



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**DEMOCRACY FROM THE GROUND UP ANNOUNCES LAUNCH OF 2022 CAMPAIGN**

*Coalition seeks to pass 15 pro-voter reforms in 15 counties*

**View a Recording of Today's Press Conference [here](#)**

**Austin, TEXAS** - Today, Democracy From The Ground Up announced the launch of the 2022 campaign to increase voter participation across Texas ahead of the midterm election. Democracy From The Ground Up is an advocacy campaign done in coalition by Common Cause Texas, MOVE Texas, Texas Civil Rights Project, and Texas Freedom Network.

Democracy From the Ground Up will work with local election officials to enact reforms that bolster our local election infrastructure in order to increase voter participation in Texas, notorious for low voter turnout. Our goal is to implement 15 pro-voter reforms in 15 different counties across the state of Texas that together comprise over half of the state's population. These reforms include: 1) establishing a minimum wage of \$17/hour for poll workers, 2) establishing polling places on college campuses with more than 8,000 students, and 3) ensuring that counties promote the availability of curbside voting for people with disabilities.

"The core mission of Harris County Elections is to expand voter participation in a safe, accessible, transparent, and equitable manner. Key to expanding participation is innovation at the local and state level. The Democracy From the Ground Up coalition is taking valiant steps in the direction of expansion by working with local officials to advance reforms that break down barriers to voter access. We are pleased the DFGU groups continue to push for innovations and look forward to working with them on advancements in Harris County," **said Beth Stevens, Harris County Interim Elections Administrator.**

Since its inception, Democracy From The Ground Up has made major strides in enacting a number of pro-voter policies in several counties across Texas. Past victories of the campaign

include; mailing postage-paid vote-by-mail applications to all voters over the age of 65, recruiting high school and college students to participate in local Student Poll Worker Programs, verifying that all polling locations in the County comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, along with many other tactics.

“This campaign has a clear track record of implementing pro-voter reforms across Texas. This year, Texans are facing additional barriers enacted by the Texas Legislature that put the equity, accessibility, and safety of our elections at risk. We aim to work side by side with local pro-voting officials to fight back and enact reforms that make voting safe and accessible for Texas voters,” **said Miguel Rivera, Voting Rights Outreach Coordinator at the Texas Civil Rights Project.**

“By coming together as voters, we can make a better Texas where our electrical grid works, students learn the truth in schools, and all communities are valued. In working with local election administrators, each community can take the power to work on pro-voter reforms that uplift the voice of their communities. Every pro-voter reform put in practice will show that the people of Texas hold power, not far right politicians at the state capitol,” **said Rae Martinez, Texas Rising Director at Texas Freedom Network.**

Over the past several years, certain politicians in the Texas state legislature have continued to make it harder to vote. Most recently, thousands of voters had their ballots rejected for simple clerical errors due to new provisions in Senate Bill 1 (SB 1). That is why we are calling on Elections Administrators, County Clerks, and other officials to join the Democracy From the Ground Up campaign to make our elections safe and accessible.

“As a young person and staffer of MOVE Texas whose mission is to engage, energize, and empower young people in the political process, it is apparent that the electoral system was not created with me, my generation or all the young voters before us in mind. From registering to vote to finding a polling location to casting a ballot, it is like navigating your way through a giant maze with multiple dead ends and little to no help through the finish. That is why we’re advocating for these reforms to expand democracy, limit confusion and barriers to voting, and build a culture of civic engagement in Texas,” **said Amber Mills, Advocacy Organizer at MOVE Texas.**

“I think it’s my responsibility to make sure that everyone who is eligible to vote is registered so that the minute they decide they would like to vote they are able to exercise that right and they are not caught in that 30 day window Texas requires for registration. It’s been helpful and extremely beneficial that we’ve had organizations step up and help us with that because we can’t be everywhere 24/7 in communities. So when organizations like the ones represented here engage it’s extremely helpful to get the word out to make sure we’re creating trusted sources of information within the community,” **said Remi Garza, Cameron County Elections Administrator.**

“This is a critical moment for our democracy. Last legislative session we saw our state government not only make it harder for Texans to access their fundamental right to vote, but it punished counties for trying to innovate pro-voter policies. Our campaign aims to elevate local power to protect and ensure access to the ballot box. If we can't trust the leaders at the top to protect our right to vote, we'll build protections for our democracy from the ground up.” **said Katya Ehresman, Voting Rights Program Manager for Common Cause Texas.**

The right to vote is fundamental to our democracy, which is why we must fight to protect it at every level of government. To learn more about Democracy From The Ground Up visit [democracyfromthegroundup.org](http://democracyfromthegroundup.org).

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#### **About [Texas Civil Rights Project](#)**

*The Texas Civil Rights Project is boldly serving the movement for equality and justice in and out of the courts. We use our tools of litigation and legal advocacy to protect and advance the civil rights of everyone in Texas, and we partner with communities across the state to serve the rising movement for social justice. We undertake our work with a vision of a Texas in which all communities can thrive with dignity, justice and without fear.*

#### **About [Common Cause Texas](#)**

*[Common Cause Texas](#) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization working towards more honest and accountable government at the national, state and local level. We have a proven track record of hard-fought legislative campaigns and victories. works towards solutions that will reduce the influence of money in politics, end partisan gerrymandering and ensure that our elections are free, fair and accessible.*

#### **About [Texas Freedom Network](#)**

*The Texas Freedom Network ([tfn.org](http://tfn.org)) is a grassroots organization of religious and community leaders and young Texans building an informed and effective movement for equality and social justice.*

#### **About [MOVE Texas](#)**

*[MOVE Texas](#) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit, grassroots organization building power in underrepresented youth communities through civic education, leadership development, and issue advocacy.*