

HARVEY KRONBERG'S QUORUM REPORT
TEXAS POLITICS REPORTING SINCE 1981
PO BOX 8 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767
VOICE: 512.292.8191
FAX: 512.292.0099
EMAIL: HKRONBERG@QUORUMREPORT.COM

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ROYAL MASSET: THE VOTER ID BILL WILL KILL MY MOTHER'S RIGHT TO VOTE

Long time Republican consultant debunks arguments behind Voter ID bill to be considered on House floor today

I was a big fan of voter ID until the federal government declared my mother **Aimee** dead. The reason I've not been heavily involved in the political arena for the last three years is because I've been taking care of my 91-year-old mother who is a complete invalid but is very much alive.

I found there was no way of proving her alive. Invalid 91 year olds do not have driver's licenses, passports, employment badges, gun permits & etc. Since I'm taking care of her in my home she has no bills with her name and address. I can't even get her a birth certificate since she lacks the ID necessary for a notary to verify. Under **HB 218** my mother, who is a registered voter in Austin, cannot vote in Texas. Anyone who says all legal voters under this bill can vote doesn't know what he is talking about. And anyone who says that a lack of IDs won't discriminate against otherwise legal minority voters is lying.

I agree with **David Dewhurst's** comments that we should "ensure that we maximize the number of voters, which is all in our best interests, but that we limit our elections to American citizens. I can't imagine anyone who could be against that concept." I agree with David 100%. And if he is a man of intelligence and integrity he will not support HB 218 since it does the exact opposite of what he says he wants. HB 218 will lower voter turnout. There is no evidence on the record that non-American citizens have voted in past Texas elections in a manner that would have been stopped by HB 218.

Bills should only be passed if they solve problems or otherwise make our lives better. No testimony was given on HB 218 proving a problem exists that can be solved by requiring extra Voter ID. I have no doubt that HB 218 does not solve any problems. It will create new problems.

VOTER FRAUD IS A PROBLEM

In the 15 years I worked for the *Republican Party of Texas*, mostly as Political Director, ballot security was always one of my top jobs. People who believe voter fraud doesn't exist are naïve.

Former Congressman **Joe Kilgore**, who represented TX-15, the Rio Grande Valley 1947-1955, told me that during the counting in the 1948 US senate race **John Connally** told him "They stole the last election from us (**LBJ**) and I'm not going to let them steal this election." The election judge for Alice ballot box 13 made a deathbed confession that he did indeed fabricate the votes that gave LBJ his winning margin.

Human nature has not changed in 60 years. Buying votes with suitcases of money and forging signatures in alphabetical order are no longer in vogue. I believe elections have been stolen through illegal mail absentee ballots harvesting, deliberate miscounting that was never discovered and punching out chads with fingernails. However, voter fraud by individual voters is extremely rare.

VOTER FRAUD IS RARE

In my involvement with over 5000 Republican candidates I have never seen one case of Republicans committing voter fraud. This isn't a matter of moral superiority. Using voter fraud is an incredibly stupid way to win an election. Almost all candidates and activists think their candidate will win. Why cheat and possibly destroy your candidate? It is one hundred times easier to get a legal voter to the polls than it is to get someone to illegally register and then talk them into voting for your candidate then getting them to vote. If someone exists who is hell-bent in stealing an election they aren't going to risk participating in criminal conspiracies with dozens of ignorant people who might become disgruntled at any time, want more money or feel the need to confess. Today's election thief is more likely to act alone by mis-programming a computer or making an "innocent error" in vote counting. Anyone with long fingernails can invalidate dozens or hundreds of votes on punch cards.

In 1996 I was put in charge of canvassing the votes for the Republican Primary. All the newspapers proclaimed **Judge Mike Keasler**, in his first race *for Court of Criminal Appeals*, as being in a runoff the day after the election. When I did the canvass a few days later it turned out that he had erroneously received 4000 extra votes in Hidalgo County. Without those votes he failed to make the runoff, which had already cost him well into six figures. I was always impressed by the fact that while greatly hurt by this "surprise" Judge Keasler showed himself to be a true believer in the rule of law and accepted the outcome. I am sure hundreds of people stood in my position of being able to determine the outcome of an election by ignoring or miscounting something. I know of one 2000-vote error in a small county for a statewide office that was not caught in the state canvass.

