

**TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF HISPANIC COUNTY JUDGES
AND COUNTY COMMISSIONERS**



Hon. Margaret J. Gomez, President
Hon. Roger Galvan, Vice President
Hon. Debbie Gonzales Ingalsbe

512-854-9444 Travis Co
361-552-9242 Calhoun Co
512-393-2243 Hays Co

December 20, 2013

Dear Colleagues:

The State of Texas continues to attempt to suppress the voting strength of the Hispanic Community and South Texas. Recently, a three judge federal court in Washington DC ruled that the Texas Voter ID law (SB14) was the most restrictive voting rights law since the imposition of the Poll Tax back in the 1930s and that:

“(1) a substantial subgroup of Texas voters, many of whom are Hispanic, lack a photo ID; (2) the burdens associated with obtaining ID will weigh most heavily on the poor; and (3) racial minorities in Texas are disproportionately likely to live in poverty.”

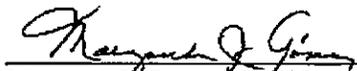
Based on these findings, the Court concluded that SB 14 would violate the Voting Rights Act “because it would in fact have a retrogressive effect on Hispanic American voters.” *Texas v. Holder*, 888 F. Supp. 2d at 138.

In spite of these findings, Texas is going ahead with SB14; they are using millions of state dollars to enforce SB 14 to suppress the Hispanic vote and minimize the impact of South Texas in the 2014 statewide elections. Many of our South Texas Counties do not have DPS offices to issue the voter ID cards that are required by SB14.

On October 18, 2013 Federal Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos from Corpus Christi granted our organization intervention status to help fight the implementation of SB14; expert voting rights attorney Rolando Rios is representing us and he feels we have a good chance to stop the state from implementing SB14 in the 2014 general elections.

This letter is to urge you and your respective county government to allocate money to help us fight the Texas Leadership as they try to suppress South Texas voter turnout. Someone will be contacting you in this regard and I urge you to allocate the base donation of \$5,000 from next year's budget for our legal defense fund.

Your friend and colleague,


Margaret J. Gomez, President
Travis County Commissioner, Pct.4

ROLANDO L. RIOS & ASSOCIATES

February 25, 2014

Re: *USA v. Texas*: Case 2:13-cv-00263 (legal challenge to SB14)

Challenging Texas Voter ID Law (SB14);

TO: Texas Commissioners and Judges

FROM: Rolando L. Rios, Voting Rights Attorney

Attached is a letter from Commissioner Gomez urging your support for the legal challenge to the Texas Voter ID Law (SB14). Last month Hidalgo County agreed to support the litigation with \$20,000 and Frio County is supporting with \$10,000 in legal fees to fight the State of Texas and restore to county government their traditional voter registration responsibilities; SB14 takes away the right of every county voter registrar to be the final authority to issue voter registration cards. It also punishes counties that do not have a DPS office – voters have to travel far to get the voter ID necessary to vote. Similar Voter ID laws have been declared illegal in Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

Please review the attached letter from Commissioner Gomez and allow me to attend your commissioner court meeting for a briefing.

ROLANDO L. RIOS AND ASSOCIATES, PLLC

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Taling Points to Challenge Voter ID Law (SB 14):

Impact of ID law: The State of Texas has passed what has been characterized as the most restrictive voting rights law since the imposition of the Poll Tax back in the 1930s. It requires a voter to obtain a picture ID even though they are registered voters who have been voting for years.

Politics: It is an attempt to minimize the impact of South Texas voters on statewide elections.

Discrimination and DPS Offices: Three Federal Judges in Washington DC declared SB 14 illegal and found that: "Hispanic registered voters are more than twice as likely as non-Hispanic registered voters to lack" a DPS-issued driver's license or ID card. There are approximately 800,000 registered Texas voters with no picture ID. *If your county does not have a DPS office, voters will have to travel many miles to obtain one.*

US Department of Justice: The United States has filed suit against the State of Texas under the Federal Voting Rights Act claiming that SB14 was passed by the State of Texas with the "intent and for the purpose of discriminating against Hispanic" and voters in the lower economic level.

Types of ID Required by SB 14 : The law allows a license to carry a concealed handgun to be used for voting but *College Student IDs are not permitted.*

Direct Impact on South Texas Counties: In addition to having many of its voters and citizens adversely impacted by enforcement of S.B. 14, a County's ability to run an efficient and economical election will be impacted. The County will have to hire additional election staff to handle the various potential issues that may arise, including the execution of affidavits, the delay in election process as more and more people must demonstrate compliance with the law or file declarations under the various exceptions. It has been estimated that there may be as many as 50% of voters that do not have authorized photo IDs that matches the registration data.

Texas Association of Hispanic County Judges and County Commissioners: The Association is challenging the legality of SB 14 and is asking South Texas Counties to retain our law firm to represent the county's interest in this legal proceeding. Hidalgo County has allocated 20k for this purpose and urges other South Texas Counties to join this important legal fight to protect their voters.

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