



League of Women Voters  
of Plano/Collin County  
[www.lwvcollin.org](http://www.lwvcollin.org)

# Voters Guide

## Mar. 2, 2010 Primary Elections Texas Senate and House

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Early voting – February 16 – 26, 2010

Election day – Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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This Voters Guide is published by the League of Women Voters of Plano/Collin County to help citizens prepare to cast an informed vote. The League of Women Voters, a nonpartisan organization, encourages informed and active participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

This guide includes contested races in which two or more candidates are running regardless of party. All candidates for the respective offices were invited to participate. If a candidate did not respond by the deadline, "No response from the candidate" is printed. Responses were limited to 100 words and truncated with /// after the 100<sup>th</sup> word. Where there are multiple candidates for the same office in a party, the candidates appear in ballot order.

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### **Candidates for Texas Senate, District 8**

*4 year term. Must be 26 years or older, a U.S. citizen, a resident of Texas and a resident of the district represented. Responsible for representing the citizens of the district in which he/she is elected in the Texas Senate.*

**Florence Shapiro (Incumbent), Republican** – No response from the candidate

**Ed Kless, Libertarian**

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of member of the Texas Senate/House of Representatives.

Ever since graduating magna cum laude from Pace University in New York, I have been working in one capacity or another to help make small businesses better. Within the past decade, I have begun studying economics, especially price theory, and believe that the lack of basic economic understanding drives most bad government policies. There are two words that all economists agree upon regardless of their political leaning, "Incentives matter." Legislators motivated by the best of intentions have created perverse incentives that interfere with free market activities. Government is the problem in many cases, not the solution.

2. Texas ranks very low among states in percentage of persons with health insurance. What measures would you support for improving access to health care in Texas?

While health care and insurance reform have been debated mostly at the federal level, once again government has created a problem that must be dealt with on a local level. The best way to improve access to care is to create competitive delivery

systems. I would advocate for the Texas Medical Board to allow more creative delivery of basic care. Texas should allow our citizens to purchase health insurance across state lines thus spurring more competition among insurance companies. If elected, I would lead the charge against the implementation of a national insurance scheme on state's rights (Tenth Amendment) grounds.

3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should the gas tax be raised? Should the gas tax be dedicated solely to road construction and maintenance? Do you support increased construction of toll roads?

I believe bonds would be the best way to finance road construction. Maintenance should be paid for by a combination of local real estate taxes and gas tax. In principle, I have no problems with allowing private companies to develop toll roads. However, I am drastically opposed to the government use of eminent domain to confiscate private property for the purposes of turning that property over to another private developer. That said, toll roads owned and operated by the state should be eliminated. Combined with the gas tax, they amount to double taxation.

4. Do you consider Texas' current per-student public school spending to be adequate and equitable? If not, what measures would you support to increase funding of public school education?

The question while well intentioned, implies a false economic premise of measuring inputs rather than results. Enough statistics available if cherry-picked would create arguments for increasing or decreasing school spending. While many of the public schools in Senate District 8 are exemplary, as a state we are in the middle of the pack. We can do better. I believe that Texas should lead the nation by adopting a free market throughout all levels of education. We need more charter and magnet schools. Better still, I would propose creating a voucher system allowing parents to decide where to send their children.

5. Texas is one of the largest emitters of carbon dioxide in the U.S. What changes would you support to Texas' energy policies?

While I am sure we are one of the largest emitters of CO<sub>2</sub>, we are also one of the more economically productive states. Creating any kind of a restriction on CO<sub>2</sub> levels would create an undue burden on the people of Texas. Remember, plants photosynthesize CO<sub>2</sub> into oxygen, as least that is what I learned in school; it is **not** toxic. I remain unconvinced about the dreaded outcomes of global warming, now called climate change. The last 10 years produced no increase to average surface temperature. It is only highly flawed models that predict these catastrophes.

6. State hospitals that serve people with mental illness have reduced the number of available beds, yet the need for services is increasing. How do you propose that Texas provide for the care of those with severe mental illness?

Again, the question implies government as the solution here, it is not. We need to reduce the overall tax burden on citizens. Texans, I have come to learn, are an extremely generous and hospitable people. Well-run private charities would be a better alternative to any form of state-run system.

7. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in the next session of the Texas Legislature, and what is your position on these issues?

The problems with **immigration** are not related to the immigrants themselves, but from the services the government provides them. The government at any level should not provide these services. We need to increase the number of worker visas allowing people a chance to earn a living and return to their homes and families.

