

LONE STAR PROJECT

Fighting Back... with Facts



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Democratic Senator's Courage Backed by Facts

Sen. Gallegos is not only brave, he's right

An extraordinary act of courage and self sacrifice is on display this week in the Texas State Capitol. State Senator Mario Gallegos (D-Houston) is recovering from a liver transplant performed only four months ago. He is in the critical stages of recovery when he must be monitored closely to identify any signs of organ rejection or failure. It would be reasonable to assume that he is in Houston staying in close proximity to his doctors and immediate emergency care if needed.

Incredibly, however, Senator Gallegos is at work in Austin valiantly standing guard to ensure that the voting rights of his constituents in Houston and across Texas are protected from the unnecessary and highly partisan Voter ID/Vote Suppression Bill backed by Republican leaders. Eleven votes are needed to block consideration of the voter suppression bill. Senator Gallegos is the eleventh vote.



Senators John Whitmire and Mario Gallegos

Photo: James Nielsen, Houston Chronicle

As this drama plays out, it is important to know that Senator Gallegos is doing more than demonstrating extraordinary courage. **He is also right on the facts.** As the fact sheet below demonstrates, the Republican-backed voter suppression bill is unnecessary and would result in qualified and fully eligible voters being denied the right to participate in elections. It has been editorialized against by newspapers in every region of Texas and is opposed by virtually every non-partisan public advocacy organization that has taken a position on the matter.

As Texans, and people throughout the country admire the courage of Senator Mario Gallegos, they should also appreciate his wisdom and insight.

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 reported, "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: The Republican Secretary of State from Georgia found that 22.8 percent of all registrants age 65 and older and 33.2 % of African-American registrants age 65-plus did not have a license or Georgia ID. Among all voters 13.6% lacked ID. (Source: GA Secretary of State Karen Handel, June 23, 2006)

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; May6, 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, who is currently exploring a bid for the Congressional seat formerly represented by Tom DeLay, 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)

[Read More about the Lone Star Project's Work Against Republican Voter Suppression](#)

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