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September 2, 2020

Blake A. Hawthorne, Clerk
Supreme Court of Texas
201 W. 14th Street, Room 104
Austin, Texas 78701

Re: No. 20-0671; *In re Stephen Hotze, et al.*; In the Supreme Court of Texas

Dear Mr. Hawthorne:

Charles Butt respectfully submits the attached amicus curiae letter in support of the Respondent Chris Hollins in the above-referenced mandamus proceeding. Please distribute this letter to the Court.

Pursuant to Rule 11(c), Tex. R. App. P., no fee has been paid or will be paid in connection with this amicus curiae letter.

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Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Wallace B. Jefferson

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on September 2, 2020, this letter was served via electronic service through eFile.TXCourts.gov on all parties through counsel of record, listed below:

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/s/ Wallace B. Jefferson
Wallace B. Jefferson

September 2, 2020

Dear Chief Justice Hecht and members of the Supreme Court of Texas,

I send my best wishes to you with my thanks for your service to the State.

As you likely know, when the Coronavirus began to impact Texas, our company and many other retailers expanded their programs of allowing pickup of online orders at the store. In addition, our home delivery offerings were expanded. A significant portion of our sales are now transacted without the customer having to interact face-to-face with another individual.

We've worked hard to give customers opportunities to buy their food in the safest way. In light of this, I also support efforts to allow voting by mail, which is the safest means for people to exercise this vital right during this time. The plan announced by the Honorable Chris Hollins, Harris County Clerk, to send applications for mail-in ballots to registered voters in Harris County is permissible under the Election Code and facilitates the execution of the constitutional right to vote.

Texas requires an excuse to vote absentee but, as your Court has recently held, does not permit election officials to second-guess a voter's exercise of that option. Thus, Clerk Hollins's effort to make absentee ballots widely available trusts voters, protecting those who are vulnerable from unnecessary exposure in this new Covid world in which we're living.

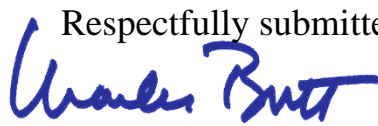
It's always been my impression that the more people who vote, the stronger our democracy will be.

My knowledge of the judicial world is not deep, but it seems to me that it is important for both state and federal courts to retain their non-partisan reputation, which today seems to be in jeopardy.

Based on our experience at H-E-B, many people, including those of all ages, are nervous about contracting the virus. By extension, in my opinion, many would be anxious about voting in person. Clerk Hollins has reasonably given these voters a chance to guard against perilous exposure in a manner consistent with this Court's opinion and the Election Code.

Thank you for considering this view.

All good wishes to you.

Respectfully submitted,

Charles Butt