



# Senator Eliot Shapleigh

District 29

## Press Release

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### For Immediate Release

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## "SUPPRESSING YOUR VOTE IN TEXAS"

*"By changing the Senate rules to give a special status to the voter suppression bill, Republicans declared that holding onto power by any means is their most important issue this legislative session. Not enhancing Texas' competitiveness when our nation faces the most dire economic crisis since the Great Depression. Not securing more health insurance for children in the state that ranks first in uninsured kids. Not cleaning up our environment when Texas has the nation's dirtiest air. Not funding a highway system that is flat broke. None of these crucial issues demanded the same special status as the voter suppression bill, making it perfectly clear that holding onto power is their first priority."*

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**AUSTIN - Today**, Senator Eliot Shapleigh, (D- El Paso) releases the following statement regarding SB 362, a voter suppression bill scheduled to be considered by the Senate Tuesday:

"I write you on a matter of real importance: your right to vote!

In Austin, on Tuesday, March 10th, Republicans will try to pass a law to suppress your vote. Please come help. I ask you come testify, advocate, and help us fight for democracy. Let Rick Perry and the Republicans know that your vote and our democracy are too valuable to mess with!

Here's what's up: Republicans have scheduled a special hearing on March 10th regarding [SB 362](#), a bill that will place new bureaucratic walls and endless red tape between voters and the ballot box. Designed to suppress voter turnout through frustration and added costs, this bill will make it harder for all of us to vote.

Who will be impacted? Maybe your sister who is recently married or divorced and whose last name does not match her ID. Maybe your uncle who went to work on the bus and never got a driver's license. Maybe your child at college whose ID does not match their temporary address. Maybe your grandmother who, because of illness or transportation barriers, cannot get an ID. This bill is aimed at all of us. If Texans get too frustrated to go vote, Republicans win, and this is what the voter suppression bill is all about.

- More -

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Think about these key points:

- **The bill is not about voter fraud; it is about voter suppression.** Republicans are betting that this bill will suppress the vote by 3 to 5 percent—just enough for Republicans to hold onto power through the crucial redistricting battle in 2011. A similar bill, after all, was passed in Indiana and has forced otherwise eligible voters to be turned away from the ballot box. For example, in May 2008, a dozen Indiana nuns were [denied ballots](#) by a poll worker because the women, all of whom were in their 80s and 90s, did not have a valid photo ID. Simply put, voter suppression is another Karl Rove trick designed to keep Republicans in power when fair elections don't. As the Texas redistricting fight made clear, the Republican approach to elections is when you can't win on your ideas, just change the rules to win. Elections are often so close that shaving off just a few percentage points can be enough to claim victory. Karl Rove and other Republicans understand this, and the facts support it: a [Brown University study](#) recently found that in 2004 voter ID policies reduced minority voting by over 400,000.
- **Voter fraud is a "cucuy"—yet another Rove scare tactic not supported by the facts.** Requiring a photo ID to vote will prevent only one type of voter fraud: voter impersonation. But voter impersonation simply doesn't happen. In 2005, Texas' Republican Attorney General Greg Abbott launched an investigation into voter fraud across the state. Despite burning through \$1.4 million in taxpayer money, a [Dallas Morning News analysis](#) revealed that Abbott could not document one case of voter impersonation. Under the Bush administration, when honest Republicans refused to go after nonexistent voter fraud cases, Karl Rove had them fired. [David Iglesias](#), the former U.S. Attorney for New Mexico, was fired by Rove and the Bush Department of Justice when he refused to prosecute supposed voter fraud cases that had no basis in fact. Iglesias' termination is proof that Republicans value a partisan power push more than the rule of law or the right to vote. Now Congress has [subpoenaed Rove](#) in its ongoing investigation into the U.S. Attorney firings.
- **To keep power, Republicans have made voter suppression their most important issue this session.** By [changing the Senate rules](#) to give a special status to the voter suppression bill, Republicans declared that holding onto power by any means is their most important issue this legislative session. Not enhancing Texas' competitiveness when our nation faces the most dire economic crisis since the Great Depression. Not securing more health insurance for children in the state that ranks first in uninsured kids. Not cleaning up our environment when Texas has the nation's dirtiest air. Not funding a highway system that is flat broke. None of these crucial issues demanded the same special status as the voter suppression bill, making it perfectly clear that holding onto power is their first priority.

Newspapers across the state have published editorials condemning the Republicans' voter suppression efforts. These papers include [the Waco Tribune-Herald](#), [The Austin American Statesman](#),<sup>(2)</sup> [the Houston Chronicle](#), [the Fort Worth Star-Telegram](#), [the San Antonio Express-News](#) and [the Dallas Morning News](#). All these newspapers agree that legislators should be focusing their efforts on issues that matter to Texas - not on a partisan fight to solve a problem that doesn't exist.

- More -

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As President Lyndon B. Johnson said, "[t]he vote is the most powerful instrument ever devised by man for breaking down injustice and destroying the terrible walls that imprison men because they are different than other men." The harder it is to vote, the less chance voters have to demand and get change. All citizens must stand united against Republican attempts to infringe on everyone's right to vote. I urge you to come to Austin to have your voice heard or [email Rick Perry](#) and [David Dewhurst](#) and tell them to quit messing with your right to vote!"

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