VOTING IN THE TEXAS PRIMARIES

When you vote in a political party’s primary, you become affiliated with that party for the next two years. At the time you vote, your voting certificate will be stamped with the name of the party in whose primary you vote. You may vote in only one party’s primary.

In the Primary runoff, you can vote only in the same party’s runoff election in which you voted in the March 1, 2016 Primary. (Note that in the General Election in November, voters may vote for any candidate they wish, regardless of whether they voted in a party primary or runoff or participated in a party convention. All candidates from all parties are on the same ballot.)

If you did not vote in March 1, 2016 Primary, you may vote in either party’s Primary runoff.

On election day, eligible Travis County and Williamson County voters may vote at any voting location. You may bring this Voters Guide into the voting booth.

WHAT TO TAKE TO THE POLLS

Texas requires voters to show valid photo ID

Texas now requires voters to show an acceptable photo ID at the polls. The only acceptable photo IDs are:

- Texas Driver’s license
- Personal identification card issued by DPS
- Concealed handgun license
- Election Identification Certificate

These photo IDs are not acceptable at the polls:

- Student IDs
- Employer IDs
- Out-of-state driver licenses

Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS)

- United States passport
- Military identification card
- Citizenship certificate or naturalization certificate with photograph

U.S. government-issued photo IDs

- Driver’s license
- A valid non-driver identification card
- Government-issued photo ID
- U.S. military I.D.
- Voter registration card (if issued by state)
- Alien registration card
- Social Security card
- School ID
- Employment ID
- Student ID
- Health insurance ID

These photo IDs are not acceptable at the polls:

- Student IDs
- Employer IDs
- Out-of-state driver licenses

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Donate!
Support the Voters Guide with a tax deductible contribution to the League of Women Voters of Austin Area Education Fund, 1011 W. 31st St. Austin, TX 78705 or make a secure donation online at www.lwvtexas.org.

Access the Interactive Voters Guide
An interactive version of this Voters Guide is available online at VOTE411.org. Enter your address and zip code and view the races and candidates that appear on your ballot. You will be able to compare the candidates’ responses to the questions side-by-side and create a printout of a ballot that you can take to the polls.

When and where to vote

Early Voting: All registered voters may vote early by personal appearance at any early voting location in their county. Check with the county clerk or election administrator for early voting times and locations. Early voting days for the May 24, 2016, Primary Runoff Election are Monday, May 16 - Friday, May 20.

If you report to the incorrect polling place, you will be redirected to the correct site or offered a provisional ballot. You can vote by provisional ballot, but if it is determined that you are not registered where you vote, your ballot will not be counted by Texas law. More information on provisional voting appears on the Texas Secretary of State website www.VoteTexas.gov.

Election Day Voting: On Election Day you must vote in your precinct of residence (unless, like Travis County and Williamson County, your area is participating in county-wide vote centers). Your precinct is listed on your registration card, or you may find out where to vote by calling or going online with your county election administrator.

County elections addresses and fax numbers are available at www.VoteTexas.gov or at www.VOTE411.org.

Ballot-by-Mail Voting: Only specific reasons entitle a person to vote by mail (no longer called absentee voting). You may request a ballot by mail if you:

■ will be away from your county on Election Day and during Early Voting.
■ are sick or disabled.
■ are 65 years of age or older on Election Day.
■ are confined to jail, but eligible to vote.

You do not need a photo ID to vote by mail, but photo ID will be required of first time voters if a driver license or Social Security number was not included with the voter registration application.

■ A ballot will be mailed to you, and you must return your completed ballot to your county elections department by 7 p.m. on Election Day, May 24. The ballot must be received, not just postmarked, by that date. If you are mailing your ballot from outside the United States, the early voting clerk must receive your ballot by the fifth day after Election Day. (You must mail it no later than 7 p.m. on Election Day.)

ABOUT THIS GUIDE: This Voters Guide lists candidates in contested races who are on the May 24, 2016, Primary Runoff Election ballot and provides their answers to questions posed by The League of Women Voters of Texas and The League of Women Voters Austin Area.

Additional information can be accessed online at www.VOTE411.org including an online Voters Guide with candidate videos, races not included in this Voters Guide, and an “On Your Ballot” feature allowing voters to enter an address and review races and ballot initiatives specific to that address.

This Voters Guide lists candidates for statewide, regional, and local races in Texas, including Railroad Commissioner, Court of Criminal Appeals, State Senate, Constable, and County Commissioner.

Only candidates in political parties that select their candidates in the Primary Election are included, currently Democratic and Republican parties. Questionnaires were sent to candidates in races that are contested within the same party. Candidate replies are printed without editing or verification. Due to space restrictions, candidates were given strict word limits. Replies exceeding the word limit are cutoff. Candidates were also asked to avoid references to their opponents. Candidates appearing with no photo failed to submit one.

Candidates in other parties are selected by convention.

This Voters Guide is organized by office/race. Ballot order may vary from county to county.

For more information on the responsibilities of the statewide elected officials in the Primary runoff election, go to:
Texas Railroad Commission Races

TEXAS RAILROAD COMMISSIONER

**Question 1:** How would you balance the environmental concerns of Big Bend residents related to construction of the Trans-Pecos natural gas pipeline with oil and gas industry interests?

**Question 2:** What are the main health and safety issues related to oil and gas drilling (fracking) in urban areas, and how would you address them?

