

Statewide Offices: Governor

For my final column to describe the important statewide races on the November 8 ballot and the Democratic vision for that office, I'll review the position of Governor.

The Governor is the state's chief executive, elected every four years. The Governor makes policy recommendations to state legislators and signs bills into law once passed. The Governor also appoints the Secretary of State (responsible for the conduct of elections, among other duties) and many boards and commissions. The Governor is the only elected official that can call a special session of the Legislature.

A Democrat as Governor will fully fund public schools. Public education is about the future of Texas kids and the future of the Texas economy. To have the best jobs in America here in Texas, we need the best schools in America here in Texas. Right now, teachers across the state say they lack the resources and flexibility they need to fully unlock a lifelong love of learning in the students in their classroom. Texas underfunds



its schools by \$4,000 per student compared to the national average, and Texas' hyper-focus on standardized testing has tied the hands of educators, forcing them to teach to a test instead of teaching to the children in front of them. Democrats will also reject any effort, such as vouchers, to take public tax dollars out of Texas schools. According to the National Coalition for Public Education, "vouchers are especially harmful to the public school systems serving large rural areas because the schools are forced to spread the same costs for facilities, transportation, administration, and instruction over a smaller revenue stream."

Democrats will also promote access to affordable health care so that Texans are well enough to go

to school, pursue a career, and live to their full potential. With one in five Texans uninsured, Texas leads the nation in the number of people who can't afford to see a doctor or fill a prescription—and Texas ranks dead last in the nation when it comes to mental health care access.

The failure to expand Medicaid in Texas is driving up property taxes and insurance premiums. Democrats will expand Medicaid to bring \$100 billion of Texans' federal tax dollars back home to Texas to help more people see a doctor. Expanding Medicaid will create nearly 300,000 jobs in Texas, keep rural hospitals open, and reduce property taxes and health care costs across the board.

Democrats will also promote responsible gun ownership and change how easy it is for people to use firearms irresponsibly in this state. Over 4,000 Texans are killed by gun violence every year. Women in Texas are 24% more likely to be murdered with a gun than women in other states. And four of the worst mass shootings in American

history have taken place here in Texas in just the past decade. In 2021, the Governor ignored the advice of law enforcement when he signed the dangerous permitless carry law that makes it easy for criminals to carry a loaded gun in public without any background check, training, or permit. Democrats will repeal permitless carry and pass common-sense gun safety measures such as closing the private sale background check loophole; and enacting red-flag laws, safe storage laws, and stronger domestic violence reporting laws—all of which will keep guns out of the hands of people who shouldn't have them.

Democrats want every part of Texas to share in this state's wealth. Right now, when great jobs come to Texas, they're not coming to rural communities. Why? Because state leaders have failed to partner with rural communities to invest in education, health care, and broadband, making it harder and harder to recruit and retain talent and encourage economic investment. Two examples: due

to the refusal to expand Medicaid, more rural hospitals have closed in Texas than in any other state. And because the Governor vetoed rural broadband support legislation last year, rural Texans could soon be paying anywhere between \$20-\$100 more on their phone and internet bills. Democrats will be a partner for rural communities such as those in Kendall County.

You have one last chance to vote on Tuesday, November 8. Kendall County residents can vote at any one of eleven vote centers in the county, all open 7am-7pm. Visit the Kendall County Elections Office website to see a list of locations; they are also listed elsewhere in this newspaper. Make sure to bring your photo ID. For more information on statewide offices or to register to vote, call our office at 830-331-1243 or visit www.kcdems.us

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