

**TEXAS
2006 GENERAL ELECTION
VOTER GUIDE**

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**TEXAS GENERAL ELECTION
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2006
POLLS OPEN 7:00a.m. to 7:00p.m.**

CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDENT/ VICE PRESIDENT

Questions:

- 1. Do you support the 9-11 Commission's recommendations regarding reorganization of Congressional Intelligence Committees?**
 - 2. How do you propose to reduce the federal deficit?**
 - 3. What role should the federal government play in providing adequate health care for all Americans?**
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Gordon Bearce, Republican (Nathan Maclean)

Background: BA Stanford University 1971; MBA Harvard University 1974. 14 years of service in the Navy Reserve. Governor of Missouri since 1992.

1. Yes. Currently, numerous committees oversee the many different areas of intelligence needed to make our homeland secure. We need to follow the 9-11 Commission's recommendations to help coordinate these committees and reorganize them so they can operate and pass along information efficiently.

2. In order to reduce the federal deficit, we must have long-term fiscal discipline. We should not borrow from Social Security or Medicare or any other programs, rather simply reduce government spending in other areas, such as areas where supplemental appropriations are routinely passed. I will not raise taxes, however tax cuts that solely benefited the wealthy should be repealed, as this simple act will help reduce the government deficit by over 1 trillion dollars.

3. We should take a strong step forward in helping all Americans get the adequate health care they deserve. We should expand Medicare and Medicaid to help cover those that are currently in need of quality health care, but aren't getting it. Everyone has a right to quality health care, and under my watch, I will ensure all Americans get what they deserve.

Vernon Stanley Albury, Democrat (Richard Rigby)

Background: BA Princeton University 1967; JD Yale University 1970. District Attorney 1972-1982; Member of US House of Representatives since 1985.

1. Yes. We should restructure Congressional Intelligence Committees to help manage intelligence in a more expedient and precise manner, however complete reorganization will not help. We must restructure these committees and redefine their purposes, rather than simply removing some and adding power to others. This is a careful process that we need to take, allowing the Congressional Committees to cooperate and allow the Department of Homeland Security to oversee this intelligence.

2. I propose to reduce the federal deficit by controlling rampant supplemental appropriations bills. Too many congressmen and women are too concerned about giving their own districts money rather than looking out for the good of the entire nation. I will veto any supplemental appropriations bills that do not have a supermajority of the house behind them, and encourage fiscal discipline wherever I can.

3. The federal government should help provide adequate health care for all Americans. We should restructure Medicare and Medicaid so that they operate more efficiently and give Americans the medical coverage they need. Providing adequate health care does not mean

simply pumping money into these programs—we need to ensure that those in need get what they need, and not be short-changed by the bureaucracy.

**Janette Froman, Libertarian
(Chris Aponte)**

Background: BS Texas A&M 1980; JD University of Houston Law School 1984; Prior Candidate for Texas House of Representatives and Texas State Senate.

1. No. No amount of reorganization can fix the mess that the past few administrations have created. We need to rebuild our intelligence committees from the ground up—and establish term limits in the House so that those responsible for this disorganization are out of office.
 2. I plan to fix the federal deficit by immediately cutting the Department of Defense's budget drastically. Their expenditures account for a large plurality of our government spending, and their rampant use of government funds needs to be curtailed.
 3. None. It is not the federal government's responsibility to provide health care to all Americans. Too many take advantage of the system, and this problem has helped to exacerbate our federal deficit. Medicare and Medicaid ought to be repealed.
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CANDIDATES FOR US SENATOR

Questions:

1. What changes, if any, need to be implemented in US free-trade policies?
 2. A number of criticisms have been aimed at the Medicare prescription coverage program. What modifications, if any, would you support?
 3. What, if anything, would you change about “No Child Left Behind”?
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Cecile Cadieux, Republican

Background: JD, University of Texas 1985 – LLM in Taxation, University of Florida 1989, Authored or co-authored 14 professional articles; Married, one child

1. Chinese goods should be tariffed to cause their prices to be what they would be but for attachment of the yuan to the dollar. (China's currency has been attached to the dollar since 1995.) Attachment has prevented US manufacturers from being able to compete, thus causing loss of U.S. jobs.
 2. The Program should be repealed and HHS should be directed to negotiate with the pharmaceutical companies to provide our seniors with the prices that are charged to western European and Canadian seniors. Catastrophic coverage should exist, but it should be funded by small Medicare Part A/B benefit reduction.
 3. Test scores have not been improved since the federal Department of Education was created in 1979. Three levels of government is enough. Debts and unfunded liabilities of the federal government total \$330,000 per full-time worker. I would dismantle the DOE.
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Fern Brzezinski, Democrat

Background: I am a businesswoman, family woman, and public servant. I have been a business and political leader in Georgia for over 30 years, and I currently serve in the US House of Representatives. I am proud of my family, and I have 3 children and 4 grandchildren.

1. Our biggest challenge to our Free Trade Agreements is to make sure US Trade Representatives enforce the rights of US companies through the World Trade Organization.
 2. The first phase of the Medicare Modernization Act has gone very well with the implementation of the Discount Drug Cards for seniors. The main provisions of the Act do not take effect until 2006. Any modification should only be considered after implementation in 2006.
 3. As an original coauthor of NCLB, we are constantly monitoring its progress. We have already modified provision for testing of special education children and non-English speaking children. We must refine the "highly qualified teacher" provision, particularly in Special Education instruction.
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Corey Dery, Independent

Background: I have a BA in Political Science from Yale University, and a JD from Duke University School of Law. I have served as a law clerk for the Texas Court of Appeals.