Governments have wasted billions of dollars fighting an unwinnable “**war**” on **drugs**. I believe each person has the right to put into their bodies any substance of their own choosing be it alcohol or marijuana. They are responsible for their actions while under the influence of these.

### **Candidates for Texas House of Representatives, District 66**

*2 year term. Must be 21 years or older, a U.S. citizen, a resident of Texas and a resident of the district represented. Responsible for representing the citizens of the district in which he/she is elected in the Texas House of Representatives.*

#### **Van Taylor, Republican**

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of member of the Texas Senate/House of Representatives.

My family came to the Dallas area in 1898, I was born in Dallas. As a small businessman and lifelong conservative I support family values, lower taxes and less government. I served West Plano as a ProLife grassroots activist, and am currently Vice Captain of *Vets for Freedom*, and Chairman of the *National Defense Committee* in Texas. As a United States Marine Officer, I served in Iraq and on the U.S./ Mexican Border. Harvard BA and MBA.

Life Member: *NRA and Texas State Rifle Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars.*  
Member: *Club for Growth, National Taxpayers Union, Republican National Committee.*

2. Texas ranks very low among states in percentage of persons with health insurance. What measures would you support for improving access to health care in Texas?

As a committed lifelong conservative activist, I am totally opposed to the Democrat led takeover of healthcare. We cannot allow government to take over our health care system. Texas should use every means available to block a proposal that will raise costs, lower quality, and lead to rationing of health care. We need more market based solutions such as Health Savings Accounts (HSA) and policies which promote direct consumer involvement in their health care decisions. The legislature failed to expand HSA for state employees in the last session, something I would seek to enact in the next legislative session.

3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should the gas tax be raised? Should the gas tax be dedicated solely to road construction and maintenance? Do you support increased construction of toll roads?

Stop diverting money out of the gas tax and make sure that the money goes toward the roads with the most congestion. The gas tax generates more revenue than we need for roads, but the excess and then some is diverted to projects other than roads. I have signed the ***Taxpayer Protection Pledge*** to vote against any tax increase and will oppose any additional taxes or fees placed on hard working Texas families. As a conservative, I oppose state financing of more toll roads, as our gas tax dollars should go to relieve congestion and build toll free roads.

4. Do you consider Texas' current per-student public school spending to be adequate and equitable? If not, what measures would you support to increase funding of public school education?

We need to raise the cap on charter schools above the current cap of 215, or better yet eliminate the cap completely. Charter schools introduce greater freedom and choice for parents to educate their children. Texas has had good success with charter schools and we need to build on that success to encourage them to succeed in Texas. We need to continue to phase out Robin Hood by the state buying down property taxes. As a conservative, I believe the legislature should ensure that parents receive more value for their education dollars.

5. Texas is one of the largest emitters of carbon dioxide in the U.S. What changes would you support to Texas' energy policies?

As a father of three daughters and husband, quality air is essential to me, and we must have clean air. However, the EPA is threatening to implement draconian measures which are not realistic, not based on science, and threaten job creation here in North Texas. Funding of state agencies which monitor pollution must be transparent so that taxpayers can see how their money is being used and ensure that we are meeting the environment goals. Texas can promote clean air through the development of nuclear energy as well as the adoption of the latest generation of clean coal technology.

6. State hospitals that serve people with mental illness have reduced the number of available beds, yet the need for services is increasing. How do you propose that Texas provide for the care of those with severe mental illness?

Sometimes placing patients in a group home environment is an appropriate option, and that has been recent trend. However, we need to redirect existing funding to provide state hospital beds for those families who believe that is the best course of care for their family member. There is a need for both, as each patient has different needs. Some can reside in group homes, and some patients need the individual care provided by state hospitals. That decision should be made by doctors and the patient's family.

7. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in the next session of the Texas Legislature, and what is your position on these issues?

Texas faces an \$8 to \$15 billion budget shortfall. We can meet this shortfall by restructuring Texas government, similar to the successful process utilized in 2003 which balanced the budget without raising taxes. As a conservative businessman, I constantly look for ways to create value, cut costs, and improve service. Government should do the same. This "tear down, then build up" budget process will cut costs and improve service for Texas taxpayers. I will support Pro-life legislation to reduce abortions. I served as a Marine Officer on the Southern Border, and I know firsthand how to secure that border.

### **Wayne Richard, Republican**

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of member of the Texas Senate/House of Representatives.

