



Early Voting begins October 21st and ends Friday November 1st

Voting by mail applications must be
into the County Clerk by October 26th

Most early voters go the second week; voters disinclined to standing in line should go the week of Oct. 21-27. Some of us have already voted by mail but be advised to send your application no later than **October 23**. If you wish to vote by mail get your application to the County Clerk as soon as possible but **it must be in his office no later than October 26**. To get an application form go to

harrisvotes.com
or write to
Stan Stanart
Harris County Clerk
P.O. Box 1148
Houston, TX 77251-1148

For Galveston County go to
galvestonvotes.org/early-vote-mail-FAQ.htm

Or write to
Elections Division,
Galveston County Clerk
P. O. Box 2450
Galveston, TX 77553-2450

Harris County Early Voting Location
Freeman Branch Library
16616 Diana Lane, 77062

Galveston County Early Voting Locations

Dickinson Community Center 2714 Highway 3 Dickinson, Texas	Bacliff Community Center 4503 – 11th Street Bacliff, Texas
League City County Annex 174 Calder Road League City, Texas	Friendswood City Hall 910 S. Friendswood Dr. Friendswood, Texas

Early Voting Hours

October 21-25: . . . 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
October 26: 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.
October 27: 1:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.
October 28- Nov.1: 7:00 a.m. - 7:00 p.m.

TRS Actuarial Soundness means COLA Possible in 2015

Inside Line, Tim Lee, 9-30-13

Not only did SB 1458 provide financial relief for most retirees, it made the pension fund actuarially sound for the first time in many years. According to state law, pension increases such as the COLA provided in October are not possible legally unless the pension fund is actuarially sound.

Being actuarially sound is very important not just to provide increases for retirees, but to preserve the fund for the long term. TRTA's primary goal is to ensure that the TRS fund remains intact for all current and future retirees and that the defined benefit plan is maintained.

A defined benefit plan ensures retirees an income for the rest of their lives, as opposed to a defined contribution plan which retirees can outlive. This is especially important since most Texas school employees have little or no Social Security as part of their retirement.

For this reason, TRTA believes it is important that we show our appreciation to all of our Texas legislators! Some of you may not have received the COLA this year, but because the fund is stable, the likelihood of future increases for more retirees is significantly higher. TRTA has not forgotten about you, and we continue to work even now talking to legislators about increases for *ALL TRS retirees* in future sessions.

Senator Taylor, Representative Davis and Dr. Bonnen all slogged doggedly and finally got to support a unanimous vote to make HB1458 Texas law. These legislators and their very helpful staffs deserve a very enthusiastic "Thank You" from every CCART member.

Need a State-Issued Picture ID?

Bring proof of citizenship and your voter registration card to a DPS office. If you have no voter card fill one out at the DPS. **Best bet:** go Saturday to the DPS Office at 111 Tristar Dr. in Webster, 281-486-8242, across from Ellington Field just off Highway 3. No lines at DPS (Webster) because the're open Saturdays 10am-2pm until November 2 exclusively for voter IDs .

What if your Drivers Lic. and Voter Registration Do Not Match?

The Galveston County Clerk provides the following instruction:

When a voter arrives at a polling place and has an ID where the name does not *exactly match* his or her name on the Voter Registration Records, the voter may be asked to fill out a form to change the voter rolls so they conform to the name on his or her photo ID. The goal is to bring the Voter Registration rolls in line with the voter's photo ID.

If the voter's ID is "substantially similar" to what appears on their voter registration record they will be allowed to vote a regular ballot. If the information on the ID is not "substantially similar" the voter may be offered a provisional ballot.

What is a "substantially similar" name?

1. When the name on the ID is slightly different from what is shown on the voter registration records (e.g., Browne vs. Brown)
2. When the name on the ID is a customary variation of the formal name (e.g., Bob for Robert or Bill for William)
3. When the voter's name contains an initial, middle name, or former name that is not on the voter registration rolls (e.g., Samuel A. Bates vs. Samuel Abraham Bates or Norma Jean Smith vs. Jean Smith Blackwell or Jean S. Blackwell [where Blackwell is her husband's surname name which she assumed upon being married]) or
4. Where one of the voter's names is in a different field on the ID than it is on the voter rolls (e.g., Michael Jay Black vs. Jay Michael Black)

If I have a "substantially similar" name will I be prohibited from voting?

