LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS® OF TEXAS

NONPARTISAN VOTERS GUIDE

GENERAL ELECTION » NOVEMBER 3, 2020

U.S. President » U.S. Senator » Railroad Commissioner » Texas Supreme Court » Texas Court of Criminal Appeals » State Board of Education » Court of Appeals

EARLY VOTING: Oct. 13–30, 2020 » ELECTION DAY: Nov. 3, 2020. Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

» ABOUT THIS *VOTERS GUIDE*

This *Voters Guide* is funded and published by the League of Women Voters of Texas. The League never supports or opposes political candidates or political parties.

» ONLINE *VOTERS GUIDE*

The *Voters Guide* is available online at **VOTE411.org**. By entering your address and zip code, you can view races and candidates that appear on your ballot, compare candidates' responses to questions posed by the League, and create a printout of a ballot to take to the polls. You can also find out where to vote!

VOTE 411 ELECTION INFORMATION YOU NEED

» SIGN UP FOR VOTING REMINDERS!

Text LWVTX to 80123 to receive voting reminders on your phone or sign up at my.lwv.org/Texas/get-voting-reminders

Text: LWVTX TO: 80123

» SUPPORT THE *VOTERS GUIDE*

Help us fund the cost of this valuable resource for Texas voters by donating to the League of Women Voters of Texas, 1212 Guadalupe #107, Austin, TX 78701, or make a secure donation online at **lwvtexas.org**.

DONATE

» EMPOWERING VOTERS. DEFENDING DEMOCRACY.

» VOTING IN TEXAS

First General Election without straight-party voting!

Beginning with the November 3 General Election, voters may no longer check one box to vote for one party's candidates in every partisan race. Instead, voters mark a candidate for each race. Candidates representing a party are identified with a letter following their name: "R" for Republican, "D" for Democrat, "L" for Libertarian, or "G" for Green. Candidates in many local elections are nonpartisan and do not represent a party.

How do I find my polling place?

Go to **VOTE411.org** or your **county election website**.

What is on my ballot?

- Find a sample ballot on your **county election website**!
- Compare candidates with the League's nonpartisan *Voters Guide* at **VOTE411.org**.
- Take your list of candidates to the polls when you go vote!
- You may bring the League's *Voters Guide* to the polls.
- You cannot use your phone in the voting booth.

Note: Changes to voting processes could occur after the *Voters Guide* is published. Go to **VOTE411.org** for the most up-to-date election information.

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» VOTE SAFE

The League of Women Voters of Texas encourages you to "Be a Safe Texas Voter!" in the 2020 elections. We fight for the right of ALL Texas voters to participate in our democracy while protecting their health. Your vote is more important than ever . . . share these tips for voting safely.

» VOTE BY MAIL

If you are voting by mail . . .

- Ballots are mailed out 30–45 days before an election or 7 days after the county election office receives an application.
- Mail in your ballot as soon as possible.
- Use a blue or black pen, not a pencil, to fill out the ballot.
- Sign the ballot and the envelope with the same signature you used on your application.
- Ballots may need two stamps.

To hand deliver your vote by mail ballot

- The voter may hand deliver their marked ballot in-person to the county election office during early voting and on election day while polls are open. Check with your county election office for times and locations.
- The voter must show an ID when delivering the ballot, and sign a signature roster.

If you received a ballot to vote by mail, but decide to vote in person

- Take your unmarked ballot with you to the polling place and turn it in to the voting clerk. You will be allowed to vote a regular ballot.
- If you lose or forget your ballot, you can still cast a ballot at the polling place. In this case, you will be allowed to vote a provisional ballot.

» VOTE IN PERSON

The Texas Secretary of State provides the following recommendations for voting in person during COVID

- **sos.state.tx.us/elections/laws/advisory2020-19.shtml**
- **sos.texas.gov/elections/forms/health-protocols-for-voters.pdf**

Voters are encouraged to:

- wear a mask
- practice social distancing by spacing themselves at least six feet apart
- bring a pen and hand sanitizer
- bring a list of candidates you are voting for. Use of mobile phones is prohibited in the voting booth, so be sure to bring what you need on paper, not on your phone.

» VOTE EARLY

- Voters may vote early at any voting location in their county.
- Find your polling site at **VOTE411.org** or **your county election website**.
- A voter with a disability and their helper who are in line to vote in person may request to move ahead of other voters in line.

» CURBSIDE VOTING

- Available for voters who are physically unable to enter the polling place without personal assistance or likelihood of injuring their health, or voters who have signs or symptoms of COVID-19.
- Voters who meet these qualifications may ask an election officer to bring a ballot to their car.

» VOTE DURING NON-PEAK HOURS!

During early voting and especially on Election Day, vote during non-peak hours such as mid-morning or mid-afternoon. Avoid the busiest periods of early morning, lunchtime and after work.

» SUSPENDED VOTER

You can still vote if your voter registration is in suspense! "Suspense" means that your county voter registrar needs to confirm your voting address.

» HOW TO VOTE A LIMITED BALLOT ONLY!

During early voting, a registered voter who has moved from the county in which he or she is registered to a new county of residence in Texas, and who will not be registered to vote in the new county before Election Day, may be eligible to vote a "limited ballot." A limited ballot allows you to vote on state and national races.

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U.S. PRESIDENT

The President is: the head of state of the United States of America; the Chief Executive Officer; and, the Commander in Chief of all military forces. The powers of the President are prescribed in the Constitution and federal law. The President appoints the members of the Cabinet, ambassadors to other nations and the United Nations, Supreme Court Justices, and federal judges, subject to Senate approval. The President, along with the Cabinet and its agencies, is responsible for carrying out and enforcing the laws of the United States. The President may also recommend legislation to the United States Congress. Current Annual Salary: $400,000 per year

Note: All candidates who will appear on your ballot are listed below but only those that meet the following criteria were invited to respond to the League's questions in this guide.

1. The candidate must have made a public announcement of her/his intention to run for President.
2. The candidate must meet the Presidential Election Campaign Fund Act's minimum contribution threshold requirements for qualifying for matching funds, based on the most recent data publicly available on the Federal Elections Commission website.
3. The candidate must qualify for the ballot in enough states to win a majority of electoral votes.

All qualified presidential candidates were invited to provide biographical information and responses to specific questions. Responses were limited to a specific number of characters and were truncated thereafter. If a candidate did not respond by the date of publication, "Candidate has not yet responded." is printed.

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» Donald J. Trump (R)

Candidate has not yet responded.

Campaign Website: http://www.donaldjtrump.com/
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/DonaldTrump/
Twitter: @realDonaldTrump

» Joseph R. Biden (D)

Campaign Website: http://www.joebiden.com
Facebook: http://www.facebook.com/joebiden
Twitter: twitter.com/joebiden

Q: What actions would you take to balance public health and economic recovery in the US, both in light of COVID-19 and for the long term?
A: It's a false choice to think we have to choose between our public health and economy; they're linked. On Day One, I'll implement the COVID strategy I've laid out since March—surging testing and protective gear; distributing vaccines safely and free of politics; helping schools and small businesses cover costs; and getting state and local governments resources to keep educators, cops, and firefighters on the job. I'll respect science and tell the truth, period. And I'll build our economy back better, creating millions of good-paying jobs. I'll revitalize manufacturing, build a clean energy economy, and boost caregiving—easing the squeeze on working families, providing paid leave, and getting caregivers the respect and pay they deserve.

Q: What is the most important issue facing our country and how do you plan to address it during your first 100 days in office?
A: Pandemic. Recession. Racial injustice. Climate change. We're facing historic crises; we have to tackle them all at once. Character and experience count. I'll listen to scientists, tell the truth, and make sure we're never so unprepared for a pandemic again. I'll expand the Affordable Care Act, lowering costs and making health care a right for all. I'll build our economy back better, and make racial equity central to recovery. In these crises, we have an enormous opportunity, if we come together. As President, I'll draw on the best of us, not the worst. I'll work as hard for those who don't support me as for those who do. That's a president's job: to represent us all. To take responsibility. To protect the nation. To unite and to heal.

Q: How will you address racial injustice in our country on day one of your administration?
A: America is at an inflection point. It's past time to end our inequities and deal with the denial of our nation's promise to too many for too long. I'll fight to end the health inequities that COVID-19 amplifies; and give every child the same strong start in life by offering universal Pre-K, tripling funding for Title I schools, and making public college debt-free for most families. I'll make racial equity central to our recovery, closing the racial wealth and income gaps, boosting home ownership, and investing in communities and entrepreneurs of color—building a stronger, more inclusive middle class for the future. And, I'll work for real police reform and invest in shifting our criminal justice focus from incarceration to prevention.

Q: What aspects of our current immigration policy will your administration address first?
A: My immigration policy is built around keeping families together. It's past time to reform our broken system, restoring family unification and diversity as its core pillars. As President, I'll reverse Trump's assault on our values on Day One, ending his cruel border policies that rip children from their mothers' arms. I'll act immediately to protect Dreamers and their families, and invest real political capital in finally delivering legislative immigration reform, with a roadmap to citizenship for the nearly 11 million undocumented people who already do so much to make our communities strong. We have to enforce our laws, but in a way that's humane, respects due process, honors our values, and sees the big picture.

Q: What will you do over the long term to ensure access to quality healthcare for all?
A: This pandemic makes clear: All Americans need access to quality, affordable health insurance. That's why I'll protect and build on the Affordable Care Act. I helped to secure the final key votes to pass that landmark law, protecting 100 million Americans who can no longer be turned away or denied coverage for preexisting conditions, and bringing coverage to 20 million more. As President, I'll build on that progress with a public option and lower health care and prescription drug costs. I'll make all COVID-19 testing, treatment, and vaccines free; double funding for community health centers that are so often on the frontlines of care; and much more.

