



## League of Women Voters of Dallas Testimony to Dallas County Commissioners

November 3, 2015

I am Susybelle Gosslee, speaking on behalf of the League of Women Voters of Dallas. I would like to address the proposed change of the Dallas County Commissioners to meet twice a month and the additional proposed change to vote on issues the same day that the commissioners are briefed and have discussion.

The problem is that the change to the process will negatively affect the public's knowledge about and participation in the decision-making process with Dallas County Commissioners.

The democratic process works best when there is transparency and the public participates in policy-making at the national, state and local levels. As needs of society and the people's concerns change, the commissioners need to hear from the people. Public participation is a basic principle of a democracy and one of the greatest civil rights.

The world has many countries that have demonstrated the disempowerment of its people when public participation in one or many levels of government was disallowed. When citizens are not fully informed about issues and the proposed solutions, the Court basically is governing without hearing what the people think. The message is that the people of Dallas County are not capable of self-government. Dallas County Commissioners have an opportunity to promote and practice the highest ideals of democracy and create more safeguards to ensure good government.

If anything, we need more public awareness of issues and the participation in determining solutions. As a democracy, Dallas County needs the informed participation of all the people to become a great and safe place to live and work. Democracy works when citizens are informed participants. The League supports the briefing and votes on issues occurring on separate dates.