

RESOLUTION AGAINST BIASED RISK ASSESSMENT TOOLS

WHEREAS, the Texas criminal justice system discriminates against the poor and people of color, and

WHEREAS, studies have revealed irrefutable evidence of racial and ethnic disparities throughout the criminal justice system, and

WHEREAS, systemic racism and discrimination in the criminal justice system leads to disproportionate differences in rates of arrest, detention, conviction, and length of prison sentence, and

WHEREAS, counties throughout the state maintain pretrial justice systems that process arrested persons in an assembly-line manner, and

WHEREAS, on any given day, thousands of people who are charged with misdemeanors and nonviolent crimes are housed in the nation's jail system who have not been convicted of a crime, and are in jail for no reason other than they cannot afford the money bail they required to be released pending disposition of their cases, and

WHEREAS, these people are disproportionately poor and people of color, and pose no public safety risk to the community, and

WHEREAS, certain states and municipalities across the country have adopted "bail reform" policies to reform the criminal justice system, and

WHEREAS, in an effort to aid in these reforms, so-called risk assessment tools have been instructing the decisions of judges on who should be released from jail and who should remain indefinitely until their trial, and

WHEREAS, these tools are secret computer algorithms with no transparency and without public knowledge of what goes in to their decision making matrix, and

WHEREAS, the public and specifically people of color are supposed to simply trust the secret computer program to make color-blind decisions, and

WHEREAS, a headline in Pro Publica says that this software is "biased against blacks", and

WHEREAS, at the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a broad coalition of more than 100 civil rights, digital justice, and community-based organizations released a shared statement of civil rights concerns highlighting concerns with the adoption of algorithmic-based decision making tool, and

WHEREAS, these groups found that in fact, these tools can worsen racial disparities and allow further incarceration, and

WHEREAS, prominent allies like the NAACP, ACLU, Civil Rights Corps, and Color of Change have said that these tools can exacerbate racial disparities in the system and called for their end

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Democratic Party of Texas rejects the use of secret computer algorithms and risk assessment tools in our criminal justice system and further calls for Texas to reform its broken bail system without the use of these tools that have shown to be racially biased and increase racial disparities in our criminal justice system.

SUBMITTED TO the Platform Committee of the <**** Convention in Texas County,> March ***, 2020 by <Your Name, Precinct #, Contact info>