The following candidates have qualified for the Texas state ballot according to the Secretary of State of Texas but did not meet the LWVEF criteria.

» Jo Jorgensen (L)

» Howie Hawkins (G)

U.S. SENATOR

Six-year term. One of two members of the U.S. Senate from Texas. The Senate has the exclusive power to advise and consent on presidential nominations to executive and judicial offices, to ratify U.S. treaties, and to try impeachments. With the U.S. House, the Senate adopts budgets, levies taxes, borrows money, regulates interstate commerce, provides services, adopts regulations, and declares war. Current annual salary: $174,000
» What does a senator do? https://youtu.be/K_fSu4Cd9xw

» QUESTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Qualifications: What training, experience, and background qualify you for this position?

Immigration: What are your priorities regarding the immigration system?

Healthcare: How would you address access to and the cost of healthcare?

Gun Violence: What are your recommendations to protect students from gun violence?

COVID-19: What actions, if any, do you believe are needed to address the health and economic impact caused by COVID-19?

Voting Rights: What actions, if any, would you take to ensure that all eligible voters have equal access to safe and fair elections?

Vouchers: What is your position on using public funds for private school vouchers and why?

Two Minute Video Option: Comment on the recent civil rights demonstrations.

» John Cornyn (R)

Qualifications: John Cornyn was elected to the Texas Supreme Court in 1990. In 1998, he was elected Attorney General of Texas. In 2002, he was elected to the U.S. Senate. Senator Cornyn serves on the Senate's Judiciary, Finance, and Intelligence Committees.

Immigration: Recognizing we are a nation of immigrants, Senator Cornyn has voted in support of a permanent legislative solution for Dreamers who call Texas their home. The Senator cosponsored the Secured and Succeed Act in 2018, which proposed a solution for DACA recipients that provides a pathway to citizenship for 1.8 million young adults.

Healthcare: Senator Cornyn supports a system that: protects those with pre-existing conditions; lowers the cost of prescription drugs by increasing generics; increases competition by allowing cross-state health insurance; lowers out of pocket costs for seniors on Medicare; reestablishes the privacy of the doctor patient relationship

Gun Violence: Sen. Cornyn believes the right to keep and bear arms is a sacred Constitutional right for Texans. But we must ensure guns are kept out of the hands of criminals and domestic abusers. He believes we need to eliminate unlicensed firearm dealers, which will mean more people get background checks because all Federal Firearms Licenses are required to complete those.

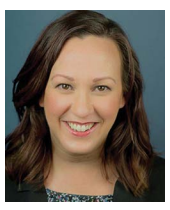
COVID-19: Sen. Cornyn voted for the CARES Act, which sent stimulus checks to individuals who—through no fault of their own—were unable to work and earn a paycheck, and established the Paycheck Protection Program—a critical lifeline that helped ensure businesses could bridge the gap without laying off employees.

Voting Rights: Sen. Cornyn believes that any Texan who wants to vote safely can do so under existing law. If you're over 65 or you're disabled, you can vote by mail. Or if you are not going to be present in your county on Election Day, Gov. Abbott has extended the early voting period.

Vouchers: School choice empowers parents to choose the setting that best fits their child's unique interests, learning style and educational needs. While education is rightfully managed at the local and state level, our entire country has a stake in ensuring we are raising highly educated, analytical, well-rounded citizens.

Two Minute Video Option: https://www.youtube.com/v/WLnXOc9afTU

Campaign Website: http://www.johncornyn.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/johncornyn
Twitter: https://twitter.com/teamcornyn



» Mary 'MJ' Hegar (D)

Qualifications: I have served our country, am a working mom, and live the challenges of regular Texans. I served 3 tours in Afghanistan as a medevac pilot, earning a Purple Heart & DFC w/ Valor and took on DC to make our military stronger. I'm the fighter we need.

Immigration: We need comprehensive immigration reform that reflects our core American values—the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We must streamline the process for applying for and receiving citizenship, create a pathway to citizenship for those here, protect DREAMers, permanently end child separation and secure the border with effective procedures & technology.

Healthcare: During my 5 years working in health care, it was clear that our skyrocketing costs and high uninsured rate were unsustainable. As we face a pandemic and beyond, I'll fight for access to quality affordable health care for every Texan, and for their right to determine whether that is a public option or their current plan.

Gun Violence: As a mother of two young boys, gun violence survivor and a responsible gun owner, I say enough is enough. We must pass common-sense gun safety legislation to require background checks on every single gun sale, including closing the gun show loophole. We must also stop selling weapons of war to the public.

COVID-19: We need to listen to experts, not politicians, when it comes to solving the public health and economic crisis. We must provide adequate testing that is fully covered, protect our frontline workers, and improve contact tracing capacity. The economic recovery must center around supporting small businesses and workers, while enforcing transparency and accountability measures.

Voting Rights: Having served 12 years in the military I'm committed to defending our constitutional rights. I'll work to expand access to registration and voting, fight against voter suppression tactics, and support the John Lewis Voting Rights Act, restoring protections which have been weakened by the Supreme Court.

Vouchers: I'm a proud product of public school and a mama bear for my two young boys, and I will always fight for public schools and ALL of our kids. I oppose any policy that cuts or siphons funding from public schools.

Two Minute Video Option: My entire career I've fought to protect people's right to protest, and I stand with those peacefully demonstrating for change now. It's time for systemic reforms to fix how we train and equip law enforcement and improve their relationship with the public, and action to address the racial disparities that go far beyond our criminal justice system.

Campaign Website: http://www.mjfortexas.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/MJforTexas/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/mjhegar

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» Kerry Douglas McKennon (L)

Qualifications: I have served on the executive committee for the Libertarian Party of Texas. I have over 20 years of management in the retail and food industry.
Immigration: Our first priority is that no child is left in a cage or separated from their family, reforming immigration policy means making it as simple as have the same policy for all immigrants from all countries. More judges and caseworkers are needed to determine if those seeking asylum can be allowed in, because an individual in a detention facility for three year is unacceptable
Healthcare: Health insurance allowed to be purchased across state lines. The cost of healthcare is due primarily to the amount of money being spent in administration. We see within the VA and Medicare system; where actual treatments are being delayed or not approved due to lack of doctors, but there is never a shortage of admins boosting drug costs.
Gun Violence: Mental health and hate lie at the core of gun violence and those who act in it's wake. Hate is learned and can be unlearned, but is a very tough row to hoe. Mental health is an issue that we can diagnosis and treat. Those are not the answers that some individuals want to hear, but they are closer to protecting our students than any gun ban.
COVID-19: I think politicians are damned if they do and damned if they don't in a pandemic situation. What we can do is get the government out of the way of treatment and care. It is difficult to say who is and who is not essential. For the individual working that is now not essential by the government for them that paycheck is essential to feed their family, to have shelter, etc.
Voting Rights: The Voters Rights Act has been a huge success. So much so that preclearance at the federal level is rarely needed to ensure the right to vote. One way to ensure eligible voters can access equal, safe, and fair elections is to stop the gerrymandering that currently occurs from both old parties.
Vouchers: I oppose using public funds for private school vouchers. The main reason is that those fund have been set aside for the use of public education. If a parent or guardian chooses to send their child to a private school, the taxpayers should not be paying for that choice.
Two Minute Video Option: Protest are always warranted. Violence as with the Boston Tea Party is sometimes necessary when in defense of Liberty. I would stand with Justin Amash in ending Qualified Immunity and gladly sponsor that bill.

Campaign Website: http://www.mckennon2020.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/KerryMcKennon2020/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/McKennon2020

» David B. Collins (G)

Qualifications: I am a US citizen, 30 years of age or more. In college I studied political science, originally as my major field but eventually as a second field toward a Texas teacher certification. Since then, as an activist, I have followed global politics.
Immigration: Make immigration policy humane, at last. The US has helped make much of Central and South America unsafe for poor and indigenous families for decades; this must stop. Let our neighbors in and give them a path toward citizenship. If the flow of capital is globalized, with national boundaries practically irrelevant, the movement of workers should be just as unrestricted.
Healthcare: This nation should do what other wealthy nations have done successfully: guarantee universal, single-payer health care. COVID-19 has made this more urgent than ever. Improved Medicare for All will cover all ages, with dental, mental, and optical coverage and no premiums. Once fully operational, it will save the nation as a whole 50% on health care costs.
Gun Violence: When young people have hope for the future and access to the mental health care they need, they will be far less likely to look to firearms to "solve" their problems. Schools need to be places of nurturing and care for the whole student, especially when their homes often are not. Our government can set a better example by not bombing people to boost corporate profits.
COVID-19: Our 4% of the world's population has about quarter of its COVID-19 deaths. If we had shut down public spaces, suspended rent and mortgage collections, and given US residents a livable income for a few months, like New Zealand and other countries, we would have saved thousands of lives and billions of dollars. We could easily pay for this by redirecting defense funding.
Voting Rights: 1. Propose a Constitutional Amendment guaranteeing voting rights for all US citizens 18 and up, including convicted felons, and prohibiting states and counties from purging voter rolls. 2. Enact automatic voter registration and a federal database (which I know scares some people). 3. Approval voting makes elections much fairer by avoiding the third-party "spoiler" problem.
Vouchers: Vouchers are a lazy solution to an avoidable problem. We can have excellent public schools for everyone, and much more, if we cut our national "defense" budget by half. Side note: Texas school districts should prioritize the mission of actually educating children rather than building palatial football stadia.
Two Minute Video Option: https://www.youtube.com/v/j9BLOvw9dys``I wholeheartedly support the Movement for Black Lives, as do the Green Parties of Texas and the US. Our platform calls for reparations and strong measures to end racially motivated police violence.

