



Wednesday, March 27, 2024

Dear Members of the House & Governmental Affairs Committee:

The League of Women Voters of Louisiana writes to **SUPPORT** the following bills scheduled on the agenda of the House & Governmental Affairs Committee of the Louisiana Legislature for hearing at its meeting on Wednesday, March 27, 2024.

HB154 (Landry) ELECTIONS/CANDIDATES: Provides for prohibited political materials and applicable criminal penalties

The League has serious concerns about the potential for mis/disinformation through artificial intelligence, "deep fakes," and similar false digital material and their effects on voting and elections that would be addressed by this bill. In recent elections, the League has been working to combat mis/disinformation. The League supports preservation of the integrity of our electoral process by increasing transparency in our elections. The League seeks to ensure voters have the necessary resources to make informed voting decisions.

The League believes that voters deserve access to true and complete information about elections and the candidates seeking their votes. The League is particularly concerned by efforts to undermine the role of voters and corrupt the election process by attempting to deceitfully sway voters' opinions or suppress voter turnout.

HB319 (Newell) ELECTIONS/POLLING PLACES: Provides relative to notice of the reason for changes to polling places

The League believes that voting is a fundamental citizen right that must be guaranteed. The League has undertaken concerted nationwide efforts to promote voter protection and education to prevent the development of processes and laws that threaten to disenfranchise voters, educate the public on new election procedures, and provide voters with the information they need to cast a vote and be sure that vote is counted. The League supports effective polling place management and fair distribution of polling places and other voter resources.

Timely notice of polling place changes is essential for voters to cast their votes. Provision of the reason for polling place changes will supply the necessary information to assess whether access to polling places is being managed and distributed in a fair and equitable way that strengthens trust in our election system.

HB324 (Boyd) VOTERS/VOTING: Provides for early voting on Sundays

Many voters in Louisiana, particularly those who attend church on Sundays, would like the opportunity to engage in "Souls to the Polls" voting events with members of their churches.

Refusal to hold elections on Sundays disproportionately affects voters of color and those with religious convictions that support voting and civic participation. In some instances, it could even be seen as an infringement on their religious practice and free exercise of their faith.

For religious and non-religious voters alike, early voting on Sunday provides another day of voting that is not traditionally a work day and so is more easily accessible. Louisiana's voter turnout has been abysmal in recent elections. Let's leverage the increasing interest in early voting by expanding it to Sundays.

HB347 (Green) ELECTION DAYS: Extends the duration of the early voting period.

The League supports expanded opportunities for early voting, which has been increasingly used by Louisiana voters in recent years, especially in public health emergencies. This bill supports both an expanded period of early voting and Sunday voting, both of which may help to increase voter participation in elections for the reasons stated above regarding HB347.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Christian Green". The signature is stylized with a cursive, flowing script.

M. Christian Green
President, League of Women Voters of Louisiana
Chair, LWVLA Voting Rights Committee