

 <p>vol. 13 no.6 Clear Creek Assoc. of Retired Teachers, Editorial Board: Ginny Darling, & Vee & Frank Stansfield, Randy Elms, Chair, James Bailey</p>	 <p>Feb. 9, 2016</p>
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Early Voting Begins Feb.16

- Early Voting Hours of Operation
 February 16 through February 19:
 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
 February 20:
 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
 February 21:
 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
 February 22 – **February 26:**
 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.



The Clear Creek area early voting location remains at the **Freeman Branch Library**, 16616 Diana Lane. In Galveston Co. it will be at **North County Annex**, on Calder Road, **Bacliff Community Center**, **Dickinson Community Center**, 2714 Highway 3, **Clear Creek ISD Ad. Bldg.** Board Room, **Creekside Intermediate** behind the Gym and **Friendswood City Hall**, 2nd floor. Remember: IDs are still required to vote.

Voting by Mail

Voting by mail is an option for registered voters if you are 65 on Election Day. But it also is available to any voter who plans to be out of county during the election period or if disabled. Both Harris and Galveston Counties are ready to get your application. Go to voteharris.org; click on “voting by mail” or, if you live in Galveston County, google “**Galveston County Clerk’s Office**,” click on “Elections Division” to print out a copy of the application. Do it this week; your completed application must be in the County Clerk’s office by Friday, **February 19** and your completed ballot must be in the Clerk’s office by election day. Here are the respective addresses:

<p>Stan Stanart, Harris County Clerk, Attn: Elections Division P.O. Box 1148, Houston, TX 77251-1148</p>	<p>Dwight D. Sullivan County Clerk Attn: ballots by mail P.O. Box 17253 Galveston, TX 77552-7253</p>
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Sample ballots are available at voteharris.org or at “Galveston County Clerk’s Office” as well.

1. If you vote in a Primary Election for one party and a run-off election for that position occurs, you can vote only in the run-off of the SAME PARTY for which you voted in the Primary.
2. **Remember:** You can vote for anyone of any party in November regardless of how you voted in the March Primary.

3. If you do not want your Voter Registration Card stamped with a party label, simply present your Texas Driver’s License or a valid government photo ID.

Tim Lee suggests effective voting strategies for Texas Primaries

based on Tim Lee, *Inside Line*, 1-19-16

The vast majority of elections in Texas are determined during the primary elections. In legislative races, the November general election does not matter that much!

Your power as a voter is amplified in primary elections simply because so many other people choose not to vote. Occasionally, the candidate from your political party most likely to win the primary election does not represent your ideals. **If you are in this situation but you do not want another influential interest group to take away your power in the November general election, consider voting in the OPPOSITE party primary and choosing a candidate you believe may be friendlier to TRTA issues.... If you think your vote may be better used by cross-over voting, this may be a winning strategy for gaining support for TRTA issues during legislative session.**

Some TRTA members may agree with the likely victorious political party in their area. This does not mean, however, that the party’s candidate who won the primary is the person you want representing you on vital TRTA legislative issues.

It is easy to take for granted our favorite candidate’s chances of election, but we must remember that when a candidate faces a challenger in the primary, the vote could go either way! If TRTA does not exercise its resources - the voices of 80,000 retirees - our allies in the Texas Legislature or candidates asking for a chance to serve and protect your TRS benefits may be defeated.

You may know someone who served in the Legislature previously that is no longer serving due to the results of a primary election. Because so few people cast a vote in the primary elections, these races can be determined by just a handful of votes!

This means **YOUR VOTE IN THE PRIMARY ELECTION WILL MAKE A DIFFERENCE!** TRTA does not endorse candidates for political office, but has a reputation for working across party lines to establish strong relationships with legislators for the good of TRS and its 350,000+ retirees. We also know that many groups seek to eliminate our defined benefit retirement plan. Some challengers to elected officials in primary elections are supported by groups that want to do away with our retirement system.

It is up to us to do our due diligence and ask candidates the tough questions about TRS! Because your retirement benefits affect your livelihood, you owe it to yourself to find out the answers to the following questions from ALL candidates in your area:

- 1. Do you support a defined benefit plan for all current and future TRS retirees?**
- 2. Do you support providing reasonable, affordable healthcare for TRS retirees?**
- 3. What will you do as my legislator to ensure that the TRS pension fund and TRS–Care health insurance program are preserved and improved?**

Please feel free to report back to TRTA with any responses you receive, both positive and negative. Send an email to info@trta.org with the subject line “Elections.” It is also worthwhile to share the feedback you receive from candidates with other education retirees....

