



WHAT YOUR **V**OTE DECIDES

Here are the elections on your
#TX2020 ballot - explained.



TX Lege

STATE SENATORS

State senators function much like US senators. They work alongside the governor of Texas to create laws and establish a state budget. They pass bills on public policy matters, setting levels for state spending, raising and lowering taxes, and voting to uphold or override gubernatorial vetoes. In the case of impeachment trials brought by the TX House, they serve as the court for it.

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

State representatives function much like US representatives. They consider proposed laws, resolutions and constitutional amendments for submission to voters, assign all funds to the state government, originate all bills for raising revenues considered by TX legislature and can bring an impeachment trial against a statewide officer.

TX Exec

RAILROAD COMMISSIONERS

Despite its name, the commission does not regulate railroads but instead oversees the oil and gas industry, gas utilities, pipeline safety, safety in the liquefied petroleum gas industry, and surface coal and uranium mining.

SHERIFFS

They serve as license peace officers and are responsible for enforcing the state's criminal laws, manage and work the county jail, provide security for the courts, and serve warrants and civil papers. They may also regulate bail bondsmen in counties with no bail bond board.



STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Members set curriculum and graduation requirements, oversee the TX Permanent School Fund, review and adopt instructional materials, appoint board members to special districts, provide final review for State Board for Educator Certification and review the commissioner's proposed award of new charter schools.

TAX ASSESSOR-COLLECTORS

They are responsible for public funds. As their title suggests, they assess and collect taxes for the county- assessing property value, collecting property taxes/ad valorem taxes, and entering into contract with school, cities, and special districts to collect taxes. They also serve as an agent of the TX Department of Transportation and as the designated voter registrar for some TX counties.

COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

They serve on the Commissioners Court (which has legislative and executive duties), the governing body of the county, with the county judge. The Commissioners Court carries on county government, including providing safety protection, public transportation, parks, hospitals and buildings, providing zoning, waste, water and permit regulations, levying and collecting taxes for county and municipal organizations and overseeing and enforcing more specific duties, as laid out by TX statutes.

CONSTABLES

Constables are certified TX peace officers and are seen as in the office "closest to the people." Once in-office, duties vary county by county but may include serving as bailiffs and serving papers issued by justice courts, enforcing traffic laws and patrolling neighborhoods, and criminal investigations.

TX Courts

TEXAS SUPREME COURT JUSTICES

The court is the last resort for Texas' civil matters. Judges spend much of their time deciding which cases will be heard, usually picking cases that help clarify Texas laws. The court answers questions of state law certified from a federal appellate court; issues writs; conducts proceedings for the involuntary removal of judges; and reviews cases involving attorney discipline.

COURT OF CRIMINAL APPEALS JUSTICES

The court decides which criminal cases to hear. The court must hear cases that involve sentencing decisions in capital punishment cases and other cases involving liberty issues, such capital punishment cases, cases where bail has been denied and habeas cases where a person being detained attempts to prove some constitutional right has been violated as a result of their detention.

CHIEF JUSTICE OF COURTS OF APPEALS

They ensure that laws, regulations, and court policies are followed, and monitor court caseloads. They oversee local rule-making and adaptations of state court rules, resolve informal disputes and review court budgets and court spending with the Clerk of Court. They also serve as the link between the court and other branches of TX government or the public.

FAMILY DISTRICT JUDGES

Family Courts decide on cases relating to families and children like divorce, child custody, child support, visitation rights, protective orders and the emancipation of minors.

COURT OF APPEALS JUSTICES

There are 14 appellate courts in the state, which have intermediate jurisdiction- judges decide on civil and criminal cases that are appealed from the lower district or county courts.

DISTRICT ATTORNEYS

They represent the state in prosecuting felony criminal cases and in removing children from abusive households. They work with law enforcement officers in the investigation of criminal cases. They also decide to pursue police brutality prosecution and the death penalty.

VARIOUS DISTRICT JUDGES, CRIMINAL DISTRICT JUDGES

District courts are the first to hear felony criminal cases, divorce cases, cases involving title to land, election contest cases, civil matters in which the amount of money or damages involved is \$200 or more, and any matters in which jurisdiction is not placed in another trial court. In more densely-populated districts, courts have specialized district courts for criminal and civil cases.

COUNTY COURT AT LAW JUDGES

County Courts at Law are trial courts in TX with shared jurisdiction over many cases with the district courts and county courts. Each of the county courts at law vary widely in scope. The judge can issue writs in cases where the offense charged is within the jurisdiction of the court. The judge also can punish for contempt, and has all other powers and duties of the county judge.

COUNTY ATTORNEYS

The county attorney enforces criminal statutes and does not represent the county in its general legal or civil business.

JUSTICES OF THE PEACE

Justice courts are the first to hear misdemeanor criminal cases where punishment upon conviction may be only by fine. These courts generally have exclusive jurisdiction of civil matters when the amount in controversy does not exceed \$200, and shared jurisdiction with the county courts when the amount in controversy is \$200 to \$10,000.

US Lege

US SENATORS

They confirm presidential appointments, ratify treaties, pass bills (that must also be passed by the House to become law), override presidential vetoes (which must also be vetoed by the House to come into effect), and conduct impeachment trials of federal officials.

US REPRESENTATIVES

They introduce bills, resolutions and amendments. The House consists of 20 committees- including Agriculture; Appropriations; Armed Services; Budget; Commerce; Education and the Workforce; Ethics; Financial Services; Foreign Affairs; and Homeland Security. These committees monitor agencies and programs within their jurisdiction.

