



EVERY TEXAN

Opposition to SB 689

Luis Figueroa, Chief of Legislative Affairs, Every Texan

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Chair and Members of the Committee,

Every Texan respectfully submits this testimony in strong opposition to SB 689 out of concern for the bill's implications for the efficacy, autonomy, and responsiveness of our local governments and public institutions.

SB 689 imposes a sweeping prohibition on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives across all governmental entities, including counties, municipalities, and special districts. This uniform ban disregards the distinct needs and values of our diverse communities. DEI programs equip local entities with the essential tools to understand and respond to the specific cultural, economic, and demographic dynamics of their populations. Local governments are uniquely positioned to address the particular challenges within their jurisdictions, and thus a restriction like SB 689 undermines their capacity to serve constituents effectively and equitably.

Moreover, DEI initiatives play a critical role in building and maintaining trust between public institutions and the communities they serve. By dismantling these programs, SB 689 threatens the relationships local governments have cultivated with their residents. Trust is the foundation of effective governance, and thus policies that erode this trust jeopardize civic engagement, reduce public cooperation, and contribute to a broader climate of mistrust in all levels of Texas government, undermining both the democratic processes and institutional legitimacy.

The enforcement mechanism outlined in SB 689 permits individuals to file complaints with the Attorney General, who may then initiate legal proceedings against the targeted governmental entity. This approach diverts scarce resources from essential public services and exposes local governments to litigation costs without allocating additional funding. The result is an unfunded mandate that strains municipal budgets and hampers the delivery of vital services. Furthermore, the threat of legal reprisal may discourage local governments from supporting historically marginalized communities, further harming residents who depend on responsive and inclusive governance.

SB 689 constitutes a clear overreach of state authority, undermining the pursuit of limited government and the preservation of local control. It sets a troubling precedent in which the state dictates the internal policies of local entities, contradicting the foundational principle that government should be as close to the people as possible. Respecting local autonomy is essential to upholding the values of decentralization and democratic self-governance.

In sum, SB 689 would compromise the ability of local governments to serve their communities effectively, impose unfunded mandates, erode public trust, and subvert long-standing principles of local control. For these reasons, we urge you to vote no on SB 689.