No! The goal is to have the name on your voter registration record match the name on your photo ID. If it is determined that you have a "substantially similar" name you may be asked to fill out a form to correct the discrepancy but this will not keep you from voting normally.

What if the name on my voter registration roll is not "substantially similar" to the name on my photo ID? What then?

If the names on your photo ID and the voter registration records are not identical or similar, then you will always have the option of voting a provisional ballot.

In addition, you have the option of showing one of the acceptable forms of photo IDs to the Voter Registrar's Office in your county within six calendar days following the election. If you show them either an acceptable form of photo ID or one of the prescribed legal documents and submit a "Similar Name affidavit" stating that you are the same person as the person shown

on the voter rolls then your provisional ballot will be accepted, assuming this is the only reason for you were asked to vote provisionally.

Can I update my voter registration record online so I can avoid dealing with this at a polling location?

Yes! If you want to correct the name on your voter registration record prior to going to the polls you may do so up to thirty days prior to the election. In order to do this you will need to have a couple of documents handy. The first is your driver's license. The second is your voter registration card. And thirdly you will need to know the last four digits of your Social Security Number. With these in hand you may go to the Secretary of State's Website and start the process.

- You will be asked to enter your Texas Driver's License or Identification Number into a form.
- Next you will need to put in your date of birth, the last four digits of your social security number, and your DPS Audit Number (which is found on your license or DPS ID card)
- Then you will be asked to enter your Voter Unique Identification Number (VUID) from your voter registration card and finally to identify your county. This will log you into a form that you can fill out online to update your voter registration record at the Secretary of State's office in Austin. Remember, in order for this to take effect it must be done at least 30 days prior to an election.

Senate Finance and House Appropriations & Pensions Chairs to Leave the Lege

First it was Pension's Chair Bill Callegari (R - Katy) and then last Thursday the widely respected Senate Finance Chair Tommy Williams (R - Woodlands) announced that he will not be a candidate in 2014. In August, House Appropriations Chair Jim Pitts (R-Waxahachie) declared he was leaving. Many believe that this manifold departure leaves a gap in financial knowledge. However, Williams insists that there are "capable people" and points to the Legislative Budget Board as our "institutionalized experience." Leaders of several diverse groups say Tommy Williams was the guy who had the "ability to bring fractured opponents together." But now the Lt. Governor and the House Speaker must choose new budget leadership for the 84th session in January 2015. But who can mollify the highly fractionized legislature and battle-ready retired teachers as well. Footnote: Long-time Rep. Allan Ritter (R-Nederland) announced his retirement last Friday.

9 Constitutional Amendments to be on Ballot for the November 5th

All of the following explanations are borrowed mostly from the website of the Secretary of State. The check after the number indicates that there is little or no opposition to the proposition.

Proposition #1 ✓

provides for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a member of the United States armed services who is killed in action, as long as the surviving spouse has not remarried. An eligible spouse who later qualifies a different property as the surviving spouse's residence homestead could be authorized by statute to receive an exemption from ad valorem taxation in the same amount received for the first qualifying homestead during the last year in which the surviving spouse received the exemption.

The Language on the ballot:

"The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a member of the armed services of the United States who is killed in action."

Proposition #2 ✓

repeals the constitutional provision requiring the creation of a State Medical Education Board and a State Medical Education Fund, neither of which is in operation. No new loans have been made from the fund by the board in more than 25 years, and the board currently has no appointees and receives no program funding.

The Language on the ballot:

"The constitutional amendment eliminating an obsolete requirement for a State Medical Education Board and a State Medical Education Fund, neither of which is operational."

Proposition #3 ✓

authorizes local political subdivisions to extend the length of time that aircraft parts could remain temporarily in this state before being subject to ad valorem taxation. Under current law, merchandise, wares, and goods (including aircraft parts) may remain in this state temporarily for up to 175 days before being subject to ad valorem taxation; the proposed amendment would permit taxing entities to extend the exemption up to 730 days after the date

that a person acquired or imported aircraft parts in the state.

The Language on the ballot:

"The constitutional amendment to authorize a political subdivision of this state to extend the number of days that aircraft parts that are exempt from ad valorem taxation due to their location in this state for a temporary period may be located in this state for purposes of qualifying for the tax exemption."

Proposition #4 ✓

allows the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of part of the market value of the residence homestead of a partially disabled veteran or the surviving spouse of a partially disabled veteran if the residence homestead was donated to the disabled veteran at no cost to the veteran by a charitable organization.

