



Carbett “Trey” J. Duhon III
Waller County Judge

TO: PRESS RELEASE

FROM: TREY DUHON, WALLER COUNTY JUDGE
CHRISTY EASON, WALLER COUNTY ELECTIONS ADMINISTRATOR

DATE: OCTOBER 12, 2018

RE: WALLER COUNTY ASSURES VOTING RIGHTS AT PVAMU

Hempstead, Texas – On Thursday, October 12, 2018, in response to misinformation that has been recently distributed via social media and on the Prairie View A&M University campus, Waller County officials assured the public that every student at PVAMU that is registered to vote will be allowed to vote in the upcoming general election.

Beginning this past Tuesday, the Waller County Elections Office starting receiving phone calls in relation to misinformation being distributed around PVAMU that student voter registrations had been 1) destroyed 2) disallowed or 3) that students will not be allowed to vote, especially if they had registered using 100 or 700 University Drive as their address on their voter registration application.

In 2016, the Waller County Elections Office, working in conjunction with PVAMU officials and the United States Post Office, and members of the Waller County Democrat Party, agreed to allow students to use the same address for registration purposes that PVAMU uses as their primary address (100 or 700 University). This was done to ensure that

students received their voter registration cards by mail since they do have individual mail boxes at PVAMU. However, in the past primary, it became apparent to Waller County Elections officials, that by using the University address, students were being placed in Precinct 310 instead of the campus precinct (Precinct 309). This was occurring because the physical location of 100 or 700 University is not located within the campus boundaries (and Precinct 309) and no one was previously aware of that. Part of the issue with the physical location is related to an issue Prairie View has had in the past with the zip codes in the area. Waller County Elections Administrator Christy Eason stated, “I wasn’t here at that time, but I don’t think it ever crossed anyone’s mind, including the University, that the University’s main address was not actually physically on campus... There was never any ill-intent behind the error whatsoever.”

Several months ago, the Waller County Elections Office began working with PVAMU officials, local community leaders, and the Texas Secretary of State to resolve the issue and advise students of the same. County Judge Trey Duhon stated, “Unfortunately, with the misinformation and rhetoric that has been put out there the past few days, the fact that Waller County has been working very hard with University officials and community leaders to protect the voting rights of students has been lost in translation... Since I took office in 2015, the Waller County Commissioners Court has expanded voting rights at PVAMU by returning the Election Day Poll to the Memorial Student Center, and most recently, making early voting available on campus for the first time in PVAMU history. For those trying to paint Waller County in a certain light, the truth is that we have worked very hard to protect and expand the voting rights of students at PVAMU, and we will always remain committed to that endeavor, regardless of what anyone else tries to portray.” Eason added “Members of the student body that I have worked with over the past few months have been phenomenal. The groups of fraternities, sororities and student government members that I have deputized have seen our need and have been more than willing to

help. Believe it or not, there has and continues to be a very strong partnership between the County and PVAMU.”

The following procedures have been approved by the Texas Secretary of State and Waller County for the upcoming election to resolve the issue:

1) Any student using 100 or 700 University as their registration address WILL be allowed to vote in Precinct 309 (on campus) or Precinct 310 (at the Prairie View City Hall). The ballots at either location are identical. The County will have additional poll workers on hand to help any students who want to correct their address after they cast their ballot so that there will be no unnecessary delays for other voters. “This will substantially reduce lines and delay to the greatest extent possible on Election Day,” Eason added. No student using these addresses will be required to use a provisional ballot. Eason stated further “Providing an “on campus” residence address will not only ensure that the voter is placed in the proper voting precinct, it will eliminate the same problem in future elections.”

2) The Waller County Elections Office and volunteers will conduct an Address Correction Drive on campus at the Memorial Student Center so that students can check their registration and correct their address PRIOR to Election day if they so wish. The exact times and dates will be announced early next week after the Office completes processing of all of the voter registration applications that have been submitted.

3) Any student wanting to avoid any lines or confusion can vote early at ANY EARLY VOTING LOCATION in Waller County. An early voting location will also be on campus at the MSC October 29-31, from 8 am to 5 pm and at the Waller County Community Center, Nov. 1-2 from 7 am to 7 pm. Any student wanting to vote can do so ON CAMPUS and prior to Election Day. The early voting schedule and all poll locations can be found on the Waller County Elections website at:

<http://www.co.waller.tx.us/page/Front%20Page>.

Next Wednesday, October 17th, Waller County Commissioners will consider a recommendation from Ms. Eason to add additional early voting dates and locations to the Prairie View and PVAMU campus for the week of early voting starting October 22, 2018.

Judge Duhon added, “Students that reside on campus that have registered to vote will absolutely be given EVERY opportunity to cast their ballot during the General Election with the least amount of delay and inconvenience humanly possible. Waller County has made every effort to protect the student’s ability to vote. That is just the truth.”