

IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
SAN ANTONIO DIVISION

MI FAMILIA VOTA, TEXAS STATE
CONFERENCE OF THE NATIONAL
ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT
OF COLORED PEOPLE, MICAELA
RODRIGUEZ and GUADALUPE TORRES,

Plaintiffs

v.

GREG ABBOTT, Governor of Texas; RUTH
HUGHS, Texas Secretary of State,

Defendants.

NO. 5:20-cv-00830

DECLARATION OF PLAINTIFF MICAELA RODRIGUEZ

I, Micaela Rodriguez hereby state on my own knowledge and belief that:

1. I am of legal age and competent to provide this declaration.
2. I am a plaintiff in the above-entitled action.
3. I am a registered voter in Harris County, Texas.
4. I have always voted in person.
5. I do not qualify to vote by mail in Texas.
6. I live with my two daughters. I have moved out of my mother's house, but I still spend a lot of time with her. I am concerned for both of my parents because my dad is over 60 and my mom is almost 60, and both have pre-existing health conditions that make each of them high risk for getting very sick if they get COVID-19.
7. I am very worried about voting in person because of COVID-19, but I also want my vote to count and think that voting in person is the best way to do that.
8. During the primary election in March, I had to stand in line for two hours to vote.
9. When I voted during the July run-off elections, I intended to vote in person. But when my husband and I drove up to the polling place, we saw a big congregation of voters. People

were waiting in line for more than 30 minutes to vote. Some people wore masks but some people did not, and they were not social distancing. I did not feel like I could safely vote in person.

10. My husband and I were given the opportunity to vote curbside, so we did that. I voted on a machine. The poll worker had gloves, but I had to touch the voting machine with my finger; I was not given finger coverings.
11. I am worried that my vote didn't count. The poll worker first took my identification inside, and then came back and typed in the numbers that called up my ballot. I just used my fingers on the machine. Then the poll worker had to take the machine inside again to connect it to the system. I don't know if my vote was ever actually cast.
12. I felt badly for the poll worker. It didn't seem like there was enough staff. She looked extremely fatigued. I felt bad for her but I also worried about mistakes being made when they are so overworked.
13. Usually voting is an empowering feeling, but it wasn't in July. I still don't know if my vote got cast.
14. I don't know if I would vote curbside again, or if I will be allowed to.
15. I have spoken to my family and friends. Many are just hoping that they will eventually be able to vote by mail because they don't feel safe voting in person. When it comes to November, if their only choice is to vote in person, I don't know if they will choose to vote, even though they have a lot of interest in the election and want to vote. But the risk of getting sick is very high.
16. Right now, I'm thinking about the decision I have to make—do I risk getting sick so that I can vote in person, or do I forfeit that right?
17. I want to say yes, that voting is that important to me that I will take the risk of getting COVID-19. But I don't know if I can take that risk.
18. I'm worried about my family getting sick, I'm worried about what happens to me and my kids if I get sick. I don't know if I can risk going to vote in person, but I don't know if I could vote any other way, or if my vote would get counted if it did.
19. Making masks mandatory would go a long way to making voting safe. I wore a mask and so did the poll worker, but a lot of people in line did not have masks and I have spoken with friends who tried to vote and saw a lot of people without masks. It makes the risk much higher.
20. Voting in person is unsafe because there are too many people at the polling places, and the lines are too long. Even in the July election, there were a bunch of people congregated by the door. There will be so many more people in November.

21. The lines need to be much shorter. It would help to have more voting stations at each polling place, which would allow the line to move faster, and to have more polling places. It would make it easier to move people in and out of the polling places. Otherwise, there are going to be crowds.
22. I would feel safer if I can vote on a paper ballot. I wouldn't have to touch the screen, and I'd be more confident that my vote gets cast.
23. I am glad that Texas is going to start early voting earlier this year, but I think they should do more—the more people who vote early, the fewer people have to go to vote on election day.
24. I think they need to have more poll workers. The person who helped me was exhausted. There is so much more to do during these elections, that it's important to have enough people.
25. If masks are made mandatory and there are only short lines with social distancing, then the risks of getting COVID-19 from voting will be so much lower; this will go a long way to making it safe to vote in person.
26. Right now, a safe way to vote doesn't exist. So people who want to vote won't because they need to stay safe, and they can't do that by voting.
27. I hate that I have to make this decision. I want to vote, my family and friends want to vote, but we are afraid. It's important to have the right to vote safely, and we don't have that right now.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the United States that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed on August 26, 2020.


Micaela Rodriguez