



## **Political Watch Committee**

**Arlington, Texas**

A combined Committee of Members of the Arlington Republican Club and the Republican Women of Arlington

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### **Contents**

<b><u>Section</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
<i>National Offices (by Dr. Mark Hanson)</i>	1
<i>State Offices (by David Rakes)</i>	3
<i>County Offices (by Steve Eklund)</i>	5
<i>City Offices – City Council Meetings (by Richard Weber)</i>	6
<i>AISD School Board of Trustees (by Susan Tate)</i>	7
<i>Mansfield ISD (34% of MISD students live in Arlington) (by Cassie Redinger)</i>	10

### **National Offices (by Dr. Mark Hanson)**

All our federal legislators have pledged support for the SAVE act and condemned the government shutdown caused by Democrats, among other Republican agenda items. Both of our Senators criticized Democrat US Senator nominee James **Talarico** for being anti-meat! Guess who the Texas ranchers will vote for?

#### **Representative Roger Williams (R-CD25)**

Representative Roger **Williams** is Chair of the House Small Business Committee. He introduced the “Put America on Commission Act of 2026.” The bill aims to create a federal commission focused on improving U.S. economic competitiveness and long-term growth. In early 2026, **Williams** was involved in legislation referred to the House Financial Services Committee, including banking system reforms and regulations affecting financial institutions and industries.



Congressman **Williams** is consistent in working towards lower taxes and regulation and expanding capital. He works to support small business and manufacturing and trade schools. He is an advocate of stronger election security. (Remember, he was a former Texas Secretary of State, most concerned with elections.)

The Congressman had no primary opposition and is running against Democrat

Dione **Sims** in November.

### **Representative Jake Ellzey (R-CD6)**

Representative Jake **Ellzey** voted for and supported the FY2026 appropriations package, which funds the federal government. He framed this as restoring “regular order” which means not to pass budgets by reconciliation. He consistently votes for policies that are pro-defense and pro-election security.



Representative Jake Ellzey (left) and PWC Reporter Dr. Mark Hanson

In early February, **Ellzey** backed House action that moved the government away from a potential shutdown.

On Feb. 17, 2026, **Ellzey** voted in favor of the SAVE Act, a bill focused on election integrity measures. This bill is awaiting a Senate vote.

**Ellzey** won the Republican primary for Texas’s 6th Congressional District, securing the Republican nomination.

He entered 2026 with significantly higher fundraising totals than primary opponents. Representative **Ellzey** will face Democrat Danny **Minton** in November.

### **Senator Ted Cruz (R-TX)**

Senator Ted **Cruz** led a bipartisan effort to improve aviation safety by requiring new aircraft-tracking technology with the goal of reducing mid-air collision. This bill did not pass the House.

The Senator introduced legislation to ensure airport security workers are paid even during government shutdowns. The bill gained support from major airline CEOs, showing real industry backing.



**Cruz** advocated a plan to reduce capital gains taxes by indexing for inflation. He also introduced bipartisan child abuse survivor protections by sponsoring TREY’S Law to void non-disclosure agreements that attempt to silence survivors of child sexual abuse.

Senator **Cruz** co-led a bipartisan effort to expand and speed up federal benefits for injured/killed public safety officers. He proposed closing loopholes that allow nonprofits to fund violent protests without transparency in the SPONSOR Act. He also introduced the “Count the Crimes to Cut Act” to catalog all federal crimes and improve legal transparency.

**Cruz** proposed requiring payments based on actual attendance to reduce fraud in childcare programs. As a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, **Cruz** issued statements supporting U.S. military actions against Iran and warned about elevated terrorism threats and advocated stronger security policies.

**Cruz** is currently Chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, giving him significant influence over transportation, technology and interstate commerce.

## Senator John Cornyn (R-TX)



Senator John **Cornyn** has been actively introducing legislation, including: “End Special Treatment for Congress at Airports Act,” which aims to remove preferential treatment for members of Congress at airport security.

The Senator sponsored a bill allowing law enforcement to purchase retired firearms, which expands access for officers to acquire previously used service weapons.

**Cornyn** questioned the administration on the Iran policy and counterterrorism risks, especially tied to DHS funding issues and before hostilities began in Iran. He has emphasized linking DHS funding to national security concerns, arguing against partial funding approaches.

