

Collin County Libertarian Party

<http://collinlp.org>



Concerning HB 433 Eliminate Straight Ticket Voting

Bill	Legislative Session	Author(s)
HB 433	85(R)	Simmons, Bonnen, Greg

The Collin County Libertarian Party, pleased that the 2017 Legislative Session is considering several measures to improve governance in Texas, ask that you consider:

Whereas,

only nine remaining states permit Straight Ticket Voting (STV). The last state (Michigan in 2016) to eliminate STV said “The State Legislature had good reasons to enact the law, the brief said. Eliminating straight-ticket voting makes it more likely that voters will pay attention to parts of the ballot concerning nonpartisan offices and referendums, it said. “Requiring office-specific voting,” it said, “encourages a more informed electorate and therefore could improve the democratic process.”

Whereas,

in Texas, we elect individuals, not parties, to fill offices.

Whereas,

not all candidates (eg Independents) are allowed the option of straight ticket voting, and not all parties participate in each race.

Whereas,

voters desiring to vote for only candidates of a single party still have that option, as each candidate is clearly labeled with their party affiliation.

Whereas,

in 2016, roughly 64%¹ of all voting in Texas, was straight party voting, which means that in races where not all parties are represented, these voters are not casting a vote in those races.

Whereas,

when voting a straight party ticket, voters may not realize that there may not be a representative from their chosen party in certain elections.

Whereas,

voters should be aware of not only who they are voting for, but who they are voting against. Eliminating straight party voting will ensure that voters will be made aware of all their options of candidates.

Whereas,

voting straight party allows elected positions to be decided without your vote. If there is no candidate in your party for a position, a straight party vote is no vote at all for that position. This may be what the voter intends, but this should be a conscious choice on the voter's part and not an accident of straight party voting. Straight party voting is antithetical to electing the best candidate for a position, especially if that candidate is a member of a third party. This method of voting makes it easy to pick a party, not a candidate. It is easy to miss voting for someone you would like to be in a position, because they happen to be in a party other.

Therefore,

to benefit Liberty and Texas, the Collin County Libertarian Party respectfully asks all members of our Legislature to fully support HB 433 within this legislative session, including a “yea” vote.

¹ <https://www.texastribune.org/2016/11/11/texas-2016-straight-ticket-ballots/>

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