



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF COLLIN COUNTY
www.lwvcollin.org

Nonpartisan

VOTERS GUIDE

**March 6, 2018
Primary Election
TX Senator District 8**

Early voting: February 20 – March 2

Election Day Polls: March 6 – 7 am to 7 pm

About this Voters Guide

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

This guide is available online at www.lwvcollin.org, along with guides for other offices that include all or part of Collin County. Candidate responses for all races are also available at www.VOTE411.org, where you can enter an address and view a personalized ballot with races specific to that address.

Questionnaires were sent to all candidates for each office, whether or not the race is contested. Candidate replies were subject to a character limit and are printed without editing or verification. If a candidate did not respond by the deadline, "No response received" is printed. Candidates were asked to avoid references to their opponents. Photos are included for candidates who provided them.

This Voters Guide is organized by office sought, with candidates listed in alphabetical order, regardless of their political party.

League of Women Voters is a Nonpartisan Organization

The LWV never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

Texas Senator District 8

4-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 Senate.

Questions

Taxes: Should school property taxes and/or franchise taxes be reduced? If so, what sources should be used to make up the resulting public school funding shortfall? Do you support transparency for school taxes that are sent to the state under Robin Hood?

Transportation: What are the main transportation needs in Texas, and how should they be funded?

Education: What changes, if any, should be made to public education in Texas?

Healthcare: What legislation would you support, if any, to ensure comprehensive, affordable healthcare for all Texans?

Emergency Preparedness: What does the state need to do to be prepared for and provide emergency services and funding after natural disasters?

Other Issues: 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?

Brian Chaput, Democratic Party

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Education: Master of Science in Electrical Engineering from the University of Texas at Dallas, Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering with a Minor in History from Washington University in St. Louis, Plano Senior High School Graduate

Experience: 24+ years Manufacturing Engineering and Product Development, Plano Heritage Commission - Chairman, Plano Masonic Lodge - Past Master, Scottish Rite, Board Member of 501c3, Plano Chamber of Commerce, Youth Sports Coach, PTA, Marathoner & Soccer Player

Taxes: Property taxes can't make up for the state's delinquency. We need 'taxparency' to ensure revenue collected in the name of education is spent on education. School districts keep a fraction of the revenue raised in property tax appraisal increases. If the state is required to pay its half, local property taxes would be relieved of the tax burden and instant support will become available to our school districts to spend on teacher resources and compensation. Franchise tax laws, expanding ACA in TX, and economic growth will inject billions of revenue to the state funds for use on school financing.

Transportation: The main transportation need in TX is to efficiently connect communities of workers to business centers. We need to invest in mass transit and bicycle and foot paths to lower demand on highways. Reducing highway use alone will control spending on road maintenance, allowing the reallocation of funds to these transit solutions and eliminating the need for new toll projects. Express lanes and the proposed private/public funded joint venture bullet train connecting Dallas and Houston will connect longer distanced commuters and greatly enhance Texas's economic opportunity.

Education: To be a leading state in public education, TX must prioritize STEM initiatives, public full-day Pre-K, school testing and rating standards, expanded community college programs, and address college affordability, research grants, and private-public partnerships for our state university systems. For educators, we need to provide competitive salaries and improve TRS funding. Commitment with transparency in the public educational funding is imperative. TX Legislators must view education as a long-term public investment for a well-educated workforce to spur economic growth and prosperity for all.

Healthcare: Affordable, comprehensive healthcare is an issue for Texans and all Americans. I would support any proposed legislation that addresses this problem. I believe ACA Medicaid expansion in TX is the simplest method to return billions of tax revenue to the state. It will help many citizens obtain immediate attention to mental and physical health concerns. People can only be whole when their bodies and minds are properly treated. Also, a woman should have individual responsibility and control of what happens to her body, and restrictions on women's health are completely unnecessary and immoral.

