

# Texas Conservative Grassroots Coalition for Election Integrity and Ballot Security

May 24, 2017

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of Texas

Dear Governor Abbott:

Thank you for prioritizing ballot integrity this session. With recent media reports about voter fraud throughout the Metroplex, and multiple ongoing investigations in progress by the Texas Attorney General's Office, it gets clearer every day that you were correct when you cited voter fraud as a major problem in Texas and made it clear this serious issue must be addressed immediately [See Exhibit A - Screenshots of @GregAbbott\_TX Tweets] While you promised multiple times to make ballot integrity a top issue this legislative session, the House had different plans. **Every major election integrity reform bill died in the Texas House.**

This coalition letter expresses our deep frustration that election reform bills that would have brought integrity to all elections in Texas were killed in the Texas House. This is unacceptable. The election integrity and ballot security we seek **begins** at the point of voter registration, **follows** through the process of the actual casting of votes, and **ends** with the preservation of each voter record (publicly viewable paper backup records to verify electronic election results) in a manner that ensures ***every vote cast is a legal vote and verifiable***, should the election results of any race be called into question.

Fortunately, for Texans, our election statutes originate in our State Constitution Article 6, Section 4: *"In all elections by the people, the vote shall be by ballot, and the Legislature shall provide for the numbering of tickets and make such other regulations as may be necessary to detect and punish fraud and preserve the purity of the ballot box..."* **Governor Abbott, the cold, hard truth is that we do not have the laws or the enforcement mechanisms in place to fulfill this constitutional mandate!**

Election Integrity is an issue with wide bi-partisan support. Witnesses from the Valley to the DFW Metroplex came to Austin to testify on the importance of election reforms and the dramatic need to correct the defects in our election process. We heard of criminal investigations into voter fraud happening throughout the state, but we also repeatedly saw how the weak election code precludes law enforcement from obtaining felony convictions. We can continue to modify the code, or we can get serious about election fraud and give law enforcement the tools they need to eradicate it.

We heard of case after case of organized groups stealing hundreds, or in some cases, thousands of ballots. **These criminal enterprises must be stopped.** Several strong bills were filed to do just that. HB 4131 and HB 4133 would increase penalties for ballot harvesting; thereby giving law enforcement the tools they need to prosecute. Current law only provides for prosecution of the field worker; however, we know that there are people financing and planning these vote harvesting operations. HB 4134 would allow for the prosecution of



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those organizing ballot harvesting groups. We must equip district attorneys and the Office of the Texas Attorney General to be able to secure convictions in these cases.

We have also seen several recent convictions of non-citizens who voted in our elections. ***It is appalling that neither the Texas Secretary of State nor any election official in any of our 254 counties is mandated by law to verify the driver's license or Social Security numbers used by individuals when they register to vote!*** Governor, it is essential that HB 3474 be passed to require the Secretary of State to verify citizenship status of registered voters against the DPS database and/or other available databases. ***We implore you to use every power available under the Texas Constitution to ensure that only US citizens are registered to vote in Texas!***

Governor, we agree with your social media comments pointing out the dramatic need for Texas to eradicate voter fraud. We have cited specific bills in this letter; however, the following underscores our concerns and specifies areas that need your immediate attention:

First, **we support legislation that would restore the ability of Texas to participate in programs such as Interstate Crosscheck.** These programs ensure voters are citizens and are not on multiple voter rolls. However, according to the Texas Attorney General's Office, our state cannot enforce a current law that allows this verification process due to a Texas Supreme Court ruling that made date of birth information off limits. Legislation should make that information public and allow Texas to participate in crosscheck programs.

Second, **we support legislation to increase penalties for election crimes.** Many important offenses in the Election Code are only misdemeanors. These low penalties disincentivize prosecutors from pursuing these important crimes and incentivize criminals to commit them.

Third, **we support legislation that would address the issue of organizations that harvest ballots by enacting a conspiracy statute.** Courts have recognized that mail-in ballots pose a serious risk for fraud. Current laws are so focused on individuals that commit election crimes that they are ineffective at addressing criminal organizations. Copying the type of organized crime statute we have in the Penal code into the Election Code would enable prosecutors to more effectively address the organizations that unlawfully harvest mail-in ballots.

We ask you to call a special session to deal with these matters. **Election integrity and ballot security simply should not and cannot wait until the 86<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislative Session!**

Governor, until you assume the power of your office to force a resolution of these matters, the legitimacy of every election held in Texas hangs in the balance. You simply must insist on a rule of law solution to voter fraud in Texas.