Campaign Website: http://dbcgreentx.net
Facebook: https://facebook.com/dbc4senator2020
Twitter: https://twitter.com/dbcgreentx

RAILROAD COMMISSIONER

Six-year term. The railroad commissioner is one of the three-member Texas Railroad Commission. The commission has no regulatory authority concerning railroads. Instead, it regulates the oil and gas industry, gas utilities, pipeline safety, safety in the liquefied petroleum gas industry, and surface coal and uranium mining. Current salary: $137,500

» What does the railroad commissioner do? https://youtu.be/Fm0BNjPUCic

» QUESTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Qualifications: What training, experience and background qualify you for this position?

Pipelines: What can the Texas Railroad Commission do to further ensure compliance with pipeline regulations to avoid environmental harm?

Natural Resources: What can the Texas Railroad Commission do to promote the reclamation and reuse of water resources used in fracking operations?

Flaring: What, if any, further regulations or limits are needed to address the impact of flaring on the environment?

» James "Jim" Wright (R)

Candidate has not yet responded.

» Chrysta Castañeda (D)

Qualifications: I have over 30 years of experience in the oil and gas industry, as an engineer and attorney. I know the complex technical and legal issues that face the industry. I will protect our natural resources and environment and keep industry functioning.

Pipelines: The Commission should increase safety and emissions monitoring to end catastrophic failures and eliminate methane leaks. It should implement a more robust information system to know where all smaller intrastate and gathering lines are located and permitted. The legislature must assign oversight authority for pipeline permitting, right-of-way acquisition and condemnation.

Natural Resources: A reclamation and reuse program would ensure less fresh water is used and would reduce the need for disposal wells. Program guidelines, informed by experts, could provide best practices for operators. Updated permitting and reporting requirements would ensure operator compliance. To work, oversight must be provided by adequately trained and compensated professionals.

Flaring: If the Railroad Commission would simply enforce the laws on the books, we would dramatically impact greenhouse gasses and pollution. Flaring and venting of natural gas are illegal activities and the Railroad Commission should enforce those laws, which Texans enacted long ago to protect our natural resources and our environment.

Campaign Website: http://chrystafortexas.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ChrystaForTexas/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/ChrystaForTexas

» Matt Sterett (L)

Qualifications: I run a small Oil & Gas Software company. Clients use the software to forecast well data. Sometimes, that data is from the RRC. I've been in the building & met w/ a few RRC team members—I'm familiar with the organization's digital operations.

Pipelines: Punt the responsibility to the courts. Texas is a litigious state. I think the Texas courts have broadly supported property rights. As a Libertarian, I believe in strong private property rights. I also don't believe in expanding regulators activities. If / when environmental harm is done, I'd rather is be settled in a court than a government agency.

Natural Resources: As a Libertarian, I believe in strong private property rights. I also don't believe in expanding regulators activities. If / when environmental harm is done, I'd rather is be settled in a court than a government agency.

Flaring: I'm against Flaring on the grounds that it's *wasteful*. We have a limited amount of natural resources. In the past, when we've had to import, it has meant foreign policy that led to wars. Title 3, Sub-chapter B Sec. 91.015 of the TX Natural Resources Code (statutes.capitol.texas.gov/Docs/NR/htm/NR.91.htm) calls to "prevent waste of oil, gas". The RRC has not upheld this.

Campaign Website: http://www.mattrrc.org/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/sterett
Twitter: https://twitter.com/matthewsterett

» Katija "Kat" Gruene (G)

Qualifications: 3 decades of project & bus.mgmt. along w/ consensus-based facilitation; 2 decades of experience doing legislative work, coalition building, campaigning, and leading an environmental & social justice movement in a litigious & hostile environment.

Pipelines: First, no new pipelines. Second, properly inspect and review existing permits for compliance and safety. Third, hold corporations accountable for violations including restoration of & restitution in areas already harmed. Fourth, stop taking political contributions from those they are regulating. Fifth, enforce new 2020 regulations, including updating existing pipelines.

Natural Resources: Ban Fracking Period. There is no need for such a highly wasteful, unsafe, and unsustainable practice. All water used in these operations is no longer potable and because it is chemically altered, scientists believe it may never be returned to the state of water—h2o. The emerging tech of onsite carrier gas desalination plants could become a valid option if successful.

Flaring: There are solutions, we just need to require them: power oxidation process, flare gas power generation, flare gas reinjection in secondary oil recovery, feedstock for petrochemical plants, LNG, CNG, & a small reactor that inexpensively breaks water and methane into carbon monoxide and hydrogen in the field (syngas), which can then be used for energy and industrial products

Facebook: https://facebook.com/GreenTXRRC
Twitter: https://twitter.com/qweekat

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CHIEF JUSTICE, TEXAS SUPREME COURT

Six-year term. A member of the court that hears only civil cases. The Supreme Court issues final decisions on civil and juvenile appeals, issues writs of mandamus/habeas corpus, and has jurisdiction over orders or judgments of trial courts if the Supreme Court determines them important to the jurisprudence of the state.
Base salary: $170,500
» What does the Texas Supreme Court do? https://youtu.be/nv6Mu5-QsO8

» QUESTIONS TO CANDIDATES

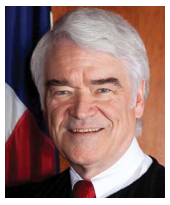
Qualifications: What training, experience and background qualify you for this position?

Judicial Selection: Texas is one of the few states that elects judges in partisan elections. What changes, if any, in the judicial selection process would you recommend?

Standards: What changes, if any, do you think are necessary to improve public confidence in the legal profession?

Biases: What training and practices do you recommend for trial judges to guard against implicit biases?

Other Issues: What other issues do you believe will be the most pressing for the Texas Supreme Court?



» Nathan Hecht (R)

Qualifications: Yale BA 1971; SMU JD w/ honors 1974; USNR JAGC 1971-1979 (hon. disch); 1976-1981 Locke firm assoc., ptr; 1981-1986 95th Dist. Ct., Dallas; 1986-1988 5th Ct. of App., Dallas; 1989-2013, Tex. Supreme Ct Justice; Chief Justice 2013-present

Judicial Selection: Voters should decide who their judges are, but in partisan elections, they don't get to, because there are too may judges on the ballot to know their qualifications. It's not voters' fault. Party politics and campaign fundraising are poisonous. Judges must follow the law. Appoint on qualifications, then voters elect to retain based on performance, holding them accountable.

Standards: Judges and lawyers should engage with community leaders to ensure the justice system is seen as fair to all, as the Supreme Court and I did in a "Beyond the Bench Summit" in Dallas. Civics education in schools should be stronger and more creative. A great example is the South Texas program for students to enact mock trials in a real courtroom, playing different roles.

Biases: Training Texas judges on issues of race and fairness has been required for many years. Implicit bias training is conducted annually for new judges and by the Texas Center for the Judiciary in many other courses and conferences. The Supreme Court's "Beyond the Bench Summit" featured implicit bias training. The Judicial Council that I chair is preparing other training.

Other Issues: The Court's work is completely current and has been since I've been Chief Justice. Its challenges are to continue to guide Texas courts through the pandemic and equip them with all they need to function. In these tight economic times, the Court must help ensure adequate funding for courts, and also for legal aid for the poor, to ensure equal access to justice for all.

Campaign Website: http://justicenathanhecht.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/hechtyes
Twitter: https://twitter.com/NathanLHecht

» Amy Clark Meachum (D)

Qualifications: As a district court judge for a decade, I have presided over all types of cases heard by the Supreme Court: civil, family and administrative appeals. I am a guest lecturer for ethics, a member of the Public Law Council and an advocate for legal aid.

Judicial Selection: The State should help voters by sending an information packet to each voter and providing that information at polling locations. The packet should contain background information, qualifications, and a statement of judicial philosophy for each candidate. That information would assist voters to make an informed selection and would reduce campaign costs for candidates.

Standards: Texas should increase public membership and participation on the Committee on Disciplinary Rules and Referenda, which recommends proposed changes in legal ethics rules in Texas. Currently, under Texas Gov't Code § 81.0872, just 2 of 9 members are public members. Also, members of the public who file grievances should be allowed to participate in some parts of the process.

Biases: We need to require every judge and lawyer in the state to take implicit bias training. This is simple and achievable. When I am elected Chief Justice this fall, we will make this part of the Texas justice system's mission on Day 1. We need to add a pledge of "Equal Justice under the Law" to the lawyer's and judge's oaths. It is past time to create a more fair system.

Other Issues: All Texans should have access to essential legal services. Access to justice is a top priority of mine, and one of the cornerstones of a fair and just society, especially during COVID. The current Court is considering a $1.2 million cut to legal aid, but rising evictions, layoffs and domestic violence cases are creating a more urgent need for legal services—not less.

Campaign Website: http://amymeachum.com
Facebook: https://facebook.com/JudgeAmyforChiefJustice/

» Mark Ash (L)

Qualifications: I have mostly practiced criminal defense law for the last 27 years. Also, I have represented individuals in civil matters including divorce, property rights and personal injury.

Judicial Selection: Elections for judges should not be based on political party affiliation. At a minimum, judges should be in good standing with the state bar and have actively practiced law in Texas for a minimum time period of 5 or 10 years. Also, term limits for judges should be seriously considered limiting judges to no more than 2 or 3 terms per court.

Standards: The public needs access to more data from the state bar. The public needs to know how many clients the lawyer has represented in the criminal or civil courts. Many times, clients are not aware of the limited experience a civil lawyer may have in criminal court and a criminal lawyer may have in civil court. Also, malpractice insurance information needs to be disclosed.

