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**Lawsuit Alleges Paper Vote-By-Mail Ballots Keep Blind Texans from Voting**

*Suit Claims Secretary of State Prevents Counties from Implementing Easy Solutions*

**AUSTIN**—Texas’s reliance on exclusively paper vote-by-mail ballots keeps blind Texans and other Texans with disabilities who require accessible ballots from participation in mail-in voting, according to a lawsuit filed today against the Texas Secretary of State, Ruth Hughs, on behalf of the National Federation of the Blind of Texas, The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, and three individual plaintiffs. The lawsuit was filed by [Brown Goldstein & Levy](#) and Disability Rights Texas.

Electronic ballots delivered by email for military personnel and overseas voters are already available and could be made accessible as an immediate temporary solution to the problem. Numerous low-cost and no-cost accessible electronic ballot delivery systems are available and used by many other jurisdictions as permanent solutions. Despite the available solutions, the Secretary of State of Texas has refused to allow counties to implement them. This refusal places Texans with disabilities in a precarious situation. They must either forfeit their right to vote privately and independently or risk their health by traveling to a polling location in order to cast their vote in person during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Earlier this year, the state of Michigan faced a similar problem and since has agreed to purchase a remote accessible vote-by-mail system for future elections. New York litigation resulted in the state’s making its military ballots accessible and offering them to blind voters for a June election while the state explores a permanent solution.

“There is plenty of time to allow Texas to make mail-in ballots accessible in time for the upcoming elections on November 3, 2020,” said Lia Davis, senior attorney at Disability Rights Texas. “People who are blind have a right to utilize the mail-in ballot option, and they should not be unnecessarily exposed to the COVID-19 virus at the polls. We believe there is an easy remedy to this problem and the Secretary of State’s obstinance is discriminatory.”

“Sadly, Texas is choosing to disenfranchise blind voters and is violating the law,” said Norma Crosby, president of the National Federation of the Blind of Texas. “Blind Texans will not tolerate being treated as second-class citizens, and we will continue to be part of the nationwide effort of the National Federation of the Blind to make sure voters in other states are not treated as such.”

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**The National Federation of the Blind of Texas** is an affiliate of the oldest and largest nationwide organization of blind Americans. Founded in 1940, the National Federation of the Blind consists of affiliates, chapters, and divisions in the fifty states, Washington, DC, and Puerto Rico. The organization defends the rights of blind people of all ages and provides information and support to families with blind children, older Americans who are losing vision, and more. We believe in the hopes and dreams of blind people and work together to transform them into reality. Learn more about our many programs and initiatives at <http://www.nfbtx.org>

[Disability Rights Texas](#) is the federally designated legal protection and advocacy agency for people with disabilities in Texas. Its mission is to help people with disabilities understand and exercise their rights under the law, ensuring their full and equal participation in society.