

League of Women Voters of Texas



MRS. DARVIN M. WINICK, PRESIDENT

TO: LOCAL LEAGUE PRESIDENTS IN SAN ANTONIO, HOUSTON, AMARILLO, GARLAND,
DALLAS, SOUTH JEFFERSON, TAMAR COUNTY, MIDLAND, VICTORIA, AND WACO
CC: CONVENTION OFFICE, ANDERSON, STATE OFFICE
FROM: BETTY CONNER, TCR CHAIRMAN
RE: SUBMISSION AND TRANSITION COMMITTEE

The following delegates are members of the submission and transition committee. This committee has the power to recommend the date of the constitutional election, how the constitutional proposals will be worded on the ballot and where placed on the ballot. This committee can also recommend removing sections from an article and submitting it as an alternative proposals and putting alternative proposals into the body of an article.

Please talk to your delegates about the following questions:

1. Has an election date been discusses or set? (probably this November general election, but it would be nice to know for sure)
2. How will the constitution be submitted to the voters?
3. Has the committee considered setting a limit on the number of alternative proposals that can be submitted?
4. Could the committee recommend that constitutional issues be placed on the ballot in a uniform method thru out the state?
5. ~~Can there be substanstive changes made in the constitution after third reading? (the parliamentarian says no, some delegates feel the rules can be changed by a two thirds vote and sections~~

could be dropped as well as added)

6.

League of Women Voters of Texas
OBSERVER FORM

Rights + Suffrage
COMMITTEE

2/20/74

DATE

Blana Lilley

OBSERVER

Schwartz

Presiding Officer

19 (absent Lee, Cole)

Committee number present

Committee ~~and~~ debate

Committee activity (public hearing, etc.)

RECORD OF ACTIVITY (record all votes, resolutions, who testified, major points made, etc. continue on back and additional sheets when necessary)

Schwartz ^{recommended} ~~moved~~ that the committee hear further expert (not public) testimony from lawyers knowledgeable in the areas of sounder + constitutional ramifications. Witnesses were to be invited by committee chairman. Nichols made the motion. McKnight voiced opposition - "Futile exercise." Motion passed 13 to 6 (six were Nowlin, Bigham, McKnight, Newton, Simmons, Slack) Possible witnesses suggested: Attorney General's Office, Wright, Williams from UT law school.

Nichols entered into record letter from Board of Pardons + Paroles re. their procedure + basis thereof for restoring citizens rights to paroled felons. Also read ABA release which stated that no state could withhold voting rights from felons having served sentence. Nichols made a motion that the committee hear further testimony from constitutional experts w/regard to felon voting rights. Motion passed 14 to 5 (Nowlin, Canales, Newton, Simmons, Slack) Earlier motion by Canales for comm. to reconsider tabling Art. II, Sec. 1 failed in favor of Nichols motion.

Committee hearing scheduled for Fri. morn. Feb. 22 for witnesses testimony only. No vote on Fri.

OBSERVER COMMENTS

League of Women Voters of Texas
OBSERVER FORM

Rights and Suffrage
COMMITTEE

Feb. 5 - Tues. - 7:30 p.m.
DATE

Susan Reid

OBSERVER

Brynell

Babe Schwartz

Presiding Officer

15+

Committee number present

Public hearing

Committee activity (public hearing, etc.)

RECORD OF ACTIVITY (record all votes, resolutions, who testified, major points made, etc. continue on back and additional sheets when necessary)

- Schwartz explains Committee business (Mon. mtg meeting)*
(LWV Betty Conners letter to delegates and letter to Schwartz urging support of minority report.)
② Ned Stewart - suggestions deal with Soc. Security # on voting application etc. (Jarrett Co.) - Chair's opinion that this is statutory.
I. E. I. Paso - Mr. James Speer - Water Improvement District #1
A. Special districts: on basis of Sup. Ct. decisions that says there are reasons limited voting rights (landowners, quantity of land) approve amend - may make property requirement for bonds & for elections of limited purpose. Weighting voting on basis of how much land owned!
Rationale: People who benefit & have responsibility should vote. Voting on management elections.
Schwartz says this could be statutory and language could be done by Style & Drafting.
under heavy questioning from Nichols.
Miller suggests change in wording from political subdivision to special gov. districts.
Schwartz keeps interjecting in favor of witness
II. Mr Sullivan calls on members of CURE
A. Mr. Patrick Vincent M. - Catholic Bishop of Austin Diocese
→ Person served his term should have all civil rights (rehabilitation argument)
Andujar q: time limit to ascertain? no -
Statement by all Bishops in US - C. R.'s to be restored.
Simmons: says can get it from Bd. of Paroles. Vick says person hasn't paid his debt.