Biases: Judges should be required to attend a minimum number of hours of continuing legal education. Information about the courses/classes that the judges

» Mark Ash (L) (*continued*)

attended need to be available online for the public to view. Also, user friendly access to campaign contributor information needs to be made available to the public.
Other Issues: The Texas Supreme court should continue to make more and more user friendly legal forms available online for simpler legal matters such as for family, probate and real estate. Links should be provided to trusted websites that give up-to-date information for pro se litigants.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/markashfortexassupremecourt/

JUSTICE, TEXAS SUPREME COURT

Six-year term. A member of the court that hears only civil cases. The Supreme Court issues final decisions on civil and juvenile appeals, issues writs of mandamus/habeas corpus, and has jurisdiction over orders or judgments of trial courts if the Supreme Court determines them important to the jurisprudence of the state.
Base salary: $168,000
» What does the Texas Supreme Court do? https://youtu.be/nv6Mu5-QsO8

» QUESTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Qualifications: What training, experience and background qualify you for this position?

Judicial Selection: Texas is one of the few states that elects judges in partisan elections. What changes, if any, in the judicial selection process would you recommend?

Standards: What changes, if any, do you think are necessary to improve public confidence in the legal profession?

Biases: What training and practices do you recommend for trial judges to guard against implicit biases?

Other Issues: What other issues do you believe will be the most pressing for the Texas Supreme Court?

» JUSTICE, SUPREME COURT, PLACE 6

» Jane Bland (R)

Qualifications: I have served more than 20 years at three levels of the state judiciary: as a trial judge, as a justice on the court of appeals, and now on the Supreme Court of Texas. I am board certified in civil trial law and civil appellate law.
Judicial Selection: No change in judicial selection can happen without the support of the voters and their elected representatives. Governor Abbott and the Texas Legislature have formed a bi-partisan commission charged with making recommendations about judicial selection. I look forward to these recommendations, and I support this process.
Standards: We can improve public confidence by respecting and valuing all people who encounter our courts, reducing the cost of resolving disputes through innovation and technology, educating lawyers about best practices, and serving needs of those who cannot afford a lawyer. I have done that work through leadership positions in the bar and as a community volunteer.
Biases: I recommend that trial judges cultivate standards of excellence by incorporating the best practices of others from all walks of life and foster understanding even in disagreement or when faced with terrible circumstances. The Texas Center for the Judiciary offers excellent courses for judges on understanding implicit bias and improving decision-making.
Other Issues: The Court will continue to work toward advancing justice and the rule of law during the pandemic.

Campaign Website: http://www.justicejanebland.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/judgejanebland/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/courthouse_mom

» Kathy Cheng (D)

Qualifications: I have almost twenty years of legal experience in areas including complex commercial issues, divorce and probate, tax and real estate cases. I have also served as adjudication officer for the City of Houston for about six years.
Judicial Selection: The beauty of democracy is that citizens can vote for individuals who they believe reflect their values, which in the State of Texas includes the election of judges. If that choice turns out to be a bad choice, being able to vote elected officials out of office is a mechanism to hold said officials accountable. As such, I see no need for change at the present time.
Standards: As time evolves, the means of disseminating the rules and standards for the legal profession shall also evolve. With the ease of digital accessibility, there should be more educational information available to the general public by digital means of the rules and standards governing said profession so that the general population are better informed as to their rights.
Biases: Raising awareness of the existence of implicit bias through regular meeting discussion can debias the years of exposure to cultural stereotypes, narratives and/or systemic policies. In addition, implement a mandatory annual implicit bias training for judges and staff members.
Other Issues: With the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision to refrain from hearing challenges of partisan gerrymandering, partisan gerrymandering cases

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» Kathy Cheng (D) (*continued*)

will now go before the Texas Supreme Court, which is an example of how this Court impacts its citizens even though the citizens themselves may never go before this Court.

Campaign Website: http://www.chengforjustice.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/chengforjustice/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/chengforjustice

» JUSTICE, SUPREME COURT, PLACE 7

» Jeff Boyd (R)

Qualifications: My extensive and varied legal career—including 16 years in private practice, 3 years as the deputy attorney general in charge of civil litigation involving the state, and 2 years serving as general counsel and chief of staff for the governor's office
Judicial Selection: Electing judges creates issues that undermine the public's confidence in the system, but it also requires judges and judicial candidates to interact with the public. This gives the public the opportunity learn who will best serve to counteract those problems. If we were building the process from scratch, leave it to the public to decide to alter the system.
Standards: We must continue to make the system more accessible by reducing the costs and delays required to resolve common civil disputes. We must do more to promote the legal profession as a means for public service instead of private profit. And we must continue to promote transparency into the operations and activities of our courts and judges.
Biases: Programs like the "Beyond the Bench" conference the Court sponsored in 2016 can be effective for that purpose. Requiring judges' participation in such well-designed, high-quality programs as part of their annual continuing-education requirements would be a meaningful step in the right direction.
Other Issues: (1) Ongoing implementation of evolving technology to increase efficiency within the judicial system. (2) Maintaining timely decision-making processes through changes in the Court's make-up over time. (3) Ensuring continued operations throughout the judicial system in times of natural disasters.

Campaign Website: http://justicejeffboyd.org
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/JusticeBoydTX
Twitter: https://twitter.com/JeffBoydTX

» Staci Williams (D)

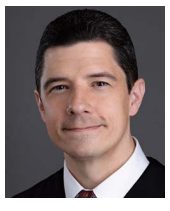
Qualifications: I am in my second term as Judge of the 101st District Court. The 101st District Court handles primarily commercial, personal injury, medical malpractice, oil and gas, and consumer issues. I have over 27 years of legal experience.
Judicial Selection: Texans have elected judges in partisan elections for more than 100 years. While I believe that this Texas tradition should not be disturbed, a Commission has been established to study options to selecting judges in urban areas by methods other than partisan elections. Recommendations will be made at the end of the year. I look forward to reviewing these alternatives.
Standards: The legal profession needs to get more involved in the community. My judicial outreach program, the Citizens' Civil Academy ("CCA"), was launched to educate citizens about the civil court system. The CCA explores the types of cases heard in the civil courts and what happens to a case from the time the case is filed until it is disposed. There have been over 350 graduates.
Biases: I believe they should attend training sessions and evaluate on a monthly basis what practices or procedures can be modified to reduce implicit bias. Every day, the judge should ask him/herself, "would I have treated this litigant differently if he had been a member of my own race?"
Other Issues: The Texas Supreme Court will be faced with what to do about the bar examination. Many states have an apprentice licensing program. We must consider how the Court will ensure safe testing locations and procedures or if the Supreme Court will allow the 2020 graduates to practice without an examination.

Campaign Website: http://judgestaci.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/JudgeStaci/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/JudgeStaci

» William Bryan Strange, III (L)

Candidate has not yet responded.

» JUSTICE, SUPREME COURT, PLACE 8



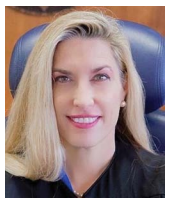
» Brett Busby (R)

Qualifications: Based on my experience as a board-certified appellate lawyer and my record as a fair court of appeals judge, I earned the support of all Democrats and Republicans when the Texas Senate voted unanimously to approve my appointment to the Supreme Court.
Judicial Selection: Our process should select experienced judges who will deliver justice: giving everyone the fair day in court they deserve and ruling impartially based on the law, never imposing their personal or political views to reach a desired result. I support the work of the Texas Commission on Judicial Selection, which the Legislature created to report on selection options in 2021.
Standards: Important conversations are taking place across Texas about equality and justice under the law. The Supreme Court's "Beyond the Bench: Law, Justice, and Communities Summit" developed a toolkit to foster dialogue on real solutions that will enhance public trust in our justice system. I encourage lawyers, judges, and local leaders to use this kit in their communities.
Biases: The Texas Center for the Judiciary provides all new Texas judges with training on recognizing and responding to implicit biases. As part of our ongoing commitment to assure that equal justice under law is a reality for all, the Center

» Brett Busby (R) (*continued*)

also offers continuing education on unconscious processes that affect decisions and best practices for increasing sound decision-making.
Other Issues: As the Court's liaison for access to justice, I champion reforms that help Texans of limited means—including veterans, domestic violence victims, families, and the elderly—get the basic civil legal services they need. Example: online hearings can significantly increase access and reduce cost, so we are planning how to use them most effectively even after the pandemic.

Campaign Website: http://www.BrettBusby.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/justicebrettbusby/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/BrettBusby



» Gisela D. Triana (D)

Qualifications: For over 24 yrs, I have served as a judge in Texas: Municipal Ct, JP, County Ct, District Ct, Appellate Ct. I will be the first person on the TXSCT to have served on every lower level court. Most of my 32-yr legal career has been in public service.
Judicial Selection: This is a legitimate discussion if there was a nonpartisan way to select judges that Texans could trust. The issue is the timing: after the party that has been in power and benefited from partisan election of judges for decades begins to lose that power. It makes the concern seem self-interested. Texans have clearly shown a preference for electing judges, I support that.
Standards: I believe that in today's racially and politically charged climate, lawyers and judges should be at the forefront and lead by example by requiring mandatory implicit bias training for all members of the Bar. We all have implicit bias and some even explicit bias. We need to learn how to identify it and work diligently to overcome it. I try to do this on a daily basis.
Biases: There are several continuing legal education courses that deal with the psychology behind our unconscious bias, how to identify it, and how best to combat it. Such courses should be compulsory for all Bar members. Project Implicit has several online tests that can be startling, yet should also be required for all judges. https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
Other Issues: Restoring balance to the Court. Currently, all members are Republican. 7 of the 9 were originally political appointments by a Republican Governor. Our founders were wise to create a jury system that brought people from different walks of life, with different experiences to judge a case. We need diversity of thought on the Court, as well. It makes for better jurisprudence.

