

TEXAS NEEDS ITS OWN VOTING RIGHTS ACT

Texas makes it harder to vote than almost any other state, ranking 46th in the nation for voting access. Extremist politicians in Texas are only making it harder.

There is a better way: The Barbara Jordan Voting Rights Act or TXVRA (which includes HB 5258 and HB 2082) will enshrine a powerful and critical state Voting Rights Act into Texas law. It will protect Texas voters from voting discrimination, provide powerful tools to combat voter intimidation, expand language access, and more — to ensure free and fair elections for every Texas voter.

Texas Voters Face Persistent Barriers and Discrimination

Texas elections are plagued by voting discrimination. Recent anti-voter laws, such as the 2021's legislative session's SB 1, have limited access to the ballot box by cutting "drive-thru" voting, prohibiting mail-in ballot drop-boxes, and limiting early and absentee voting.

These laws have caused Texas voters to meet every election with confusion and frustration and have caused many qualified citizens to sit out the political process. Since adoption of the 2021 bill, absentee ballot by mail [rejections have been at an all-time high, with documented racial disparities in rejection rates](#). Furthermore, ballots often suffer from severe postal and administrative delays — in some cases they don't arrive at all.

Ahead of the 2024 general election, more than [2.1 million registered Texas voters](#) were cut from the active voter rolls. On election day, voters routinely

face severe barriers, from a lack of curbside voting to a lack of accessible entrances and parking, to long lines. In recent years, voters have increasingly faced intimidation, resulting in a hostile environment that has chilled voter participation.



Despite heavy rain, people wait in line to vote at the Metropolitan Multi-Service Center on November 5, 2024 in Houston, Texas. Photo by Danielle Villasana/Getty Images

The Barbara Jordan Voting Rights Act Will Protect Black and Brown Voters

Key elements of [HB 5258](#):

Prohibit voter suppression and vote dilution that deny voting opportunities in a way that is efficient and cost-effective.

Establish a preclearance program run by an independent Texas Voting Rights Act Commission to prevent racially discriminatory voting changes from being enacted in the first place.

Expand language access for limited English proficiency voters so more voters can participate effectively in the political process.

Key elements of [HB 2082](#):

Enshrine online voter registration into Texas law.

Automatically register eligible Texan voters through the Department of Public Safety.

Allow eligible Texan voters to register to vote at their polling place during Early Voting and Election Day.

Expand the criteria for mail voting.

Allow nonpartisan poll watchers to observe the election process to ensure it is fair and secure.

Require polling places on college campuses.

Expand acceptable forms of voter ID, including student ID, tribal ID, or a state agency ID card.

Increase Early Voting locations and hours.



The Time is Now

The continued and escalating threats of racial discrimination in voting in Texas make this a perilous time for our democracy. The Barbara Jordan Voting Rights Act would go a long way to counteract both recent and historical efforts to diminish the voting power of Black and Brown Texans. Texas can and should lead in protecting the right to vote and promoting inclusive democracy by adopting the Barbara Jordan Voting Rights Act.