**Austin, TX -** In response to the alarming attacks on local government authority trending in the 88sth Legislative Session, League of Women Voters of Texas President Joyce LeBombard issued the following statement:

Legislation currently in front of the Texas Legislature seeks to take over control from local governments and other vital local entities, including election administration. The League of Women Voters is alarmed at this proposed change as it threatens the trustworthy and transparent work of our local election officials.

The Texas Legislature proposes to rewrite the rules that have governed state and local relationships for decades. Lawmakers have re-adopted or proposed to re-adopt legislative district maps that significantly erode the representation of Texans in large population centers. In addition, they are debating sweeping legislation preempting local ordinances in significant areas such as natural resources, finance, and labor. These changes would be enforced through private action at the expense of local government.

The League is concerned about seeing the same pattern in elections. Real and perceived issues with election administration in Harris County in 2022 are being used as an excuse to subject election officials and election workers across the state to everything from increased criminal and civil liability to outright takeover by the State.

Examples include:

- Legislation allowing the Secretary of State to directly administer county elections based on a 'good cause to believe,' not actual evidence of fumbles in election administration;
- Legislation giving the Secretary of State the same power as a district court judge to order a new election;
- Legislation creating elections marshals to police local elections;
- Legislation allowing prosecution of election law violations in counties other than the county in which the alleged violation occurred;

The League remembers the axiom 'Government is best that is closest to the people.' Our lawmakers in the statehouse would do well to remember it also.


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