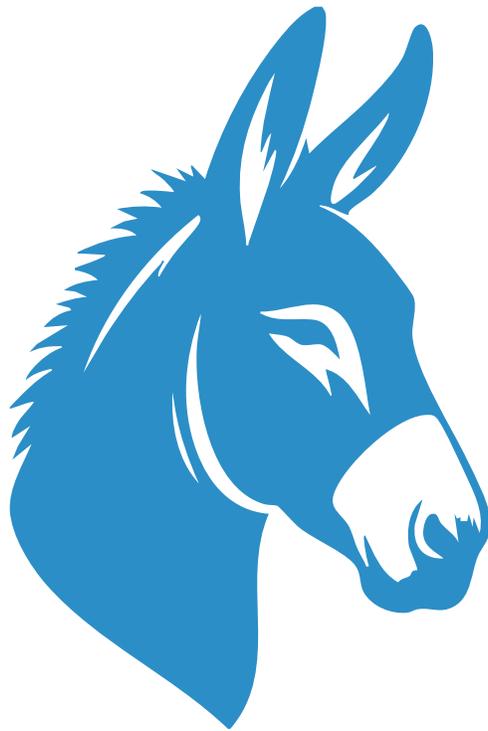


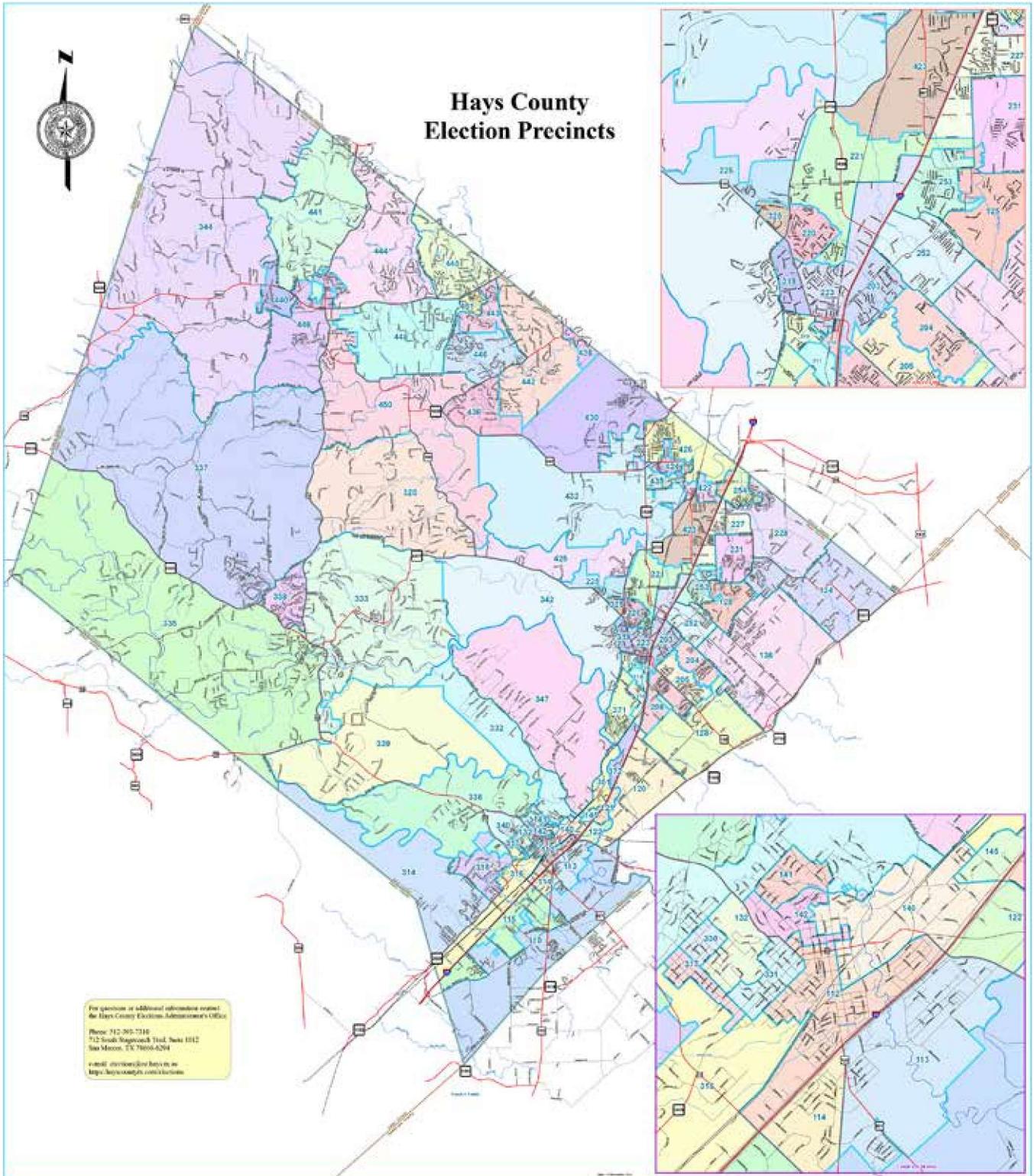
DEMOCRATIC DEEP DIVE

2026 Primary Candidate Forum
Hays County



Sunday, February 1, 2026

Wimberley Community Center | 14068 RR 12 | 1:15–5:30



Follow this QR code to the full-size map that can be viewed in detail.