**Question 3:** Aside from the issues above, what are the two most serious issues the Railroad Commission will face during the next term, and how would you address them?

**Wayne Christian (R)**

**Education:** BBA in General Business Stephen F. Austin University  
**Experience:** As a businessman and a former legislator, I am the only candidate in this race with experience in doing what the railroad commission actually does — creating a regulatory environment that protects our communities while promoting responsible oil and gas production. In the Texas House, I served on multiple committees that handled energy policy and had direct oversight of the Railroad Commission.

**Answer 1:** As Railroad Commissioner, it is important to balance the rights of landowners and industry across the state. On average 50 miles of 20-inch pipe keeps over 1,500 trucks off our roads each day. From a safety standpoint, it is essential that we have a robust network of pipelines across the state to transport our energy resources. At the same time, the property rights of landowners are important and we must not allow for those rights to be eroded.

**Answer 2:** Whether the production is happening in urban or rural areas, we must ensure that all energy production is done in a way that is safe and responsible.

**Answer 3:** 1) The oil, gas and coal community deserves consistent and predictable leadership that is based on science, not speculation. 2) Texas needs a fighter that will stand up to the federal government and Obama’s EPA to ensure Texas is able to continue producing fossil fuels. Our strong energy sector in Texas helps keep energy prices low and provides much needed revenue to the state budget, funding our schools, roads, and other pressing obligations.

**Gary Gates (R) - No Response**

**Cody Garrett (D)**

**Education:** UT Austin Bachelor of Science in Speech, UT Austin Master’s of Arts in Writing, Temple High School 1989  
**Experience:** I am the only Democrat in the race. I am for the people, not the vested interests. I want to keep gasoline at two dollars a gallon and effectively institute a moratorium on natural gas rates. We need to restore balance to a commission that is dominated by one party and one region.

**Answer 1:** By listening.

**Answer 2:** Earthquakes, disposal wells -- in effect we need to know what they’re putting down.

**Answer 3:** I will serve the people, not the interests.

**Grady Yarbrough (D)**

**Education:** Obtained a Bachelors degree in Business Education. Also, obtained a Master of Education in Guidance, Counseling, as well as Certification in Public school administration.  
**Experience:** My academic training in the field of Business would give me that training needed to reach fair and equitable decisions facing the commission. Of course my years of service have been in the field of education, which requires the same logic, and critical thinking skills as any other field of endeavor.

**Answer 1:** The impact upon Human life, and the environment would always be my major concern. The construction of the Trans-Pecos Gas pipeline would pose a Health and safety hazard to the residents of the area, and would oppose, based upon those reasons.

**Answer 2:** The reasons for my objections to fracking in urban areas, is the danger posed by such activity. Fracking, according to the U S Geological Survey contributes to the Earthquakes which are occuring, with frequency, within the Metro-Plex and surrounding counties. If this activity continue it will cause damage to homes and businesses within a very, densely populated area, which would put lives at risk. My Proposal has been, for nearly three years, is to suspend Fracking within cities over one thousand inhabitants. This activity will eventually cause some areas to be declared an “Earth Quake” Zone, which will cause

**Answer 3:** Home owners Insurance premiums to increase, which will be an added cost to the taxpayer, of which he, the taxpayer, received no benefit from this activity. The Loss of confidence is a serious issue facing the commission at this time. This can be restored by adopting people oriented Solutions to to those solutions
Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS, JUDGE, PLACE 2

Question 1: How do you maintain impartiality, given the need to raise funds for political campaigns?

Question 2: Describe an accomplishment of which you are proud and how it would help make you a better justice on this court.

Question 3: Aside from the issues above, what are the two most pressing issues facing the Court in the next term, and how would you address them?

Mary Lou Keel (R)


Education: JD, University of Houston, 1985 BA, University of Texas, 1982

www.maryloukeel.com

Answer 1: Iron discipline.

Answer 2: The Court of Criminal Appeals hears criminal cases on appeal, nothing else. Candidates for that court should demonstrate an aptitude for that kind of work. I do. I represented the State in 279 criminal cases on appeal when I was a Harris County prosecutor. My opponents have handled criminal appeals numbering in the single digits.

Answer 3: (1) I would like to see the court issue its opinions more decisively, i.e., without the need for rehearing. (2) I would like the court to issue its opinions in a more timely fashion. I would address these issues by lending my three decades of experience to the job and working hard.

Ray Wheless (R)

Background: I offer the broadest legal experience. My twenty-one years pre-judge experience trying criminal and civil cases and my AV rating placing me in the top 5% of all lawyers is unmatched. As a judge, I have disposed of over 23,000 cases, conducted over 500 jury trials and sat as an appellate judge.

Education: I earned my GED in the Air Force during the Vietnam War era and attended college at night. I earned a Bachelors in Business Administration at California State University and a Doctor of Jurisprudence from the University of Texas at Austin, Texas' top law school. Double Board Certified. AV rated.

judgeraywheless.com

Answer 1: I was appointed to my first bench as a County Court at Law Judge and appointed by the Governor as a District Judge. I have never had an opponent. Because I didn't have to campaign, I did not accept campaign contributions until a few years ago. I have now received contributions from a broad cross section of citizens. Most of these people are not criminal defense lawyers and will never have cases before me. I pledge that I will follow the Rule Of Law and administer justice blindly.

