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Harris County Elections Administrator Joins Challenge of Texas Anti-Voter Legislation

(HOUSTON, TX) – Harris County Elections Administrator Isabel Longoria has joined a lawsuit challenging the recent Senate Bill 1 voting bill that will make it harder for Texans to cast their ballots

The section of the complaint specific to Administrator Longoria alleges that her First Amendment-protected speech would be restricted under the bill’s anti-solicitation provision, which makes it a crime for her to encourage individuals who are eligible or may be eligible to apply to vote by mail.

“My first and only priority is to educate and help voters to lawfully cast their ballots,” said Administrator Longoria. “Voting by mail is not simply another method to vote - for many senior voters and voters with disabilities, it’s their only option to vote. SB1 makes it a crime for me to encourage those who are eligible to vote by mail to do so, effectively making it impossible to fulfill my sworn duty as Elections Administrator.”

The challenge was filed Friday, September 3, 2021 in U.S. District Court in San Antonio by the Harris County Attorney’s Office, MALDEF (Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund), the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law, and the law firms of Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP on behalf of 10 membership and community-based organizations, Harris County Elections Administrator Isabel Longoria, and an election judge.

“I’m proud to partner with the Brennan Center—the nation’s leading protector of voting rights—to challenge Texas’s new dangerous anti-voting law. Among other harmful provisions, SB1 imposes criminal penalties—including a draconian six-month minimum jail sentence—on elections officials who advocate for eligible Harris County residents to exercise their right to legally vote by mail,” said Christian D. Menefee, Harris County Attorney. “This provision is nothing more than an unconstitutional attempt to intimidate public employees and voters into avoiding vote by mail altogether. I look forward to fighting on this crucial lawsuit to protect the voting rights of all Texans.”

Find the complaint in its entirety [here](#) (note* the section of the claim specific to Harris County Elections Administrator Isabel Longoria is located on pages 54-56).

Plaintiffs include the Anti-Defamation League Austin, Southwest, and Texoma Regions; FIEL Houston; Friendship-West Baptist Church; Harris County Election Administrator Isabel Longoria; Jolt Action; James Lewin, an election judge; La Unión Del Pueblo Entero (LUPE); Mexican American Bar Association of Texas; Southwest Voter Registration Education Project; Texas HOPE; Texas Impact; and William C. Velasquez Institute.