**Cornyn** reversed his long-standing position and expressed openness to changing or eliminating the filibuster to pass Republican priorities like the SAVE America Act. This is a position shift that received much national publicity. He has always been a defender of Senate traditions. This shift could materially affect how laws pass in the Senate now and in the future. The Senator is also trying to stop Somali currency smuggling, sharia law, and prohibit illegal aliens from becoming police officers. (Why hasn't this been illegal!?)

We are all aware of the primary election in which **Cornyn** finds himself. He finished first by a small amount in the March 3<sup>rd</sup> Republican primary advancing to a runoff in May. So far in 2026, **Cornyn** led fundraising among candidates in the Texas Senate race. We have all noticed that he is aligning more closely with Donald **Trump's** policy agenda, including support for major GOP legislation.

## State Offices (by David Rakes)

The big news currently in the state is the Primary that was held on March 3<sup>rd</sup>. There weren't too many surprises on the Republican side, but there was one big shake up in the Democrat Primary.

- Governor – Greg **Abbott** prevailed over a field of ten other hopefuls. **Abbott** received 81.8% of the vote, with Doc **Chambers** being a distant second at 11.2%. Abbott will face Democrat Gina **Hinojosa** in November, as she defeated a field of eight other Democrats.
- Attorney General – This was a hot race and offered a mild surprise. Mays **Middleton**, a strong conservative Texas Senator, led the way with 39.1% of the vote. Former congressman Chip **Roy** was second at 31.6% and will head to a runoff with **Middleton** to choose the nomination to run in November. Aaron **Reitz**, who stepped down from the Trump Department of Justice to run, was a distant third with 14.2%. He has now endorsed Mays **Middleton** in the runoff. Democrat Nathan **Johnson** (48.1%) will face Joe **Jaworski** (26.4%) in a runoff in May for the right to face either **Middleton** or **Roy**.



Mays Middleton reached a runoff for Texas Attorney General

- Comptroller of Public Accounts – Don **Huffines** won this outright with a total of 57.4% of the vote. Interim Comptroller and former state Senator Kelly **Hancock** was knocked out after receiving only 23.7%. **Huffines** will face Democrat Sarah **Eckhardt** in November.
- Commissioner of Agriculture – This was another mild surprise as challenger Nate **Sheets** overcame incumbent Sid **Miller** 52.7%-47.3%. **Sheets** will face Democrat Clayton **Tucker** in November.
- Railroad Commissioner – While incumbent Jim **Wright** was the leading vote-getter with 32.1%, former Tarrant County GOP Chair Bo **French** forced a runoff by receiving 31.7% of the vote. The winner of that runoff will face Democrat Jon **Rosenthal**



Nate Sheets ousted incumbent Sid Miller for Ag Commissioner

(Note: The Court of Criminal Appeals is the Supreme Court of Texas for Criminal cases.)

- Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 3 – This was a hot race with four legitimate contenders. As might be expected, it's headed to a runoff between Alison **Fox** (31.3%) and Thomas **Smith** (30.7%). The winner of the runoff will face Democrat Okey **Anyiam** in November.
- Judge, Court of Criminal Appeals, Place 9 – John **Messinger** won this seat with 68.8% of the vote. **Messinger** will face Democrat Holly **Taylor** in November.

Members of the Texas House run every two years, and members of the Senate run every four years. For that reason, some of our Senators aren't involved in the current election season.

- SD9 – This seat was the subject of a special election in November with a runoff in January, and Republican Leigh **Wambsganss** lost that runoff to Democrat Taylor **Rehmet**. Ironically, that seat is up for re-election this year, so **Rehmet** really doesn't have any duties before the November 2026 election. **Wambsganss** will face **Rehmet** again in November, as she was the only candidate in the Republican Primary.



Conservative Leigh Wambsganss gets another shot for SD9

- SD10 – Current Republican Senator Phil **King** is not up for re-election this year.
- SD22 – Former State Representative David **Cook** won this Primary outright, receiving 67% of the vote. He will face Democrat Amy **Martinez-Salas** in November.
- SD23 - Current Democrat Senator Royce **West** is not up for election this year.
- HD92: JP **Woodruff** beat Joseph **Robinson** 67% to 33% for the right to face incumbent Democrat Salman **Bhojani** in November.