Answer 2: I created the first DWI/Drug Court Program in Collin County and serve as the Chairman of the Specialized Courts Advisory Council to Governor Greg Abbott. My role is to establish best practices and recommend funding to the Governor for alternatives to incarceration such as Veterans Court Programs and Drug Court Programs. As a member of this Court, I will help to shape our criminal justice system policy and help administer State funds t train judges in these specialized courts.

Answer 3: 1. Statewide electronic filing of all documents in criminal cases still needs to be implemented. A hearing is scheduled in April of this year to address these issues. Provisions will have to be made to allow pro se citizens to file paper documents. 2. The Court is struggling with issues surrounding the Michael Morton Act requiring prosecutors and law enforcement to turn over all exculpatory evidence. This Court must affirm proper convictions but remain vigilant against wrongful convictions.
Texas Court of Criminal Appeals

TEXAS COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS, JUDGE, PLACE 5

Question 1: How do you maintain impartiality, given the need to raise funds for political campaigns?

Question 2: Describe an accomplishment of which you are proud and how it would help make you a better justice on this court.

Question 3: Aside from the issues above, what are the two most pressing issues facing the Court in the next term, and how would you address them?

Background:

Scott Walker (R)

I have been a small business owner all my adult life. I have learned the importance of stewardship and fiscal responsibility. I am, and have always been, a constitutional conservative, and don’t believe in legislation from the bench. I have been attorney of record on over one thousand criminal cases. I have tried over forty jury trial. I have written over one hundred appellate briefs.

Answer 1: I am an Evangelical Christian. Integrity, fairness and honesty are of utmost importance. My beliefs as a Christian will never allow me to rule in any way which is contrary to my convictions because someone or some group contributed to my campaign. Impartiality will never be a problem.

Answer 2: Over fifteen years ago I was asked to write my first appellate brief. I spent a lot of time researching briefs that others had written, as well as researching the law. Eventually the brief was finished. I realized that I was gifted with the ability to think logically and to apply that gift to legal analysis. I decided that I would love to be an appellate judge. I began taking every appeal case I could so that I could gain the knowledge and experience necessary to be an effective appellate judge. I have now written over 100 briefs and I am qualified to be an effective appellate judge.

Answer 3: The Court of Criminal Appeals hears appeals of criminal cases. There is no way to know for sure what issues will be presented during the next term. Because of the recent implementation of the Michael Morton Act, I expect that discovery issues will be necessary to be an effective appellate judge. I have now written over 100 briefs and I am qualified to be an effective appellate judge.

The issues of wrongful convictions. I will address these issues with fairness and impartiality.

Brent Webster (R)

I’ve practiced Criminal law since 2006, and I have very diverse criminal, trial and appellate experience. I’ve handled everything from misdemeanors to murder and I’ve written appeals. I currently served as the General Counsel for the Williamson County District Attorney’s office.

Answer 1: I am running a grassroots campaign and have received many donations from a broad group of people. They are donating to me because they believe in me. They trust that I am Conservative and will always do the right thing. As an appellate judge, the quality of my work will be judged by the opinions that I write. Therefore, if I were to do something that is contrary to what the law requires (in a way that is not impartial), then the voters would, and should, hold me accountable for that action.

Answer 2: I am proud of how hard I fought for children that have been physically abused. I have been very successful helping multiple children get out of bad environments where their life and physical safety was at risk. I believe this will make me a better judge because, not only will I be a strong advocate for our constitutional rights, but I also have a deep and profound understanding of what victims of violent crime must live with for the rest of their lives.

Answer 3: First, there is always a high volume of cases that can result in a backlog. I am running to work hard for Texas and I will use my skills and energy to help move the caseload at the Court of Criminal Appeals. Second, I believe that our Constitutional Rights are under attack around the nation by the Government. As a Judge, I will make sure that your rights are protected, especially your 1st Amendment right to Free Speech and Freedom of Religion, and your 2nd Amendment right to bear arms.

Texas Senate

TEXAS SENATOR, DISTRICT 24

Question 1: What are the issues of the Child Protective Services program that you consider most urgent? For example, early intervention, budget, and caseloads?

Question 2: These topics are of concern to Texas citizens. Please discuss your position on: voting, guns, sexual discrimination and access to healthcare.

Question 3: The Legislature currently draws the district lines determining our voting districts (redistricting). Would you support a Citizen’s Independent Redistricting Commission at the State level? Why or why not?

Question 4: What are your legislative priorities for ensuring that all children in Texas are well educated?

Question 5: What are your legislative priorities for responding to our environmental issues in Texas, such as water management, air emissions, nuclear energy, and renewable energy?

Question 6: What other issues do you consider the most important and how would you address them?

Dawn Buckingham (R)

No response

Susan King (R)

No response
Question 1: County government is primarily financed through taxes. Are there other revenue options beyond the property tax? Please explain.

Question 2: What are the transportation issues and how do you plan to address them?

Question 3: Because the Texas legislature has not given counties ordinance making power (i.e. zoning authority), how do you plan to address growth issues in the unincorporated areas of your county?

Question 4: What are the health and human services issues in your county and how would you address them?

Melvin (Mel) Hamner (R)

Education: Community College of the Air Force, A.A. in Traffic Management
electmelhamner.com

Answer 1: First, in our role as overseers of all county department budgets, commissioners should work with departments to encourage increased efficiencies, to lessen demand for local taxes. Where available, state and federal grants should be pursued. Also, many county services are currently supplemented by user fees. All county operations should be carefully analyzed to identify potential for user fees, where appropriate.