1. Trade agreements must guarantee that the US can act to protect workers from rapid changes in the international marketplace. I will carefully evaluate all trade agreements to ensure that they adequately protect the internationally recognized rights of workers including the right to organize and collectively bargain.
 2. The Bush Administration's prescription drug plan must be changed so that our senior citizens can obtain prescription drugs at an affordable price. We should permit the government to negotiate with drug companies for fair prices for Medicare beneficiaries. We should also allow the re-importation of cheaper prescription drugs from other countries.
 3. High quality education for our children is critical to the future of our economy and will give us a skilled and competitive workforce. As a member of the House Education and Workforce Committee, I have fought to fully fund Head Start, No Child Left Behind, and other important education initiatives.
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CANDIDATES FOR US REPRESENTATIVE**Questions:**

1. Do you support the 9-11 Commission's recommendations regarding reorganization of Congressional Intelligence Committees? Please explain.
 2. What role should the federal government play in providing adequate health care for all Americans?
 3. How would you address the growing federal deficit?:
 4. What is your position on renewing and/or expanding the US Patriot Act?
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Pedro Brouse, Republican

Background: Education: B.A. Accounting, University of Texas, Austin; Experience: Auditor/accountant-Texas Department of Public Welfare (1973-1977), US Navy (1979-1983), Initial Rentokil USA, Inc (1983-2004)

1. Congress should play a greater role in oversight.
 2. I am very concerned about inadequate planning for seniors and veterans. Millions of Texas families are without health insurance...it is tragic that so many children are left out and so many Americans of the "greatest generation"—seniors and veterans, most of whom are over 80 years old—are left behind, when all of us in the younger generations owe the World War II generation so much.
 3. Inadequate management of the budget and the economy has created this problem for our future. I am proposing a more responsible foreign/defense policy to address budgeting...and new legislation to address large/multi-nationals that "outsource" and go "offshore"...our renewed emphasis on economic development and lowering the tax burden on Americans who have the least income will help.
 4. It should not have been renewed, but rather revised to accomplish cooperation within our US law enforcement system while respecting our cherished US Constitution and Bill of Rights...undermining our rights, liberties, and freedoms does not enhance security, it diminishes our great American democracy.
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Robert Mettler, Democrat

Background: Education: Graduate, Senior Executive Fellows Program, Harvard University. J.D., St. Mary's Law School. B.S., Trinity University; Experience: Chief, Terrorism and National Security, US Attorney's Office; Bush-Cheney transition team member; Attorney General Greg Abbott transition team member; Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Justice under John Cornyn; Trial attorney, Public Integrity Section, US DOJ

1. I support the Commission's recommendations on Congressional Intelligence Committees. Today, Congressional Intelligence gathering is spread over several committees making it more difficult for Congressional leaders to address the key issues that will define and determine our success in the war on terror. By consolidating the Committee structure, we help create one area where key security issues can be fully and completely examined.
2. The best possible health care system will be driven by consumer choice; where patients and physicians can make decisions about appropriate care. Our current system, both public (Medicare/Medicaid) and private (HMOs), limits choice and drives up costs and must be reformed. Additionally, we must pass legislation to end runaway litigation that forces doctors to practice "defensive medicine," increasing costs and hampering development of cutting edge procedures and medicines while depriving Americans of the best health care possible.
3. Federal spending is driven by government bureaucracies and wasteful programs that are systematically funded, year after year, through massive "omnibus" spending bills which virtually no one actually reads, especially those in Congress. I strongly favor a Federal Agency "Sunset" Law so that each bureaucracy and every single funded program must justify its existence. This system in Texas has saved millions of dollars, and it is time we made Washington more closely account for every expenditure.
4. No matter the threat, America must protect our civil liberties enshrined in the Bill of Rights. If we curtail civil liberties to fight terrorism, the terrorists win. However, our laws must keep up with the times, allowing us to investigate, disrupt and prosecute terrorists before they destroy critical

infrastructures. I support renewing the Patriot Act because it does just that: it takes existing legal principles and retrofits them to address the particular challenge of terrorism.

CANDIDATES FOR GOVERNOR

Questions:

- 1. What is your first priority as Governor?**
 - 2. How would your budget reflect support for environmental measures?**
 - 3. How would you improve and finance transportation?**
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Glen Travis Lozier, Republican

Biography: BA, Texas 1977; JD Georgetown 1980; As Attorney General, I have focused on the security of Texans, including domestic violence and protecting children. A former state and federal prosecutor, I have also served as Secretary of Public Safety.

1. As Governor, I want to create a Texas filled with opportunity. To do this, we must have better pay for better teachers so that our children get a better education. We must empower Texans to have more control over their healthcare options through health savings accounts and long term care incentives. And I will continue my efforts to combat domestic violence and gang activity.
 2. As Governor, I will pursue responsible environmental policies to benefit future generations by employing a stewardship based model for governing our natural resources and environmental assets, emphasizing collaboration and citizen involvement; recommitting our state to pollution prevention; and creating an environmental enforcement team to target those who harm the environment through purposeful or grossly negligent actions.
 3. As Governor, I will lead the way to innovative transportation solutions that empower Texans and work to reduce congestion by creating Regional Transportation Authorities to develop and implement solutions to regional transportation problems. I will use prioritize the use of technology on our roadways to make them less congested.
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Rick Stickles, Democrat

Biography: BS, Rice 1975; JD Texas 1980; My life has been shaped by my parents, family, children, faith, and my community. Working in my father's firm, as a civil rights lawyer, and later as Mayor and Lt. Governor taught me to value strong communities, equal opportunity, hard work, fiscal discipline and finding common ground.

1. Education. Our teachers deserve better pay, and our schools can be made better simply by an emphasis on education in our state budget. I will raise standards and expect nothing less than excellence in the classroom and in recruiting the nation's best teachers.
2. We owe it to our children to leave them this beautiful state as we found it. Budget reform will allow us to make historic investments in environmental programs. We should value clean air and a clean environment, and through budget reform, we can achieve these.
3. We need a new approach to reduce traffic. We cannot simply tax and pave our way out of the problem. I will work to fix the hole in the transportation bucket by vetoing any diversion of Transportation funds. I will create incentives to better connect land-use and transportation decisions to reduce traffic and sprawl.