- HD94: This seat is vacant as Tony **Tinderholt** stepped down to run for the County Commission. Five Republicans competed for this seat, so you might expect it to wind up in a runoff. That's why Cheryl **Bean's** outright win was so impressive as she received 54% of the vote. Jackie **Schlegel** was second with 25% and local favorite Susan **Valliant** was a distant third with 10%. **Bean** will face Democrat Katie **O'Brien Duzan** in November.
- HD96: Ellen **Fleischman** was unopposed for the Republican nomination to replace David **Cook**. Perpetual Democrat candidate Ebony **Turner** will face **Fleischman** in November.
- HD101: No Republicans ran to oppose long-time Democrat Chris **Turner**. But in the biggest surprise of the Primary, **Turner lost** to Junior **Ezeonu** 53%-47%. With no Republicans running in November, **Ezeonu** will be the next Representative in HD101.



Cheryl Bean defeated four other Republicans for HD94

There were ten propositions on the ballot as well. As a reminder, these are merely a way for the Republican Party to get the feel of the priorities of the Republicans in Texas. The results will provide advice to the party as they write the party platform. All of the propositions passed with at least 73% of the vote. In particular, Proposition #10, regarding banning Sharia law, passed with 94.8% of the vote. This is an indicator that citizens consider the Muslim threat within our borders to be real.

As a final note regarding voting, consider the race for SD9. That has been a safe Republican seat, a district that President **Trump** carried by 17 points. Democrats were motivated in the Special Election, however, and Republican Leigh **Wambsgans** lost in a light turnout runoff. Most people expect that she will defeat **Rehmet** in November when there will be a bigger turnout. But the name of the game is turnout! The candidate that can turn out their vote is the one that will win. So don't get complacent! We still have a runoff in May where we will choose between some good candidates to run in November. Come out and vote! The big election will be in November when we must turn out to defeat the far-left Democrats. Remember, Democrats gave us open borders, men in women's sports and locker rooms, and mutilation of children for sex changes. We must defeat them in November and any other time we have the opportunity.

### **County Offices** (by Steve Eklund)

Results of the Primary Election March 3, 2026:

- County Judge: Tim O'Hare (i) - 88%, Robert Buker - 12%
- County Commissioner, Precinct 2: Tony Tinderholt - 80%, Lucila Seri - 20%
- District Attorney, Phil Sorrels (incumbent) - 100%
- Family District Judge, 231<sup>st</sup> District: Leslie Barrows won with 54% of the vote.
- Family District Judge, 234<sup>th</sup> District: Andy Hsu won with 56% of the vote.

The 38 other incumbent Judges received 100% of the vote.

Of significance, all the county judges are Republicans! We have a few Justices of the Peace who are not. It is very important for Law and Order that conservative Republican judges are re-elected to the bench.

Our county sheriff, Bill **Waybourn**, was re-elected for his third four-year term in November 2024. He will be on the ballot for the November 2028 election. We need to support his re-election bid starting March 2028. He has certainly been a superior Sheriff!



Sheriff Bill Waybourn will be on the ballot in 2028.

On February 10<sup>th</sup>, the Commissioners Court approved a grant application and resolution for the Sheriff Immigration Law Enforcement Grant Program. It passed 3:2.

This grant and resolution stem from a grant program established by Senate Bill 8 (89th legislative session) to help cover the costs of implementing certain agreements with the United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

There are approximately 25 Islamic mosques in Tarrant County. There are more than 67 mosques in DFW, and there are more than 32,000 Muslims living in our county. Do we know who our neighbors are?

### **City Offices – City Council Meetings** (by Richard Weber)

There are 14 candidates running for five city council spots for the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Municipal Elections. (Early voting will be April 20 – April 28.) In my opinion there are only four candidates I get a positive feeling about, Nikkie **Hunter** (single-member District 3), Lisa **Ventura** (single-member District 4), Rebecca **Boxall** (single-member District 5), and Kelly **Burke** (challenger in single-member District 3). I dislike all the choices for Mayor (and at-large District 8). My official preferences will be in the [Arlington Spectator](#) in early April.



Kelly Burke (left) and Nikkie Hunter will square off for City Council District 3.

