



Testimony on HB 386,

By: Veronikah Warms, Legal Fellow and Staff Attorney, Texas Civil Rights Project

House Elections Committee, March 23, 2023

Chair Smith, Vice Chair Bucy, and members of the House Elections Committee,

I am here to testify in support of HB 386. At the Texas Civil Rights Project, we help run the nonpartisan Election Protection hotline, 866-OUR-VOTE. Every election, we get hundreds of calls from voters with disabilities trying to cast a ballot, including many reports from voters from across the state who report trouble with curbside voting access.

This bill would require all counties to post signs informing voters on how to access curbside voting. Many voters in Texas do not know that curbside voting must be offered at every polling place. If there are no signs providing proper notification and instructions, voters with disabilities will not necessarily know that they can request curbside. Without signs, even the voters who know that they can request it may not know how!

Voters across Texas struggle to access curbside every election. Our 2021 curbside voting report told the story of one of our volunteers who saw a voter in a wheelchair trying to enter a polling place that had no ramps or curb cuts. The polling place had no signs about how to vote curbside. Lack of signage was such a problem in 2020 that TCRP sought—and won—a court order requiring Bexar County to post curbside signs in conspicuous places at every polling location.² The Texas Secretary of State's office already provides signs telling voters how to access curbside voting in English and in Spanish.³ Requiring counties to display them would be a simple fix to a persistent and widespread problem.

Curbside voting is a crucial aspect of disability access in Texas. HB 386 would make sure that voters who need curbside are able to use it. We ask you to report this bill favorably. Thank you.

² These and more examples can be found in our curbside voting report, available at <https://txcivilrights.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Curbside-Voting-Report.pdf>

³ These signs can be found at <https://www.sos.state.tx.us/elections/covid/index.shtml>.