55 years of life experiences and launching a self funded successful technology company from my dining room twenty years ago has provided me with a wealth of knowledge. Everything I have in life I earned from hard work and sacrifice. I have been in a situation where I had to choose between food and rent. I am Chairman, SMU Cox Alumni Board of Directors, member Salvation Army Advisory Board in Plano. I'll approach the challenges we face from a business perspective and conduct myself as a patriotic statesman who is beholden to no lobby group of special interest group.

2. Texas ranks very low among states in percentage of persons with health insurance. What measures would you support for improving access to health care in Texas?

Open up the state to free market competition and eliminate many of the mandatory policy requirements which will make writing policies in Texas more attractive thereby allowing greater choice to the consumer and creating a competitive environment in Texas lowering costs to the consumer.

3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should the gas tax be raised? Should the gas tax be dedicated solely to road construction and maintenance? Do you support increased construction of toll roads?

I am not in favor of increasing taxes. Insure 100% of revenue collected by the state through the gas tax is allocated to road construction and maintenance. Toll revenues should be considered only for new construction and once the specified project / road is paid for the toll tax should be eliminated.

4. Do you consider Texas' current per-student public school spending to be adequate and equitable? If not, what measures would you support to increase funding of public school education?

Total dollars per student are adequate; however the allocation of funds needs to be reevaluated. A greater percentage needs to be allocated to the actual students and administrative allocation reduced. We need to allow for free market competition to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of our schools. Vouchers, home schooling and charter schools should be promoted. Invest in innovation that provides the greatest impact on learning. Repeal the Robin Hood tax, it is unconstitutional.

5. Texas is one of the largest emitters of carbon dioxide in the U.S. What changes would you support to Texas' energy policies?

Our carbon foot print is due largely to our automobile utilization. Improving our transportation infrastructure would help to address this situation. Increase the percentage of energy derived from wind farms. Begin the construction of nuclear power plants. Expand natural gas exploration.

6. State hospitals that serve people with mental illness have reduced the number of available beds, yet the need for services is increasing. How do you propose that Texas provide for the care of those with severe mental illness?

Texas needs to insure our mentally impaired citizens are cared for properly. We spend an enormous amount of money proving services and benefits to individuals undeserving such as illegals in our state. Reallocate those funds to the truly needy.

7. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in the next session of the Texas Legislature, and what is your position on these issues?

Bottom line we have a major budget issue to address. All agencies need to be evaluated and reviewed from the ground up. We need to have an efficiency committee begin the process of evaluating our current methods of business. Review agencies to determine if their services can be provided by the public sector. Eliminate the franchise / business tax. E-verify needs to be enforced within the state government and with all companies conducting businesses within the state of Texas.

### **Mabrie Jackson, Republican**

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of member of the Texas Senate/House of Representatives.

As a Plano businesswoman and mother of two children in Plano ISD schools, I understand the issues that are facing the citizens of District 66. As a former Plano City Councilwoman, I listened to the citizens of Plano and represented their interests. In fact, I am the only candidate in this race that has fought against tax increases for Plano citizens. I am running for State Representative so that I can represent the people of District 66 in Austin.

2. Texas ranks very low among states in percentage of persons with health insurance. What measures would you support for improving access to health care in Texas?

Access to health care for all Texans is important for the future of our state. Shortages in nursing and rural physicians make access to health care much more difficult. We need to seek options to adequately address these shortages. We must also hold firm on liability caps for non-economic damages in lawsuits against doctors and hospitals in order to keep insurance premiums as low as possible.

3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should the gas tax be raised? Should the gas tax be dedicated solely to road construction and maintenance? Do you support increased construction of toll roads?

North Texas needs new transportation infrastructure to ease the traffic congestion along crowded highways. However, I do not support any new taxes or tax increases to fund this infrastructure development. I also do not support imposing new tolls on existing free roads. Any option for transportation infrastructure should be locally approved by the voters.

4. Do you consider Texas' current per-student public school spending to be adequate and equitable? If not, what measures would you support to increase funding of public school education?

As the daughter of a retired Plano ISD teacher and the mother of two current Plano ISD students, I strongly believe that we need to focus our education policy on classroom excellence and teacher pay. I support increased funding for districts that are experiencing tremendous growth and the efficient use of those funds. I also support efforts to ensure that we close corporate loopholes in property taxes.

5. Texas is one of the largest emitters of carbon dioxide in the U.S. What changes would you support to Texas' energy policies?