Campaign Website: http://www.JudgeTriana.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/JudgeTriana
Twitter: https://twitter.com/JusticeTriana

» VOTING FOR JUDGES IN TEXAS

In some states, judges are chosen by the government. In Texas, judges are chosen by people like you.

Judges make decisions that affect everyone, ranging from someone going to jail, issuing warrants, getting evicted, and owing someone money, to performing marriage ceremonies and deciding whether a couple can adopt a child. Because of the power they hold, all persons elected as judges should know the law and treat people fairly.

To be fair and independent, judges avoid influence from politics and money. They cannot make promises about their decision in a case before they hear and see the evidence.

Because of this, the questions posed to judges in this guide are limited to how they would make the courts better, the need for impartiality in their roles, and how they would make sure the system works for everyone.

What should voters look for when electing judges?

According to the American Bar Association, principles to consider in choosing judges include:

- Judges should uphold the rule of law.
- Judges should be independent and impartial.
- Judges should possess the appropriate temperament and character.
- Judges should possess the appropriate capabilities and credentials.
- Judges and the judiciary should have the confidence of the public.
- The judicial system should be diverse and reflective of the community it serves.
- Judges should perform their duties in a manner that assures public fa[illegible] and confidence in the court.

How is the Texas court system organized?

The Texas court system is made up of a statewide network of trial courts and appellate courts. Most cases begin in a trial court. In a trial court, judges listen to witnesses, review evidence, hear arguments from lawyers, and give a decision on the case, or a verdict.

There are many types of trial courts. Some only handle criminal cases, ranging from parking tickets to murder. Others only handle civil cases, ranging from disputes between neighbors to multi-million dollar lawsuits. And some handle both.

If one of the parties disagrees with the trial court's decision, they can appeal the decision to an appellate court. Texas has fourteen Courts of Appeals distributed throughout the state.

Then, if a party still disagrees, the next appeal would be to:

- The Court of Criminal Appeals (criminal cases only) or
- The Supreme Court of Texas (civil and juvenile cases).

Appellate courts do not try cases, have juries, or hear witnesses. They review what the lower courts did and decide if the lower courts were correct.

An excellent chart of the Texas Court Structure is available at:
txcourts.gov/media/1448645/court-structure-chart-january-2020.pdf

To learn more, visit **txcourts.gov/about-texas-courts**

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JUSTICE, TEXAS SUPREME COURT | *(continued)*

» Tom Oxford (L)

Qualifications: With almost four decades of legal experience I will bring a broad range of knowledge to the bench. I have had the pleasure of successfully representing Texans before both the Texas Supreme Court and the Unites States Court of Appeals.
Judicial Selection: The problem is not the partisan nature of the elections. The problem is the massive amount of money given to these candidates by the very firms that will be appearing before them. If a firm wants to give funds to a candidate that is their right. However when that firm appears before that same Judge appropriate conflict of issue standards should be applied.
Standards: An open system that treats all parties with an even hand, regardless of race or socio-economic status would be a good start. Too often a litigant's chances depend more on who their lawyer is and what connections they have with the judge than on the actual facts of the dispute. An honest recognition of that fact by our profession would be a good start.
Biases: I am not sure how to answer this question. You cannot train bias out of someone, it is part of human nature. We all favor our family over our neighbors, our neighbors over our community and our community over the community down the road. We must recognize our bias and constantly guard against it. A difficult task indeed!
Other Issues: Historically Judges decided the law and juries decided the facts. We have gotten away from that respect for the Jury System in Texas. Too often, when there are honest factual disputes, Judges will overrule the jury and substitute their own opinions for the Jury's. This tension will continue to be a pressing issue.

JUDGE, TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS

Six-year term. A member of the court with final judgment in all criminal cases. The court must review all cases in which the death penalty is assessed. It also exercises discretionary review in other criminal cases and issues writs of habeas corpus. Base salary: $168,000
» What does the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals do? https://youtu.be/ilOwfEy4adk

» QUESTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Qualifications: What training, experience, and background qualify you for this position?

Mental Health: How should the Court of Criminal Appeals address mental health issues of those who come before the court?

Access to Justice: What opportunities are there, if any, to improve the state's indigent defense system in criminal cases?

Other Issues: What other issues do you believe will be most pressing for the Court of Criminal Appeals?

» JUDGE, COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS, PLACE 3

» Bert Richardson (R)

Qualifications: I am the incumbent in this race and have been a State judge for over 20 years. I am a former State and Federal prosecutor that is Board Certified in Criminal Law. I have participated in hundreds of appeals, writs and over 50 capital cases.
Mental Health: Mental health issues are litigated at the trial level. As an appellate judge, in cases with mental health issues, I write legal opinions that determine whether a trial court properly admitted, or excluded mental health evidence. If evidence of mental health is improperly excluded, the Court has the authority to grant a new trial.
Access to Justice: There are opportunities to improve the system, but that requires additional funding and that assistance has to come from the legislature and individual counties, not the courts. In order to attract qualified lawyers to represent indigent defendants, the State will have to compensate those lawyers, or create more public defender offices.
Other Issues: In light of the current COVID crisis, one of the most pressing issues will involve getting the courts across the State back to work. I anticipate several legal challenges will follow the "new normal" including speedy trial claims, jury selection issues, witness testimonies and jury deliberations that result in fair verdicts.

Campaign Website: http://www.electjudgerichardson.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/JudgeBertRichardson/

» Elizabeth Davis Frizell (D)

Qualifications: I have 27 years of trial experience and 13 years as a private practitioner. I have 20 years of experience as a Judge where I was elected as a Dallas County Criminal Court Judge and Dallas Criminal District Court Judge.
Mental Health: The Court of Criminal Appeals should ensure that trial courts examine mentally ill defendants for their capacity to know the difference between right and wrong as well as whether a mental illness affected their judgment and was properly asserted and applied for sentencing purposes.
Access to Justice: The State Bar should require internships similar to internships in the medical field where newly licensed attorneys work for non-profit organizations, government agencies, and firms doing trial work and appellate work for at least one year prior to becoming licensed. This will give non-profit and pro bono agencies more attorneys to handle an increased caseload.
Other Issues: Disparate sentencing, wrongful convictions, and death penalty cases.

Campaign Website: http://www.Frizell4Judge.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/frizell4txjudge

» JUDGE, COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS, PLACE 4

» Kevin Patrick Yeary (R)

Qualifications: *Law Clerk- Texas Court of Criminal Appeals 1yr (1992-1992) *Private Lawyer- Criminal/Civil Defense 3yrs (1992-1995) *Appellate Prosecutor- Dallas, Houston, San Antonio 19yrs (1995-2014) *Judge- Texas Court of Criminal Appeals 5+yrs (2015-Present)
Mental Health: The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, along with the Texas Supreme Court, recently established the Texas Judicial Commission on Mental Health "to engage and empower court systems through collaboration, education, and leadership, and to thereby improve the lives of individuals with mental health needs and persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD)."
Access to Justice: The Texas Indigent Defense Commission "provides financial and technical support to counties to develop and maintain quality, cost-effective indigent defense systems that meet the needs of local communities and the requirements of the Constitution and state law."
Other Issues: The Court must follow the rule of law and ensure that the written law provides the even playing field that all citizens should expect from our judicial system. Judges must not be policy makers, but should instead decide disputes between parties to litigation, guided by reference to the constitution and laws, which are written by others.

Campaign Website: http://www.judgeyeary.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/JudgeKevinPatrickYeary
Twitter: https://twitter.com/JudgeYeary

» Tina Clinton (D)

Qualifications: I am the presiding district court judge of the oldest Criminal District Court in Texas. I have 14 years experience as a trial court judge over a felony district, county criminal and municipal courts. I have tried over 400 trials in my career.
Mental Health: The CCA is an appellate court so issues of mental health raised on appeal are the issues that may be addressed. The CCA also funds education programs and grants for judges, lawyers and prosecutors. Expanding the funding for additional education on mental health in criminal cases would make a vast difference in the entire criminal justice system.
Access to Justice: First, review cases of ineffective assistance of counsel closely. One can be ineffective not merely by not doing something they should have done but also for the lack of time they have based on carrying too heavy of a case load, based on ABA standards. Second, indigent defense attorneys must be given adequate resources for investigators, experts and other tools.
Other Issues: (1) To help answer and educate members of the legislature on where bail reform is currently in Texas. (2) Review staffing needs for additional lawyers on writs that come into the CCA. (3) To consider using differing platforms to increase transparency to the public. (4) Diversify internships to give access to law students that have not traditionally been given access.

Campaign Website: http://facebook.com/JudgeTinaClinton
Facebook: https://facebook.com/JudgeTinaClinton
Twitter: https://twitter.com/JudgeTClinton

» JUDGE, COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS, PLACE 9

» David Newell (R)

Qualifications: I serve you as a Judge on the Court of Criminal Appeals. I have over two decades of experience handling and deciding criminal appeals as either a lawyer or a judge. I am board certified in both criminal and criminal appellate law.
Mental Health: It can adopt dynamic standards to allow non-dangerous citizens suffering from mental illness who commit a crime to easily transfer out of the criminal justice system from a jail bed to a hospital bed so they can get the help they deserve. Violent offenders should also be treated for their illnesses, but in a secure facility for the safety of the community.
Access to Justice: Creation of more regional public defender's offices could help ensure a standard level of competent representation. Additionally, the Court of Criminal Appeals could pro-actively set out minimum standards for representation of indigent defendants in serious cases
Other Issues: Mental health issues, mentioned above, are obviously pressing. Wrongful convictions based upon junk science or police misconduct are also very serious. Additionally, reforming bail practices so that the indigent are not incarcerated for extended periods of time prior to conviction unless there is a flight or safety risk is another significant to address.

