



114th STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSEMBLY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

Passed Unanimously
9/29/2020

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Executive Summary

A.R. 04 In Support of Student Poll Workers

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Travis County is dealing with an unprecedented shortage of poll workers just weeks before voting in the 2020 general election. Traditionally, the majority of poll workers are over 65 years of age and thus at a heightened risk of COVID-19. The University of Texas is hosting two polling locations on campus this election at Gregory Gymnasium and the Flawn Academic Center. As the university has many civically-engaged young voters, we are a valuable source to use to close the gap in poll workers. Working the polls is an opportunity for students to help their democracy while making money, and their work will lower the need for people at higher risk of disease to work the polls. This legislation intends to both urge students to sign up for shifts at on-campus polling locations and urge the university to lower barriers that might impede them from doing so.

Frequently asked questions:

1. How many poll workers does Travis County need?

Travis County Clerk Dana Debeauvoir says she is looking for as many as 2,000 poll workers to work across the county between Oct. 13 and Nov. 3. On campus, the county reports they are looking for at least 5 more workers in Gregory Gymnasium and at least 6 in the Flawn Academic Center for Election Day alone.

2. What incentives do students have to work the polls?

Travis County is paying students 10-12 dollars per hour. If a student does not need the money, they may opt to donate their wages to a charity through the county. Students may choose different shifts during early voting to best accommodate their schedule.

3. What may prevent students who want to work the polls from participating?

Many of the voting times may interfere with a students' class schedule, and as of now professors do not offer excused absences to work the polls. Further, there is no guarantee that students will be able to work the polling locations on campus, potentially needing to travel around the county for their shifts.

A.R. 04

In Support of Student Poll Workers

Authors: REPRESENTATIVE RYAN CHANDLER (*University-Wide Representative*), DIRECTOR AINSLEY DORSEY, (*Co-Director, Hook the Vote*), DIRECTOR NEHA VALMIKI (*Co-Director, Hook the Vote*)

Sponsors: REPRESENTATIVE BENJAMIN FARIAS (*School of Undergraduate Studies*)

WHEREAS, Student Government serves as the official voice of students at the University of Texas at Austin; and,

WHEREAS, Poll workers are essential to a free and efficient election; and,

WHEREAS, Travis County is facing an unprecedented shortage of poll workers due to the COVID-19 pandemic¹; and,

WHEREAS, Over 60 percent of poll workers are traditionally over the age of 65, putting them at increased risk of COVID-19²; and,

WHEREAS, The University of Texas has an opportunity to supplement Travis County's workforce at the polls by assisting students to become poll workers and eliminating barriers that may prevent their ability to participate; and therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, The University of Texas at Austin Student Government supports students wishing to contribute to their elections by serving as poll workers and urges the university to take steps to eliminate difficulties for these students; and therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED, The University of Texas ought to adopt a policy that allows students to claim an excused absence if their class schedule impedes their ability to work a shift at a polling location, and professors ought to consider voluntarily implementing that policy for their classes ; and therefore,

¹ <https://www.reformaustin.org/coronavirus/texas-election-officials-prepare-for-voting-amid-covid/>

² <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2020/04/06/older-people-account-for-large-shares-of-poll-workers-and-voters-in-u-s-general-elections/>

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The Student Government Assembly will outline and enact a strategy aimed at spreading information about working the polls and recruiting students to sign up for poll shifts; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The Student Government Assembly urges students to take advantage of early voting dates between October 13, 2020 and October 30, 2020 to lessen the burdens on our polling locations on Election Day ; and therefore,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That a copy of this resolution be sent to the Daily Texan, the Office of the Dean of Students, the Travis County Clerk's Office, and the Faculty Council of the University of Texas at Austin.

Titles for Authors and Sponsors

- REPRESENTATIVE FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*College/University-Wide*)
- CHAIR FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Academic/Financial/Governmental/Student Affairs Committee*)

- CHAIR FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Legislative Policy Council/ COVID-19 Response Standing Committee*)
- SPEAKER PRO TEM FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Student Government Assembly*)
- SPEAKER FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Student Government Assembly*)

- PRESIDENT FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Student Government*)
- VICE PRESIDENT FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Student Government*)
- CHIEF OF STAFF FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Student Government Executive Board*)
- DIRECTOR FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Administrative/ Communications/ Finance/ Policy, Student Government Executive Board*)
- DIRECTOR FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Agency, Student Government*)
- OFFICER FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Agency, Student Government*)
- FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*External Appointment, Committee/ Task Force*)

- CHIEF JUSTICE FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Student Government Supreme Court*)
- JUSTICE FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Student Government Supreme Court*)

- FIRST NAME LAST NAME (*Student, College/ School*)

Official Names of Schools/Colleges

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| ● <i>Cockrell School of Engineering</i> | ● <i>McCombs School of Business</i> |
| ● <i>College of Education</i> | ● <i>Moody College of Communication</i> |
| ● <i>College of Fine Arts</i> | ● <i>School of Architecture</i> |
| ● <i>College of Liberal Arts</i> | ● <i>School of Information</i> |
| ● <i>College of Natural Sciences</i> | ● <i>School of Law</i> |
| ● <i>College of Pharmacy</i> | ● <i>School of Nursing</i> |
| ● <i>Dell Medical School</i> | ● <i>School of Social Work</i> |
| ● <i>Graduate School</i> | ● <i>School of Undergraduate Studies</i> |
| ● <i>Jackson School of Geosciences</i> | |
| ● <i>LBJ School of Public Affairs</i> | |

Official Names of Agencies

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|--|---|
| ● <i>City Relations Agency</i> | ● <i>Out of State, International, and Transfer Student Agency</i> |
| ● <i>State Relations Agency</i> | ● <i>Longhorn Legislative Aide Agency</i> |
| ● <i>Federal Relations Agency</i> | ● <i>Freshman Leadership Organization</i> |
| ● <i>Hook the Vote Agency</i> | ● <i>Longhorn Entrepreneurship Agency</i> |
| ● <i>Queer Students Alliance</i> | ● <i>Orange Outreach</i> |
| ● <i>Disabilities Inclusion Agency</i> | ● <i>Campus Safety Agency</i> |
| ● <i>Women's Resource Agency</i> | ● <i>Students United For Rape Elimination (SURE) Walk Agency</i> |
| ● <i>Diversity and Inclusion Agency</i> | |
| ● <i>Non-Traditional Students Agency</i> | |