

Statewide offices: Attorney General

For my next column to describe the important statewide races on the Nov. 8 ballot and the Democratic vision for that office, I'll review the Office of the Attorney General (OGA). The OGA serves as the state's top law enforcement officer. The OGA's responsibilities include defending the State of Texas and its laws by providing legal representation to the State, its officials, and agencies; serving the children of Texas through the enforcement of the state's child support laws and the collection of child support; securing justice for Texans by investigating and prosecuting criminal activities; and more. The OGA has the power to hold politicians accountable for any wrongdoings and can promote justice and equality by advocating for policies that benefit Texas communities. A Democrat in this office will champion voting protections, accessible health care, and more.

Democrats believe that health care is a human right. Going to the doctor or picking up a pre-



scription should never break the bank. Democrats will work to expand access to quality health care in rural areas, lower drug prices, ensure that vision and dental benefits are included in health plans, and expand Medicaid to the nearly 1.5 million people in Texas who need it. Democrats will end OAG lawsuits against schools, cities, and counties that are trying to keep Texas children safe during COVID-19 and any future health care emergency.

Democrats are also strong advocates for and defenders of Texans' rights, including those of the LGBTQ+ community. Democrats will create a full civil rights division within the OAG. Democrats will dismantle the incumbent's "election integrity unit" and replace it with a

Voting Rights Unit under a fully-funded Civil Rights Division. Democrats will ensure voting rights are protected in the courts if there are further attempts to make it harder for any Texan, especially people of color, to cast a ballot.

Workers are the backbone of America. Democrats will use the power of the OAG to protect the rights of workers and unions to organize, negotiate fair pay and benefits, and advocate for workers' interests. Democrats will also create a Workers' Rights Bureau to protect Texas workers from bad actors, and they'll fight to end wage theft, misclassification of workers to prevent them from receiving benefits, and health and safety violations that put workers in danger. Democrats will also appoint a labor liaison who will interface between the OAG and labor unions and leaders across the state — workers will have direct input in the policies that directly impact them.

The Texas power grid should not fail in the middle of a deadly win-

ter storm. No one has been held accountable for the failure of the Texas power grid in early 2021. The OAG has the power to investigate and hold those responsible accountable but has failed to do so. Texas deserves an AG who will take on powerful corporations to fight for Texans' interests, because AGs are supposed to be lawyers for the people.

Democrats will make consumer protection a top priority and investigate what went wrong with the Texas power grid to ensure that it can never happen again — and Democrats will act to ensure that corporations feel the consequences of taking advantage of Texans. Democrats will also stand up for rural communities to make sure they have access to the infrastructure they need, like clean water. Rural communities are often among the hardest hit when disaster strikes.

Though immigration enforcement falls under federal jurisdiction, Texas is currently engaged in unconstitutional, wasteful border enforcement efforts. Rather than solve the issues surrounding our immigration system,

these efforts are actively worsening the situation. Democrats believe that the people suffering at our border must be treated with compassion and respect.

Democrats also support legalizing the sale and use of recreational cannabis and ending the prejudicial prosecution of Black and brown Texans on misdemeanor criminal possession charges.

The last day to register to vote in the November election is October 11 (that's THIS Tuesday!). Visit www.votetexas.gov to check your registration or to register to vote. (Note that Texas doesn't have online voter registration; you must fill out a form and mail it to the Kendall County Elections Office.) Early voting starts Monday, October 24 at the Kendall County Courthouse Annex (221 Fawn Valley Dr, Boerne). 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. Rochelle Garza and the OGA contributed to this article.