Campaign Website: http://keepjudgenewell.com
Facebook: https://facebook.com/judgedavidnewell/

» Brandon Birmingham (D)

Qualifications: Two-term Felony Trial Court Judge, former Presiding Judge-all Felony District Courts, Dallas. Lead counsel on over 100 jury trials from DWI to Capital Murder. 2 specialty court dockets, visiting professor at SMU Law School.
Mental Health: My experience has taught me how important properly addressing mental health issues are to reducing recidivism. The CCA should help increase training for lawyers on these issues, and where appropriate, work to increase funding for courts across Texas for worthwhile mental health programs.
Access to Justice: Justice shouldn't depend upon a person's access to resources-lessons we've learned from the Dallas County exonerations. We must increase funding through the legislature to help counties pay for reasonable and necessary costs of providing indigent defense. Second, we have to establish state-wide best practices to define and manage the case loads of indigent defense counsel.
Other Issues: From allowing a verdict to stand while a lawyer slept in court, to letting politics impact decisions, or reversals by the United States Supreme Court in death penalty cases, rulings from the CCA have contributed to the public's skepticism of our criminal courts, and illustrate very clearly the need for change. If we don't learn from history, we are doomed to repeat it.

Campaign Website: http://JudgeBirmingham.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/JudgeBirmingham/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/JudgeBirmingham

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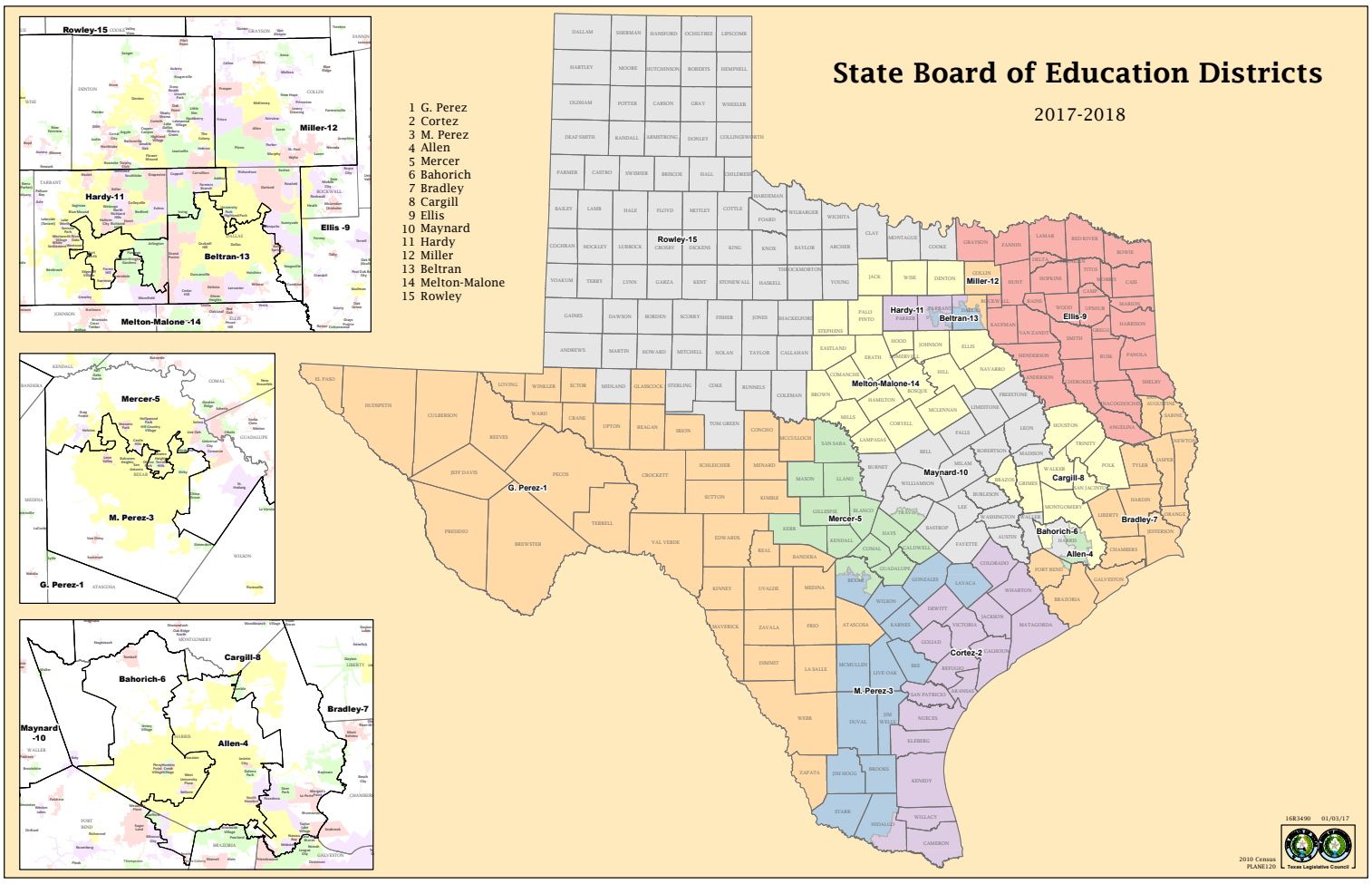
STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Four-year term. The fifteen-member board decides curriculum, standards, student testing, special education programs, and textbooks for Texas public schools. It also oversees the Permanent School Fund. Members of the board do not receive pay, but are eligible for reimbursement for expenses incurred in the course of official business.

» What does the State Board of Education do?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3XZK4qoFFIU&feature=youtu.be



» QUESTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Qualifications: What training, experience and background qualify you for this position?

Curriculum: What is your philosophy for setting curriculum standards?

Civic Education: What changes, if any, do you recommend to prepare students for their civic responsibilities?

Charter Schools: What is your position on charter schools in the public education system?

Other Issues: What other issues do you believe will be the most pressing for the State Board of Education?

» STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 1

» Jennifer Ivey (R)

Qualifications: As a mother of seven children, I have dedicated myself to the education of my children at home. Several of my older children have now transitioned into the public school arena. I will be the common sense voice for children and parents.

Curriculum: I believe in a classical education curriculum that will encourage a strong desire to learn.

Civic Education: I would devote more time towards learning about the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights. It should be covered extensively and students should be allowed to engage in discussions that will inspire interest in civics.

Charter Schools: I firmly believe that Parents are perfectly capable of determining the educational choice for their children. I am a believer of School Choice,

Other Issues: The onset of Covid-19 has brought education to the forefront. Parents were not part of the solution process and the U.S. Constitution has been violated. Parents, teachers and administrator must now move forward with understanding that not all children can learn virtually. In person education should have never stopped.

Campaign Website: http://Voteforjenniferivey.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/jenniferivey2020
Twitter: https://twitter.com/jivey2020

» Georgina Perez (D)

Qualifications: I served as an eighth-grade English Language Arts and Reading teacher, department chair, pre-service and new-service teacher mentor, and professional development educator in the Ysleta ISD for more than a decade.
Curriculum: Curriculum standards for (public schools: all schools that receive taxpayer dollars) development, revision, and adoption should always remain in the public realm via the TXSBOE.
Civic Education: We should teach civic engagement in schools and register every eligible student to vote, not just provide voter registration cards in the front office.
Charter Schools: Charters are a duplicative and undue burden on Texas taxpayers, that do not participate in local control or public oversight. Charters are not required to employ state-certified or credentialed teachers. Charters do not outperform our community ISD schools. Our students and their families deserve to know the truth in charters. Texas taxpayers deserve a break!
Other Issues: In addition to comprehensive and medically accurate sex education as part of our TEKS, we must also teach climate change and the preservation of planet Earth, and inclusive and reflective history. Our students deserve every opportunity; our standards must serve as their passports to reaching every one of their goals.

Campaign Website: http://www.ginaTXSBOE1.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ginaTXSBOE1/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/ginaTXSBOE1

» STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 4

» Larry McKinzie (D) Unopposed

» STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 5

» Lani Popp (R)

Qualifications: I have spent my life serving Texas students, including working 17 years in public schools (four in inner city schools) and 11 years in private school. I am a passionate champion for children with autism, with expertise in Autism Spectrum Disorder.
Curriculum: I believe curriculum standards should be historically and scientifically accurate and age appropriate. We need to foster critical thinking skills so students are able to actively debate and question instead of being passive recipients of information. We need to discontinue requiring a single process for math calculations and allow students to use a variety of processes.
Civic Education: I believe students should have civics in their junior year in high school. Thus if they are 18 in the fall of their senior year, they will have an adequate understanding of our constitutions and the freedoms, rights, and responsibilities therein. I believe students should have to demonstrate competence in this area by answering questions from our citizenship test.
Charter Schools: Having worked in an inner-city school district, I can see the benefit of charter schools for students who are more socio-economically disadvantaged. We need to make sure we are properly vetting charter schools, holding them to the same standards as other public schools. We also need to safeguard parent choice and must always promote the academic success of the student.
Other Issues: We need to reform our broken state standardized testing system. Many students with disabilities (high functioning autism, ADHD, students with anxiety, etc.) may be brilliant but not demonstrate that on a test. We need to make sure we are testing basic skills, but we need to look at more than just a test when judging a student's knowledge, abilities, or progress.

