

DEMOCRACY

Texas Democrats believe that a healthy democracy is based on free, fair, and transparent elections; that our constitutional right to vote should be protected at all costs by elected officials who exhibit ethical public service.

Voting Rights & Fair Elections

We must adopt policies to eliminate the barriers to voting and encourage full participation in elections. As Texas Democrats, we support:

- repeal of the highly restrictive Texas photo Voter ID law;
- automatic voter registration upon age 17 years and 9 months for all persons who meet Texas voter registration requirements;
- same day voter registration;
- online voter registration;
- voter outreach and education efforts, especially for youth and underserved communities;
- existing voter protection policies under the federal Voting Rights Act and the Texas Voting Rights Act, and restoration of the federal preclearance policies in the Voting Rights Act that were overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court;
- protect extended early voting periods;
- instituting no excuses vote by mail for all elections, federal state and local;
- public ownership of all election processes, software and equipment;
- the creation of a nonpartisan redistricting commission to end gerrymandering in our redistricting process;
- robust auditing procedures that include absentee ballots; and
- a constitutional amendment to eliminate the electoral college and award the presidency to the winner of the nationwide popular vote, and failing that, urge all states to join the National Popular Vote Interstate Compact, so that candidates must campaign everywhere and not just in swing states.

Campaign Finance Reform

Texas Democrats believe money should not determine who wins and loses elections. Campaign spending limits and keeping corporate money out of politics is essential to a healthy, responsive democratic system that can be trusted by voters. We support:

- overturning, by Constitutional Amendment if necessary, the decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Elections Commission* that allows corporations to give unlimited amounts of money to political campaigns, and to clarify that corporations are not persons and constitutional rights are for natural persons only, and to end the doctrine that money is speech;
- legislation to move towards public campaign and election financing;
- full disclosure of funding sources for political advertisements, including the largest major funders of all political television, radio, print, slate mailer, and online advertising for ballot measures, independent expenditures, and issue advocacy; and
- the reinstatement of the federal Public Service and Equal Time requirements, so that companies given monopoly use of public television and radio frequencies cannot limit access to only candidates that can afford the high costs of advertising.

Ethics

In a healthy democracy, officeholders must adhere to the highest ethical standards and be accountable to taxpayers by avoiding real or perceived conflicts of interest. No elected official is above the law. We believe that:

- state employees should be free to do their job free of political considerations and oversight with only the public good in mind;
- Texas officials should not be exploiting public funds to pay for personal or political activities;
- corporations should not be writing legislation as proxy to legislators, as occurs, for example, with the American Legislative Exchange Council;
- we should end the double-dipping of retirement for elected officials;
- the abuse of personal leave policies and bonuses by state officials should be eliminated; and
- to often, political considerations outweigh sound policy, violating ethical standards in contracting and the use of public funds.