DEMOCRATIC DEEP DIVE

2026 Primary Candidate Forum

Sunday, February 1, 2026 | Wimberley Community Center

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Andrew Weber, Moderator

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Willie Tenorio

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County Judge: Ruben Becerra (I), Michelle Cohen, and Joel Martin

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U.S. Representative, District 27: "Stock" Castro-Mendoza, Tanya Lloyd, and Wayne Raasch

CLOSING REMARKS

Jeff Rasco, Emcee



**SUPPORT THE
FORUM**

Donate here:



HILL COUNTRY HONEYS PERFORM

LYRICS to “TURNING BLUE”

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VERSE 1

I set down my phone
Turned off the TV
I had to do something
To help my poor country

VERSE 2

So I picked up my guitar
And and wrote this little song
I truly believe we can fix
the things gone wrong

CHORUS

Sun always shines
After a storm
Sewing on patches
Where the flag’s been torn

I’m doing my part
You can do yours too
Get out and vote
So we can turn this country blue

VERSE 3

Let’s all write some letters
Let your voice be heard
We can make things better
Go out and spread the word

VERSE 4

Climb up on a mountain
And shout it out real loud
Time for a change
We can make our country proud

CHORUS

Sun always shines
After a storm
Sewing on patches
Where the flag’s been torn

I’m doing my part
You can do yours too
Get out and vote
So we can turn this country blue
Get out and vote
So we can turn this country blue



WELCOME and INTRODUCTION OF MODERATORS

Jeff Rasco, Emcee



Jeff Rasco and his family have been residents of Woodcreek for nearly 30 years. As Founder and CEO of Attendee Management, Inc. (AMi), a local family-owned business providing technology services for the global meetings and events industry, he led a team of more than a dozen staff until (mostly) retiring in July 2020. He was elected to the Woodcreek City Council in November 2020, where he had also served from 2006-11 as Council Member and Mayor Pro Tem. In 2021 he was elected Mayor of Woodcreek, where he proudly served until November 2025.

Rebecca Minnick, Moderator



A lifelong Democrat, Rebecca Minnick has served as Chair of the Wimberley Democrats since February 2025. She has served on the Wimberley City Council since 2019 and has been elected by her fellow council members as Mayor Pro Tem in all four terms. In her elected position, Rebecca has collaborated with citizens, non-profits, community organizations, businesses and county, state and federal agencies to improve the city's systems and services. She is a fellow of the Texas Municipal League Leadership Academy, a member of the Hill Country Alliance 2025 Leadership Cohort and a member of Hays County's Mental Health Coordinating Committee.

Andrew Weber, Moderator



Andrew Weber recently succeeded renowned environmental attorney Jim Blackburn as President of TESSPA. He also recently semi-retired from practicing law. A former Texas First Assistant Attorney General to Attorney General Greg Abbott in the mid-90s, Andrew was most recently a partner at Kelly Hart & Hallman LLP, where he was the partner in charge of the Austin office and started the firm's Public Law practice, assisting all other practice groups whose clients need help navigating the intersection of law, policy and politics at the Legislature and before State agencies. Andrew and his wife Lin moved to Wimberley 18 years ago. They have two daughters and three exceptional grandkids.

Alex Villalobos, Moderator



Public service is about responsibility, fairness, and showing up when it matters. I'm a Texas State University graduate with degrees in Criminal Justice and Public Administration, and a Senior Fellow at the University of Michigan—Ann Arbor. I've served as a Kyle City Council Member, Hays County Chief of Staff, and Emergency Management Coordinator, helping lead our community through crises with transparency and accountability. Today, I serve on the City of Kyle Charter Review Committee and as President of the Hays County Tejano Democrats, committed to practical solutions, public safety, and government that works for everyone.

HAYS COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIR

Willie Tenorio



Willie Tenorio, Jr. is a lifelong volunteer for the Democratic Party. He has served as a precinct chair, and as the Chair of the Hays County Tejano Democrats. He was a Hays CISD Trustee for twelve years, which included two years as Board President and one year as Vice President. He is also the former President of the Mexican American School Board Association, the largest Hispanic School Board group in the United States.