Answer 2: Bastrop County’s current structure establishes four independent road departments, one in each Commissioner’s Office—this is standard procedure in smaller counties. With 74,000+ residents across 896 square miles, Bastrop County is large enough to establish a single road department to work with the county engineer and all four commissioners for increased, cost-effective road maintenance.

Answer 3: Uniform subdivision standards should encourage provision of completed, adequate infrastructure from day one. Encourage developers to provide family recreation areas and activities for youth. Also there are currently too many miles between isolated subdivisions, without egress feeders to enhance evacuation or even detours when needed. We should link outlying subdivisions with cross-county boulevards so local traffic does not have to use SH 71.

Answer 4: I have taken an active role in facilitating private sector support for the homeless and needy by coordinating activities of Derek’s Mission and the In The Streets - Hands Up High Ministry in their efforts to open men’s shelters in Bastrop and Elgin, a women’s shelter in Smithville and feeding programs in Stoney Point and Lake Bastrop Acres.

Willie Pina (R)

Education: Bachelor of Arts Degree in Economics from the University of Texas at Austin, Texas, and Master of Science Degree in Quality Systems Management.
Experience: I have been a county commissioner for seven years and I am a Certified County Commissioners Court Member. Retired LTC, Vietnam & Afghanistan veteran.
www.williepina.com

Answer 1: Although property taxes are the majority of revenue for counties, counties do receive other forms of taxes, such as sales taxes, motor vehicle registration, fees, etc. We have applied and used grants for special projects, such as home hazard waste cleanup, fire mitigation, etc. Also, we collect fees for septic system permits and other county services. Our state legislature should always consider funding when a county service is proposed.

Answer 2: Bastrop County is one of the fastest growing counties in Texas. Obviously, traffic is a concern and public safety is a priority. In 2009, we, Commissioners Court, joined the Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organizations (CAMPO), and then, in 2010 became a voting member when CAMPO Transportation Policy Board voted to expand their board composition to include Bastrop County. By joining, we can adequately focus on funding TXDOT projects.

Answer 3: Even though we have limited land use authority, the Texas legislature did give us some subdivision regulations that we can impose on developers. If developers are seeking a tax incentive from the County, we can enact the Local Government Code 381 which allows the County to give a tax incentive such as a tax abatement to a developer. With a 381 agreement, a County can impose terms and conditions on projects. We have ETJ agreements with cities.

Answer 4: As our County’s population grows, we will continue to address those issues that impact our citizens. Seton and St. David medical systems are present in our County providing medical services. We also have the indigent healthcare program in the County, and there is a free clinic in Smithville which we have allocated some funds for their operation. We have funded local nonprofits that provide some individual and family assistance.
Marc Mulkey (R)


Experience: Truck driver, heavy equipment operator, plumber, DJ, Restaurant Mgr., Constitutional, Christian Conservative. Honesty, Integrity, Accountability.

www.marcmulkey.org

Answer 1: A county has other sources of income such as fines, fees and vehicle registrations. Fines and fees are deposited into the general operating funds of the county. Fines and fees can come from: criminal defendants who pay fines and court costs, fees levied by justices of the peace, fees from Constable Services, birth certificates, passports, marriage licenses, civil, felony, and arrest fees, and fines and fees levied by the county court.

Answer 2: Bastrop County will likely have another 20,000+ new residents within the next few years. The Commissioners Court must continue to work aggressively with TX-DOT to make sure that the state highways are improved by widening lanes of traffic plus building more bridges & ramps that will bypass stop lights. We should also implement more Ride Share programs and work closely with the CARTS Board and CAP-COG to identify ways to improve service and funding.

Answer 3: The extremely limited nature of counties and land use controls has led to situations in which rapidly growing counties, like Bastrop, find themselves unable to control development in an acceptable manner. This has led for growing counties to try to secure further land use controls through action of the state legislature. The Commissioners Court needs to make sure we have the legal tools and abilities to handle the coming influx of people and homes.

Answer 4: Bastrop County has many rural areas and there is a definite lack of nearby medical services once you get outside of Bastrop County’s larger cities. The County needs to look into the possibility of establishing mobile health clinics that would go to the rural communities and provide basic, preventative health care, low cost immunizations, antibiotics, health screenings & regular checkups. Small fees could be charged to help offset the costs.

Colton Stabeno (R)

Education: Bachelors of Science degree from Texas A&M University.

Experience: Strong experience with our local government through my current position. Water issues through my experience on the LCRA regional council board.

www.votecolton.com

Answer 1: Absolutely. Taxes fund slightly over two-thirds of Bastrop County’s 30 million dollar budget. We are fortunate here at Bastrop to have a Federal jail. This jail provides Bastrop County with approximately 2.1 million in revenue. Other revenue sources include fees, collected from services provided by the County, and fines collected from citations. These both total about 2.5 million. Motor vehicle registration also contributes largely to the County.

Answer 2: A major concern in Precinct 3 of Bastrop County is the safety of Highway 71. There are an outrageous number of collisions on that stretch of 71 in Cedar Creek, many of which result in fatalities. With its proximately to the schools there, I think something needs to be done about this issue. I would use my position as County Commissioner to push on TXDOT to give this area attention immediately, and ultimately, see an overpass placed there.