Although vote fraud is very rare, the belief that a close election was lost by fraud is common. Human Beings do not accept defeat easily. After every election about 20-50 candidates and activists would phone me at the RPT convinced that their election was stolen and wanting their DA to prosecute. (On a national level I assume similar calls are made all the time to federal prosecutors.) I'd make sure they fully participated in their canvass and, where appropriate, pay for a recount. Recounts in fact changed many outcomes. If they still felt their election was stolen I'd tell them that an Election contest requires sworn evidence proving more votes were cast illegally than the margin of defeat. At this point 99% of our candidates couldn't meet the burden of proof needed to win an election contest. They would talk about illegal aliens mass voting (South Texas) or **Jesse Jackson** marching illegal voters to early voting locations (East Texas). But outside of vague hearsay allegations, they almost never could produce sworn testimony about specific conversations, actions, or names of illegal voters. Losing an election does not prove election fraud.

REPORTS SHOW ABSENCE OF MISUSED REGISTRATION CARDS

The most credible recent study on illegal voting in Texas was done by Attorney General Greg Abbott last year. As best I can determine **he found no cases** of illegal aliens casting votes with fraudulent registration cards. At best maybe 5 illegally cast votes he found could have been prevented because of HB 218, though I suspect the real number would have been 0.

The second most credible study was done by Will Hartnett in his Finding of Master Report, January 7, 2005, Heflin v. Vo, Election Contest District 149. Master Will Hartnett concluded that Heflin produced **"no evidence of any intentional voter fraud** which affected the final vote tally to his detriment. Contestant's challenge to the vast bulk of the votes in question is based on technical, and apparently unintentional, violations of election law."

The **Burkablog** last week summed up these findings when it reported "The U.S. Election Assistance Commission **reported** in December 06 (see page 10) that in its wide reaching interviews of election officials and scholars, **'Many asserted that the impersonation of voters is probably the least frequent type of fraud** because it is the most likely to be discovered, there are stiff penalties associated with this type of fraud, and it is an insufficient means of influencing an election'."

Even the excellent report by the **Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute**, which supports voter ID, **admits**, "The items acceptable as ID in lieu of a Drivers License or SSN have nothing to do with the

citizenship status of the applicant." They also point out that even Drivers licenses and other photo IDs do not prove citizenship.

HB 218 WILL CAUSE PROBLEMS

Even without the other arguments on this page, HB 218 is a bad bill because it won't work. For one thing every illegal alien I've ever met has several pieces of ID. More important, how does an election judge determine if an ID is valid? HB 218 requires that "...the voter's identity can be verified from the proof presented." This verification will be arbitrary and capricious. Hairstyling, contact lenses, makeup and Botox make photo IDs almost worthless. How does one verify the genuineness of non-photo IDs, almost all of which can be computer generated in seconds? I believe that the integrity of the ballot box will be compromised much more by Bill 218 and its arbitrary enforcement than by fraud involving phony registered voters.

Proponents of HB 218 talk about how they need ID cards everyday for things like banking. Their logic eludes me. For one thing none of my credit and bankcards have photos on them or require backup ID. Many businesses obviously need one piece of ID and many need to know how old you are. **For the purpose of voting your Voter registration card provides all the ID you need. I wholeheartedly support tightening up the requirements to get a voter card. CSHB 626 is a step in the right direction,** although even in this bill I would make sure there were a reasonable way people without birth certificates could prove citizenship. Millions of American citizens whose parents have been here for generations don't have birth certificates and are undocumented. **Voter registration should require proof of age, residence and citizenship. But requiring that you prove your identity and citizenship every few months at every election is bureaucratic overkill.**

Many proponents of HB 218 talk about how easy it is to get photo ID. In doing so they show how out of touch they are with many Americans such as my mother. If any of them ever cared for an invalid family member, besides talking a good game, they would know invalids don't have recent ID cards and may not even pay bills. When voting in America is only allowed to healthy and wealthy people than the America I know is far sicker than my mother. HB 218 is a direct descendent of poll taxes, and of allowing only white male property owners to vote. In its effect it is racist, barbaric, antidemocratic and contrary to everything that made America great. My mother has sacrificed her life raising my severely handicapped sister and I and making this a better country. She and all mothers like her deserve the right to vote.

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