We beseech you to call the legislature back to a special session to do this important work for the people of Texas. A government by and for the People only exists when the People can have confidence that the results of an election are a reflection of the collective intent of ***eligible voters.***



Thank you for your service to the people of the great state of Texas.

Sincerely,

**Aaron Harris**, Executive Director, Direct Action Texas

**JoAnn Fleming**, Executive Director, Grassroots America - We the People PAC

**Laura Pressley**, Ph.D., Founder, Save Our Texas Vote Coalition

**Trayce Bradford**, Texas Eagle Forum President

**Michael Quinn Sullivan**, President Empower Texans

**Elizabeth and Jim Graham**, Texas Right To Life

**Chairman Tim O'Hare**, Tarrant County Republican Party

**Chairman Phillip Huffines**, Dallas County Republican Party

**Chairwoman Lisa Hendricks**, Denton County Republican Party

**Chairwoman Teresa Beckmeyer**, Mitchell County Republican Party

**Chairwoman Tammy Blair**, Cherokee County Republican Party

**Chairman Jim Logan**, President, Hood County TEA Party; Hood County Republican Party Chair

**Chairman Jack Dubose**, Real County Republican Party

**Cathie Adams**, Board Member, National Eagle Forum; past President, Texas Eagle Forum

**Dana Hodges**, State Director, Concerned Women for America/Texas

**Farris and Jo Ann Wilks**, Cisco Conservatives

**C R Dick Saulsbury**, Saulsbury Companies

**Monty Bennett**, Ashford, Inc.

**Hon. Kara Sands**, County Clerk Nueces County

**Julie McCarty**, President, NE Tarrant TEA Party

**Bill Hussey**, Founder & Past President, Llano TEA Party

**Ray Myers**, Chairman, Kaufman County TEA Party





**Maggie Wright**, Founding member & past President, Texas Patriots TEA Party

**Robin and Jim Lennon**, President & Director, Kingwood TEA Party, Inc.

**Suzette Griffin**, President, Clear Lake TEA Party

**Mary and Dale Huls**, Past President & current Executive Committee members, Clear Lake TEA Party

**Dr. Dwayne Collins**, Founder & Chairman, Edom TEA Party

**Dean Wright**, Co-founder/Director, New Revolution Now & the Austin TEA Party

**Suzanne Guggenheim**, TEA Party Patriots State Coordinator – South Texas; Programs & Events Chairman, Corpus Christi TEA Party