Answer 3: Bastrop County has to continue to use what limited authority we do have to manage for good growth in these areas of the County. This includes our septic regulations, driveway regulations, and most importantly, our subdivision/platting regulations. As a Commissioner, I will push towards revisiting our subdivision regulations and updating them, as it is evident that those regulations are now outdated. Ensure quality infrastructure is being built.

Answer 4: A major concern in Bastrop County, is the amount of illegal dumping. Our Environmental and Sanitation department stays extremely busy with calls and reports of illegal dumping, which creates health concerns. We need to allocate more resources to curtailing this problem. Secondly, employee retention at our Sheriff’s office is a concern. Much of this high turnover rate is pay related, a problem that can be addressed by the Commissioners Court.
Bastrop County Races

BASTROP COUNTY SHERIFF

**Question 1:** How does the Sheriff’s office work with ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) and what improvements or changes, if any, will you make?

**Question 2:** How will you train officers to deal with diverse populations, including those with mental issues and the transgendered?

**Question 3:** What measures or programs do you propose to reduce crime in our community?

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**Maurice Cook (R)**

**Education:** Associates, Bachelors, Masters, Juris Doctor Degrees-FBI National Academy- Police Staff Command-Secret Service Dignitary School-DPS 16 Week Academy

**Experience:** USAF, City Police, Highway Patrol, Intelligence, Motor Vehicle Theft, Texas Rangers-Chief, College Professor-Attorney-Expert Witness, Leader, Budget M

voteforcooksheriff.com

**Answer 1:** Not being with the Bastrop Sheriff’s Department (BCSO) I can only speculate how the BCSO works with ICE. Since ICE is a federal agency charged with exclusive jurisdiction over Immigration and Naturalization issues it would seem reasonable that the BCSO maintain a cooperative attitude on matter of mutual interest such as human smuggling and federal immigration violations. According to news sources the BCSO reports immigration violations to ICE.

**Answer 2:** There are training courses in place which deals with both subjects. As an Educator and Law Enforcement Trainer I would seek out and provide the necessary training to deal with the above issues plus other issues that tend to discriminate against any of our citizens. I have a keen awareness of each issue since both are represented in my family. I would also make sure that policies and procedures were in place to identity and address infractions.

**Answer 3:** I would use my experience to recruit, hire, retain, and train qualified personnel to serve within the Sheriff’s Department. Develop a partnership with the public to help report and identify those who violate the law and put our citizens at risk. Utilize Sheriff Department personnel and resources in the most efficient and effective manner to investigate and identify the criminal element; properly file and prepare criminal cases for prosecution.

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**Matthew Henderson (R)**

**Education:** Bastrop High School 1981, CAPCOG Academy 1996, Constable Leadership College, Justice Court Training Center, TCOLE, ALERRT, TPA Leadership Conference

**Experience:** Bastrop County Constable, Pct 3, Bastrop County Reserve Deputy, Past Member Hostage Negotiations Team, LCRA Power Plant Operator 28 1/2 years

facebook.com/matthewhendersonforsheriff

**Answer 1:** Immigration and Customs Enforcement enforces federal laws that target criminal aliens and partners with local state and county agencies to aid in identification, arrest, detainment and deportation of these criminals. I do support ICE and will improve our partnership to better protect our community and raise revenue for our Office.

**Answer 2:** I plan to utilize all training resources to enhance the officer’s knowledge, confidence and accuracy in all areas of skill, departmental interest, cultural diversity, gender diversity and consumers with mental health issues. This strength will boost morale, confidence and diversity within the department to better serve our community.

**Answer 3:** I will restore leadership, morale, appreciation and pride within the Sheriff’s Office, restore community faith in the Sheriff’s office and promote community safety for all residents of Bastrop County. I will strengthen partnerships with Citizens on Patrol and Neighborhood Watch programs and others so we can all work together through awareness, observation and involvement to help reduce crime in our community.
Hays County Races

HAYS COUNTY JUSTICE OF THE PEACE PRECINCT 1, PLACE 2

Question 1: What should be the minimum qualifications for the position of Justice of the Peace?

Question 2: What are the funding needs of the office of Justice of the Peace?

Question 3: What issues need to be addressed regarding process serving and customer service?

Sandra Sepulveda Lopez (D)

Education: SMHS Graduate ’98, Texas State University- Criminal Justice/Forensic Psychology, Texas Justice Court Training- Civil Process & Civil Office Management

Experience: 10+ Years Justice Court experience and civil office management, TCIC/NCIC Certified, TLETS Certified, J.P. Courtroom Interpretation- Spanish

sandraslopez.com

Answer 1: I believe that the minimum requirements to hold the office of JP should include work experience and formal education in a related field as well as involvement in the community you seek to serve. My experience as a Justice Clerk coupled with my education in criminal justice provide a firm foundation on which to build a streamlined department that will efficiently serve the community.

Answer 2: All county offices have the same general cost of operation: personnel costs, office supplies, equipment, etc. While the bulk of the budget would be spent on those items, I feel that the greatest need in funding would be for training. It is important to invest in continuing education for all staff members so that they are able to serve the public effectively.

Answer 3: Any issues with the service of process can be mitigated by fostering and maintaining a good working relationship with the Constable's office which is primarily responsible for service of Justice Court documents. In terms of customer service, the Justice Court must never forget that it serves the people and I would ensure that all staff members treat everyone with dignity and respect.