The Ballot order for the May 2<sup>nd</sup> Election:

- Mayor – Hunter **Crow**, Jim **Ross** (i), Shaun **Mallory**, Steve **Cavendar**.
- District 3 (generally considered southeast Arlington) – Kelly **Burke**, Nikkie **Hunter**.
- District 4 (generally considered west Arlington) – Tom **Ware**, Rojo **Meixuiero**, Lisa **Ventura**
- District 5 (generally considered downtown and east Arlington) – Rebecca **Boxall** (i), Brittney **Garcia-Dumas**
- District 8 – Jason **Shelton**, Melody **Fowler**, Corey **Harris**.

The council's latest corporate welfare deals include Anthem, the redevelopment of

Lincoln Square. What started as a \$150 million dollar project, with \$14.25 million coming from the taxpayers' funds, is now down to an almost \$100 million project with over \$42 million coming from taxpayers' funds.

The city also spent \$19,000,000 from water "to go" funds, meant to start projects before bond money is available, to buy land at the southwest corner of Lamar and Collins. For more information, there is a [staff report](#), the actual [resolution](#), and the [contract attachment](#). The claim is this will not delay any water projects (then why are they sitting on so much of our/taxpayer funds they charged us on water bills?). In the last report I supplied a staff report where this was to be a \$1 million deal to help purchase the land, but that must have fallen through, so now the city is shelling out the full \$19 million for the purchase. That old staff report may be found [here](#). James **Hartley** of KERA News and the *Arlington Report* has an [article](#) as well.

With much displeasure from the LGBTQ community, the city council passed an anti-discrimination ordinance that forwards complaints to the federal level. (I do not know if June's Gay Pride event is still canceled or not.) I still wonder why the Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB) helped sponsor the first one.

The city council approved three "[resolutions of support](#)" and one "[resolution of no objection](#)" for over 500 more low-income apartments. These resolutions help the developers get preferred federal financing in the form of tax credits. The Arlington Housing Finance Corporation (controlled by the city council) also approved a \$75 million intent to issue bonds for the 291 apartments at 1801 E. Arkansas Lane and approved issuing \$40 million in bonds to refinance the construction bonds at the Matlock Flats. Personally, I am still trying to figure out how low-income apartments are good for Arlington. At the March 24<sup>th</sup> council meeting they are set to approve another developer agreement for massive apartments/mixed-use downtown.

## ***AISD School Board of Trustees*** (by Susan Tate)

This report will focus on three key areas – The May 2<sup>nd</sup> School Board Election, One of the district's Key Priorities: Academic Growth, and the 2026 Proposed Bond Package.

### **School Board Election**

On May 2, 2026 there will be a local election that covers City Council and School Board offices. There are two School Board seats that will be decided:

- Place 6: Jan **Tyler**, Brooklyn **Richardson** (i)
- Place 7: Leanne **Haynes** (i), Linton C. **Davis**

Due to the traditionally low turnout for these elections, your vote will carry a lot of weight. Be sure to get out and vote!

### **Academic Growth**

#### Targeted Improvement Plans and Turn Around Plans

My last report included an update on three years of performance data released by the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2025. This report revealed

some of the district's schools received unacceptable (D/F) ratings.

As a result, AISD has developed Targeted Improvement Plans (TIPs) and Turn Around Plans (TAPs), which are monitored by the TEA. To give you some perspective on how this process works:

- A TIP is generated when a campus receives its first F rating.
- In the second year of implementing a TIP, a TAP is also developed. This occurs if the campus does not meet the requirements of the first year of the TIP.
- The TAP is initiated after the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of unacceptable ratings.

The district is focusing on high quality, intensive curriculum and instruction improvement. The Bluebonnet Math Learning program will be implemented as part of these plans to increase performance. The district piloted this specific learning curriculum at Foster Elementary, and they are seeing improved results in grades K – 2. Additionally, the district will monitor with milestones reported out over three years: 2026 – March 2028.

#### Curriculum Audit Update

The curriculum audit process kicked off last year. Dr. Steven **Ebell** with Curriculum Management Solutions, an independent audit firm, provided an update to the Board with key findings and recommendations.

The audit focused on five areas: Vision/Accountability, Curriculum, Consistency, Feedback, and Productivity.

The district would like to be seen as the school district of choice; thus, providing high quality education across their 76 campuses.

A few of the strengths highlighted from the audit revealed that AISD had dedicated employees with a strong focus on students, multiple opportunities for students to learn such as the Fine Arts program, and the Career/Technical program.