HAYS COUNTY OFFICES

COUNTY COURTS-AT-LAW I

The Hays County Courts at Law have jurisdiction over all class A and B misdemeanor criminal cases, juvenile matters, and civil cases filed in the County Courts. These Courts also have jurisdiction in probate, guardianship matters, and mental commitments. The Hays County Courts at Law also hear traffic and other appeals from Justice and Municipal Courts.

Source: <https://www.hayscountytexas.gov/hays-county-court-at-law>

Jimmy Alan Hall (I)



COUNTY TREASURER

The elected Hays County Treasurer acts as the chief liaison between the County and depository banks, and works closely with the Hays County Auditor's Office to maintain an accountable checks and balances system. The Treasurer is designated as the County's investment officer and is required to submit regular reports on County finance to the Commissioners Court.

Source: <https://www.hayscountytexas.gov/treasurer>

Daphne Tenorio (I)



COUNTY COURTS-AT-LAW 2

The Hays County Courts at Law have jurisdiction over all class A and B misdemeanor criminal cases, juvenile matters, and civil cases filed in the County Courts. These Courts also have jurisdiction in probate, guardianship matters, and mental commitments. The Hays County Courts at Law also hear traffic and other appeals from Justice and Municipal Courts.

Source: <https://www.hayscountytexas.gov/hays-county-court-at-law>

David Friesenhahn



I've been a criminal trial lawyer for over 35 years. I've been a prosecutor, as well as a criminal defense lawyer. I'm board certified as a specialist in criminal law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization.

I received a B.A. in American Studies from Rice University, and a law degree from the University of Texas at Austin. I am a former Hays County Democratic Party Precinct Chair.



My wife, Tara, and I have been together as a couple for over 34 years. We have lived in San Marcos for over 13 years. We have a 15 year-old daughter.

Chris Johnson (I)



Growing up in a military family, I lived across the U.S. and Europe before earning a B.A. in History from the University of Dallas. After early work in publishing, I graduated from South Texas College of Law and began my career as a prosecutor, later practicing civil law in Austin. I spent twelve years prosecuting felony, misdemeanor, and juvenile cases in Hays County before becoming Judge of County Court at Law #2, where I also preside over Veterans Court and Juvenile Court. My greatest pride is my family—my wife, Shelley, and our three sons.



Thomas Just



Thomas Just has dedicated his life to serving his country, community, and the courts. A U.S. Air Force veteran and former senior intelligence analyst, he continued that mission as a trial lawyer, defending veterans, families, and working people in criminal and civil courts. Thomas served as the 1st Vice Chair of the HCDP and removed an ineffective district clerk. Thomas represents a new generation of leadership ready to help Hays County adapt to life as a growing and dynamic community. He will implement proven solutions to address issues intensified by rapid growth, ensuring justice remains fair, efficient, and compassionate.



DISTRICT 428 JUDGE

District courts in Texas are trial courts where a judge or jury decides a criminal or civil matter. The district courts are part of the judiciary of Texas, responsible for administering justice throughout the state. Each district court is presided over by an elected or appointed judge, who must be a licensed and experienced lawyer.

Source: <https://texapedia.info/district-courts/>

Cassie Benoist-Templeton



Cassie is an experienced attorney who has dedicated her career to public service and the pursuit of justice. For the last 12 years she has served as a felony prosecutor handling serious and complex cases, including crimes against women and children. Through her work, Cassie has seen firsthand the profound impact the justice system has on individuals and families. She is committed to ensuring that everyone who comes into contact with the 428th District Court is treated with fairness, dignity, and respect, and that the court upholds accountability while serving Hays County.

Bill Henry



I have spent my entire career practicing law in Hays County. In 2005, I advocated for the creation of the 428th District Court and was subsequently appointed as judge. In 17 years on the bench, I presided over capital murder, sexual assault, and drug cases on the criminal docket; complex lawsuits on the civil docket; and family law appeals. I initiated Hays County's first specialty drug court and studied to acquire board certification in family law and civil law. Recognizing that judicial resources were being misallocated at the expense of our citizens, I stood up to opposition and helped our county gain additional courts. I am fully committed to Hays County and to fairly applying the law.

Joe Pool (I)



I am Hays County District Judge Joe Pool. I was born in 1955 in Dallas. My Father, Joe Pool Sr., served Texas as its Congressman-At-Large. He died in office of a heart attack in 1968. Five months later my Mother died in a fire.

I attended St. Stephens boarding school in Austn. I graduated from UT with a BA in Government in 1977. I graduated from UT Law School in 1980.