Maurice Humble, Independent

Biography: I have a BA in Economics and a JD from Texas; I am currently serving my fourth term in the Texas State Senate, and I chair the Education and Health Committee. I value my family and my three daughters, and the community I live and work in.

1. My first priority as governor would be to implement a comprehensive solution to the state's transportation problems. The state also has several other important issues that need to be addressed—including education, tax reform, and health care.
 2. As a state senator, I have been a strong advocate for the environment. I have worked to provide \$15 million each year for air quality improvement. I will continue to fight for environmental improvement across the great state of Texas.
 3. We have a crisis on our hands that needs to be fixed—I am the only gubernatorial candidate willing to recognize this fact. We need a radical approach to fixing our transportation problems, including bolstering our transportation budget and tackling the issue at the state level, rather than with regional authorities.
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CANDIDATES FOR LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR**Questions:**

1. How do you see yourself functioning in the role of Lieutenant Governor?:
 2. How would you influence the dynamics of the legislative process?:
 3. What would you like the citizens of Texas to know about you?:
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Shane Terrio, Republican

Biography: Occupation: Consultant with Riggs, Counselman, Michaels, and Downes, a Houston-based insurance agency. Education: BA, Political Science, Texas, 1979. Experience: Texas State Senate 1996-present

1. The Lieutenant Governor's statutory responsibilities include presiding over the Senate of Texas and chairing a number of state commissions. With ten years experience in the State Senate, I can easily fulfill these responsibilities. I also look forward to working with others to take a leadership role in a number of state programs, including efforts to reform Medicaid and make quality health care available to every Texan.
2. During my ten years in the State Senate I have built strong personal relationships with other legislators from both political parties. I have been recognized as one of the most effective members, and I have proven my ability to work with people who hold competing views on important issues and fashion sound public policies for Texas. I will continue to do that as Lieutenant Governor.
3. I have the background, knowledge, and experience in state government that is necessary to help lead Texas. I have also articulated a clear vision for the future of Texas—a vision that creates a pro-business environment and a commitment to invest the resources that economic growth generates in the core responsibilities of state government including transportation,

education, public safety, healthcare, and responsible efforts to protect our important natural resources.

Cassie Principe, Democrat

Biography: I've served Texas for 12 years in the legislature (both in the Senate and the House). I have a BA in Political Science from the University of Texas. I am a small business owner, and I am proud of my two grown children and my one grandchild.

1. The Lieutenant Governor presides over the Texas Senate. I will work closely with the Senate to continue the progress and build on the fiscal responsibility of the previous administration.
 2. I believe that governing is not about finding fault but finding solutions. During my legislative career, I have proven the ability to reach out to those across the aisle to seek consensus on the important issues facing Texas, issues like education, transportation, the wise use of environmental resources, affordable health care insurance, and building a culture of freedom and personal responsibility.
 3. I believe government must treat all its citizens with fairness, dignity and respect. My philosophy on government is that a representative has an obligation to listen, to have an open door for all people-including those who agree with and those who do not. I have fought for twenty years in Texas to build better communities, make our highways safer, provide tax relief and broaden educational opportunity, I have consistently been a voice for those who cannot afford to hire lobbyists; I consider myself "the people's lobbyist". This is how I approached my service on behalf of Texans at the federal, state and local level. I am eager to bring this effective experience to the job of being your Lieutenant Governor.
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CANDIDATES FOR ATTORNEY GENERAL

Questions:

1. What do you want to accomplish as Attorney General?:
 2. What potential do you view in this office?:
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Tim Speight, Republican

Background: I am a retired U.S. Army officer, a former prosecutor, and a 14 year member of the Texas House of Representatives. I have earned degrees in Business, Management, Public Policy, and the Juris doctor.

1. I will crack down on violent sexual predators who target our children by enacting much tougher penalties for sex offenders, revamping the sex offender registry, requiring sex predators to register with State Police before being released from prison, monitoring sex offenders with GPS tracking systems, and other legal reforms. Other key priorities include strengthening efforts to protect Texans from identity theft, protecting Texas from terrorist threats, fighting drugs and gangs, implementing a family court system, protecting private property rights, and protecting Texas' pro-jobs environment by working to end lawsuit abuse and reducing regulations.
2. Our next Attorney General must have the experience to get the job done for our citizens from day one. As an army veteran who served in Europe during the Cold War, a local prosecutor who put murders, child molesters, and rapists behind bars, a proven legislator who played a key role

in abolishing parole for violent criminals and passing historic welfare reform, I bring the experience we need to this important office.

Rick Organ, Democrat

Background: BA, Texas, 1970; JD, Texas 1977; I have previously served the public as a District Attorney, and I have served in the Texas House of Representatives for 10 years.

1. In this post-9/11 world, I believe the next attorney general's top priority must be keeping Texas safe and secure. I will use the office to advocate for public safety and to pursue my security agenda. But the AG is also responsible for providing the best legal advice to the governor and legislature, and I believe that should be done promptly and without a partisan political agenda.

2. Texas needs an attorney general who is an advocate for all the people, not just the powerful. I believe the office can be a powerful force for reducing prescription drug prices, consumer fraud and identity theft. Also, I plan to work with the Department of Social Services to close the \$2 billion child support gap.

CANDIDATES FOR COMPTROLLER OF PUBLIC ACCOUNTS

Question:

1. What will you do to "provide a window into Texas government"?

Therese Gustin, Independent

Training and Experience: I have a BA in Accounting from the University of Houston, and I am a Certified Public Accountant. I have worked in the Texas Comptroller's office for the past 15 years, and I am confident I can run this office better as the Comptroller.

