



## CELIA ISRAEL

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • DISTRICT 50

June 4, 2015

Fellow Texan,

Thank you for contacting me about your views on LGBT issues. As my constituent, you are my first priority and I hope to be of service to you. We addressed several LGBT issues this session, and I certainly did not shy away from standing up for equality for all Texans. Below is a summary of the more high profile bills we addressed:

- HB 537, which would ensure accurate birth certificates for adopted children of same-sex couples, passed the State Affairs committee. Unfortunately, time ran out on its consideration in the full house. I was proud to joint author this bill, and I hope to see this pass next session.
- HB 3495, which bans conversion therapy of minors, failed to receive a hearing. Perhaps with another two years, we can be in a better position to advocate for common-sense and eliminate harmful conversion therapy forever.
- HB 71, or the "Romeo and Juliet bill," would protect same-sex minors who are less than three years different in age from being punished for their relationship under antiquated statutory rape laws. The current code only protects opposite-sex couples. The bill passed the State Affairs committee and although I voted for it, there were not enough votes to pass the full House. I hope we can address this disparity next session.
- HB 4105, which would direct local government officials to refuse marriage licenses to same-sex couples, regardless of federal law, was killed procedurally on the House floor. I was one of many opponents of the bill who were able to come together to keep it from being debated. This was a divisive bill that would have done more harm than good, and I'm glad we stopped it in the Texas House.
- SB 2065, which establishes that pastors shall not be forced to marry same-sex couples, passed nearly unanimously. From time to time, this body sees fit to reiterate what is already in the U.S. Constitution. While same-sex couples will not seek out those who disapprove of their union, this bill simply establishes a right pastors already have. I voted for this bill and believe we showed it is possible to support both equality and religious liberty.

Texans are ready for equality, and I hope with time, we will begin working together to make lives better for all Texans. These divisive issues harm our ability to work across party lines on other issues such as transportation and public education.

Feel free to visit my website at <http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/member-page/?district=50>, if you have an interest in other areas. Check out our newsletter tab where we break down many of the issues we covered this session.

Do not hesitate to contact my office at (512) 463-0821 if you ever need anything, or if you would like to receive additional updates. I serve on both the Transportation and Elections committees, and our office is always available to help you on other state issues you may need help with. Please know that my office is your office, as the Capitol belongs to the people of Texas.

Sinceramente,

Celia Israel  
Texas State Representative, HD 50