Leslie and I moved to Hays County in 1994, where we raised 2 boys. After practicing civil and criminal law for 30 years, in 2022 I ran for District Judge and won.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 1, PLACE 2

The Justice of the Peace is the legal jurisdiction closest to the average citizen. Section 19 of Article 5 of the Texas Constitution provides that: Justice of the Peace Courts have original jurisdiction in criminal matters of misdemeanor cases punishable by fine only and such other jurisdiction as may be provided by law.

Source: <https://www.hayscountytexas.gov/justice-of-the-peace>

Elizabeth Trevino Amaya

Not in attendance.

Maggie Moreno (I)



I have served as Justice of the Peace for nearly a decade, presiding over criminal, civil, jury, and truancy cases. I have also conducted hundreds of death investigations as a part of job responsibilities as JP. I have worked collaboratively to create and implement a juvenile diversion program within the Justice Courts and helped establish a truancy case manager to strengthen coordination between the courts and schools. Beyond the courtroom, I have served on numerous nonprofit boards to address the same challenges I see in the justice system, focusing on prevention and community-based solutions. My experience brings proven leadership, practical solutions, and steady judgement to the bench.

JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 2, PLACE 1

Beth Smith (I)



I was elected to my first term in office in 1999 to the Justice Court, Precinct 2, place 1. I'm now serving my 7th term.

I attended ACC and Southwest Texas State University, studying Criminal Justice as my major. I was elected as the First Mayor of Mountain City in 1984 and served voluntarily in that capacity for 14 yrs, so have basically been a Public Servant for 40 years. I have continued my education in Justice with over 1500 hours of continuing education as the JOP and the Presiding Municipal Judge in Buda. I have appropriate skills for decision making and "people and communication" skills necessary to be an effective JOP.

CHIEF JUSTICE 3RD COURT OF APPEALS

Texas Courts of Appeals serve as the intermediate appellate courts in the Texas judiciary, reviewing cases appealed from district courts and county courts, both criminal and civil. They play a crucial role in ensuring fair application of the law by correcting legal errors and clarifying legal principles. Positioned between trial courts and the state's highest courts, these appellate courts provide a critical check on judicial decisions, ensuring consistency and fairness in legal interpretations.

Source: <https://texapedia.info/appellate-courts/>

Darlene Byrne (I)



Darlene Byrne, your Chief Justice of the Third Court of Appeals, seeks re-election and needs your help to defeat an Abbott appointee in the general election. She has served as an elected judge in Central Texas for over 25 years and is committed to ensure the court serves all who seek justice regardless of race, wealth, who they love, whether represented by counsel, immigration status, political party affiliation, or gender. Darlene works hard on and off the bench. Help her continue working for you.



CRIMINAL DISTRICT ATTORNEY

District attorneys are the chief prosecutors representing the State of Texas in criminal cases in the courts, particularly cases involving serious crimes, such as murder, assault, robbery, drug trafficking, and felony drunk driving.

Source: <https://texapedia.info/district-attorneys/>

Landon Campbell



Landon Campbell is a father, husband, and prosecutor living in Kyle, Texas. He currently serves as a Division Chief in the Hays County Criminal District Attorney's Office, overseeing the Misdemeanor and Specialty Courts Division. He is a graduate of Texas A&M University and the University of Texas School of Law and has worked in all divisions of the Criminal District Attorney's Office since 2018. Landon has also served his community as Board Chair of the Scheib Opportunity Center in San Marcos and as a Director on the Hays County Bar Association Board of Directors.

Alfonso Salazar



A San Antonio native, my foundation was shaped by the loss of my sister to gun violence at age 14 and the strength of incredible mother figures. I served 12 years in the military as a Military Police Officer. The United States Air Force allowed me to become the first in my family to graduate college, completing my B.A. from UT in 2 years, followed by Baylor Law, all while still serving. After my final 2019 deployment, I hung up my uniform and moved to Hays County where I have been practicing law as a defense and civil rights attorney.

COUNTY JUDGE

A county judge in Texas is the presiding officer of the governing body of a county government, the five-member county commissioners court. Together with the four county commissioners, the county judge sets the tax rate, policies, and budget of the county. Each county judge is a voting member of the commissioners court.

Source: <https://texapedia.info/county-judge/>

Ruben Becerra (I)



Ruben Becerra is the sitting Hays County Judge and a lifelong public servant shaped by the service industry and small business ownership. As County Judge, he has prioritized transparency, ethical governance, water protection, and constitutional due process. He led and passed a unanimous county resolution affirming humane and lawful treatment rooted in constitutional principles, strengthened public engagement in county decision making, and pushed back against insider driven development practices. His work centers around working families, environmental stewardship, and restoring public trust in local government.

