

EPOCH TIMES

Texas State Senator's Election Reform Proposals Hold GOP Lawmakers' Feet to the Fire

By [Steven Kovac](#)

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As the Texas Legislature convened on Jan. 10, State Senator Bob Hall (R-Rockwall) proposed a series of reforms that will give members of the GOP majority a chance to prove to voters that they are serious about [election integrity](#).

Both houses of the Texas State Legislature are controlled by Republicans by comfortable majorities.

Hall, a state senator since 2015, says Texans are being asked to believe that the current election system works “because the government says it works”—an assurance he insists is not good enough.

It's also not good enough for GOP Precinct Chair and election integrity activist Susan Valliant of Arlington in Tarrant County.

After the November 2022 mid-term election, Valliant reviewed records of hundreds of complaints from citizens and local election officials.

Texas State Senator Bob Hall (R-Rockwall). (Courtesy of Bob Hall)



Out-of-order voting equipment was one of the most frequent problems reported.

“I’m not talking about one or two machines being down,” said Valliant. “There were several sites with 30 to 50 machines where only two to five were working.”

According to Valliant, there were numerous instances of paper jams that slowed down the voting.

Many sites ran out of paper ballots, spurring frantic poll workers to call their election office only to find nobody was answering the phones, “So they couldn’t get anyone to deliver more ballots,” she said.

Valliant told The Epoch Times there were reports from Dallas that before the polls closed, election workers saw electronic poll book numbers “changing right before their eyes.”

The Epoch Times has independently verified the report with a Dallas County Presiding Election Judge, Beth Biesel, who personally witnessed the electronic poll books escalating by almost four-fold the number of voters who had been logged into the written vote roster.

According to Biesel, when informed of the irregularity the Texas Secretary of State’s office issued a statement characterizing the escalation of the numbers as “normal.”

Biesel strongly disputes the SOS assertion.

“At best, the incident does little to inspire confidence in our voting systems,” she said.

Valiant believes Hall’s reforms will solve such problems.

“My concern is with the other state legislators. Many of them do not believe there is anything wrong with our elections. They think they fixed everything in their last session. However, it’s quite the contrary,” Valliant said.



Susan Valliant of Arlington, Texas. (Courtesy of Susan Valliant)

Charles Wedemeyer of Citizens for Election Integrity in Texas told The Epoch Times, “It is extremely appreciated that someone of Bob Hall’s stature and notoriety is taking on these issues and offering concrete solutions.

“Our people are demanding that Texas elections represent the consent of the governed.

“It is a shame citizens have to battle their own officials and representatives to get them to follow the law.

“The total secrecy in which the election department of Tarrant County operates compounds the difficulties citizens have in obtaining public information,” he said.

Need for Transparency

In a written summary of the reform package, Hall described the state’s current voting system as a “black box process” that cannot produce sufficient evidence in a court of law to prove that a declared winner, Republican or Democrat, was actually the choice of a majority of the voters in any given election.

“In reality, we know little to nothing about how the process works...There is no transparency, no accountability, and the [system’s] accuracy is unknowable,” he said.

According to Hall, the current Texas voting system is so “opaque” that “neither the voters nor the election workers are privy to what happens inside the ‘black box’ election process and equipment.”

Computerization to Blame

A Navy-trained electrical engineer, Hall blames computerization for the decline in transparency, accuracy, and accountability of recent Texas elections.

Hall said he believes the current election system “sacrifices security for convenience.”

With good intentions, computers were viewed as the solution to the proverbial ballot box stuffing that has tainted the outcome of Texas elections for generations, Hall said.

“Unfortunately, that has not been the case. Computers and software have increased the opportunities and frequency of error and fraud in ways never considered and to a level much greater and more difficult to detect.

“Our elections are too important not to have a system that delivers a high degree of confidence that the will of the people is being respected,” he said.

Fair Elections Express Consent of the Governed

A Texan, describing himself as a Stanford-trained technology and finance lawyer, who is serving as a volunteer analyst for several grassroots election reform groups, told The Epoch Times, “The press-reported glitches, goofs, and gaffs” in recent Texas elections have caused concern among many people that the present election system may be “too technologically complicated, unmanageable, and expensive to properly operate.”