Maggie Hernandez Moreno (D)

Education: San Marcos High School Junior at the University of Texas San Antonio pursuing a degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Legal Studies

Experience: I supervise the state programs in 28 counties, provide education to the community thru public speaking, and ensure grant deliverables are met.


Answer 1: As it stands now, the minimum qualifications for this office are determined by the State. To qualify, a candidate must be 18 years of age, a resident of the State of Texas, a district resident, and registered to vote in the area elected from. It is up to the voters if they want candidates with additional qualifications such as a university degree, law license, or a working knowledge of the criminal justice system.

Answer 2: The funding needs for this office are difficult to state, since it has not been fully functional after the death of my mother, Judge Margie Hernandez in April of 2015. One can only look at past budgets and estimate what the workload may be in 2018 when this office is fully staffed again. If elected, I would work with Commissioner’s Court to construct a budget that meets the needs of the newly combined Place 1 and Place 2 offices.

Answer 3: The office of the Justice of the Peace must continue to have an open communication line with the Constable’s office in order to handle process serving in a timely and efficient manner. By providing as much information as possible to the Constable’s office, the office of the Justice of the Peace can ensure that notifications regarding summons to appear before the court are provided to individuals within a reasonable amount of time.
Hays County Races

HAYS COUNTY CONSTABLE PRECINCT 5

Question 1: What do you think are the most important responsibilities of the County Constable's office?
Question 2: What emerging problems do you foresee in the Constable's office and how will you address them?
Question 3: What should be the minimum qualifications for the position of Constable?

John Ellen (R)

Education: Master’s Degree in Political Science/Public Administration, Bachelors Degree in Psychology, Master Peace Officer, 6700+ hours of LE training.
Experience: Licensed Peace Officer for 35 years, 14 years Executive/Command experience, 10 years Supervisory experience, 3500+ hours of Instructor experience.

Answer 1: In addition to their basic constitutional mandates, Constables have the responsibility of providing traditional law enforcement services and should be committed to the safety and security of citizens and their families; visible and proactive in their approach to law enforcement functions; involved in the community and responsive to its unique needs and values; accessible, accountable, and focused on service to the citizens they serve.

Answer 2: Historic growth levels in Hays County have created the need to adapt established law enforcement models to reflect emerging trends and community standards. I will address this challenge by forming active, working partnerships with area law enforcement and governmental agencies, community organizations, and citizen groups, to identify and address challenges as a cohesive group centered on proactively managing community opportunities.

Answer 3: Minimum qualifications should align with those of other law enforcement chief executives and should include broad and extensive law enforcement experience, significant executive/command level experience in a law enforcement agency, and the proven ability to organize, manage, and direct, personnel toward established goals. The important qualification is the ability to inspire personnel to focus on service to the community.

Mitch Johnson (R)

Education: Have a Master Peace Officer Certificate
Experience: 36-1/2 years of law enforcement experience, 27 years with Hays County.

Answer 1: To maintain a high standard of quality of law enforcement service, building trust and relationships with the public. Treating the public the way I would want my family treated with respect and dignity. One of the ways to meet these standard is through the continued training and education for all the officers. Also working with all the public safety agencies, courts and serving all the civil process and warrants that is sent to the department.

Answer 2: Hays County is one of the fastest growing areas in the country. This will mean and increase in calls for service by law enforcement along with an increase in court cases being filed and civil process being served. As Constable I will try to work with the assets that I have along with working with the commissioners court and seek grant funding to have adequate staff and equipment to keep up with the growth and meet the needs of the public.

Answer 3: The minimum should be as stated in Texas Local Government Code 86.0022. I feel the candidate Should hold a minimum of a Master Peace Office Certification and live in the Precinct you want to hold the position of Constable for a minimum of five years. Along with some experience in serving civil process in order to be able to supervise Deputies working for you that are serving civil process.
Travis County Races

TRAVIS COUNTY COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT 1

Question 1: County government is primarily financed through taxes. Are there other revenue options beyond the property tax? Please explain.

Question 2: What are the transportation issues and how do you plan to address them?

Question 3: Because the Texas legislature has not given counties ordinance making power (i.e. zoning authority), how do you plan to address growth issues in the unincorporated areas of your county?

Question 4: What are the health and human services issues in your county and how would you address them?

Arthur Sampson (D)

Education: Travis County Sheriff’s Academy, attended Austin Community College-continuing education, Certification in Highway Construction - Texas A & M University

Experience: City of Austin more than 30 years -Project Coordinator/Supervisor. Overseen multi-million dollars projects. Worked on City Hall Public Plaza

www.arthursampson.com

Answer 1: Additional revenues that the county receives are; fees for civil process, clerk recording, probate district clerk, juries, constable service, vehicle registration, ticket citation, courts, civil/criminal violation. Building/land leased, selling of county property, park property facilities, inter-local agreement between county and developer on tax incentives repayment.

Funds for the use of Travis County Expo Center and royalties from the events

Answer 2: Travis County is a fast growing county. The population is approximately 1.2 million people. Travis County is 1023 square miles. SH 45 SW may not be the total answer for traffic congestion but it’s start. I will work with other Governmental Agencies to develop a public transportation system in rural areas of Travis County. We can start with buses from rural area of Travis County to city limits of Austin.