Michelle Cohen



Dr. Michelle Gutierrez Cohen is a native Texan, born in Austin and raised in Hays County. As the Hays County Commissioner for Precinct 2, she has made a significant impact in her community.

Dr. Cohen is married to her supportive husband, Daniel, and they have three children together. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, a Master's degree in Business, and a Doctorate in Management with a focus on Organizational Leadership, making her well-equipped to serve her community.

She is now running for Hays County Judge with the aim of bringing a collaborative and partnership-driven vision to Hays County.

Joel Martin



I am a small business owner, builder, and lifelong public servant living and working in Hays County. I bring decades of real world leadership across construction, emergency response, and community operations. I am known for cutting through noise, building teams that deliver, and putting people before process. As a hands on leader and devoted family man, I believe government should work as hard as the residents it serves. My focus is simple: modern systems, honest leadership, and results that last.

COUNTY CLERK

The County Clerk’s Office includes three divisions – Records, Courts and Commissioners Court – all led by the elected County Clerk. The staff provides a number of services for the residents of Hays County, including the recording and maintenance of all Commissioners Court minutes, Official Public Records, and County Court Records.

Source: <https://www.hayscountytexas.gov/county-clerk>

Nicholas Costilla



Born and raised in San Marcos, I am a proud Rattler graduate of San Marcos High School and Texas State University, where I earned a B.S. in Criminal Justice. Since 2014, I have served Hays County in the District Attorney’s Office, currently as Legal Assistant Supervisor for the Misdemeanor Division, gaining extensive experience with records, case management, and interdepartmental coordination. Beyond my career, I remain active in numerous local organizations. With a lifelong commitment to this community, I am dedicated to ensuring the Clerk’s Office operates with transparency, accessibility, and efficiency for all residents.

Cynthia Millonzi



Cynthia Millonzi is the current Assistant County Clerk for Hays County and a proven public servant with a lifetime of leadership and service to country and community. Since 2021, she has worked as part of the leadership team alongside County Clerk Elaine Cardenas to ensure accurate records, transparent operations, and responsive public service. A retired U.S. Army Colonel with 30 years of honorable service and 25 years as a senior federal civil servant, Cynthia brings disciplined, mission-driven leadership to county government. Deeply rooted in the community, she has led local nonprofits and currently chairs the board of the Wimberley Players. She is running to continue the strong executive leadership of the Hays County Clerk’s Office.

DeeDee Rodgers



Delana “DeeDee” Rodgers is a 30-year veteran of the Hays County Clerk’s office, retiring as Chief Deputy Clerk in 2025. She has been instrumental in managing historical records for County Courts of Law during Hays County’s rapid growth. Her deep knowledge of the processes and systems that support the County Clerk’s office, coupled with her years of training and observation of best practices across Texas, enables DeeDee’s passion to lead strategic improvements. As an expert in serving residents with integrity and a smile, she will ensure filings and records are accurate and accessible. Your records are her priority!

COUNTY COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 2

The Hays County Commissioners Court is the governing body of the county. This group oversees the functions and budget for all county-related business. Weekly court sessions take place at the Hays County Historic Courthouse, located at 111 E. San Antonio St., in San Marcos, Texas. Court meetings take place at 9 a.m. every Tuesday except when canceled by action of the Commissioners Court at the Hays County Historic Courthouse.

Source: <https://www.hayscountytexas.gov/county-commissioners>

Bryan Escobar



Bryan Escobar is a husband, father, grandfather, and Hays County resident with three decades of experience helping businesses and hardworking families navigate complex financial and regulatory challenges. As a business consultant and tax expert, he has managed large budgets, improved efficiency, and delivered real solutions across multiple industries. A former youth coach and cancer survivor, Bryan brings resilience, integrity, and a steady, service-driven approach to leadership. He is committed to transparent, accountable county government and ensuring that every community in Hays County has a voice in the decisions that affect them.

Johnny Flores



Johnny Flores, the grandson of an immigrant woman, was raised in South Texas by hardworking parents who taught him service, integrity, and resilience. As Vice President of the Hays CISD School Board, he advocates for the dignity and safety of all students, especially those from marginalized groups, and fights for democratic principles in the face of harmful federal and state policies. A recognized Texas teacher and active community volunteer, Johnny believes collaboration is essential to delivering real results. He prioritizes sustainable growth, affordability, and stronger emergency services to ensure every family in Hays County is safe. His values-driven leadership brings people together to build a community where all can prosper.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 4

Laurie Brown



I'm a native Texan and resident of Leisurewoods since 2021, where I am the POA Treasurer. I earned a master's in accountancy from TXST in 2011 and have worked in banking, real estate, and for the past 13 years as graduate advisor and lecturer in the TXST Accounting Department.