The analyst, an escapee from a country ruled by communism who asked that his name not be printed, said, “This country is founded on the consent of the governed. The consent of the governed is given by only one method—elections.”

What the Reforms Will Do

A centerpiece of Hall’s proposed reforms is a return to the use of hand-marked paper ballots, sequentially numbered for each precinct, and managed with strict chain of custody requirements.

Ballots would be printed on special, secure, paper, and the count preserved on a write-once optical disc.

Election night audits would be required as result tapes move from precincts to the county and then from the county to the state.

This would allow for verification that county totals are consistent with precinct totals, a safeguard Hall says is lacking in the current system.

The proposed legislation would require that transmission of results from the counties to the state be over secure one-way lines.

The reform package also includes a tightening of the eligibility requirements for voting absentee.

“Mail-in voting encompasses more people than necessary and is too susceptible to abuse and error,” said Hall.

Also, immediately before the polls open, the reforms would require a tape to be produced showing there are zero votes recorded in the tabulator; and a result tape must be run and preserved immediately after the polls close.

The tabulators are to have limited functions and must not be connectible to Wi-Fi or Bluetooth. They must include secure ballot storage, and the scanners must not be capable of reading the same ballot more than once.

The proposed reforms would eliminate electronic poll books, replacing them with paper poll books printed 30 days before in-person voting begins.

Curbside voting would be limited to the legitimately disabled, and voters may vote only in their designated home precinct—no more county-wide voting.

Withdrawing Texas from membership in the Election Registration Information Center (ERIC) is another proposed reform.

Secretary of State Could Have Done More

Hall said the Texas Secretary of State's Elections Office "has the authority and ability to issue rules that could significantly reduce the opportunities for error and fraud but, to date, continues to refuse to do so."

When asked to comment, Sam Taylor, a spokesperson for current Republican Secretary of State Jane Nelson, told The Epoch Times that the SOS is prohibited by Texas law, "from advocating for or against legislation," and had no comment.

Instead, Taylor pointed to the report of a [forensic audit](#) of the 2020 general election commissioned by former Secretary of State John B. Scott.

The audit expressed guarded confidence in the trustworthiness of the state's election system.

The report said in part, "When the Texas Election Code and local procedures are followed, Texas voters should have a very high level of confidence in the accuracy of the outcome of Texas elections...When procedures are followed, results of the election are trustworthy.

"Indeed, in most cases, the audit found that counties followed their procedures, and clearly documented their activities.

"In some cases, however, they did not.

"Where procedures were not followed, discrepancies and irregularities from small to large ensued," the audit said.

Opposition Expected

Hall's Chief of Staff Amy Lane told The Epoch Times that opposition is expected from both sides of the aisle in the legislature and from individuals at the local level who want to maintain the status quo.

"Some people do not like change. Others believe that the current system, with all of its flaws, may somehow give them an advantage.

“And then there are those who know how to exploit the system and do not want those opportunities thwarted,” said Lane.



An

early voting location for the primary runoff elections in Brackettville, Texas, on May 18, 2022. (Charlotte Cuthbertson/The Epoch Times)

Long-time Texas political consultant Aaron Harris told The Epoch Times in an October interview that modern-day election fraud is not unusual in the Lone Star State.

Harris said both Democrats and Republicans have been involved in [ballot harvesting](#) schemes.

In recent years, multiple Texans have been arrested and convicted for election fraud and ballot harvesting for money.

One convicted harvester in Fort Worth told authorities his specialty was tricking mostly elderly citizens into signing ballots that he himself marked.

He was paid up to \$200 per ballot and in some weeks earned as much as \$1,200.

The man said that when he was arrested, he was promptly bailed out by a known associate of a top Democrat Tarrant County election official.

Later, he received a sentence of 10 days in jail, though he was eligible for 10 years in prison because of his prior felony record.

A 2019 report released by the Texas Secretary of State revealed that a cross-check of the state's voter rolls with Department of Public Safety records discovered that 95,000 non-citizens were registered to vote, and 58,000 of them voted in one or more Texas election since 2016.

The Secretary of State of Texas is appointed by the governor, in this case, Republican Greg Abbott.

Abbott's office did not respond to a request for comment by press time.



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