1. If elected, I will work to audit and ensure that every Texas agency is spending money like it should and is being held accountable. I would make sure that government regulations are based on common-sense and that every agency is abiding by them.

Greg Converse, Democrat

Training and Experience: I am a Certified Public Accountant, and I received a BA in Accounting from the University of Texas, and an MBA from Rice University. I have worked for the Texas Treasury Department for the past 10 years.

1. The Comptroller's office should shed light on all the other bureaucracy and government in Texas, ensuring that everything is working properly. If elected, I will help the Texas government to run a smaller, more efficient operation, ensuring that no taxpayer's money is misused.

CANDIDATES FOR COMMISSIONER OF GENERAL LAND OFFICE

Question:

1. What will you do as Commissioner to uphold the General Land Office's responsibilities to protect natural resources?

Sam Saddler, Republican

Training and Experience: BS in Geology from Texas A&M in 1981. I have worked for the Texas General Land Office for the past 20 years. I am proud to work for the oldest state agency in Texas, and I have experience with all the intricacies of this office, therefore I believe I am qualified to be Commissioner.

1. One of the General Land Office's duties is to protect the natural resources that belong to our state. I will work closely with the Office of the Railroad Commission to ensure that our state's oil and gas deposits are taken care of. I will ensure that Texas' interests are at heart in these decisions, not local business interests.

Elise Ellzey, Democrat

Training and Experience: I have a BS in Petroleum Engineering from Louisiana State University. I have worked for Exxon as an engineer, and I have worked for the Texas Railroad Commission.

1. I will ensure that our natural resources are protected and that all the proper proceeds are given to the Permanent School Fund, to ensure that our children get the monies they deserve from drilling rights in this state. I will ensure that all contracts are handled appropriately.

CANDIDATES FOR COMMISSIONER OF AGRICULTURE

Question:

1. What can be done to revitalize Texas' agriculture industry?

Polly Rylander, Republican

Training and Experience: I have served two terms in the Texas House of Representatives, and I have a BA from the University of Houston, and an MBA from the University of Texas. I grew up on a farm, and I have worked within the agriculture industry for the past 10 years.

1. Marketing for Texas' agriculture products tops my list of priorities as Commissioner of Agriculture. If elected, I plan to help revitalize our extensive agriculture industry by promoting our products nationwide.

Roberto Aron, Democrat

Training and Experience: BS, Texas A&M 1975; MBA University of Houston, 1981; I have worked closely with the agriculture industry for the past 20 years, including working in New York in the financial markets.

1. With the Texas Department of Agriculture backing our state's industry, there is no need to revitalize it. Texas has one of the strongest agriculture exports of any state, and, if elected, I plan to help continue making Texas' agriculture industry successful.

CANDIDATES FOR RAILROAD COMMISSIONER

Questions:

- 1. How would you prioritize the goals of the Railroad Commission's Strategic Plan for 2005-09 in light of limited funding?**
 - 2. How do you propose to meet the Railroad Commission's stated responsibility for supporting research, education, training, and marketing of clean-burning alternative fuels?**
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Jillian Balas, Republican

Training and Experience: Geologist, petroleum geophysicist and energy attorney. Texas Railroad Commissioner since February 2003. Elected Chairman by colleagues. Former petroleum geophysicist for Amoco Production. Energy attorney at the General Land Office. Assistant Abilene city attorney; political science and legal studies instructor, Hardin-Simmons University. Elected Abilene City Councilman and Taylor County Judge.

1. The top goal of the Texas Railroad Commission is to strengthen the safety and productivity of the Texas energy industry. In this era of record high oil prices, we must reduce dependence on foreign oil, increase responsible energy production, and promote conservation and renewable energies such as wind, fuel cell and biomass energy. Since joining the Railroad Commission, I have helped reduce the agency budget, while improving safety and environmental quality in the energy sector.

2. As Chairman of the Texas Energy Planning Council, I worked hard to promote alternative energy sources. I have visited Texas wind farms and emerging technologies which promise to reduce dependence on foreign energy and improve environmental quality. My goal is to ensure emerging energy technologies are conceived and built in Texas, taking advantage of our vast expertise and infrastructure. The Railroad Commission also uses grants funds to promote cleaner burning fuels, such as propane.

Zachary Minick, Democrat

Training and Experience: Born and reared in west Texas. Degrees from Baylor, Southwestern Seminary, Yale, and the University of Illinois. Experienced in personal business development. Experienced in formulation, support, and implementation of public policy at the local, state, and national level. Experience in the negotiation and management of mineral properties.

1. The Commission's Strategic Plan for 2005-09 indicates it "does not expect significant changes in its mission, strategies, or goals during the next five years." The development of our oil and gas resources is primary. Safety and environmental concerns are secondary. Scant attention is given to alternative energy. No attention is given to monitoring intrastate natural gas transmission. The public's growing concern about the relationship between energy development and the environment needs a higher priority.

2. There may be an inherent conflict of interest in making a Commission devoted to the development of oil, gas and coal resources responsible for developing “clean-burning alternative fuels.” A much broader range of knowledge, concern, and experience as well as a broader range of interests need to be involved. If this project is to remain the Commission’s responsibility, it would have to greatly expand its knowledge base and staff.

CANDIDATES FOR STATE SENATOR

Questions:

- 1. What solutions would you propose to balance the state budget?**
 - 2. Should state funding for Public Education be expanded?**
 - 3. How do you propose to fund healthcare for the large number of uninsured in Texas?**
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Ricardo Nigro, Republican

Background: Education: B.B.A. from University of Texas-Austin, J.D. from South Texas College of Law; Experience: State Senator 2003-present; Travis County Commissioner 1998-2001; former Chief Clerk, Senate Committee on County Affairs; former Chief Clerk, Senate Joint Interim Committee on Regional Issues; former member of the Texas Open Records Steering Committee; former General Counsel for Senator Jeff Wentworth, and the Senate Interim Committee on Public Information.

