# CITY OF HOUSTON

Office of the Mayor

**Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities**

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April 1, 2021

The Honorable Briscoe Cain
House Committee on Elections
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Chairman Cain and Members of the Election Committee,

I am submitting these comments regarding HB 6 on behalf of the Houston Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities and the over 215,000 people with disabilities who live in the City of Houston. We strongly oppose HB 6 because it suppresses the vote of Texans with disabilities. If passed, this legislation will force disabled people to go through burdensome and onerous steps to ensure that their vote is counted. A person with a disability will also have difficulty asking for assistance at their polling location because of the proposed bill.

Section 64.0322 requires an individual assisting a voter with a disability to fill out a form listing their personal information, relationship with the voter, and detail how the voter was assisted. This requirement is another form of voter suppression making it difficult to cast a ballot via mail or in person. Some members of our community need assistance at polling locations and this extra step will intimidate voters with disabilities and their direct support professionals. The threat of criminal penalties will make voters with disabilities second guess whether they should request help. This will lead to ballots not being cast correctly, causing Texans with disabilities votes to be thrown away.

This bill pretends to tackle a problem that is nonexistent to justify suppressing the votes of Texans with disabilities. The proposed bill targets the disabled community and threatens our right to a fair, free, and accessible election. I urge members of this committee to oppose this bill that will simply serve to disenfranchise voters with disabilities across the state.

Sincerely,

Gabe Cazares
Director, City of Houston Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities

Council Members:
Amy Peck  Tarsha Jackson  Abbie Kamin  Carolyn Evans-Shabazz  Dave Martin  Tiffany Thomas  Greg Travis  Karla Cisneros  Robert Gallegos  Edward Pollard  Martha Castex-Tatum  Mike Knox  David Robinson  Michael Kubosh  Leticia Plummer  Sallie Alcorn