I support continued exploration of renewable sources of energy like wind and solar energy. Renewable energy sources will be better for the present and future by giving us a cleaner and more efficient energy. Proven science should guide our future energy policy. Nuclear power should also be further explored and implemented into our State's energy policy.

6. State hospitals that serve people with mental illness have reduced the number of available beds, yet the need for services is increasing. How do you propose that Texas provide for the care of those with severe mental illness?

Texas needs to ensure that hospitals are able to serve people with severe mental illness. Addressing nursing and physician shortages will help with health care access for those suffering from mental illness. Texas needs to explore private/public partnerships that would allow the facilities necessary to deal with all patients in need of care.

7. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in the next session of the Texas Legislature, and what is your position on these issues?

The Texas Legislature must continue to focus on responsible solutions to transportation infrastructure to relieve the traffic congestion along our crowded highways. I also believe that we need to work with school administrators and local districts for school accountability measures that will use standards that will better serve our children, such as readiness for college and the workplace. We also need to pass a Voter ID bill to prevent voter fraud.

### **Josef Novak, Libertarian**

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of member of the Texas Senate/House of Representatives.

I am a semi-retired businessman, age 64, having been involved the field of finance, with emphasis today on mortgage lending and health care. At age 16, my political interests began to develop as a volunteer for local campaigns for Republican candidates. At 19, I served as a delegate to the Young Republicans Convention in Chicago. In the many states I have lived, I frequently took part in community affairs to better the operation of government. Over the course of time, I found my political ethos coinciding with an evolving Libertarian movement, so there I ventured.

2. Texas ranks very low among states in percentage of persons with health insurance. What measures would you support for improving access to health care in Texas?

I propose a capitated system for uninsured families not qualifying for Medicaid. Over time, federal funds would be rolled into an expanded plan if successful. Gatekeeper participation of 10% would be mandatory, with supplemental funding regulated by the Texas Workforce Commission at base ½ % of GSP. The main thrust, however, would be varied incentives for hospitals and physicians who form entities modeled after Kaiser Permanente, a private for-profit HMO. The Dept of Insurance would map regions on a competitive basis, with entities thereafter able to garner larger swaths of territory by bid, using criteria of premium, satisfaction and outcome.

3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should the gas tax be raised? Should the gas tax be dedicated solely to road construction and maintenance? Do you support increased construction of toll roads?

The gas tax should be linked to the Highway Cost Index, facilitating a basis of finance against relative increased revenues. Interest on borrowing is substantially offset by savings on cost inflation for deferred immediate needs. The future of our highways and fuel savings depend on the curtailment of congestion; long-term planning for projected population growth is imperative. I favor toll-roads as express thoroughfares only, with widely spaced on/off ramps and no toll booths. All tax designated for roads should be prohibited from diversion to any other purpose, albeit that portion of the gas tax allocated to schools.

4. Do you consider Texas' current per-student public school spending to be adequate and equitable? If not, what measures would you support to increase funding of public school education?

Funding is about 10 % below the national average, not adjusted for regional cost differentials. If we focus on the highest ranked schools in the state, that level of funding should be considered both equitable and adequate, with any increase of funding derived from the gas tax directed toward teachers' salaries. Accountability should be the hallmark for improvement. If a school falls below a set standard based on teacher continued-education testing, parents should be afforded choices that extend their options to any public school willing to accept additional students, funding attendant, and whose populations are not stressed.

5. Texas is one of the largest emitters of carbon dioxide in the U.S. What changes would you support to Texas' energy policies?

I support all considerations for alternative energy sources, and the encouragement of power-generating plants to advance conversions to clean-burning coal, a technology that exists today and is proved to work. Many mature industries began with and still enjoy certain tax breaks and subsidies irrespective of their success – tax incentives should be extended with time-sensitive prime objectives in place. Moreover, this direction creates jobs. And let's not forget that as we remedy transportation shortfalls, vehicles spend less time on highways, burning fuel.

6. State hospitals that serve people with mental illness have reduced the number of available beds, yet the need for services is increasing. How do you propose that Texas provide for the care of those with severe mental illness?

This is an exhaustive subject. I would refer to my plan for health care in Texas for any comprehensive solution to this problem.

7. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in the next session of the Texas Legislature, and what is your position on these issues?

Immigration: an honest approach in dealing with our neighbors whom we have invited for decades to fill our labor needs; we should implement a state-run system for issuing work permits for true shortages of labor that would serve as a national pilot program. E-verification is an easy solution for employers; rather than building a fence and abusing eminent domain, we should prosecute those breaking the law. When did we ever see a CEO arrested for hiring illegal aliens? Never, because the system was contrived to provide a steady stream of labor in controlled numbers.

