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State office on the ballot: Comptroller

PROGRESSIVE VIEWS

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The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) basically serves as the state's accounting office. As Texas' chief tax collector, accountant, revenue estimator, treasurer and purchasing manager, CPA is responsible for writing the checks and keeping the books for the multi-billion-dollar business of state government.

On the ballot on Nov. 3, the CPA is also in charge of administering the voucher scheme. As the state's sole accountant, the Comptroller has the "bully pulpit" in how Texas taxes are handled.

Democrats will use this office to strongly advocate for Texas public education, its teachers and their retirement savings.

Public schools provide every child equal opportunity. High-quality teachers are the backbone of an excellent education, and Texas needs to recruit and retain the best and the brightest.

Texas children need access to virtual learning through broadband internet infrastructure. Texas schools must continue to prioritize safety for our teachers and our children. Democrats will protect our schools from state funding cuts.

A Democratic Comptroller will use the power of the office to advocate for Medicaid expansion and to fully expose how much it costs when Texas continues to refuse this expansion.

Texas is No. 1 in uninsured people in the U.S. and has the worst rate of child health insurance coverage in the nation — 1 in 4 uninsured U.S. children live here in Texas, and Texans deserve more.

Texas is one of the only states that has yet to expand Medicaid. If the Legislature expanded Medicaid, more than a million additional Texans would qualify for health insurance.

Access to Medicaid, SNAP and CHIP should be as easy as Venmo or ApplePay. We should actively reach out to eligible Texans, trust them and help them get on and stay on Medicaid, SNAP and CHIP as long as needed.

Outreach and easy enrollment pay for themselves in healthy Texans ready to contribute to the prosperity of their families and their communities.

Democrats also want to expand telehealth options through universal broadband. Shockingly, one third of Texas counties do not have public local health departments or hospitals. Through federal, state, and local partnership (particularly with public schools), Democrats will work to expand broadband fiber, equipment, and training so that every Texan, no matter where they live, has an electronic option for healthcare as well as education, training, and teleworking.

Democrats will also work to create a more simple, transparent and equitable tax system. Texans everywhere are seeking real relief from burdensome local property taxes. Real and lasting property tax relief, that doesn't just shift the burden around, will come from the state meeting its financial obligations.

Democrats believe in converting the local option homestead exemption to a flat rate rather than a percentage.

At the current percentage cap of 20%, Richey Rich with his $1 million home does not have to pay property taxes on $200,000 of his home's value. Meanwhile, Poor Paul with his $100,000 home is relieved of taxes on only $20,000 in value.

the local option Homestead Exemption were capped at a flat $100,000 in value, Richey Rich and Poor Paul would get equivalent tax relief in dollars. But those dollars would mean much more to Poor Paul's budget than Richey Rich's.

A Democratic Comptroller will also use the power of the office to stop the awarding of no-bid contracts to wealthy donors and to audit the voucher scheme to make sure the funds are being used as directed.

The last day to register to vote in the November election is Oct. 5. Visit www.votetexas.gov to check your registration or to register to vote.

Texas does not have online voter registration; you'll need to fill out a form and mail it or take it to the Kendall County Elections Office. 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. Sarah Eckhardt, the CPA, and a former Democratic candidate contributed to this article.