

Statewide Offices: Lieutenant Governor

For my penultimate 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 Lieutenant Governor (Lt. Gov.).

According to the Texas Tribune, the Lt. Gov. "is often regarded as the most powerful statewide elected office because of its role in the Texas Legislature. In the Senate, the lieutenant governor is in charge of the agenda and standing committees and has the deciding word if there's a tie or a procedural question." The Lt. Gov.'s other responsibilities include co-chairing the Legislative Budget Board and serving on several other important committees. The Lt. Gov. assumes the powers of the Governor's office when the Governor is out of state or otherwise unable to discharge the office.

A Democrat in the Lt. Gov.'s office will work to fully fund Texas public schools and pay educators so that every child can have aspirations as big



as Texas. And that means fully funding Texas public schools—not vouchers and private charters. Democrats will fight for Texas to have the best schools in the nation by investing in smaller class sizes, more special education support, and great teachers.

Democrats will put an end to the budget cuts that rob Texas children of an education and be a champion for teachers, retired teachers, and all educators, including a cost-of-living adjustment. Democrats will also put an end to high-stakes testing.

Democrats are committed to fixing Texas's vulnerable power grid by increasing energy production and transmission across the board, investing in battery storage and smart-grid technol-

ogy, and creating tie-ins to the national grid. Democrats will hold accountable the corporations that made billions of dollars while Texans froze in order to bring energy costs down for Texas families.

Democrats will work ardently to ensure taxes are fair for Texas families and rein in exploding property taxes. They will start by closing tax loopholes for out-of-state corporations that cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year and use the money to lower property taxes for Texans and invest in local schools and public safety.

Democrats will also put an end to the constant culture wars that have consumed Texas state government and pit Texan against Texan.

Democrats will partner with rural communities across the state by ensuring the state no longer neglects rural schools, hospitals, and broadband. They will prioritize expanding Medicaid in order to stem the closure of rural hospitals as well as creating incentives

for rural broadband programs so that every community can access the digital economy. Democrats will oppose all efforts to pull money out of rural schools for private school voucher programs.

Democrats will also work to create a business climate that creates thousands of good paying jobs with benefits right here in Texas, and work to build an economy that serves everyone, not just out-of-state corporations. Democrats will champion Texas workers and fight for a living wage, safe working conditions, retirement security, and healthcare for all Texans.

Democrats will champion reforming the Texas criminal justice system and legalize marijuana so that more Texans can work rather than spend years in prison for minor, non-violent offenses. Democrats will also call on the state Legislature to invest in keeping our communities safe in order to reduce crime across the state. Democrats will work hand-in-hand with local offi-

cials, law enforcement, and community leaders to ensure Texas invests in well-trained and accountable law enforcement officers. Democrats will also fight to enact into law red flag laws, raise the age to purchase a firearm to 21, and end permitless carry which puts our law enforcement officers and communities in harm's way.

Democrats will return competence to the office of Lt. Gov. so that the Legislature can return to finding real solutions to real problems.

Early voting starts this Monday, October 24 at the Kendall County Courthouse Annex (221 Fawn Valley Dr, Boerne). Visit www.votetexas.gov to check your voter registration. (Unfortunately, the deadline to register to vote in the November 8 election has already passed.) For more information on statewide offices or to register to vote, call our office at 830-331-1243 or visit www.kcdems.us

Laura Bray is Chair of the Kendall County Democratic Party. Mike Collier contributed to this article.