1. I am a fiscal conservative and believe general government should be smaller and smarter. Last session we had a \$10 billion budget deficit. The deficit was a spending problem, not a revenue problem. Citizens should not be asked to pay more in taxes due to the deficit. Government should do what families do: set priorities and live within a budget. That’s why I helped pass a balanced budget without a tax increase.
 2. Public Education is my top priority. State funding should be increased to improve educational standards and to abolish the need for the current Robin Hood school finance system. Even in the face of a \$10 billion budget deficit last session, I supported \$1.2 billion of additional investment in public schools. I also supported amendments to increase investment in textbooks, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten classes, and teacher retirement benefits.
 3. It is important that the legislature create opportunities for more affordable and flexible market alternatives for health care coverage. Last session we created “Consumer Choice Health Plans” that will allow many currently uninsured Texas men, women and children to get the health care coverage that they could not afford prior to the passage of this legislation. Under this law, many small businesses will be able to provide coverage to employees and their families.
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Wesley Steven Millette, Democrat

Background: Education: I have a Masters in Social Work and law degree from the University of Texas, and a B.A. in political science from Queens College. Experience: My experience includes seven terms in the Texas House, passing over 150 bills including the Landlord-Tenant Security Devices, Indoor Air Quality, Nursing Home Reform, and Mold Remediation Licensure acts. I served on the Public Health Committee, Human Services Committee, and Select Committee on Child Welfare and Foster.

1. To balance the budget, I'd close the loophole in the corporate franchise tax so limited liability partnerships pay their fair share; expand the sales tax base to include certain services; increase the cigarette tax, and/or amend the Texas Constitution to allow imposing a statewide property tax. I'd consider instituting a state income tax, if linked to restructuring our tax system so property and sales taxes are significantly reduced.

2. Yes. The state's contribution to public education has fallen below 40%, resulting in an increased reliance on local property taxes. This situation led Judge Dietz to rule that our system doesn't provide an "adequate" education, since almost half our school children under-perform. The ruling has been interpreted to mean that the state must come up with the substantial new money over and above the funds needed to offset a reduction in property taxes.

3. To fund health care for the large number of uninsured in Texas, I'd restore the cuts to the Children's Health Insurance Program and Medicaid, thus maximizing the receipt of federal matching funds. I'd institute a one dollar increase in the cigarette tax and dedicate the revenues to health services. I'd close the loophole in the corporate franchise tax so limited liability partnerships pay their fair share and dedicate a portion of the revenues to health care.

CANDIDATES FOR STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Questions:

- 1. Do you believe that changes or improvement should be made in the Texas public health care system?**
 - 2. Do you believe that additional revenue sources are needed to meet the needs of Texas residents? If so, please identify possible sources.**
 - 3. Given Texas' low national rating on education performance, what should be done to raise our standing?**
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Petra Bencomo, Republican

Qualifications: I received my B.A. from the University of Houston and J.D. from the University of Texas. I am an attorney at ConocoPhillips. I have worked three continuous legislative sessions (1998-2004). I have also served as Rep. Farrar's Chief of Staff and Rep. Moreno's campaign manager in the 2000 Democratic Primary.

1. We need increased funding for clinics that provide preventive healthcare. This would help relieve the overcrowding in emergency rooms and prevent hospital stays. We also need to increase funding for children's healthcare programs, such as CHIP. Additionally, the state should use its purchasing power to reduce prescription costs.

2. Texas needs a fair, broad based business tax that reflects modern economy. We need to close the business tax loopholes and ensure that all companies pay equally. Additional revenue sources should not target those least able to pay, such as a regressive sales tax. We need a fair and equitable tax revenue system.

3. Our Legislature needs to answer the funding needs highlighted by Judge Dietz. We need more funding for our schools to ensure that our students have the resources they need to learn and teachers have the resources they need to teach. We also need a teacher pay raise in order to recruit and retain qualified teachers.

Susanne Rael, Democrat

Qualifications: I will use my 35 years of legal, legislative and judicial experienced leadership and proven service as a former judge for city of Houston-Harris County, attorney, certified mediator and arbitrator, wife and mother, to make our schools better, our neighborhoods safer and improve our economy for families.

1. Every system should be reviewed constantly to maximize the resources being used to see how and where more efficiency for the delivery of services can be accomplished. I will continue to work with the legislature to ensure Texas' public health care system provides the care and services required by all Texans while recognizing the financial requirements of such a system.
 2. My commitment is to the families of this District; to ensure everyone has an opportunity to receive a quality education, affordable healthcare, and to work to the fulfillment of the American Dream. As your State Representative, I will continue to seek the most effective and efficient manner to make these opportunities available to the families of this District.
 3. In the next legislative session, I will continue to use my years of legislative experience to ensure all children have the resources necessary to receive a quality education at the highest level and our school teachers are paid a reasonable salary for the hard work. I will work with other legislators to ensure this effort is achieved.
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CANDIDATES FOR MEMBER, STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION,
DISTRICT 2

Questions:

1. How can schools effectively recruit and retain quality teachers?
 2. What can be done about schools that have been rated "Academically Unacceptable"?
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Peter Varga, Republican

Background: As a self-employed mother of three, wife of a firefighter and Iraqi Freedom veteran, I am presently a UH Consumer Science/Teacher Certification applicant after earning an Associates Degree at HCCS. My 20 years of community service established the foundation for my commitment to a new direction for our schools.

