



Statement Regarding Election Integrity Policies

January 16, 2009

Contact: Brent Connett, 512-4746042

“Voter registration lists in Texas are suspect. A November 2007 review by the State Auditor identified 49,049 registered voters who may be ineligible to vote, mostly felons or deceased. That problem has not been rectified, as an independent report out of Houston notes that up to 4,000 deceased individuals remain on Harris County voter rolls.

“The election integrity crisis runs deeper: Non-citizens are registering and casting ballots in Texas. Public information requests submitted by the Texas Conservative Coalition Research Institute found at least 6,731 non-citizens have been removed from voter registration lists in the five most populous Texas counties, including Dallas and Tarrant Counties. Many of them illegally voted before being removed from our voter rolls.

“Absent an exhaustive state review, it remains unclear how many non-citizens may cast ballots this election year.

“What is clear, however, is that the state has failed to live up to its constitutional duty to reserve the right to vote to United States citizens. The Office of the Secretary of State, our chief election officer, admitted in 2006 that the citizenship of voters is never verified.

“The link between registration and voting is strong, and an important point bears repeating. When non-citizens, dead people, or otherwise unqualified individuals remain on the voter rolls, illegal votes will be cast, cancelling legitimate votes and denying legal voters of their civil rights.

“The election integrity measures we need are clear. First, the state must be a better steward of our right to vote, beginning with smarter and more advanced registration and verification methods. Advanced technologies will assist in this endeavor, and legislators can look to the State of Arizona, the only state to verify citizenship, as a model. Guessing games and honor systems are antiquated and lead to fraud.

“Second, the state must require all voters to present government-issued photo identification when voting. The United States Supreme Court affirmed the Constitutionality of Indiana’s photo identification requirement, in part, as means to safeguard against fraud stemming from inflated or inaccurate, voter registration lists. Texas needs a photo identification requirement modeled after Indiana’s.

“In the last session of the Texas Legislature, conservatives filed election integrity bills to achieve better voter registration lists (House Bill 2247 and Senate Bill 1464), smarter identification of voters at polling places (House Bill 218), and citizenship verification for those registering to vote (House Bill 626). Each bill passed at least one house of the Legislature only to be defeated by party politics in the other house.

“Vote fraud must not be tolerated. Election integrity measures are a priority for the Texas Legislature.”

###