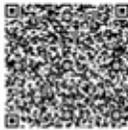


I am driven to run for office by a deep concern over the state of politics in our country. This is my way of taking positive action as a local champion for civility, respect, and good governance. My professional background provides relevant experience for public service. I want to serve this community in a meaningful way.

Angie Unger



Angie Unger is a longtime Hays County resident, mother, bilingual community leader, and small business owner with deep roots in service. For nearly a decade, she has been active in Democratic clubs and grassroots organizing, leading voter outreach, block walking, fundraising, and self-funded community events to support Democratic candidates at every level. Angie has built trusted relationships across churches, schools, neighborhoods, and multicultural communities throughout the county. She has attended Commissioners Court and water-related board meetings to stay informed and engaged. As a local REALTOR®, she brings firsthand knowledge of land use, water systems, infrastructure, and the impacts of rapid growth. Angie leads with authenticity, stewardship, and a people-first commitment to public service.



STATE OF TEXAS OFFICES

STATE HOUSE DISTRICT 73

The Texas House of Representatives is one of two parts, or chambers, of the Texas Legislature. Together with the Texas Senate, it makes laws and approves the state budget. The Texas House of Representatives meets at the Capitol building in Austin. Though it is co-equal with the Texas Senate in many respects, the House is called the “lower chamber.”

Source: <https://texapedia.info/house-of-representatives/>

Merrie Fox



Merrie Fox dedicated 31 years to Texas public schools as a teacher and administrator, earning a PhD in Educational Leadership. As a principal, her campuses earned “Exemplary,” “Recognized,” and “A” ratings. In 2009, she was selected by Raise Your Hand Texas to attend the Principals’ Institute at Harvard and later served as a Principal Advocacy Fellow for the 86th Legislative Session. After retiring in 2023, she became Executive Director of Circle Arts Theatre. A 44-year Hill Country resident, Merrie and her wife raised two children, care for her mother-in-law, mentor a foster youth, and sing in her church choir.

TEXAS SENATE DISTRICT 21

The Texas Senate is one of two parts, or chambers, of the Texas State Legislature. Together with the Texas House of Representatives, it makes laws and approves the state budget. Established in 1846 as the successor to the Republic of Texas Senate, the Senate plays a crucial role in shaping policies that affect millions of Texans.

Source: <https://texapedia.info/senate/>

Cortney Jones



Cortney Jones is a social worker, nonprofit executive director, and community advocate running for Texas State Senate District 21. For more than a decade, she has worked alongside families and local partners across Central Texas, including Hays County, addressing rapid growth, housing affordability, workforce access, and community stability. As the founder of Change 1, Cortney has led both direct-service programs and systems-level reform efforts focused on accountability and collaboration. She brings lived experience, policy knowledge, and a practical, people-first approach to public service and is running to ensure fast-growing communities have a strong, responsive voice at the Capitol.

Judith Zaffirini (I)



Senator Judith Zaffirini is the first woman Dean of the Texas Senate, first Mexican American woman Texas state senator, and the 7th of only 25 women who have served with 954 male senators. The highest bill-passer in Texas history, she has cast 76,843 consecutive votes and passed 1,524 bills.

The former teacher is a communication specialist and businesswoman who has won more than 1,300 awards and is the namesake of five buildings, five scholarships, and two grants.

Her highest priorities include education, health and human services, representing the needs and interests of SD 21 families and access to justice.

TEXAS ATTORNEY GENERAL

The Texas Attorney General is the chief legal officer of Texas and his office is responsible for representing the state in civil litigation. The Attorney General's Office also advises other state agencies on legal matters, prosecutes consumer fraud cases, and enforces child support orders.

The Texas Attorney General has no general authority in criminal cases. Instead, that power belongs to locally elected county and district attorneys, which have primary jurisdiction to prosecute most criminal offenses.

Source: <https://texapedia.info/attorney-general/>

Anthony Box

Not in attendance.

Joe Jaworski



Elected after 2008's Hurricane Ike, Joe served as the 55th mayor of Galveston, Texas. Mayor Joe, widely regarded as the city's most responsive and accessible mayor in its nearly two-century history, led Galveston's transformative recovery from epic natural disaster following Hurricane Ike.



Joe, a third-generation Texas attorney, practicing in the profession that his grandfather Leon and father Joseph famously pursued, graduated from the University of Texas School of Law along with his wife Rebecca in 1991.

Following a successful three-decades strong trial law practice in Gulf Coast state and federal courts, Joe is now a highly sought after national and international mediator.