As former educators, let us educate ourselves and all candidates running for office in Texas! Make a commitment to contact the candidates in your area and ask them the questions listed above.

Remember, early voting for the primary elections begins Feb. 16, and continues through February 26. Primary election day is March 1. We encourage members to vote early if possible, and to begin researching their candidates NOW!

According to the Chronicle a total of 595 **Republican delegates** will be awarded on March 1 by 11 states, nearly half the 1,236 needed for the nomination and “Texas is the big enchilada, with 155 GOP delegates up for grabs, more than any other state on Super Tuesday. Texas alone has more GOP delegates than the 133 decided by the four early states — Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada....” Delegates will be awarded proportionally based on Congressional districts. Most of Texas’ 252 **Democratic delegates** will be allotted on a proportional basis based on the primary vote. The bulk of them, 145, will be distributed by the vote in each of the 31 Senate districts. Another 77 will be allotted based on the statewide vote. Thirty are members of the Democratic National Committee and Congress and can vote for whoever candidate they choose.

Who will be on the March 1 Primary Ballot for President?

based on reports of the Texas Secretary of State
the Houston Chronicle and *The Texas Tribune*

Republicans: Jeb Bush, Ben Carson, Donald Trump, Marco Rubio, Ted Cruz, Carly Fiorina, Chris Christie, John Kasich, Mike Huckabee*, Rand Paul, Lindsey Graham, Rick Santorum & Elizabeth Gray.
Democrats: Hillary Clinton, Martin O'Malley*, Bernie Sanders, Calvis Howes, Rocky DeLa Fuente, Keith Judd and Willie Wilson. *campaign suspended

Who are the Candidates for U.S. Congress

For those who live in CD district 22 [Hwy 3 to Sugarland] **Republican** incumbent **Pete Olsen** is unopposed but there’s a contest on the **Democratic ballot** in CD22: **Mark Gibson** vs. **A.R. Hassan**.
In CD 36 [covering the NASA area to Lufkin] **Republican** incumbent **Brian Babin** is not only unopposed but no Democrat that has filed in that race.
In CD14 [Galveston to Beaumont area] incumbent **Randy Weber** has one opponent: **Keith Casey** of Beaumont and for the **Democrats** it’s **Michael Cole** running unopposed.

For the CCART area there are no contests for the Texas Legislature.

On the Republican ballot: Senator **Larry Taylor** [dist. 11], Rep. **Dennis Paul** [dist. 129], Rep. **Greg Bonnen** [dist. 24], Rep. **Wayne Faircloth** [dist. 23] and **Ed Thompson** [dist. 29] are all unopposed.

On the Democratic ballot: in Dist. 23 [the Bacliff/Texas City area] **Lloyd Criss**, the father of Susan Criss who lost in the 2014 contest and former state representative himself, is running unopposed. In the Pearland/Alvin area **John T. Floyd** has filed for District 29. Both will be on the Democratic ballot unopposed.

How Can I Support My Candidate of Choice?

Tim Lee, Inside Line, 1-20-16

You may be asking yourself, "What can I do to support my candidate?" Consider the following activities as part of your legislative duty over the next few weeks:

1. Convince others they need to vote, and ask them to make the same decision and commitment.
2. Let your friends and colleagues know who you are voting for and why. It will help them make a more informed decision.
3. Volunteer to work for the candidate of your choice.
4. Call the campaign and ask for a yard sign.
5. Give permission for the campaign to put large campaign sign on your property.
6. Allow the campaign to use your name as endorsing your candidate.
7. Sign up for campaign emails and pass them on to friends and colleagues.
8. "Friend" your candidate on Facebook, and encourage others to do the same.
9. E-mail and telephone your friends and family and tell them why you support your candidate.
10. Volunteer to walk your neighborhood to distribute campaign material for your candidate.
11. If you are willing and able, consider making a contribution to your preferred candidate's campaign.

12. Ask the campaign if they have personal endorsement postcards you can use to mail to your friends and family. (Most campaigns are happy to pay for the postage if you will address and sign the cards to send out). Your personal endorsement makes a strong statement to your friends and family, and helps them feel confident about voting for the person you recommend.
13. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper and the candidate of your choice about why you support your candidate. The candidate would probably love to use your letter for campaign purposes!
14. Share all of the information you learn with your local unit, and consider how to make voting fun for your members such as developing a group voting event!

