

# ACTION ALERT

## URGENT NEED TO OPPOSE SB971/HB1079 TO REGULATE VOTER REGISTRATION ORGANIZATIONS

This bill would expose both LWV and individual volunteers who conduct voter registration drives – a core mission of our 100-year-old organization—to criminal and civil penalties. Though the bill, as amended, appears to exempt volunteers, many large-scale voter registration drives are a blend of paid staff or interns and volunteers.

The creation of new administrative burdens and threats of penalties will have a chilling effect on voter registration efforts by non-partisan organizations such as LWV as well as businesses, churches, and grassroots groups. It would penalize failures to complete mandatory training, for submitting “deficient” voter registration forms to the county election commission, and for certain public communications without the mandated disclosure and disclaimers.

Talking points for your representative:

- This bill threatens organizations like the LWV and its individual volunteers with criminal and civil penalties for engaging in voter registration efforts. It establishes penalties for failures to complete mandatory training, for submitting “deficient” voter registration forms, and for providing certain public communications without mandated disclaimers.
- This bill would make Tennessee the only state in the nation to subject individuals and organizations to criminal penalties for submitting deficient voter registration forms.
- Courts have struck down similar language restricting drives in other states; we don’t want public funds spent on defending voter registration laws that are out of the mainstream in the country. It is bad for taxpayers and bad for Tennessee’s reputation and business climate.
- As Tennessee currently ranks 45th in the nation in voter registration, the state election commission needs to expand voter participation and promote registration drives. This bill does the opposite.

**The House is schedule to vote on HB1079 on Monday, April 15! Please send a brief email or call your local representative ASAP! Be sure to identify yourself as a constituent living in their district. The TN Senate will vote later in the week. Contact your senator to urge opposition to SB971.**