

Texas Voter Choice Act

Enabling every Texan's right to cast a meaningful vote

The Texas Voter Choice Act (TVCA) would make long-overdue changes to Texas' ballot access statute. Originally enacted in 1903, much of that law is still in place. This means that Texas is using a 19th Century system to regulate ballot access in the 21st Century. The TVCA was first heard by the House Elections Committee in the 85th Legislature (2017) as HB 3068 and will hopefully be considered again this year.

Ballot access for Republican and Democratic party candidates is assured through primary elections paid for by taxpayers. For other candidates, however, obtaining ballot access is unnecessarily burdensome, often prohibitively expensive, and potentially unconstitutional.

The result is that qualified candidates with positions supported by large numbers of voters are excluded from the ballot – simply because they lack the resources to comply with Texas's obsolete procedures. Voters are harmed when they are denied the right to freely cast votes for candidates of their choosing.

The Problem

Independent candidates must:

- Gather (by stringent paper petitioning requirements) upwards of 80,000 or more valid signatures (or at least 120,000 total) to gain ballot access for a statewide office or US President.
 - Petitioning is restricted to 3½ months – a single month for a race with a runoff.
 - Voters may only sign one petition for each office, and primary election voters are forbidden to sign any petition.
- File a declaration of intent in December of the preceding year – nearly a year before elections.

New parties must:

- Meet even more burdensome petitioning requirements to gain initial ballot access.
- Comply with similarly unnecessarily early candidate filing deadlines.
- Garner at least 5% of the vote in a statewide general election race to retain ballot access.

The Solution – TVCA (www.texasvoterchoice.org/home-page/the-bill)

- Establishes reasonable petition signature requirements and filing deadlines.
- Authorizes online nominating petitions managed by the Secretary of State.
- Eliminates restrictions on voters' right to sign nominating petitions.
- Establishes reasonable requirements for party ballot retention.

The Texas Voter Choice Act is supported by **Texans for Voter Choice** (www.texasvoterchoice.org), a non-partisan coalition dedicated to providing voters with meaningful choices on Election Day.