Answer 3: Counties have limited authority to regulate development within the county. Counties can regulate sale of alcoholic beverages, sexually oriented businesses, landfills, homeless shelters and correctional facilities. As County Commissioner I will enforce County’s regulations to ensure County and State laws meet all requirements. Continue to petition the Texas legislature to give the commissioner court ordinance making powers and zoning authority.

Answer 4: I will work with the Commissioner’s Court and the community to ensure that we have funds for programs for Senior Citizens, the Youth, Disable and Mental Health. These funds can be used in Community Centers and qualified Independent Agencies.

Jeff Travillion (D)

Education: Bachelors, Jackson State; Masters of Public Affairs, LBJ School of Public Affairs; Alfred P. Sloan Fellowship Harvard University and Carnegie Mellon


www.jefftravillion.com

Answer 1: Yes, there are intergovernmental resources (shared funding from other governmental jurisdictions), charges for services, fines and forfeitures, investment income, general purpose reserves, special purpose reserves, the sale of major assets, and a few other small reserves for emergencies and contingency funding.

Answer 2: I-35 is severely congested, the most effective way to address the congestion on I-35 is to un-toll SH-130. This will significantly eliminate congestion, a pilot project should be put in place to assess the effectiveness of the proposal. Many have no access to mass transit options which allow them to go to a doctor’s office, work, or school. We must provide options which will allow families access to transportation solutions to be successful.

Answer 3: The first step is maximizing the use of existing state law. The county does have the authority to focus on developments which may pose health or safety risks. I will support the work of the Land Development Division and work to make sure that it has the personnel and skill sets necessary to be effective. It is important to have a staff which really understands and has experience in planning and land use regulations.

Answer 4: Travis County has seen an increase in the number of low-to-moderate income families. There is a need to ensure the access and availability of health-related resources. Mass transit opportunities are inefficient, and with an aging population, we must ensure access to healthy food sources, recreation facilities, programing, and other services provided by non-profit and public organizations. We must reengineer our practices to reflect our needs.
Travis County Races

TRAVIS COUNTY CONSTABLE, PRECINCT 1

**Question 1:** What do you think are the most important responsibilities of the County Constable’s office?

**Question 2:** What emerging problems do you foresee in the Constable’s office and how will you address them?

**Question 3:** What should be the minimum qualifications for the position of Constable?

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**Danny Thomas (D)**

**Education:** “Old Anderson High School” graduate, Associates of Art in Criminal Justice from Austin Community College.

**Experience:** Elected Official 13 years: City Council Member six years, Travis County Constable seven years. I have over 28 years of law enforcement experience.

[re-electconstabledannythomas.com](re-electconstabledannythomas.com)

**Answer 1:** Serving the citizens of Travis County by educating the community on the different functions of the Constable’s office. Developing and implementing a new website to provide an informational resource for the community relative to Precinct One functions and activities. Continue to participate in community events and neighborhood association meetings to develop and maintain effective working relationships with the community.

**Answer 2:** Efficiency, education, outreach and service will continue to be the major focus of the daily operations. As Constable I will continue to strive to ensure that Pct. One remains a valuable asset to the community it serves. I plan to continue to utilize available resources to further enhance the capabilities of the office.

**Answer 3:** The minimum qualifications should be a licensed peace officer under Chapter 1701, Occupations Code with law enforcement experience.

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**Janie Serna (D)**

**Education:** Associates Degrees, one with emphasis in Criminal Justice and one in Corrections.

**Experience:** License Peace Officer with 11 years experience, with over 2200 Law Enforcement training hours and hold a Master Peace Officer Certification.

[janieserna.com](janieserna.com)

**Answer 1:** Constable should be a person of integrity with good morals who is willing to work on building relationships within the community. To serve and protect, cooperate with local, state, federal and county agencies.

**Answer 2:** Ensuring staff understand their role in serving the community. That all civil process be served in a timely manner. Staff should be partially bilingual in order to better serve the community.

**Answer 3:** Constables should be community driven individuals who understand that their main function is to serve the community with integrity, accountability and professionalism. A Constable should be a License Peace Office when elected by the community and have a degree from a credible college or university and hold a Master Peace Officer Certification by TCOLE in order to have the education and experience to effectively meet the challenges of the office.
Williamson County Races

WILLIAMSON COUNTY JUDGE, COURT AT LAW #2

**Question 1:** Do you believe changes in the current election process are needed to improve or maintain impartiality, given the need to raise funds for political campaigns? Please explain.

**Question 2:** How would you handle a situation where an attorney appearing before your court is inadequately representing his/her client?

**Question 3:** Please explain how this office is important to your constituents and what your plans are for improvement?

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**Laura Barker (R)**

**Education:** 1995, Texas State University (cum laude with a degree in Criminal Justice, Law Enforcement), 2002, St. Mary’s University School of Law (J.D.)

**Experience:** Attorney in private practice in for 13 years handling thousands of cases in civil, juvenile, and criminal law. Winner of Wilco bar poll for this bench

laurabarkerforjudge.com

**Answer 1:** There are really only two ways to select judges in this state; by election or by appointment. While the election process may be imperfect and require candidates to raise funds to promote their candidacy, I believe it is a far superior to an appointment process that puts too much power into the hands of one person and allows another branch of government to chose those who preside over the judiciary. We should leave the choice to the voters.