1. Energetic recruitment and retention efforts should include an accelerated hiring timeline, active marketing campaigns, college and university partnerships, new teacher mentorship programs, professional development on classroom management, classroom routines and procedures, multicultural education, and lesson planning, paid summer orientations, maintain reduced classroom size, enforcement of disciplinary policies, placement of trained principals with management skills that promote teacher retention.
2. Student learning turns around all school ratings. Children's learning is promoted through the learning style of each child. A high teacher-student interaction can raise the level of learning. One cohesive team of the faculty, staff and principal as the instructional leader and manager who is supported by strong parental and community groups can achieve a clearly defined shared vision of achievement.

Mark Baber, Democrat

Background: Director, Mayor's Citizens' Assistance Office (since 5/2000), Houston Parks and Recreation (1992-2000), Houston Community College (1987-1992); Precinct 105 Chairman, (since 1996), past president – Hawthorne Civic Club, Honors Diploma- Jeff Davis High School, A.A. Government – HCC, B.A. Political Science – University of Houston. Married seventeen years, father of three daughters.

1. Teachers are our most precious resource, so we must treat them as professionals and pay them like we are serious about quality education for our kids. We must both maintain standards and allow flexibility in teaching. We must let committed teachers teach what they know. We must provide quality environments where teachers want to teach and students want to study.

2. Schools with extraordinary challenges require extraordinary resources and commitment. We must provide special incentives to attract the most qualified and talented educators and to provide the best equipment and buildings. The community's stakeholders must also be actively engaged in helping to do their part. Parents, local community and business leaders, all of us, can and must turn our schools around.

CANDIDATES FOR PRESIDING JUDGE,
TEXAS SUPREME COURT, PLACE 3

Questions:

- 1. What do you think the community can do to assist the judiciary in making decisions that protect women, their children and the community against family violence?**
 - 2. The U.S. Supreme Court has decided to hear a Minnesota dispute over whether judicial candidates can discuss their positions on issues that might come before their courts. Would you welcome a ruling that allowed you to freely comment on these issues?**
 - 3. How could we strengthen communications with the legal system when family is dealing with multiple courts and proceedings?**
-

Tim Grasty, Democrat

Training and Experience: I have practiced trial law since 1981. I have never been sanctioned. I represent individuals, businesses, hospitals and educational institutions. I am active in delivering legal services to the poor. I am a mediator. I serve on a hospital board and volunteer through church, schools, and youth organizations.

1. Personal involvement with, and financial support of, prevention programs, assistance efforts and shelters is critical. Many such entities work with the courts. Citizens must press the legislature for appropriate action to address these problems. The court benefits when citizens willingly serve as jurors. The courts are open, be there.

2. No. Our government depends on objective, impartial and constitutionally constrained judges. Such a decision could overly politicize an already challenging selection process. Judges must decide each case on the facts and applicable law. The expression of opinions in the political context could suggest a predisposition or bias about certain cases.

3. The current presiding court system could be changed to allow a single court to handle a matter from filing to final disposition. Regardless, each file should be accurately documented as to activity and action. The courts provide forms which permit contemporaneous documentation. Judges should require attorneys to promptly complete filings.

CANDIDATES FOR Presiding Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 2

Questions:

- 1. Do you believe the composition of juries adequately and fairly reflects society at large? Why or why not?**
 - 2. What changes, if any would you support to assure that the rights of the legally indigent are adequately protected under current law and practice, particularly in death penalty cases?**
 - 3. While serving on the bench, do you believe you have a role in bringing important legal or judicial issues before the public or the legislature? Why or why not?**
-

Dan Plouffe, Republican

Qualifications: Senior Judge, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, 11 year member Associate Justice, Second Court of Appeals, 4 year member Board Certified in Criminal Law, Texas Board of Legal Specialization, Masters Degree-Judicial Process, University of Virginia School of Law Course Director- 2003 Advanced Criminal Law Seminar, State Bar of Texas

1. Since I have sat on the appellate bench for the past 16 years, I unfortunately have not had the experience to observe the jury selection process at the trial level. I do feel based upon the records on appeal involving jury selection that the trial courts are diligently enforcing the constitutional protections allotted to protect jurors.
 2. In the last three sessions of the Texas Legislature, we have seen the enactment of the Texas Fair Defense Act and an amendment to the Texas Criminal Habeas Corpus Act to include Section 11.01, which covers representation of defendants in death penalty cases. I believe that both of these acts have gone a long way toward ensuring that indigent defendants are fairly and adequately represented, both at trial and on appeal.
 3. Because the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals is in the best position to observe what are the current trends and issues affecting the criminal law, I feel that it is incumbent upon us to inform the legislature and the public of these matters and to hopefully help them fashion an adequate response.
-

Derrick Melgar, Democrat

Qualifications: I have practiced law for more than 20 years and have an extensive background in both civil and criminal trial work. As a part of my practice I have successfully argued cases before both The Supreme Court and The United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

1. Our right to a jury trial provides the most important protection we have against the abuse of power by the state. If the composition of the jury does not fairly reflect society, much of that protection is lost. Having picked many juries, I know that low income and minority Texans are not adequately represented in the jury pool. Remedying that requires both outreach to these communities and fair compensation for jury service.

2. Our state's failure to provide adequate representation to indigent defendants, particularly those in death penalty cases, is a national embarrassment. A statewide public defender's office should be established with adequate funding and competent attorneys to handle these cases. In addition Appellate Courts must be more aggressive in reviewing these cases to assure the defendant received adequate representation at trial.

3. While it is not a judge's job to legislate, they are in a unique position to recognize and advise on important legal and judicial issues facing the state. I would not hesitate to offer that expertise when appropriate and ethical.