## **Eric Roberson, Independent**

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of member of the Texas Senate/House of Representatives.

When I flew carrier jets in the Persian Gulf, the side of my aircraft said United States Navy, not Republican or Democratic Navy. We need one representative in Austin that puts Texas first and Party last.

I have lived in Plano for 14 years and have 4 children in PISD schools; I know how important good schools are to the Plano and Texas economies.

As attorney who has represented some of America's largest corporations, personally keeping factories in America, I know what it takes to help bring new companies and jobs to Plano and Texas – low taxes and good infrastructure.

2. Texas ranks very low among states in percentage of persons with health insurance. What measures would you support for improving access to health care in Texas?

The current health insurance situation hurts entrepreneurship, small business, and families. People with employment benefits cannot afford to start a new company because their healthcare premiums would skyrocket. People without benefits cannot afford individual policies.

We must realize that medical insurance industry is currently not subject to real market influence because there is insufficient consumer information and ineffective competition.

Acting within Capitalistic market structures can foster competition and promote efficiencies.

I suggest the following no-costs reforms; (1) fostering formation of co-ops for self-employed and small-businesses to bid for health insurance competitively; (2) increasing consumer information regarding costs and quality.

3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should the gas tax be raised? Should the gas tax be dedicated solely to road construction and maintenance? Do you support increased construction of toll roads?

Nothing slows economic development like bad transportation. According to current estimates, by 2050 there may be 12 million residents in the North Texas.

Without effective transportation, quality of life and economic development may be destroyed. We must be willing to examine options that maintain our low tax levels but that allow our region to prevent the gridlock that will destroy economic growth.

All options should be on the table and funds must be dedicated to transportation uses. Toll roads, however, should not be viewed as anything different than a tax and we should not mortgage our future to foreign companies.

4. Do you consider Texas' current per-student public school spending to be adequate and equitable? If not, what measures would you support to increase funding of public school education?

No. Although modified and less burdensome, the Robin Hood system still makes no sense and must be ended. Texas needs a permanent solution so the PISD and other districts can plan effectively to meet the needs of their local districts.

Between 1999 and 2008, Texas fell from 25<sup>th</sup> to 44<sup>th</sup> in school spending. Even though education is 44% of Texas' state budget, as more people move to Texas, education spending has not kept pace.

Good public schools are a key to economic growth. We cannot meet the needs of Texas students by siphoning Public School money for private school vouchers.

5. Texas is one of the largest emitters of carbon dioxide in the U.S. What changes would you support to Texas' energy policies?

Carbon emissions are problem for the world, not just Texas. It makes no sense for Texas to self-inflict wounds by implementing policies that will move Texas' factories and refineries to Third World nations with less pollution controls than America.

Texas can and should promote wind energy, nuclear power, natural gas and other common sense greener solutions that will create Texas jobs, reduce dependence on foreign oil, promote economic growth and reduce our carbon footprint.

Moving to a Greener energy policy can mean better jobs and a stronger economy if we understand and use the strengths of our capitalistic market systems.

6. State hospitals that serve people with mental illness have reduced the number of available beds, yet the need for services is increasing. How do you propose that Texas provide for the care of those with severe mental illness?

Texas ranks next to last in per capita spending for its mentally ill at \$34.57 (1/3 of the national average - \$103.53), ahead of only New Mexico.

This would be something to brag about if needs were being meet, but they are not.

The legislature took a big step last session by increasing funding to local MHMR facilities. However, given budget realities, and lack of lobby supporting the "least of these" fellow Texans, it will be hard to improve this dismal record.

We can improve by making it a moral and political imperative to meet the needs of these Texans.

7. What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in the next session of the Texas Legislature, and what is your position on these issues?

The biggest issue will be tackling an \$11-12 billion budget shortfall and maintaining low taxes without sacrificing the necessary government services to attract new business.

Texas must maintain low taxes. Currently Texas ranks 48<sup>th</sup> in overall taxation. While Texas government spends \$6,858 per person, California spends \$10,070. Yet Texas has better roads, schools and infrastructure.

Our business advantages attract over 600 new Texans each day, requiring new roads, schools and infrastructure.

To continue to attract business, we must maintain the advantage both in lower taxes and better services. A temporary budget crisis should not prevent proper investments in our future.