**Answer 2:** It is not uncommon for allegations to be leveled against an attorney for failure to provide adequate representation. Sometimes those allegations have merit and sometimes they do not, so it’s important to take a measured approach when this situation arises. Due process is best served if a hearing is conducted where both the attorney and client can speak, and if it is determined the attorney is at fault, they should be removed from the case.

**Answer 3:** The court hears over 50% of the misdemeanor criminal docket, civil cases, mental health commitments, and family cases in the county. In addition, this is the DWI/Drug court and Veterans Treatment court. I will make the court more efficient and consistent with respect to scheduling, docketing, and with court policies. It is also vital that participants in the specialty courts receive proper treatment to become productive members of the community.

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**Warren Oliver Waterman (R)**

**Education:** B.S. University of Utah - 1989, Texas Tech University School of Law - Dec. 1992, Admitted to Texas Bar - May, 1993

**Experience:** Texas Attorney 22+ YRS, 100+ Jury Trials, 10,000+ Cases, Prosecution & Defense, Criminal, Civil, Juvenile, Child & Family, Real Estate, Public Servant.

wow4judge.com

**Answer 1:** While public confidence in the Judiciary require that it not appear to be “for sale”, transparency and strict reporting requirements of donations and expenditures remain the answer. Arbitrary limits to spending, and proposals to adopt alternatives such as merit selection or appointment of judges dilute the right to self govern. As such, they are cures worse than the disease.

**Answer 2:** I would follow the proper response to such a situation which is governed by the Texas Code of Judicial Ethics and the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct. A Judge is duty bound to see that no party be harmed by a lawyer who is incompetent or unfit, and is required to take appropriate action which may include a duty to inform the Office of the General Counsel of the State Bar of Texas.

**Answer 3:** It is axiomatic that the Judge is vital to the efficient administration of justice. Case backlogs need to be eliminated by more efficient methods of moving dockets and avoiding unnecessary delays. My record as a prosecutor has shown that I will put in the hours and work overtime when needed. I will also create a separate docket for probation violators so that they can be held accountable more expeditiously. Justice delayed is often justice denied.
Williamson County Races

WILLIAMSON COUNTY COMMISSIONER, PRECINCT 1

Question 1: County government is primarily financed through taxes. Are there other revenue options beyond the property tax? Please explain.
Question 2: What are the transportation issues and how do you plan to address them?
Question 3: Because the Texas legislature has not given counties ordinance making power (i.e. zoning authority), how do you plan to address growth issues in the unincorporated areas of your county?
Question 4: What are the health and human services issues in your county and how would you address them?

Donna Parker (R)

Education: B.S. Management/ Economics Russell Sage College Troy, NY
Experience: Director, Brushy Creek Municipal District
donnaforwilco.com

Answer 1: In Williamson County, approximately 82% of our revenue comes from property taxes. Fees of Office are approximately 4%. An example of these fees are: County Clerk filing fees, citation fees and vehicle registration fees. Charge of Service fees are approximately 4%. An example of these fees are: EMS, parks and landfill fees.

Answer 2: Congestion on I-35 and our roads. We need to continue to financially partner with our cities, TexDOT and Fed agencies to leverage county money to improve traffic flows. Innovative designs, such as the diverging diamond interchange and continuous flow intersections will allow traffic to move faster. Reversal of access ramps on I-35 has helped with speed and flow of traffic. We need to research innovative options.

Answer 3: Approximately 60% of the residents in Williamson County live in cities. We need to work with government and non-government entities for voluntary cooperation in development and building in the unincorporated areas. We need good relationships and communication with HOA’s and their deed restrictions, MUD’s and specialty utility districts. I believe most people have the common goal of living in an attractive area that retains high property values.

Answer 4: In WilCo, approximately 14% of adults and 7% of children lack health insurance. Mental health issues are increasing each year. I would build on and support our Public Health Dept, WCCHD and WilCo Care. One focus area is to support prevention and treatment of behavioral health and substance abuse. I will work towards having more of our mentally ill NOT serve time in jail, but get the help they need.

Landy Warren (R)

Education: Bachelor of Arts in Economics and Accounting from Austin College 1982
Experience: 34 years of financial institution experience, being 6 in regulatory and 28 in community banking.
landywarren.com

Answer 1: For revenues other than property taxes, user fees are appropriate, but only when they are reasonable and market based, and used specifically for the purposes levied. I do not believe government should create "profit margins" other products or services to subsidize negatively cash flowing operations.

Answer 2: Williamson County is an extremely fast growing county that is an integral component in the Austin-Round Rock MSA region. Using Economic Development to create and attract jobs in Williamson County to reduce traditional commuting patterns can help, but we must continue building out our road grids while we can do so through rural lands where the cost of design and construction is a fraction of that through developed areas.

Answer 3: The cities in Williamson County have been successful in recruiting substantial companies to the area, who desire high quality facilities. Their employees desire high quality homes, and want to shop and dine in high quality facilities. These companies pay very strong wages with benefits. This is the best tool to continue the trends of responsible development we are presently experiencing. It also creates jobs in the retail sector.

Answer 4: Williamson County has seen substantial development of health care delivery outlets in the last 10 years, leaving little reasons for our citizens to need to travel outside the area. We have also developed a strong presence of community clinics for the underserved. The presence of medical schools is a further positive note. I have been active in all of these efforts/developments. Mental health resources are the greatest challenge.