Nathan Johnson



Nathan Johnson is a State Senator who fights for us and wins. He flipped a Senate seat by defeating a MAGA Republican, and has delivered health insurance for 350,000 Texans, tackled corporate tax abuse, and stabilized the grid. He also led the fights to impeach the corrupt Ken Paxton, defend abortion rights, oppose the voucher scam, and overturn gerrymandered maps. He's running to take on greedy corporations, so the middle class gets ahead again. A litigator and mediator at Thompson Coburn LLP, he has also composed musical scores for the hit anime series Dragon Ball Z.

TEXAS LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

The Texas lieutenant governor has a regular and active role in lawmaking. The lieutenant governor establishes all special and standing committees of the senate, appoints committee chairpersons, recognizes members during debate, and assigns legislation to the committees of his choice.

Source: <https://texapedia.info/lieutenant-governor/>

Vikki Goodwin



Representative Vikki Goodwin is serving her fourth term in the Texas Legislature, representing parts of Austin, serving on the Appropriations and Insurance Committees. She is a passionate supporter of neighborhood public schools, and as Lieutenant Governor, will not support any public dollars going to private school vouchers. Her top priorities are to increase funding to public schools, ensure people can access the healthcare they need, pass policies addressing housing affordability, and update laws regarding water use, planning and infrastructure. Vikki and her husband raised their kids in Austin, and ran a small business together, Goodwin & Goodwin Real Estate.

Courtney Head



Courtney Head is a Contracts and Privacy Manager, wife, mother of two, and candidate for Texas Lieutenant Governor committed to building a modern, fair, and accountable Texas. Raised in working-class America and now serving as a legal and negotiation professional in the tech sector, she brings an outside perspective rooted in problem-solving, transparency, and integrity. Courtney's campaign focuses on restoring and expanding access to healthcare, strengthening public education, and investing in infrastructure innovation to create opportunity for every Texan. She is running to put people—not politics—at the center of state leadership and to ensure every Texan has a real chance to thrive.

Marcos Velez



Marcos Isaias Velez is a labor advocate, community activist, and longtime volunteer who has spent his career fighting for working families across Texas. Through collective bargaining, civil rights advocacy, and disaster-relief work, he has helped protect jobs, healthcare, and dignity for thousands of people. As a candidate for Lieutenant Governor, Marcos is focused on the office's responsibility to shape the legislative agenda, oversee the Senate, and ensure public education, infrastructure, and economic policy serve everyday Texans, not special interests. He is running to bring accountability, fairness, and working-class values back to state government.

TEXAS LAND COMMISSIONER

The Texas General Land Office (GLO) is a state agency responsible for managing 13 million acres of land owned by the State of Texas. Established in 1836, the GLO is the oldest state agency still in operation. Its core responsibilities include overseeing mineral rights, maintaining land grant records, administering public lands, supporting public education funding, managing disaster recovery efforts, and managing The Alamo, the historic battle site in San Antonio.

The GLO is headed by the Texas Land Commissioner, an independently elected official who serves a four-year term. The Land Commissioner is part of the state's plural executive branch, meaning the commissioner is accountable directly to the voters and not to the governor. This system reflects Texas' constitutional commitment to dispersing executive authority.

Source: <https://texapedia.info/general-land-office/>

Benjamin Flores



Benjamin Flores arrived in the United States in 1996 with two bags and a big dream. He washed cars, fried chicken, and worked nights at a Marriott, where tinkering with computers launched his thirty-year cybersecurity career protecting data in banking, fintech, and government.



He and his wife An Huynh moved to Texas seeking freedom and opportunity, settling in Bay City where they raise heritage pigs on their homestead. Flores serves on Bay City's City Council and regional boards, volunteers in disaster response, and advocates for public schools. Now Benjamin Flores wants to help build a better Texas.

Jose Loya

Not in attendance.

FEDERAL OFFICES

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 21

Kristin Hook



Dr. Kristin Hook is a native Texan and scientist who served the public in the U.S. Senate, National Institutes of Health, and U.S. Government Accountability Office. A former middle school teacher with a PhD in animal behavior, she is well prepared to handle Congress!



Kristin is running to fight for working families like her own and to hold Trump accountable – a fight she has led since 2017 as a grassroots organizer and oversight investigator for Sen. Elizabeth Warren. She believes government can and should be a powerful force for good, not a weapon of oppression.

Gary Taylor



I was born in Fort Worth, Texas, and have lived in Texas most of my life. I am a retired high school, community college, and university math teacher, and a musician.



I am a Progressive Democrat running for Texas 21st Congressional District. One of the main reasons I have chosen to run is to do all I can to help in building a better future for my children and grandchildren—indeed, a better future for all of us, throughout this nation. But not only a better future, I think we need a better now, too.