One key finding was the assessment trends that showed performance below the state averages in most areas of the State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR) exams. However, Dr. **Ebell** pointed out the district's scores are consistent with the performance of other districts serving similar student populations. The following school districts were selected for comparison: El Paso, Ft. Worth, Garland and Pasadena.

Their recommendation: Develop/refine the curriculum, implement, monitor, and report progress.

## 2024-25 Texas Academic Performance Report by Dr. Natalie Lopez

In February of this year, the Board received the following update. For the STAAR Exams, the district tested 100% of students, which is up 1% from the previous year and is on par with the State level. In the All-Subjects category, AISD maintained performance at 67% for all students. They are on par with the State and Regional level. In reading, AISD maintained at 67% and Math also maintained at 65%. In the College Career and Military Readiness category the district saw an increase of 10% from the 2023-24 period.



Dr. Natalie Lopez is the Assistant Superintendent of Research and Accountability for AISD

The State of Texas establishes the passing standard which is approaches grade level or above.

## Capital Needs Steering Committee Report and Proposed Bond Package Options

Dr. Catherine Parra, AISD and Nick Heizer, citizen, provided a report on the committee's work, findings, and recommendations for bond options.

The committee is comprised of 40 citizens across Arlington. The committee has engaged in 6 meetings year to date. The committee reviewed 55 projects totaling \$1.8B dollars, visited campuses, looked at demographics, and reviewed facilities such as S. Davis Elementary to look at the conditions of the facilities. They also reviewed some deferred projects from the 2019 bond package.



Dr. Catherine Parra is Chair of the Community Bond Oversight Committee

Two options were initially proposed:

- Option 1: \$350M – this would be a .0060 tax increase which effectively is a 0% increase
- Option 2: \$450M – this would be a .0070 tax increase which would be a 1% increase.

The Board had a deadline of February 13<sup>th</sup> to decide if they would call for a bond election on the May 2026 ballot. During the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Board of Trustees voted to call for a bond election for the May 2, 2026, ballot.

Some of the discussions around what was to be included in the proposal: Of the 55 projects identified, 47 did not initially meet the agreed upon 75% committee consensus. After further review, the committee agreed upon 51 projects to be included in the proposal. The board reviewed some of the items and the differences between options 1 and 2. Some additional items were added to option 2.

Option 2 was selected with the total being \$501,264,910. This is broken down into:

- School Facilities: \$438,755,000;
- Technology: \$30,955,000;
- Athletic Facilities: \$31,565,000

## **Mansfield ISD (34% of MISD students live in Arlington) (by Cassie Redinger)**

The Local Election on May 2<sup>nd</sup> will include two seats on the Mansfield ISD School Board. They are:

- Place 6: Benita **Reed** (i) running unopposed
- Place 7: Courtney Lackey **Wilson** (i), Michele **Gooch**

Dr. Jandel **Crutchfield** made the motion to hire Dr. Tiffany **Spencer** as our new superintendent and Ana-Alicia **Horn** second it. It passed with a 7-0 vote



Dr. Tiffanie Spencer was hired as the new Superintendent of schools.

Dr. **Spencer** brings a proven record of instructional leadership, strategic systems thinking, and a deep commitment to student success. Throughout her career, she has focused on strengthening academic outcomes, supporting educators, and building collaborative partnerships with families and communities. Her leadership approach emphasizes transparency, continuous improvement, and student-centered decision-making.

In addition to her instructional expertise, Dr. **Spencer** is widely respected for her ability to align district operations with long-term vision and community values. She has successfully led initiatives focused on academic achievement, organizational culture, and operational excellence.

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Political Watch Committee (PWC) members are members of the [Arlington Republican Club](#) and the Republican Women of Arlington (RWA): Steve Eklund, Dr. Mark Hanson, David Rakes, Richard Weber, Susan Tate, and Cassie Redinger.

Disclaimer: The reporting and opinions expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the official policies and agenda of the Arlington Republican Club (ARC), nor those of the Republican Women of Arlington (RWA). This report draws information from other media and agency sources. These include school board and city council sites, as well as media sites such as Arlington Spectator and UTA's The Shorthorn.

If you want to send a "**Letter to the Editor**" or just your comments regarding this report, please send it to: [eklundastephen@yahoo.com](mailto:eklundastephen@yahoo.com). Thanks!

