

Comments electronically submitted to the Texas House Elections Committee on June 12, 2024:

Dear Members of the Elections Committee, my name is Christine Welborn and I am the President of Advancing Integrity. Thank you for considering my comments.

First of all, Advancing Integrity strongly denounces the individuals responsible for publicly releasing the alleged ballots of a few individuals, a sinister form of doxing. The secrecy of the ballot must be protected.

We want to emphasize the importance of protecting the anonymity of ballots while preserving the access to election records. Therefore, we urge lawmakers and the Secretary of State to continue advising the prudent redaction of information and to communicate transparently with Texans about efforts to strengthen election security and integrity. We do understand that some more drastic measures may be needed in the short term.

In the long term, Advancing Integrity supports careful study to find a balance between protecting ballot secrecy and auditability. We recommend the smallest amount of redaction possible to protect the voter while allowing for citizens to audit an election.

We would like this Committee to also consider other methods of bolstering secrecy. For instance, this issue has opened a discussion on the make-up of election precincts. Carefully drawing precincts to minimize the smaller precincts would be advisable. Precinct based voting for both Election Day and Early Voting would cause people to only vote within their precinct, allowing their vote to be hidden within the volume of others with the same ballot style.

Uniform elections would also assist in this effort. Combining local elections with those in November would result in less voter fatigue and more participation in the resulting fewer elections. Shortening the length of early voting would also mean fewer days of low turnout in elections.

This is a complex issue and we appreciate your attention to this matter. We look forward to working with the members of the committee on this issue in the future. Thank you.