As you know, TRTA does not endorse candidates for political office, but this does not mean our members cannot participate as fully as possible in the political process. We will not tell you who to vote for, but we will always encourage you to ask the questions listed above and choose a candidate that supports the interests of public education retirees and pre-retirees.

Lee Urges that we Help "Get out the Vote"

Tim Lee, Inside Line, 1-21-16

We need YOU to get in touch with other TRTA members, retirees who are not members of TRTA, and your friends and family and GET OUT THE VOTE!

In order to exercise the vast strength represented by our organization, we need the influence of individuals such as you! Many people do not understand the significance of primary elections. **These elections are often determined by a handful of votes. Because so few people vote in the primaries, EVERY VOTE COUNTS.**

Your vote WILL make a difference! Vote in the primary election, and VOTE EARLY!

Early voting begins February 16 and continues through February 26.

Are all Retirees Prepared to Vote?

We are asking you to contact your fellow retirees, neighbors, friends and family and ask them to join you in voting during the primary elections!

Next, be sure you share information about the candidates running for office in your area.

Information about all political races in Texas can be found on Ballotpedia.org/Texas_State .

It is especially important to pay attention to Texas Senate and Texas House races. The people elected to these positions will be your Senators and Representatives in the Texas Legislature. They will make the decisions that impact your Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) pension fund and TRS-Care health insurance program.

Local TRTA Units Connect to Local Voting Communities

Your local unit is vital to spreading the word about the importance of the primary elections. Are you a local unit officer? Do you have a meeting scheduled in February? If so, share this important information with ALL of your members!

Another great asset to being a member of a local unit is the ability to organize at the grassroots level to support and vote for the candidate(s) of your choice. Organize a car pool to take voters to the polls! Consider how to make voting fun for your members and develop a group voting event with your local unit!

During your unit's regularly scheduled February meeting, consider hosting a morning coffee and tea party, and then caravanning to a nearby polling location. You can also send press releases to your local media outlets about your "primary party," letting the community know that retired teachers get out and VOTE!

Remember, when voting early, you do not have to vote in your precinct. If your local unit or a group of your family and friends plans a "primary party" to vote early, you can choose the early voting location nearest you.

How many people can you encourage to vote in the primaries?

3 Important Contested Senate Races

based on Tim Lee's newsletter of 1-22-16

Tim Lee has highlighted 30 critical Senate contests around Texas. If you know voters in these areas he urges us to contact them to take extra care to ask the three questions numbered on the second page of this Legelog. The following are three from that list:

In the Tyler area including Henderson and Texarkana (Senate Dist. 1), Sen. Eltife's old seat, there is a serious contest. There are no Democrats running but Bryan Hughes, David Simpson, James K. Red Brown, and Mike Lee. are vying for this open seat.

In Senate District 24 (west of Austin stretching from Kerrville to Temple) there is another open seat. Democratic candidate Virginia Leeder does not face a challenger in the Democratic primary but Republican candidates facing each other are Brent Mayes, Dawn Buckingham, Jon Cobb, Reed Williams, Ryan Downton, and Susan King.

In San Antonio (Senate District 26) Senator Jose Menendez faces a challenger in the Democratic primary, Trey Martinez Fischer. There are no Republican candidates vying for this seat.

3 "High-Profile" Contested Texas House Races"

House District 2

(Hunt, Hopkins & Van Zandt counties)

Seeking an eighth term Rep. **Dan Flynn** [Van] faces challenger **Bryan Slaton** [Royce City] in the Republican primary. There are no Democratic candidates. Pensions Chairman Flynn was a critical figure defending TRS-Care in the last session.

House District 121

(north central San Antonio)

House Speaker **Joe Straus** faces challengers Sheila Bean and Jeff Judson in the Republican primary. There are no Democratic candidates vying for this seat. Speaker Straus was a positive force in facilitating retired teacher issues in the last session.

House District 128

(La Porte, Baytown northward to hwy 1960)

Representative **Wayne Smith** faces challengers Briscoe Cain and Melody McDaniel in the Republican primary. There are no Democratic candidates vying for this seat.

In each of these House races urge friends or relatives who are voters in the area to ask the three numbered questions on page two.