## IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS SAN ANTONIO DIVISION

LARRY JOHNSON, WENDY WALKER, AMELIA PELLICCIOTTI, NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND OF TEXAS, THE COALITION OF TEXANS WITH DISABILITIES, Plaintiffs

SA-22-CV-00409-XR

-VS-

JACQUELYN F CALLANEN, IN HER OFFICIAL CAPACITY AS THE BEXAR COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR; AND BEXAR COUNTY, TEXAS,

Defendants

**PERMANENT INJUNCTIVE ORDER** 

\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$\$

On this date, the Court considered the status of this case. Before the Court is Plaintiffs' motion for a permanent injunction. ECF No. 61. Plaintiffs' motion is **GRANTED IN PART AND DENIED IN PART**. After careful consideration, the Court issues the following injunction.

- 1. Beginning with the November 7, 2023 election, and for all future elections within the term of this Permanent Injunction, Defendants Bexar County, Texas and Bexar County Elections Administrator, Jacquelyn Callanen, in her official capacity, shall ensure that an electronic remote accessible vote-by-mail system ("RAVBM") is available to blind voters in time for the start of absentee voting for the election in Bexar County.
- Any electronic document or ballot required by this Permanent Injunction will be considered
  "accessible" if it meets the requirements of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
  ("WCAG") 2.1 Level AA.
- 3. Voters are eligible to use the RAVBM system if they are legally blind, as defined by 42 U.S.C. § 416 (i)(1) (having a "central visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with the use of a correcting lens" or "[a]n eye which is accompanied by a limitation in the fields

- of vision such that the widest diameter of the visual field subtends an angle no greater than 20 degrees") or 42 U.S.C. § 12102 ("[O]therwise substantially limited in the major life activity of seeing.") (hereinafter, "eligible voters").
- 4. Voters will certify that they are legally blind by submitting the attestation form attached to this order, entitled "Declaration to Vote by Mail Because of Blindness."
- 5. Beginning with the November 7, 2023 election, and in each election thereafter for the term of this Permanent Injunction, Defendants shall, consistent with the time frame for providing absentee/vote-by-mail voter ballots:
  - a. Provide accessible, electronic fillable forms through which eligible voters can independently request vote-by-mail ballots (the "Ballot by Mail Application"), certify that they are legally blind, and provide an email for delivery of an accessible RAVBM ballot;
  - b. When an eligible voter submits the Declaration to Vote by Mail Because of Blindness and Ballot by Mail Application, provide an accessible and electronic RAVBM ballot by email or link to that voter's email address. Defendant will also provide accessible and electronic instructions about how to access, mark, and return the ballot as well as mail to the voter any envelopes required to return the marked ballot; such envelopes must include a tactile marking (e.g., a hole punch) on the carrier envelope or provide slips to print out and attach to an envelope for ballot return;
  - c. Permit eligible voters to use the RAVBM system to review and mark their RAVBM ballots electronically and to print and return those marked ballots for counting;

- d. Provide a mechanism for voters who certify that they are legally blind to be placed on the Annual Ballot by Mail Application list ("AABM") and be provided an RAVBM ballot, on the same terms and conditions as other voters on the county's AABM list;
- e. Notify the public of the availability of the accessible request system and the RAVBM system,
- f. Post information about the RAVBM system in the same locations where Defendants provide information about other means of mail-in/absentee voting. This includes posting step-by-step instructions for how to use the RAVBM on the Bexar County Elections Department website and communicating the same information through any other usual and customary methods used to notify voters of election information. Defendants shall repeat these notifications at each milestone leading up to the November 7, 2023 election, and all elections during the term of this Permanent Injunction;
- g. Train all county election staff regarding the accessible request system and RAVBM system through the same methods by which they train county election staff on other voting processes;
- h. Train county election staff to electronically send eligible voters the RAVBM ballots with instructions on how to mark, print, and return those RAVBM ballots, and train election staff to mail any required return envelopes, or slips to print out and attach to an envelope for ballot return, to eligible voters;
- i. Train county election staff to accept and tabulate all ballots that were properly completed using the RAVBM system and were received by the applicable deadline,

- including training staff to accept information and signatures on the carrier envelope regardless of location on the envelope;
- j. Ensure that all correctly completed and timely returned RAVBM ballots are counted in the final tabulation and certification of the election for which they are submitted.
- 6. The deadline for requesting a RAVBM ballot shall be the same as the deadline established for submitting a general Application for a Ballot by Mail. The deadline for submitting a RAVBM ballot shall be the same as the deadline for submitting a ballot by mail;
- 7. Within 45 days after each election, Defendants will provide the Court and Plaintiffs a report for that election containing the following information:
  - a. The number of individuals who requested an RAVBM ballot;
  - b. The number of individuals who were issued an RAVBM ballot;
  - c. The number of individuals who submitted an RAVBM ballot;
  - d. The number of RAVBM ballots that were accepted and rejected, and the reason for any rejections; and
  - e. Descriptions of any complaints or feedback received from voters with disabilities regarding attempts to use the RAVBM system and descriptions of how those complaints were resolved.
- 8. In order to meet the deadline imposed by the Court in Section 1 of this Permanent Junction, the Court hereby waives and releases Defendant from any obligation to comply with the applicable competitive bidding requirements which are contained in Chapter 262, Texas Local Government Code (the "County Purchasing Act") in order to acquire and implement

an electronic remote accessible vote-by-mail system ("RAVBM") and related services for the purpose of complying with this Permanent Injunction.

9. The Court shall retain jurisdiction of this action for the purpose of implementing and enforcing this Permanent Injunction for a term of four (4) years.

It is so **ORDERED**.

**SIGNED** this 27th day of July, 2023.

Xavier Rodriguez

United States District Judge

## **Declaration to Vote by Mail Because of Blindness**

My name is	I am registered to vote in the County of
Bexar, Texas. My address is	
I am legally blind, meaning I have central with the use of a correcting lens and/or a limitation diameter of the visual field subtends an angle not substantially limited in the major life activity of Disabilities Act.	o greater than 20 degrees or I am otherwise
I understand that a person commits an of information on an application for ballot by mail. Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code §132.001, foregoing is true and correct.	
I understand that this form will be reviewed available to the public.	by the Early Voting Ballot Board and may be
Executed in the County of Bexar, Texas on	, 2023.
	Signature
	Printed Name

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS DECLARATION MUST BE PLACED IN THE SAME ENVELOPE AS YOUR APPLICATION TO VOTE BY MAIL