

UNIVERSITY of
HOUSTON

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

Label: SGAR-58003

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Author(s): Director of External Affairs Nguyen, Executive Assistant White

Sponsor(s): Senator Castilla, Senator Hasan, Senator Imran, Senator Lopez, Senator Patterson, Senator Sanchez, Senator Shajan, Senator Shreim, Senator Teccsi, Senator Urquieta, Senator Worsham, Vice President Alghafir, Director of Public Relations Sabhnani, Director of Outreach Bennett, Chief of Staff Bonnete, Associate Director of External Affairs Menon, The College Democrats at UH, UH NAACP Unit #6806, Texas Rising UH Chapter

Draft: Final

Resolution in Opposition to Texas Voter Suppression Bills

Whereas, the state of Texas has a long history of voter suppression;

Whereas, Senate Bill 7 (SB7) was introduced in the past 87th Texas Legislative Session but was blocked from passage;

Whereas, the aforementioned bill would have allowed the courts the ability to void supposed illegal ballots and would have sought to prevent the education, encouragement, and empowerment of potential voters;

Whereas, Governor Greg Abbott called for a special session of the Texas Legislature starting July 8th in which legislation to suppress voters were filed including House Bill 3 (HB3) and Senate Bill 1 (SB1) with similar intentions to SB7;

Whereas, the aforementioned bills would ban 24-hour and drive-thru voting pioneered in Harris County during the 2020 general election to increase accessibility;

Whereas, the aforementioned bills would require voters to provide either a driver's license number or their Social Security number on applications for a mail-in ballot potentially preventing citizens without identification from voting;

Whereas, the aforementioned bills would enforce restrictive policies upon election workers under threat of felony charges;

Whereas, the aforementioned bills would further the powers and autonomy of partisan poll watchers potentially increasing voter intimidation;

Whereas, the aforementioned bills would add further limitations on individuals assisting disabled or non-English speaking voters;

Whereas, the aforementioned bills would ban election officials and local groups from increasing voter accessibility through the proliferation of mail-in ballot applications through which Harris County sent 2.4 million applications to every eligible voters during the 2020 general election¹;

Whereas, HB3 would ban in-person drop boxes for mail-in ballots and prohibit electronic signatures, further limiting online voter registration practices, and adding an extra hurdle for voters who do not have access to reliable mailing and printing services to complete their application;

Whereas, SB1 would purge naturalized citizens from the voter rolls using outdated data demanding them to prove their citizenship status;

Whereas, the aforementioned bill would eliminate the straight-ticket voting option, inconveniencing the democratic process by discouraging voters through increased wait times and a more tedious voting procedure;

Whereas, the aforementioned bill would discourage volunteers transporting 3 or more persons to the polls simultaneously by requiring the disclosure of personal information by said volunteers;

Whereas, the aforementioned bill calls for the limiting of early voting hours from 6 A.M. to 9 P.M. and HB3 calls for the limiting of early voting hours from 6 A.M. to 10 P.M.;

¹ [How Harris County became the epicenter of a struggle over voting rights | The Texas Tribune](#)

Whereas, the Voting Rights Act of 1965 aims to increase the number of registered voters in areas with significant histories of discrimination and outlaws any discriminatory voting practices²;

Whereas, the Voting Accessibility for the Elderly and Handicapped Act of 1984 requires polling places to be accessible for disabled voters and offers voting aides for the elderly and handicapped³;

Whereas, the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 expands access for every American, regardless of disability or ethnicity, regarding their ability to vote⁴;

Whereas, the rights of 17 million registered voters in Texas are at risk⁵;

Whereas, the 2020 election cycle saw a record-breaking voter turnout in Harris County with over 1,600,000 ballots cast⁶;

Whereas, the aforementioned bills would directly affect voters of Harris County and disenfranchise voters of marginalized minority communities;

Whereas, the aforementioned bills would apply to the University of Houston, which had an enrollment of over 47,000 students in Fall 2020⁷;

Whereas, over 1,000,000 voters in Texas under the age of 30 casted their ballots by the end of the early voting period⁸;

Whereas, in 2020, some University of Houston students who registered using the institution's zip code (77204) were turned away from the polls due to a status error regarding the validity of their zip code of residence⁹;

Whereas, the responsibility should not be on college students to ensure that voting is accessible.

² [Congress and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 | National Archives](#)

³ [A Guide to Disability Rights Laws \(ada.gov\)](#)

⁴ [A Guide to Disability Rights Laws \(ada.gov\)](#)

⁵ [January 2021 Voter Registration Figures \(state.tx.us\)](#)

⁶ [Harris County Voter Registration Figures \(state.tx.us\)](#)

⁷ [New Statistical Handbook - University of Houston \(uh.edu\)](#)

⁸ [Young Voters are Breaking Turnout Records in Texas \(texasobserver.org\)](#)

⁹ [Students concerned of possible voter suppression in Harris County - The Cougar \(thedailycougar.com\)](#)

Therefore, be it enacted by the Senate of the Student Government Association of the University of Houston:

That the University of Houston Student Government Association strongly opposes House Bill 3, Senate Bill 1, and any future legislation passed within the Texas Legislature, and the University of Houston, that would erect deliberate barriers to voting — potentially restricting any American on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression, from exercising their constitutional right to participate in the democratic process;

Be it further enacted, that the University of Houston Student Government Association urges members of the Texas Legislature to reject HB3, SB1, and any similar legislation;

Be it further enacted, that the University of Houston Student Government Association reaffirms its commitment to promoting and expanding voter registration and student civic engagement on campus ensuring accessible elections for all;

Be it further enacted, the University of Houston Student Government Association calls upon University of Houston Administration to also publicly commit to expanding voter registration and engagement efforts on campus;

Be it further enacted, that the University of Houston Student Government Association calls upon fellow student governments of other institutions of higher education across the state of Texas to unite in issuing a joint public statement opposing HB3, SB1, and any future attempts of voter suppression and commit to making efforts to expand voter registration and engagement on their respective campuses.

Arsalan Darbin

Student Government President

Date of President's Approval: _____

APPROVED

David Paul Hilton

David Paul Hilton

Speaker of the Senate

Date of Senate Approval: 7-19-2021