Campaign Website: http://Lanipopp.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/votelanipopp/

» Rebecca Bell-Metereau (D)

Qualifications: PhD. Prof TxSt U, Directs Media Minor; Faculty Senate, was Special Asst. TxSt Pres, Fulbright Scholar, Teaching Awards, 4 books/30 essays, Peace Corps teacher/interpreter Air Force flights Chad, San Marcos P&Z, Bonds Recycling Commissions, HOA board.
Curriculum: Restore respect for teachers, public schools. Teach data-based science, technology, literature, art, music, history, vocations, civics, financial, statistical literacy, sex ed, SpEd, critical thinking. Show leadership, stop costly high-stakes testing, ideological influence on education; listen to students, teachers, parents; find common ground, equity, voice for diversity
Civic Education: Teach history of voting rights, governmental branches, variety of governments, include democracies, etc. variation among counties, states, nations, worldwide, and basic principles of voting, jury duty. Note U.S. ranks 26th in eligible voter participation at 56% in 2016. Use mock debates and voting to develop civil discourse and constructive engagement/register all over-18
Charter Schools: SBOE must use better judgment. I saw SBOE approve a proposal for a charter in a strip mall alongside toxic businesses; luckily Abbott nixed it. Some charters, like Ann Richards school, are great models, admitting by lottery; some charters don't admit all students, siphon tax dollars from public schools, & aren't made to operate by same equitable standards as public schools
Other Issues: Science 2021 must teach scientific method, experimental techniques, peer review, biology and climate science, global warming, pandemics, biology and geology of evolution and latest in DNA research, influence of culture, politics and economics on scientific advancement, with engaging curriculum that offers hands-on experimental design, service learning, relevance of issues.

Campaign Website: http://voterebecca.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/voterebecca/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/voterebecca

» Stephanie Berlin (L) Candidate has not yet responded.

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» STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 6

» Will Hickman (R)

Qualifications: I have been active in government for over 20 years as a Bellaire Councilman and leadership positions in the party, working closely with many elected officials. I have 5 degrees in engineering, law, and Spanish, and have 3 kids in SBISD schools.
Curriculum: My general philosophy is that each course should be preparing you to do something: building a foundation of reading and math skills at the elementary level for future learning, or preparing for a career, military, or college at the high school level. For each course, I will ask, "What's next?" Start with existing TEKS and rely on working groups of educators and parents.
Civic Education: Each student should graduate high school with a basic knowledge of US and Texas History. How did we get here? What was the founding fathers' design? In addition, they should know the roles of the branches of government, and how each functions. As adults, they can then form their own views of the best direction for the federal, state, and local government.
Charter Schools: I am in favor of school choice. Each family should have the option to choose what is best for their kids: home school, private, charter, magnet, or zoned ISD. I am in favor of high quality charters. Each school that accepts public funding should be subject to the same accountability standards. As kids vote with their feet, poor performing charters will lose students.
Other Issues: Out of the 5.4 million Texas students, only 54% are career, college, or military ready. That means 46% are not! We need each 8th grader to develop a "flight plan." What are they good at? What do they enjoy? What are their dreams? Then customize a high school experience to get them there. High school is no longer for developing standardized factory workers.

Campaign Website: http://willhickmancampaign.com
Facebook: https://facebook.com/willhickmancampaign
Twitter: https://twitter.com/willhickman

» Michelle Palmer (D)

Qualifications: I am the only teacher running for this education position. I have taught English, Math, and Social Studies and am therefore very familiar with the curricula used in Texas. Because of this, I will be ready on day one to jump in and fix the problems.
Curriculum: I want my students to have the most fact-based curriculum possible. Currently the Health curriculum, teaches rape in a way that blames the victim. The US History curriculum mostly ignores Women's History, as well as African- American, Mexican-American, Asian-American, and Native American History. The science curriculum does not even mention climate change.
Civic Education: As a government teacher, I make certain to teach civis to all of my students. We need to add civics to the government curriculum so that ALL government teachers do the same. -making certain students know how long the ballot is in Texas -making certain they understand how to research candidates -making certain students know how to use the voting machine
Charter Schools: I believe that Charter schools should have to follow the same rules (without loopholes) that public schools have to follow. I vow to vote against every new charter school system application that comes before the Board. In addition, I would advocate for the Texas State Legislature to concentrate funding on public schools.
Other Issues: Textbook adoption will be important since Texas has so much buying power and therefore controls textbooks for much of the country. I also believe that Health should be added to the required courses for high school graduation. Most Texas districts require it but due to the high teen pregnancy rate and high STI rate, Texas should require it as a state.

Campaign Website: http://palmerfortexased.com/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/palmerfortexased/
Twitter: https://twitter.com/palmer4texased

» Whitney Bilyeu (L)

Qualifications: I was a public school educator for 20 years. I hold a Bachelor's Degree, and two Master's Degrees in Urban Education, Curriculum & Instruction, and Educational Leadership. I held various certifications, including Principalship.
Curriculum: Education should be focused on skills that are marketable and beneficial to the students and their community. Curriculum standards should account for knowledge, skills, and proficiencies that are best suited for a student's interests and aptitudes, depending on their plans for the future.
Civic Education: Civics education was always been something I am passionate about. However, to me, the first lessons in civics should be independent thinking, recognizing and understanding bias, and critical reasoning. Once students are able to reason, think independently, and filter out bias, they can better understand history, economic systems, and politics.
Charter Schools: I am a strong proponent of school choice. Students and their parents should be able to seek educational options that best suit their needs. Government schools are not the best source of education, and students should not be limited to centralized government school systems.
Other Issues: The recent pandemic exposed weaknesses in the traditional school system. More people are seeing that it does not have to be the way we have been conditioned to expect it. Government schools will have to do a better job of convincing the public that they are necessary, and worthy of the funding they receive.

» STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 8

» Audrey Young (R)

Qualifications: Certified Educator who merges over 27 years of experience leading public education students, with a high level of proficiency in implementing effective programs, and a leader with a servant's heart and a desire to achieve success for all stakeholders

Curriculum: As an Instructional Leader that subscribes to a balance of motivational and targeted instruction methodologies, I believe that as part of enhancing curricula while focusing on student outcomes, it is imperative to integrate best practices, research, cultural and educational needs of students and their communities.

Civic Education: I would offer the suggestion to include civics education course of study between 7 through 12th grade added to the student transcript (as is CPR and Traumatic Injury).

Charter Schools: I believe in increasing transparency of charter school operations, including enrollment and expulsion practices.

Other Issues: (a) Sustained funding of new school finance system (b) Improve resources for mental health for students, school security and student safety (c) Accountability rating system that places a large emphasis on local plans that better reflect the vast diversity of their represented communities

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/AYoung4SBOE/

» Audra Berry (L) Candidate has not yet responded.

» STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 9

» Keven M. Ellis (R) Candidate has not yet responded.

» Brenda Davis (D) Candidate has not yet responded.

» STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 10

» Tom Maynard (R)

Qualifications: State Board of Education, eight years, chairing Instruction and School Finance/Permanent School Fund Committees. Classroom teacher, 13 years; Texas FFA Executive Director, 17 years; Local school board trustee, six years; Public school parent of five.

Curriculum: Curriculum standards, called Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills, must be essential to the mission of public education and the overall outcome of the course; they must be statutorily compliant where statutes apply, factual, clearly stated and measurable, challenging yet developmentally appropriate and deliverable—taught to depth and mastery—within a 180-day school year.

Civic Education: The board streamlined the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for social studies in 2018 to allow for more focus and depth. The TEKS had been voluminous, making it difficult to teach to much depth. Our standards are robust and when delivered with vigor and fidelity provide a solid grounding in founding principles and foster patriotism and pride in our country.

Charter Schools: Charter schools are public schools within the state's constitutional framework. Governance, financial structures and to an extent, accountability measures are different. Curriculum standards and assessments are the same. Charter schools are not a panacea for education issues, but are an option for families. Whether we have charter schools is a question for the Legislature.

Other Issues: Under the current conditions, providing support for the advances promulgated in HB3 in the last session is critical. Fiscal issues created by the pandemic has prompted the board to proposed an additional $300 million distribution to alleviate fiscal pressure for FY 2021. We must maximize our distribution for the next biennium without compromising future distributions.

Campaign Website: http://www.maynardfortexas.com

» Marsha Burnett-Webster (D)

Qualifications: I am a career educator with 30 years of teaching and administration experience in middle schools, high schools, and colleges. I know what students need to be successful and I want a SBOE that meets those needs. I am ready to be their advocate.

Curriculum: Students must receive an education that prepares them for the future. That should be the basis for setting curriculum standards. Too often, many (especially non-educators) believe that standardized testing validates whether students have learned the material they need for the future. That is a false narrative. Students learn differently. Our standards must reflect that.

Civic Education: School students should be required to take 'civics' classes so that they better understand how local, state, and federal governments work. As part of this training, visits to (or with) governmental entities must be included in the curriculum. Additionally, students should complete community service projects before graduation to reinforce their civic responsibility.

Charter Schools: While philosophically I do not have objections to the operation of charter schools, I do have an issue when much needed taxpayer money is diverted from public schools and given to charter schools (or private schools) with little to no accountability or taxpayer oversight. Such actions destroy public schools and prevent students from getting the education they deserve.

Other Issues: My priorities would focus on developing curriculums that are predicated on proven, fact-based methodologies. I would push to increase and enhanced STEM offerings, revive much needed vocational and industrial arts programs, and ensure the arts and humanities programs receive greater emphasis. I would support limits on class size to maximize student learning opportunities.