**Larry Korkmas**, President, TFIRE

**Russell Ramsland**, Founder, Park Cites/Preston Hollow Leadership Forum

**Mike Openshaw**, Co-founder, Communications Director, North Texas TEA Party

**Allen Tharp**, President, San Antonio TEA Party

**Jeremiah Hunter**, Chairman, We the People – Longview TEA Party

**Barry A. Schlech, Ph.D.**, a Founder/Past President, Texas Patriots TEA Party

**Josie Schoolcraft**, President, Cherokee County Texas Republican Club

**Pat Tibbs**, President, Montgomery County TEA Party PAC

**Holly Muskus**, Smith County Republican Women

**Terri Hall**, Founder/Director, Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom (TURF)

**Ruth York**, President, TEA Party Patriots of Eastland County; GOP Precinct Chair

**Jan Shedd**, Events Chair/Webmaster, Kaufman County TEA Party

**Pastor Greg Young**, Nationally Syndicated Radio host, Chosen Generation

**Judy J. Brady**, Charter Member, Central Texas TEA Party

**Don Dixon**, Longtime transportation reform activist & blogger, San Antonio

**Lyleann McClellan Thee**, President, San Angelo TEA Party

**Anna Bartosh**, Treasurer, San Angelo TEA Party

**Toni and Tom Fabry**, Chairman & Treasurer, Frisco TEA Party



Fredericksburg TEA Party



**Matt Long**, President, Fredericksburg TEA Party of Texas

**Carroll Maxwell**, President, Collin County Conservative Republicans

**Sue Evenwel**, State GOP Executive Committeewoman, Senate District 1

**Joe Harrison**, Founder & Organizer, Cass County Patriots

**Mary E.(Betty) Fallert**, Steering committee member, Kaufman County TEA Party

**Mike and Cindy Schwartz**, Co-Founders, We The People-Longview TEA Party

**Sarah Kate Meador Lipsett**, Member, San Antonio TEA Party & Concho Valley Republican Women

**Barb Stauffer**, Steering Committee Member, Garland Tea Party

**Naomi Narvaiz**, State Republican Executive Committee, Senate District 21

**Connie Curry**, West Texas Conservative Leadership

**Craig Cosgray**, Past President, Highland Lakes Tea Party

**Elwood Smith**, Chair, TEA Party Conservatives of Temple

**Maria Espinoza & Timothy Lyng**, Founders, The Remembrance Project

**Karen Albright**, President, Freestone County TEA Party

**Mary Joe Cason**, Organizer, Kaufman County TEA Party

**Tanya Robertson**, State GOP Executive Committeewoman, Senate District 11

**Deon Starnes**, State GOP Executive Committeewoman, Senate District 30

**Mike Olcott**, Co-founder, Parker County Conservatives

**Rick Jackson**, Steering Committee, Kaufman County TEA Party

**David Carter**, Bell County Election Judge, Precinct 311

**Dennis Cable**, State GOP Executive Committeeman, Senate District 1

**Carol Doucet**, a Founder, Conservative Society of Navarro County

**Jackie King**, a Founder, Conservative Society of Navarro County

**Dottie Barnes**, Charter Member, Conservative Society of Navarro County

**Kelly Canon**, Leader, SE Tarrant TEA Party



**Vicki Slaton**, State GOP Executive Committeewoman, Senate District 2

**Susan Lucas**, Denton County Conservative Coalition

**Brady Whatley**, Flower Mound Area Republican Club

**David Ellis**, Garland TEA Party

**Bill Bingham**, Spokesman, Bryan/College Station Tea Party

**Deborah Bailey**, San Angelo TEA Party

**Brenda Schwartz**, San Angelo TEA Party

**Stacy McMahan**, Executive Director/President, East Texans for Liberty

**Evelyn Montalvo**, Sugar Land TEA Party, Spirit of Freedom Republican Women

**John Alaniz**, former President, Central Texas TEA Party

**Maria Martinez**, Executive Director, Immigration Reform Coalition of Texas

**Timna Rutledge**, Publisher of *The Northeast Texan*

**Richard & Judy Moscicki**, Cherokee County Republicans

**JJ & Anne King**, Cherokee County Republicans

**Dennis Kenney**, Cherokee County Republican

**Dr. Ivette Lozano**, Secretary, Dallas County Republican Assembly

**Mark Montgomery**, President, Dallas County Republican Assembly

**Judy Kent**, President, Republican Women of Northeast Texas

**Dwayne Stovall**, Director, Get Off My State, LLC

**Trevor Dupuy**, a Founder & Past President, Highland Lakes TEA Party

**Adam Cahn**, Austin political blogger, Cahnman's Musings

**Bryan Slaton**, Candidate, House District 2

**Linda T. Zepeda**, Titus County Republicans

**Michael & Susan Najvar**, Deep East Texas TEA Party, Gonzales

**George Rodriguez**, Broadcast Activist El Conservador

**Rayford Brown**, GOP Election Judge & Precinct Chair, Bell County

**John Tweedell**, Coordinator, Convention of the States Project

**Ed Brown**, GOP Chairman, Precinct 1311, Fort Worth

**Debbie Terry**, State GOP Executive Committeewoman, Senate District 12

**Terri Dubose**, State GOP Executive Committeewoman, Senate District 19

**Janie Brittain**, Steering Committee member, Garland TEA Party

**Donald & Barbara Lamontagne**, Temple Area Conservatives

**George Pangburn**, President Highland Lakes Tea Party

**Penny Story** – Founder Constitutional Conservative Activists

**Joel Starnes**, Organization for American Values

**Alex Kim**, Texas Elector CD 24 & President Tarrant Republican Club

**Rena and David French**, Founder Patriot Members, Grassroots America – We the People

\* Organizations are listed for identification purposes.

### **Exhibit A: Governor Abbott's Tweets about Voter Fraud**

 **Greg Abbott** @GregAbbott\_TX · 3h  
Largest Voter Fraud Investigation in Texas History Underway in Tarrant County. We will crush illegal voting. #tcot [empowertexans.com/around-texas/](http://empowertexans.com/around-texas/) ...

 **Greg Abbott** @GregAbbott\_TX Following

Voter Fraud allegations surface in South Texas. Ballot integrity will be a top issue this legislative session.

 **Greg Abbott** @GregAbbott\_TX Following

Voter fraud reports in Dallas are deeply troubling. We continue our work to end illegal voting. #txlege #tcot

 **Greg Abbott** @GregAbbott\_TX Following

Analysis: "evidence suggests that significant numbers of noncitizens cast ballots." Voter fraud must be eradicated.