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Texas Republicans Launch New Vote Suppression Scheme

Craddick committee directive and GOP vote suppression think tank will attempt to justify denying Texans access to the ballot

Academic studies, media reports and fact based voter analysis consistently demonstrate that systematic, widespread or frequent voter fraud in Texas, or anywhere else in the United States, simply does not exist. Texas House Speaker Tom Craddick, however, has directed a State House committee to conduct an interim study on voter fraud with the clear intention of recommending legislation to limit the ability of thousands of eligible Texans to vote. ([See the order here](#))

At the same time, former Tom DeLay aide and current Tom Craddick ally, John Colyandro, who remains under felony indictment for money laundering and other charges, has formed a "think tank" that is already using faulty data and illogical statistics to justify vote suppression tactics.

These most recent Texas Republican efforts to suppress voter turnout are consistent with Texas AG Greg Abbott's taxpayer funded phony voter fraud enforcement unit that the Lone Star Project has exposed and [reported on extensively here](#).

Why do Tom Craddick and other Texas Republican leaders want to spend taxpayer resources to examine a problem that doesn't exist? Clearly Craddick, Abbott and others are attempting to justify dramatic changes in Texas

Election Integrity???

*Indicted DeLay Crony Heads
Voter Suppression Think Tank*



Colyandro and DeLay mug shots

John Colyandro was indicted along with Tom DeLay on felony charges of money laundering, conspiring to launder money, and making illegal contributions of corporate money for his role in, "illegally funneling \$190,000 in banned corporate money into the 2002 elections to help Republican candidates." (Source: Fort Worth Star-Telegram, June 28, 2007) Colyandro is now Executive Director of the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute (TCCRI), which has launched a group with the cynical and ironic name "Election Integrity Task Force."

law and election practices, including voter photo ID requirements, senior mail ballot restrictions and voter roll purges, that will reduce overall voter turnout as demographic changes take place in Texas that are increasing the influence of minorities in Texas elections.

The facts below demonstrate clearly that the Republican voter fraud initiative is a partisan scheme to hold power by suppressing the turnout of voters whose support Republicans are unable or unwilling to earn through legitimate public service.

Colyandro has recruited two of the most harshly partisan Republicans in the Texas State House, Leo Berman (R-Tyler) and Betty Brown (R-Terrell) to co-chair the group. It will push "Purging voter rolls" and "Requiring photo identification at the polls." Betty Brown was the sponsor of an onerous voter ID bill in the House in 2007. One of Berman's most revealing quotes was made on the Texas State House floor last May, when he said, "Everyone on this floor needs a vote on illegal aliens to take home and say we did a little something about it." (Source: Austin American-Statesman, May 23, 2007)

Berman admitted in the Tyler Morning Telegraph that he, "asked House Speaker Tom Craddick to approve the topic for interim study." (Source: Tyler Morning Telegraph, November 29, 2007)

Voter ID/Vote Suppression Bill Fact Sheet

Republican Claim: Voter Fraud is an "Epidemic" in Texas

FACT CHECK: Even fiercely partisan Republican Attorney General Abbott has admitted that after spending millions of Texas and federal taxpayer dollars investigating, "there have been few [voter fraud] prosecutions in Texas." The Austin American Statesman editorialized, "Voter fraud is not an issue because Texas is not being flooded with unregistered voters and illegal immigrants flocking to the polls. That just isn't happening." (Source: Austin American-Statesman, April 26, 2007)

Republican Claim: Non-citizens voting is a major problem throughout the U.S.

FACT CHECK: The Department of Justice's Ballot Access and Voting Integrity Initiative has resulted in just 14 convictions of non-citizens voting in the entire United States between 2002 and 2005. That is less than 5 noncitizens voting a year. (Source: U.S. Department of Justice, Criminal Division, Public Integrity Section, Election Fraud Prosecutions & Convictions, Ballot Access & Voting Integrity Initiative, October 2002 – September 2005; The Politics of Voter Fraud, Minnite, Ph.D. Columbia University)

Republican Claim: Everyone has an ID

FACT CHECK: Even the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute admitted that 37% of Texas residents over the age of 80 did not have a driver's license. (TCCRI Commentary, May 1, 2007)

Republican Claim: Democratic operatives are pushing the opposition to the Voter Suppression Bill

FACT CHECK: The objections to the voter ID legislation are broad and bipartisan. The bill is opposed by non-partisan groups like the AARP and League of Women Voters, as well as every major Texas newspaper and many local newspapers. (Source: Associated Press, April 23, 2007) Former Republican Party Political Director Royal Massett has been one of the most outspoken opponents of the bill saying "Anyone who says all legal voters under this bill can vote doesn't know what he is talking about." (Source: The

Houston Chronicle, April 26, 2007)

Additionally, each of the major daily papers and many smaller papers have penned an editorial against the voter suppression legislation including the:

- **Houston Chronicle** – “With no proof of significant voter fraud in state elections, the Texas House is considering bills that would require voters to provide additional identification in order to register and cast their ballots. Not only is the legislation unjustified, if enacted it could disenfranchise large numbers of the elderly, the poor and minorities.” April 26, 2007
- **Dallas Morning News** - “Voting is a privilege sacred to the Republic. The process needs to be secure. Violators should be prosecuted. But absent any evidence of serious security breaches at the polls, access to the voting booth needs to remain as unimpeded as it is today. The state Senate would be wise to stop this bad idea.” April 25, 2007
- **Austin American-Statesman** – “Voter fraud is not an issue because Texas is not being flooded with unregistered voters and illegal immigrants flocking to the polls. That just isn't happening.” April 26, 2007
- **Fort Worth Star-Telegram** – “The architects of this idea, pitched as a noble effort to prevent voter fraud, cannot be allowed to succeed with what is surely one of the greatest assaults on the right to vote in this state since passage of the federal Voting Rights Act in 1965.” April 23, 2007
- **Waco Tribune** – “When asked for evidence that the problem is rampant in this great and vast state, partisans who cry “voter fraud” are strangely silent.” April 25, 2007
- **Corpus Christi Caller-Times** – “Putting more procedural hurdles in the way of voters is precisely what the doctor did not order. In fact, it conjures up memories of the old poll-tax days, when the system actively discouraged voting by all but the “right” groups.” April 25, 2007

Republican Claim: Simple computer matching will remove improperly registered voters.

FACT CHECK: The Houston Chronicle Reported that the, ““hundreds of people who went to the polls found their names had been removed because of glitches in a \$14 million Web-based state computer program intended to centralize voter registration lists.” The Chronicle also reports, “the system already has kicked registered voters' names off the lists [including] Prairie View Mayor Frank Jackson.” (Source: The Houston Chronicle, May 3, 2007; May 6, 2007)

Republican Claim: According to “Lite” Governor David Dewhurst: “On June 22, 2006, Harris County Tax Assessor-Collector and Voter Registrar Paul Bettencourt testified before the U.S. House Administration Committee that foreign nationals are both applying for and receiving voter registration cards. Data given to my office indicates that in Harris County alone since 1992, 3,742 voters have been removed from the voter rolls because they were not U.S. citizens.”

FACT CHECK: Republican Paul Bettencourt gave Congressional testimony disputing the above statistic. On June 22, 2006, Bettencourt appeared before the Committee on House Administration saying, “A review by my office in early 2005 turned up at least 35 cases in which foreign nationals either applied for or received voter's cards.” It is unclear why David Dewhurst’s number is exponentially higher than Paul Bettencourt’s figure. (Source: CQ Congressional Testimony, June 22, 2006)

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