CANDIDATES FOR DISTRICT ATTORNEY

Question:

1. What role should the District Attorney's office play in enforcing laws dealing with white-collar crime?

Corey Behnke, Republican

Training and Experience: District Attorney-present; Criminal District Judge 12 years; Assistant District Attorney 8 years; Private Practice 4 years; Board Certified Criminal Law; Co-chair Governor's Anti-Crime Commission; Member Texas Crime Victims Institute Advisory Council; National Council on Violence Against Women; Governor's Advisory Board on Juvenile Justice; University of Texas Law School.

1. I have prioritized white-collar crime prosecution. As law-enforcement's leader in pursuing this crime, my DA investigators and attorneys lead investigations & prosecutions. My efforts have resulted in millions being returned to victims and elderly individuals swindled of retirement money or scammed through home improvement and other frauds.

Jennifer A. Lundeed, Democrat

Training and Experience: BA, Texas, 1971. JD, Texas 1981. I have 20 years experience in criminal law. I am compassionate, rational and slow to anger. I will look at the big picture in making sure that justice is firm, fair, and serves the long-term interests of our community.

1. This office has a responsibility to protect the public from fraud whether by individuals, business or in cases involving public agencies. The DA has to enforce the law in a dignified manner. The DA must never serve the baser instincts of humanity such as envy, jealousy, or revenge.

CANDIDATES FOR COUNTY TREASURER

Question:

1. What do you hope to accomplish if elected to this office?

Dean Caffee, Republican

Training and Experience: BA in Accounting, Texas 1983. I have worked as a Certified Public Account in private practice for the past 18 years.

1. I hope to establish a transparent, smoothly run office. I will efficiently manage the staff of this office and ensure that the county's assets are handled properly and the county's budget is distributed as ordered.

Gordon Kallas, Democrat

Training and Experience: I am a Certified Public Account, and I hold certification as an elections administrator. I earned a BA in Accounting from the University of Oklahoma in 1979, and I have worked as a consultant for the local Area Development Partnership.

1. If elected, I hope to bring efficient management and vigor to make sure our county's monies are handled properly. With my experience, I will run a transparent and smooth county treasury office.

CANDIDATES FOR SHERIFF

Questions:

- 1. What is the impact of Homeland Security requirements on the Sheriff's Office?**
 - 2. What would you do to reduce juvenile crime in this County?**
 - 3. What would you do to improve relations between the Sheriff's office and the community?**
-

Stanley Saari, Republican

Background: Education: BA in Social Work; Corrections Certificate; FBI, Secret Service Protection, and UT West Point Academies; Certified Public Manager; Police Senior Management Institute; 3809 hours CE; Experience: Manage \$11 million budget and 211 employees at Austin Police Department; attained rank of Commander; 15 of 25 years in management; commanded Southwest & Southeast regions, SWAT Team, Investigations; managed Gang Suppression Unit, Homicide, Child Abuse, Sex Crimes, Robbery. Organized training conferences on gangs, criminal investigations and financial crimes.

1. Increased training and equipment for deputies who respond to WMD calls. Added security on high-risk terrorist targets. Increased calls for service on suspicious person's substance calls. Establishing an Intelligence Unit that provides potential threats. Screening information before public release to thwart false alarms. Educate the public on threats and providing instruction on how they can safeguard themselves against varied threats.

2. Work with private and public entities to expand programs such as Big Brothers/Big Sisters, mentoring, sports, scouting, and career development. Extra curricular activities keep at-risk kids and latch-key kids occupied and out of trouble. Expand the Juvenile First Offender Program to include other delinquent conduct cases. Use Juvenile Boot Camp for recidivists focusing on community service work. I would request additional bed space at Texas Youth Commission for serious habitual offenders.

3. Lead by example. Protecting and serving the community is a high calling and responsibility. Sheriff's deputies would interact with the community accordingly. Also, we would be more responsive to the community's needs. WE would determine what and where the needs are by reviewing citizen responses, internal affairs cases, crime statistics and data on hotspots of crime. We would also empanel a group of community representatives and sheriff's personnel to pinpoint additional issues and solutions.

Jason Valle, Democrat

Background: Education: BA in Criminal Justice, Southwest Texas State University, 1982
Graduate of Governor's Executive Development Program, University of Texas LBJ School of Public Affairs; Experience: Chief of Law Enforcement for Texas Alcohol Beverage Commission 1994-2004; 300 employees, 55 offices, budget of \$15 million; National trainer for Department of Justice; Sheriff's Office (1985-1994) Corrections Officer, Mounted Patrol, DARE Officer, Deputy Sheriff Texas Department of Corrections (1985) Corrections Officer

1. Protecting our community and safeguarding the peace and welfare of all our citizens is a critical role of this office. We will do everything that we can to insure that our residents are informed, educated and prepared to respond to acts of bioterrorism and other threats. We will work tirelessly to partner with other local, regional and statewide groups to address preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

2. I believe that juvenile crime is something that we as a community must address. The sheriff's office, as an authority figure, must work to build a relationship with our youth. However, I believe everyone should be held accountable, without being condescending. When it comes to reducing juvenile crime, an ounce of prevention truly is worth a pound of cure. It is a countywide issue and will require countywide coordination and response.

3. The sheriff's office must begin to build relationships with the people whom we serve. Community policing refers to much more than the assignment of an officer to a certain community. We must knock down the walls of separation and build relationships on trust and respect with accountability and responsibility as our commitment to all we serve.

CANDIDATES FOR COUNTY TAX ASSESSOR

Questions:

1. What are the two biggest challenges facing the Tax Assessor-Collector office and how would you address them?

2. How can this office increase the number of registered voters in this County?

Howard Grady, Republican

Background: Education: B.A. degree, major-Economics, Texas Lutheran University; M.B.A. degree, Texas State University; Maintains certification as a Certified Internal Auditor; Experience: Deputy Clerk, Guadalupe County Clerk's Office; Caseworker/Eligibility specialist, Texas Department of Human Services; Assistant State Auditor, Texas State Auditor's Office; Field Monitor/Auditor, Contract Monitoring Department, Texas Workforce Commission; Self-employed auditor

1. The primary duty of the County Tax Collector is presenting accurate tax statements that are stated according to the properly assessed value of the property and the legal requirements. The County Tax Collector must ensure that voter rolls are accurate to ensure that everyone that is eligible to vote gets one voter's registration record. The County Tax Collector must confirm that all property statements and voting records are correct prior to mail-outs and issuance.

