elections on April 1st. The hearing for House Bill 6 lasted more than 20 hours, including testimony from agencies and Texans from every region of the state. If the bill receives enough votes to pass favorably out of the Elections Committee, it will move to the Calendars Committee to determine whether or not the bill will be heard on the floor of the House of Representatives during this Legislative Session.

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