OBSERVER COMMENTS

Vick says rights should not be automatic
Harris asks B. about political problems of proposal.
Bishop says he would push for this (rest.)
Leland challenges Vick.

Jester Chiles - criminologist from U of TX.
Reform of prison systems - Recidivism reduced
by: a) not punishment to correcting wrong
b) remove handicaps once person comes out -
doesn't know what public will do but doubt
Committee's negative response wrong.

Vick ask after multiple offenses - would you still hold you
same position - Chiles - yes - Vick - I'm talking about
punishment - Chiles - The Philos. should be rehabilitation

Swartz is going around to each delegate and hearing
private talks with them!!

Donald Wagner: convicted felon who served
prior time who wants vote.
Questioning from Simmons to try and show he's a
good "bad guy" and others might be bad;
Vick to differentiate. Answered well.

Block:

Carmody: Simmons' client? "broke" - hard to get legal
help - Simmons draws Carmody to say that some
restriction might be necessary.

didn't know who Gov. was.

Miller - Isn't just the effort to register enough
justification for voting? A. Yes

Leland points out \$50 all he had when he got
out of prison - took 2 mos to find job
what effort to secure this right?

Andajar - what inf. given you before you left? not much
Nichols - send out to school

Dina - spoke for Zeta Chi - Compared state-felon
relationship with parent-child - Once punishment is
over it's over.

League of Women Voters of Texas
OBSERVER FORM

Right to Suffrage
COMMITTEE

Feb 1, 1974
DATE

Jan Albers
OBSERVER

Schwartz
Presiding Officer

19
Committee number present

Hearing
Committee activity (public hearing, etc.)

RECORD OF ACTIVITY (record all votes, resolutions, who testified, major points made, etc. continue on back and additional sheets when necessary)

It was voted to schedule
the following work session
Mon. - 8 p.m.
Tues. - 7:30 p.m.
Wed. - 10:00 a.m.

Delegate Joe Hernandez has introduced a proposal allowing not only ex felons to vote but also those incarcerated.

- pointed out ^{under former} marijuana laws those convicted were felons - now the penal code is change but those who served under old laws would be declassified suffrage
- said proportion of minorities in prison population was high for many reasons including limited access to good legal help
- felt people could become model citizens after serving a sentence.
- hadn't come before committee before as he could "live with CRC" proposal

Schwartz pointed out how "flexible" the majority report was - say he felt a future leg. would take care of the problem.

Simmons says people will vote down a new constitution if felons are given the right to vote

(over)

OBSERVER COMMENTS

★ General observation - Every time a controversial issue comes up in a committee, about half the members say - "If we change this the voters will vote down the whole constitution and we don't want that to happen". I also think most delegates don't want to spend the time & energy to really "sell" a new const. - they want it to be as easy as possible.

Hearing continued!

Charles Sullivan - Co-Director of CURE - a group formed to provide bus service for families of those incarcerated - they also lobby for prison reform - his group sending out a news letter to prisoners + their families to let them know what is going on in this committee - he hadn't been before committee to testify as he felt "his people could live with the CRC proposal" + had the feeling that was not going to be a problem. - was very surprised at the majority vote on Wed. - he wants things slowed down so the committee can get input after his news letter are out.

— Schwarty didn't want the delay, Bailey felt everyone should be heard from - he wanted the delay as he's concerned about the "security question"

Comments

A vote to delay voting this article out of committee was taken + passed - this was a public relations vote + I'm afraid + not an indication of a change of heart.