TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS BEFORE
THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS
EIGHTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE
(COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SENATE)
AUSTIN, TEXAS

IN RE:

CONSIDERATION OF
SENATE BILL 362

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE SENATE

TUESDAY, MARCH 10, 2009

BE IT REMEMBERED THAT AT 12:38 p.m., on
Tuesday, the 10th day of March 2009, the above-
entitled matter was heard at the Texas State Capitol
Senate Chamber, Austin, Texas, before the Committee of
the Whole Senate; and the following proceedings were
reported by Aloma J. Kennedy, a Certified Shorthand
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issues. And one of the good things about the Federalist Society, if you ever come to one of its panel discussions is, and like a lot of organizations, The Federalist Society tries to get people on both sides of an issue so that you can have a good discussion and get different points of view.

SEN. ELLIS: Thank you.

SEN. DUNCAN: Members, there's no other persons registered, so the witness will be excused.

MR. von SPAKOVSKY: Thank you,

Mr. Chairman.

SEN. DUNCAN: Thank you, sir.

The Chair calls Tova Andrea Wang.

Ms. Wang, you have 10 minutes. And you can begin.

And state your name and who you represent.

TESTIMONY BY TOVA ANDREA WANG

MS. WANG: Sure. Thank you. My name is Tova Andrea Wang. Thanks very much for allowing me to come testify today. I'm Vice President for Research at Common Cause, a non-partisan national organization with 36 state chapters, including one right here in Texas. And I have spent the last several years doing research and writing and speaking on elections issues and voting rights issues.

I want to start out talking about the
disenfranchising impacts of voter ID such as this. I know that for probably all of you in the room -- and I would include myself -- it seems so easy. You have an ID in your pocket right now, probably several. But I have to really emphasize to you all that it's not the case for everybody. For some people they don't have their ID, and it would be a real hardship for them to get that ID, and we need to understand this group in our society. In fact, about 10 percent of the American people don't have government-issued photo ID.

And as has been pointed out repeatedly today, this is disproportionally the case with African-Americans, immigrants, the poor, people with disabilities, senior citizens and students.

There have been numerous studies to this effect. I want to point out one in particular, Brennan Center survey talking just about income. People with incomes lower than $35,000 a year are twice as likely not to have the kind of ID we're talking about. 38 percent of Texans have incomes that are less than $35,000 a year. African-Americans are three times less likely to have ID than whites. And, in fact, one-fourth of African-Americans don't have government-issued photo ID.

So this is what I'm talking about when
I'm talking about thinking about a group in our society that maybe some of us don't have every day interaction with. People always talk about how everyone has ID, you need it to fly and rent a DVD and all of these kinds of things.

Now, I know Hurricane Katrina is starting to seem like a long time ago now, but I want us to think back for a second about all those people in the Astrodome. They were there because they couldn't get out, because they don't have driver's licenses, they don't have cars, they're not going out and renting DVDs on the weekends and flying on vacations. So this whole notion that everyone has ID is just untrue. Many poor people don't.

We talked a lot about fraud today, too. There is also a lot of mythology around that. I want to point out to you that the U.S. Department of Justice has never brought a case in the last several years of the type that would be addressed by a voter ID law such as this.

Now, we know this was in an environment in the last several years in which U.S. attorneys were under tremendous pressure to bring cases of voter fraud against people, and people were -- allegedly at least -- fired for not doing so; and, yet, not one