Emergency Preparedness: If the federal government continues to underfund programs like FEMA, the state must prepare to lead aid efforts after natural disasters and emergencies. To be ready and to minimize personal and property loss, the state should employ a risk assessment team to analyze potential scenarios and repercussions of disasters. Emergency scenario modeling should also be performed, where a clear, efficient plan of action is derived and quickly communicated to emergency service personnel. This includes the strategic coordination of volunteer efforts, money, and supplies for immediate impact.

Other Issues: Texas economic growth and sustainability should be a priority legislative topic discussed from a macro and micro economic viewpoint for the benefit of Texans and our businesses. To increase wages, job opportunity, and

production we can encourage tax credits for TX businesses reinvesting in local companies, adjust the minimum wage, reform franchise taxes, and repeal Texas's blue laws. Further benefit comes from a well-trained, local workforce. I also have a plan to lower year-to-year property tax adjustments on all property owners, while maintaining revenue growth for local tax jurisdictions.

Phillip Huffines, Republican Party

No response received

Ed Kless, Libertarian Party



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Education: Pace University, BA, Liberal Studies

Experience: Collin County Libertarian Party Chair and two-time candidate for Texas Senate in SD 8.

Taxes: Creating a school voucher program would reduce the cost of education resulting in the ability to lower the property and franchise taxes. A voucher program would also eliminate the need for Robin Hood since the funding would be attached to the child and the parents would be in control of where the student attended school.

Transportation: Laws restricting autonomous vehicles should be eliminated. This technology is only two or three years away. These vehicles are safe AND will require less infrastructure. Any additional infrastructure for transportation should be privately funded.

Education: Provide educational choice for all Texas parents not just the wealthy by creating a school voucher program.

Healthcare: Allow telemedicine to expand by eliminating regulations against doctors practicing in said manner. Allow insurance from other state to be sold in Texas. Both of these initiative would reduce the price of healthcare across the board.

Emergency Preparedness: The best idea to be to create a plan that allows private companies and charities to do their work. In the past, government agencies have interfered and even blocked some of these organizations causing more hardship on the victims.

Other Issues: I would look to eliminate roughly one-third of all current regulations especially those requiring licensure. For example, the state of Texas requires a license to shampoo hair, this is absurd. The result is that fewer people can get jobs in these areas. These laws do not keep the public safe, rather they just protect incumbents and make these services more expensive. This results in a double-whammy to poorer households.

Angela Paxton, Republican Party



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Education: Baylor University - BA, Mathematical Science; University of Houston, Clear Lake - MS, Education

Experience: 22 year educator (public, private and home school); High School math teacher (Lifetime Texas certification in secondary mathematics); School Guidance Counselor

Taxes: Texans pay some of the highest property taxes of any state and must have relief. Like you, I'm impacted by skyrocketing property taxes, and this continued increase is simply unsustainable. We never really "own" our homes; we simply pay higher and higher taxes for the privilege of living in our homes. Home ownership shouldn't be threatened by government greed, and an important baseline in any taxation is that it must be transparent. The margins tax must be fully repealed.

Transportation: Collin County is disproportionately tolled and even worse those tolls are exported across the state to fund other projects rather than being reinvested in needed local projects. Transportation is critical to the continued growth of SD8 and Collin County and must be fully funded as a core function of government. With three of our four major arteries already being tolled, Collin County has more than its fair share of tollways; it doesn't need more. The legislature should prioritize highway funding and budget the money needed for Texas roads.

Education: I've devoted 22 years to the rewarding field of education, including teaching in public and private schools and homeschooling. I bring an informed and personal perspective to the education issue to which our state devotes 52% of its general revenues. Robin Hood is an oppressive problem in SD8 and it is time for a new start on school finance. My education priority will be focusing education spending on the classroom resource that most affects student learning - the

teacher. As a fiscal conservative, I will keep education policy focused on the priority of increasing student achievement.

Healthcare: Obamacare (ACA) should be repealed and I support efforts to legally hinder the implementation of or rescind components of the ACA on both the national and state level. Costs have exploded, making affordable healthcare illegal, unaffordable and inaccessible. Texas officials should continue to push for the ability to make decisions in how to operate Medicaid based on our own knowledge of how best to serve the needs of our citizens. Mandates from Washington must be opposed.