Regina Vanburg



Dr. Regina Vanburg grew up in Bandera, Texas kayaking green-water rivers, cruising backroads, and dancing in Hill Country dance halls. Her father is an immigrant and both her parents are veterans; she learned early that service is a duty. Regina double-majored in Government and History at UT Austin, earned an M.A. from St. Edward's, and a Psy.D. from Our Lady of the Lake. A VA-trained trauma psychologist, she has served veterans in San Antonio and now works as a data analyst at Lackland AFB. Rooted here, she's running to make sure neighbors — not corporations — shape our future.



U.S. REPRESENTATIVE, DISTRICT 27

“Stock” Castro-Mendoza



Stock Castro-Mendoza is a first-generation immigrant, Navy Captain (Ret.), teacher and farmer. He holds multiple degrees (B.S., M.A., M.S, and Ph.D. (ABD)) in Biology and National Security. He is a veteran of numerous military campaigns. During three decades in uniform, Captain Castro-Mendoza commanded sailors, managed critical operations, and navigated complex national security challenges. He was also a military fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. After retiring in 2013, he taught high school science for almost a decade. Stock is now a working farmer and cattle rancher. He is the proud father of four grown children aged 25-37.

Tanya Lloyd



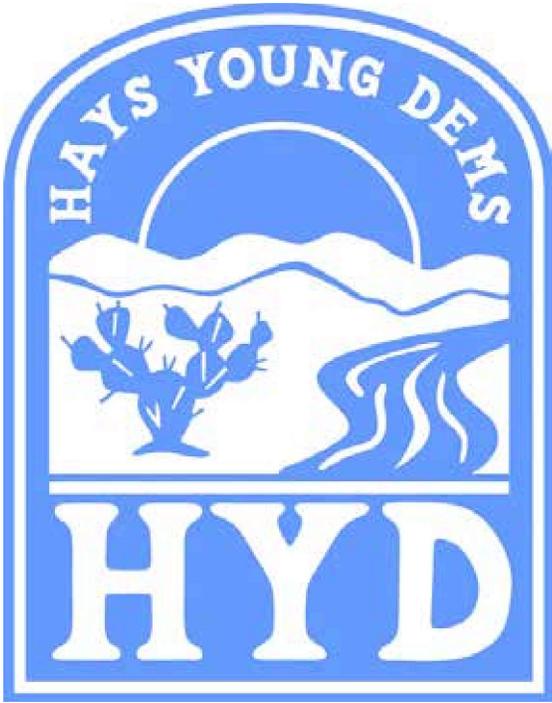
Tanya Lloyd is a lifelong Texan, public school kindergarten teacher, and mom running for Congress in Texas’ 27th District. Born and raised in the district, Tanya still lives on the family farm her parents built thanks to her father’s VA loan. For more than 20 years, she has taught in a Title I school in Lockhart ISD, working closely with families navigating rising costs, healthcare access, and underfunded schools. After watching her community go years without real representation, Tanya is stepping up to fight for affordable healthcare, strong public schools, and opportunity for rural Texans.

Wayne Raasch

Not in attendance.

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Research Candidates on Hays County Webpages



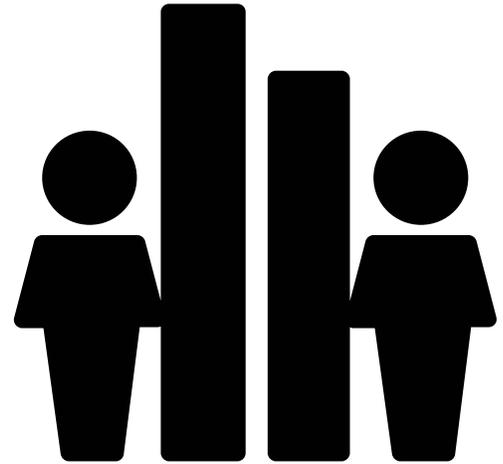
(A) Information about who has contributed funds to a candidate.



(B) Information about how the County Judge or Commissioners have voted on specific actions in 2024 or 2025 (Vote Tables); OR, to do name or key word search of Commissioners Court transcripts to learn who supported or opposed an initiative. [Scroll down to Vote Tables or year.]



(C) Archived video of Commissioners Court session addressing topics of interest. [Scroll down to Archives and search for topic of interest.]



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Welcome!

We are a volunteer organization located in the Texas hill country and we're working hard to turn Texas BLUE! As a matter of fact, we've been instrumental in turning Hays County blue and we're not gonna stop there!

Our mission is to get Democrats elected to local, county and state positions. We do this through community outreach, events, community forums, candidate meet and greets, precinct chair support, register new voters, collaborate with local Dem clubs for large events, hold monthly socials, conduct election GOTV activities and much, much more!



Become a voting member

Membership is only \$20/year.

Donations are always welcome!

You can even help us more by becoming a sustaining member with a recurring monthly donation. This helps us to forecast and budget events!!