The Language on the ballot

"The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of part of the market value of the residence homestead of a partially disabled veteran or the surviving spouse of a partially disabled veteran if the residence homestead was donated to the disabled veteran by a charitable organization."

Proposition #5 ✓

amends the definition of "reverse mortgage" to authorize the making of reverse mortgage loans for the purchase of homestead property in addition to the current legal uses of those loans, and would give lenders recourse against borrowers who fail to timely occupy the homestead properties purchased with such loans. SJR 18 would also add to the definition of "reverse mortgage" an extension of credit that is not closed before the 12th day after the lender provides to the prospective borrower a written notice summarizing risks and conditions of a reverse mortgage. The language of the required notice is prescribed in the resolution.

The Language on the ballot

"The constitutional amendment to authorize the making of a reverse mortgage loan for the purchase of homestead property and to amend lender disclosures and other requirements in connection with a reverse mortgage loan."

Proposition #6

would allow the transfer of money from the state's unencumbered rainy day fund to create a revolving, low-interest loan program for reservoirs, pipelines and other water projects. Officials say a \$2 billion

capitalization could be leveraged into \$30 billion over a half-century.

Many believe that this investment is necessary to “ensure Texas prosperity.” Republican Rep. Bill Callegari, said that Houstonians cannot take the position that water is not their problem. “It’s not a given that it will always rain.”

Opposition: Some say we should not use the Rainy Day Fund for water projects which benefit only a certain segment of the state. The Water Development Board already has funds and just wants to use the Rainy Day Fund like an investment bank.

The Language on the ballot

“The constitutional amendment providing for the creation of the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas and the State Water Implementation Revenue Fund for Texas to assist in the financing of priority projects in the state water plan to ensure the availability of adequate water resources.”

Proposition #7 ✓

allows home-rule municipalities to adopt charter provisions authorizing the filling of vacancies in the governing body by appointment, but only when the remainder of the vacant term is less than 12 months. Under current law, municipal voters may adopt terms of office for municipal officers longer than two years, but upon approving longer terms of office, any resulting vacancies in office must be filled by special election. The proposed amendment would provide an option for home-rule municipalities to fill short-term vacancies through appointment.

The Language on the ballot

“The constitutional amendment authorizing a home-rule municipality to provide in its charter the procedure to fill a vacancy on its governing body for which the unexpired term is 12 months or less.”

Proposition #8 ✓

repeals the Texas Constitution’s maximum tax rate for a Hidalgo County hospital district; the maximum rate is currently set at 10 cents per \$100 valuation. This rate is lower than the maximum tax rate allowable for hospital districts in all other counties in the State (75 cents per \$100 valuation). The repeal of the constitutional cap would authorize hospital district tax rates in Hidalgo County equal to the hospital district tax rate laws applicable to all other Texas counties.

The Language on the ballot

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: “The constitutional amendment repealing Section 7, Article IX,

Texas Constitution, which relates to the creation of a hospital district in Hidalgo County.”

Proposition #9 ✓

expands the potential sanctions that the State Commission on Judicial Conduct can issue following a formal proceeding. This constitutional amendment would allow the Commission to issue an order of public admonition, warning, reprimand, or a requirement to obtain additional training or education in addition to the Commission’s current authority to issue a public censure or recommend removal or retirement of a judge.

The Language on the ballot

The proposed amendment will appear on the ballot as follows: “The constitutional amendment relating to expanding the types of sanctions that may be assessed against a judge or justice following a formal proceeding instituted by the State Commission on Judicial Conduct.”

Contact Your Legislators

Sen. Larry Taylor - 512-463-0111
League City 281-332-0003

Rep. John Davis - 512-463-0734
NASA area 281-333-1350
Dist. 129 area north of Clear Creek

Rep. Greg Bonnen - 512-463-0729
League City 281-338-0924
Dist. 24 - area south of Clear Creek

Rep. Ed Thompson - 512-463-0707
Dist. 29 – area of Pearland/Alvin

Rep. Craig Eiland - 512-463- 0502
Texas City (800) 345-2630
Dist. 23 – Bacliff/Texas City

A friendly legislative aide will answer the phone and deliver your message to your representative or senator.

You can also type ”**Texas Legislature Online**” on your search engine and a host of information is available including things like the progress of bills, committee meetings and even the text of specific legislation. If you click on “members” a website for each legislator can show committee memberships and even a map of the representative or senator’s district.