



# LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF TEXAS

Grace Chimene

Vice President of Advocacy

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## LEAGUE PRIORITY ISSUES:

**Voter Rights and Election Laws in Texas:** Last week the only major voting/elections bill activity in the two chambers was the introduction of Lt. Governor Patrick's Voter ID bill – [SB 5](#), which incorporates the court-ordered compromise process used in the November 2016 election. That means that those unable to obtain one of the seven photo IDs could sign an impediment form claiming they were unable to obtain an ID.

**Women's Health and Reproductive Choice:** The League opposes SB 8, which bans the donation of fetal tissue for research; SB 258 which requires embryonic and fetal tissue be buried or cremated; and SB 415 which bans a specific procedure and forces doctors to practice substandard care.

### **New ACTION!**

- Contact your state senator and express **YOUR opposition to SB 8, SB 258, and SB 415.**
- [Testimony Opposing SB 25](#) for 2.27.17 "...parents of a child born with severe defects would be prevented from bringing a lawsuit against a physician or other health professional who withheld information that would have allowed them to make an informed decision."

### **New ACTION!**

- Contact your state senator and ask that (s)he vote against SB 25 which is an unreasonable restriction on a woman's constitutional right to make an informed decision whether to have an abortion.

### **New ACTION!**

Call the senators on the Business and Commerce Committee (see below) and tell them you **OPPOSE** SB 20 that would effectively ban insurance coverage for abortions for most women.

Senate Business & Commerce Committee Members:

Kelly Hancock (chair) (512) 463-0109  
Brandon Creighton (vice-chair) (512) 463-0104  
Judith Zaffirini (512) 463-0121  
John Whitmire (512) 463-0115  
Larry Taylor (bill author) (512) 463-0111  
Charles Schwertner (512) 463-0105  
Robert Nichols (512) 463-0103  
Craig Estes (512) 463-0130  
Donna Campbell (512) 463-0125

**Public Education:** The League of Women Voters of Texas supports a school finance system that provides taxpayer equity and an equitable distribution of funds to ensure that all Texas school children receive a high-quality education.

## OTHER TEXAS ISSUES:

**Behavioral Health** The Chair of the House Appropriations Committee, John Zerwas, has indicated a willingness to use part of the “rainy day fund” (Economic Stabilization Fund) to meet the funding needs of the state for the next biennium.

**Child Abuse and Neglect**: On Wednesday both chambers unanimously passed bills that would protect Texas’ most vulnerable children, including SB 11, HB 4, and HB 5.

**Child Health**: We have signed on in support of the Coalition’s Legislative agenda which you can read about here: [2017 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA CHILDREN’S HEALTH COVERAGE COALITION](#).

**Early Childhood**: We are urging legislators to provide \$236 million to fully fund the high-quality pre-k grant program established in 2015. Meanwhile, in both the House and Senate, the additional pre-k dollars fall short of the amount needed to maintain the annual funding level provided to schools through the grant program.

**Drug Laws and Policies**: L WV-TX supports SB269, HB 2109 and SB 170.

**New ACTION!** Support HB 81 to reduce penalties for possession of marijuana. A hearing by the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee for HB 81 will most likely be scheduled by March 14, 2017.

**Human Trafficking**: L WV-TX supports HB 1218, relating to the prosecution of and punishment for the offense of prostitution, and to develop standardized training to identify and assist victims of human trafficking; HB 2645, on the development of program and training for public schools on the prevention of sexual abuse and sex trafficking; and HB 2629.

**Land Use**: We OPPOSE efforts to prohibit local governments from designing local ordinances protecting their natural resources. Two senate bills (SB 782) and (SB 898) would prohibit local government regulation of removal of trees from private property.

## Other issues we are following...

- [Air Quality/Climate Change](#)
- [Capital Punishment](#)
- [Equal Opportunity/Income Assistance](#)
- [Financing State Government: The Budget and Taxes](#)
- [Gun Safety](#)
- [Hazardous Waste](#)
- [Immigration](#)
- [Juvenile Justice](#)
- [Open Government](#)
- [Natural Resources](#)
- [Payday & Auto Title Loans in Texas](#)
- [Redistricting](#)
- [Transportation](#)