Campaign Website: http://www.webstertxsboe10.com/

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Dr-Marsha-Burnett-Webster-for-Texas-State-Board-of-Education-District-10-111737920309467/

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» Trip Seibold (L)

Qualifications: Performed a two year scientific study comparing block scheduling to traditional scheduling. Served as a guest teacher in high school and elementary classrooms. Served on a Citizen's Bond Committee for Round Rock ISD. Junior Achievement volunteer.
Curriculum: Remove at least three times as many entries in the TEKS as what is being added. The purpose of this is to give our educators the freedom to be creative in their classroom instruction. Areas to enhance our standards are in mental health education, financial literacy, life skills, and logical thinking for every student. Teaching logic in 9th grade geometry is too late.
Civic Education: I recommend teaching a broader view of civics. This includes teaching government and economic models which are used elsewhere in the world. How and why do they differ from the U.S.? Emphasizing the importance of voting and of rational, civil, and peaceful discourse. Teaching about many political parties within the U.S. (major & more minor). Ensure recent history is taught.
Charter Schools: Public schools behave like they're in fear and competition with charters. Excessive funds are spent building public school palaces. These funds could pay teachers. Lawmakers need to create a fairer system where public school districts don't behave worried. Charter schools are vital for students & parents to have school choice, but not at the expense of public schools.
Other Issues: Providing more student engagement and ownership over their own education through increased elective choices and offerings. Approving textbooks which will help our society heal from racism. Working with local school districts to better serve the needs of special education students. Moving away from abstinence only sex education. Broaden or eliminate public sex ed.

Campaign Website: http://www.facebook.com/TexasTeachPeace
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TexasTeachPeace
Twitter: https://twitter.com/FinllyPossible

» STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 14

» Sue Melton-Malone (R) Candidate has not yet responded.

» Greg Alvord (D)

Qualifications: Greg Alvord has a background is science and mathematics. A BA in Physics and Mathematics, graduate work in Physics and Astrophysics, MS in Computer Science. Greg has taught high school and served on a local school board for twelve years.
Curriculum: Greg admires the learning by design approach to curriculum. The Texas curriculum is a collection unfocused material presented with the hope that the student we see the big picture as a result. The needs of society have changed over the past thirty years, but little has changed in the Texas curriculum. Out students will be using their education over the next 30 years.
Civic Education: Greg believes that civic responsibility and processes should be part of Texas Education. This includes understanding their own local government and well as the state a federal systems. Let's not forget that local homeowners associations and water districts have impact on local life also.
Charter Schools: The promise of better outcomes from charter schools has not been met. There is no statistically significant difference between charter and public schools according to TEA published data. The promise of more innovation from charter schools has not been met. Charter schools are the least accountablity of any kind of providers of service to the state.
Other Issues: The process of review an approval of educational material needs to be modernized. I an world changing as rapidly as ours a two year delay between curriculum change an adoption available to school districts misses by a wide mark. A personal finance track needs to exist. As does more practical uses of statistics and data visualization.

Campaign Website: http://greg4tx.com
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/Greg4TX
Twitter: https://twitter.com/greg4txSBOE

» STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION, DISTRICT 15

» Jay Johnson (R)

Qualifications: 16 years as trustee Pampa ISD
Charter Schools: Charter schools are currently the only public option in Texas for students in districts that continue to perform poorly.
Other Issues: Local districts should have more control on decisions impacting their students

» John Betancourt (D)

Qualifications: Former Trustee, At-Large, Amarillo ISD Board of Trustees President, Panhandle Area Association of School Board for Region 16 Region 5A State Director, Mexican American School Board Association Region 16 Rep., TASB Legislative Advisory Committee
Curriculum: Setting curriculum standards is a very vital and important role that the SBOE is responsible for. I believe we should make certain that every Texas Student receives a quality educational experience while ensuring that we go above and beyond in implementing those standards in the TEKS and adopting textbooks/instructional materials that will assist.
Civic Education: We should looks at areas of improvement and ensure that every High School in Texas provides civic learning to students. In addition to providing a pathway to register to vote for students who are 18 or close to 18 years of age.
Charter Schools: I believe that we should spend more public dollars on Texas Public Schools. I am not against charter schools but do believe that public education and charter schools should be held to the same standards and accountability measures.
Other Issues: Implementation of African-american, Mexican-american, Asian-american, Indigenous-american, sex-education, and science base curriculum for all public schools.

Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/johnfortexased
Twitter: https://twitter.com/JohnForTexasEd

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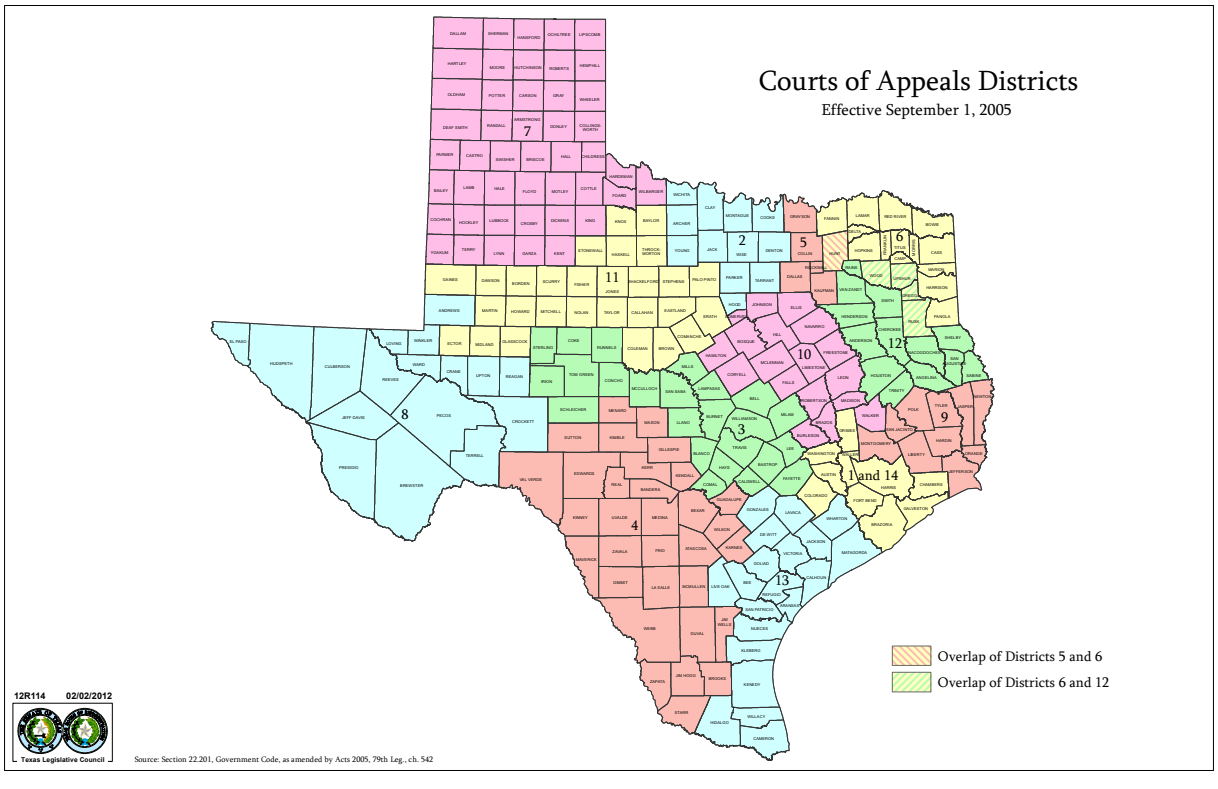
Six-year term. Hears appeals on civil and criminal cases from lower courts in its district. Base salary for Chief Judge: $156,500. Base salary for Judge: $154,000.



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The 14th Court of Appeals: Austin, Brazoria, Chambers, Colorado, Fort Bend, Galveston, Grimes, Harris, Waller, and Washington

See VOTE411.org to compare Court of Appeal candidates in your district.

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LWVTexas.org

Secretary of State

VoteTexas.gov

Texas Voter Protection

texasvoterprotection.org

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- 866-OUR-VOTE (English)
- 888-Ve-Y-Vota (Spanish)
- 888-API-VOTE (English, Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Bengali, Urdu, Hindi and Tagalog)
- 888-796-VOTE (Disability Rights TX)

Republican Party

texasgop.org

Democratic Party

txdemocrats.org

Libertarian Party

lptexas.org

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txgreens.org

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» VOTER ID: WHAT TO TAKE TO THE POLLS

In order to vote, citizens must be on the official list of registered voters. Check your registration status at **votetexas.gov**.

Voters may use one of seven forms of photo ID, listed below.

- Texas Driver License
- Texas Election Identification Certificate
- Texas Personal Identification Card issued by DPS
- Texas license to carry a handgun issued by DPS
- U.S. military identification card containing the person's photograph
- U.S. citizenship certificate containing the person's photograph
- U.S. passport (book or card)

Note: IDs may be expired up to four years. Persons 70 years or older may use an expired ID. ID address does not have to match the voter registration address.

Registered voters without a photo ID, who cannot reasonably obtain one, may sign a form (described below) and present the original or a copy of one of the following documents with the voter's name and address to vote a regular ballot:

- Texas voter registration card
- Certified birth certificate
- Current utility bill
- Bank statement
- Government check
- Paycheck
- Any other government document such as an out-of-state driver license or expired Texas driver license

The **form** to be filled out by registered voters without a photo ID is a "Voter's Declaration of Reasonable Impediment or Difficulty." The voter must mark on the form one of the following reasons for not providing a photo ID:

- Lack of transportation
- Disability or illness
- Lack of birth certificate or other documents needed to obtain an acceptable form of photo ID
- Work schedule
- Family responsibilities
- Lost or stolen identification
- Acceptable form of photo ID applied for but not received

"Substantially Similar Name"

The name on the photo ID should match the voter registration card or be "substantially similar." If the names don't match exactly but are substantially similar, the voter will initial a box for similar name when signing in to vote.

Voter Harassment

- Election officials cannot question a voter about the use of an ID type
- Poll watchers may never question a voter about Voter ID issues
- **If you are harassed, call the Voter Protection Hotline!**

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