Emergency Preparedness: Harvey showed us that Texans help Texans in times of need; in many cases it was churches, private entities, charitable organizations, and individuals that moved quickly into action. We must find more ways to leverage the agility of individuals and these private and charitable organizations such as how federal rules were changed following Harvey, allowing churches to use funding to assist their neighbors in need. The Harvey catastrophe also underscores why we must narrow the purpose of the Rainy Day Fund and protect it for exactly these kinds of natural disasters.

Other Issues: As a border state, Texas must have strong, secure borders and end policies that encourage illegal immigration. The Constitution and our borders are what define us as a nation. If we fail to protect either, we will cease to exist as a place in the world that secures and protects for its citizens the inalienable rights afforded us by our Creator, including life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I fully support the Legislature's action in passing a ban on sanctuary cities, because dangerous criminal aliens who break our laws should be deported.

Mark Phariss, Democratic Party



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Education: Vanderbilt Law School

Experience: I have decades of experience in LGBTQ activism, including serving as a plaintiff on the Texas marriage equality lawsuit. In addition I sit on the board of Equality Texas.

Taxes: Texas' property taxes are rapidly increasing due to the state not adequately funding education. State spending has decreased over a 10 year period by approx.

\$339/pupil, forcing local communities to increase property taxes, which particularly hurt taxpayers whose wages aren't keeping up with property tax increases. Plano ISD, for example, will send approx. \$154MM of its citizens' money to Austin this year (and approx. \$200MM next year), money that could be used for a property tax cut. Transparency is essential for voters to see the problem lies in Austin, not with local communities.

Transportation: This past legislative session the Texas legislature passed Amendment 12 to SB 312, essentially prohibiting TxDOT from generating funds from managed lanes & toll projects, thus eliminating, as the TxDot Executive Director testified in 2015, an additional \$6 billion per year in transportation funding. This must be reversed, giving local communities the ability to decide for themselves (rather than Austin deciding for them) whether to fund projects with managed lanes and toll roads, especially in high traffic urban areas where both residents and businesses will benefit.

Education: One, the state should adequately fund public education (see first answer above) and, two, vouchers should not be used to divert state money away from underfunded public education. Teachers, oftentimes underpaid, overworked, and frequently purchasing supplies in their classrooms with personal monies, should be supported, not vilified, and the state must address the fact that teachers' healthcare premiums are increasing faster than wage increases. Pre-K programs should be supported (they are ultimately cost-effective in the long run), and special education must be supported as well.

Healthcare: I support legislation that will pressure the Governor to accept a Medicaid expansion package that could reduce the number of uninsured in Texas (approx. 5 million) by approx. 50%. I also support state legislation that would provide relief to county and city administrations compensating for unfunded care at hospitals and medical facilities, allowing them to expand and care for more patients at lower costs. Taking care of our citizens is a founding principle of our state government, and I intend to do everything I can to work with the legislature to that end.

Emergency Preparedness: The state has a Rainy Day Fund that the Governor refuses to use (but should use) for actual rainy days, such as Hurricane Harvey. The state needs to write legislation to clearly define the terms on which these funds can (and shall) be used. In addition, the legislature should foster relationships with schools, community centers, and other facilities to have a plan in place in case of the need for refugee shelters. Underdeveloped areas of the state must have infrastructure put in place to give advanced warning and evacuation options. Funding these projects will create more jobs in return.

Other Issues: The Texas legislature has spent too much time on issues Texans do not care about, like bathrooms, and not enough on important issues, like education, transportation, property taxes, healthcare, and good paying jobs. Education finance reform starts with opposing school vouchers, and includes adequately funding education to enable local communities to lower property taxes. Making life easier for Texas families can be accomplished by extending high speed internet into our undeveloped communities, supporting equal pay for women, and making our transportation systems safer and more available.

You may bring this *Voters Guide* into the voting booth! In 1995, the Texas law prohibiting use of printed materials, such as this *Voters Guide*, in the polling place was ruled unconstitutional (*Texas Election Code, Section 61.011*)

Your vote is your voice. Be heard.