2. The office can send voter registration information in the mail-outs and the staff can routinely ask visitors to the tax offices if they are registered and would like to register. The County Tax Office can place voter registration materials at other county offices and various public places.

Randy H. Clemons, Democrat

Background: Education: B.A. degree in English, M.A. in Communications, Registered Texas Assessor-Collector (RTA). Certified by Texas Board of Tax Professional Examiners; Experience: Seventeen years' successful experience managing Tax Office operations, including property tax collections, current and delinquent; vehicle registration and titles; voter registration. Thirty-two years public service experience in federal, state, and local government.

1. a. Provide citizens with consistently superior service, (1) by decreasing their wait-time; (2) making services available at more convenient locations; (3) offering technological solutions to service delivery. Currently implementing all of these. B. reduce operating costs in the tax office (1) by using technology to our best advantage, (2) multi-tasking existing staff to reduce the need for more employees, (3) by creating and maintaining public/private partnerships for efficient, cost-effective service delivery.

2. By utilizing more than 2,500 Volunteer Deputy Registrars to register new voters. By focusing on voter registration year round, not just before major elections. By educating the public about voting, and using electronic media to help disseminate information. By raising awareness among younger voters. Travis County has 558,000 registered voters, which represents 90% of the population.

CANDIDATES FOR JUSTICE OF THE PEACE**Question:**

1. In light of the recent US Supreme Court opinion recognizing the free speech rights of judicial candidates, what public policy issues, if any, will you raise in your judicial race?

Deborah Kamps, Republican

Training and Experience: I have worked for the Administrative Hearings Office for 10 years. My dedication, work ethic, and commitment to excellence in this office have qualified me for this position.

1. If elected, I will work closely with local schools in developing a pathway for truancy. This pathway will entail counseling and community service involvement. The old saying that "it takes a community to raise a child" can still be utilized today. This will help keep our community and our children successful.

Clyde Gayton Jr., Democrat

Training and Experience: BA, Texas 1987. I have worked as a clerk for the Administrative Hearings Office for the past 7 years. I have a wealth of knowledge regarding the intricacies of this office, and my dedication qualifies me for this office.

1. I plan to work closely with the community and other courts to help provide troubled youth a second chance in life. I would like to help establish extensive counseling services for youth entangled in drugs, and help them get back on a path to a successful life.

CANDIDATES FOR COUNTY JUDGE**Questions:**

- 1. What would you do to ensure that indigent civil and criminal defendants have competent representation?**
 - 2. What can be done to alleviate the problem of overcrowded dockets in the courts?**
 - 3. Should judges recuse themselves from cases involving those who have contributed to their campaigns?**
-

Dan Atchley, Republican

Background: Education: I graduated from the University of Texas and the University of Houston Law School, where I was on the staff of the Houston Law Review. Experience: I have been licensed from 27 years, and am board-certified in administrative law. I have served as Judge of the 353rd District Court since 1993, and was a trial attorney for 14 years prior to my election. I have experience in the range of cases heard by this court.

1. The district judges have adopted a plan for representation of indigents in the criminal and juvenile system to insure that constitutional rights are protected. Appointed attorneys are required to complete continuing education and skilled attorneys are matched to the severity of the offense charged. The performance of the attorneys and aspects of the program are routinely evaluated. The plan contemplates that counsel appointed will meet with clients within 24 hours of incarceration.

2. Despite our explosive population growth, we have not had a new civil court since 1983, and the legislature approved one court last session. The county commissioners have supported hiring associate judges, who provide assistance with our family and juvenile dockets. We have one judge who hears many discovery matters to insure speed and consistency in those matters. Our central docket and ADR are major factors in helping us to reach cases timely for trial.

3. No. State and federal law are unanimous that campaign contributions alone do not require recusal. Lawyers on both sides of the docket contribute and are interested in fair judges. The state supreme court has long recognized the criticisms lodged at judicial campaign financing and suggested on several occasions that the legislature make changes to the system of judicial selection and campaign financing, but the legislature has not seen fit to adopt those recommendations.

Lewis Shine, Democrat

Background: Education: UT Austin, BA, School of Social and behavioral Sciences, 1977 TSU, Thurgood Marshall School of Law, 1983; Experience: 12 Years 10 Months Judicial Experience, Associate District Court Judge, Third Administrative Judicial Region (central Texas). Presided over 100,000 family law cases including contempt of court/jail cases. 5 years 6 months Attorney, Private Practice with criminal defense emphasis. 2 years Hearings Examiner, Parole Revocation, Texas Youth Commission.

1. Evaluate defense Attorneys according to the Fair Defense Act. Should an Attorney not meet the set standard, a specific plan for continuing legal education can be required before placing the Attorney on the appointment for indigent defendants list. Formal complaints to the State Bar of Texas Grievance Process may be necessary.

2. Judges can require Defense Attorneys to appear in Court and set expectations that Defense Attorneys obtain discovery about the case prior to their client's day in court. The Court can set several of the Defense Attorney's clients' cases on a specific day. In civil cases, the Court can require Attorneys to talk on the telephone or by personal meeting prior to setting the case for trial.

3. Judge's rules for recusal are currently in place and the State Commission on Judicial Conduct is active in determining any violations in this area. I am in favor of the rules for recusal. Currently Judges seek lawyers' campaign contributions by necessity and any financial relief that would change this action would be welcomed by any judge.
