



Texas Primary Election Recap

The March 2026 primary will go down as the most expensive and consequential in Texas history as it set records in terms of ad spending and voter turnout. Nearly 2.1 million people voted in the GOP primary while the Democratic Primary saw nearly 2.2 million voters, including 400,000 voters who had no prior Democratic primary history.

Close to \$100 million was spent in total advertising for the U.S. Senate race. While a \$71 million defensive barrage from Senator John Cornyn and his allies kept him in first place, he failed to clear the 50% threshold and will head into a May 26th runoff against Attorney General Ken Paxton.

President Trump has generally stayed out of the race noting he “liked both candidates”. The day after the election, the President posted on Truth Social he will most likely endorse in the race and ask the other candidate to “drop out” of the race.

Democratic primary election winner James Talarico spent \$25 million, which helped him to build a broad coalition. Congresswoman Jasmine Crockett, who ran against Talarico has now thrown her support behind him in hopes of flipping the U.S. Senate seat for the first time in 30 years.

State Senator Mayes Middleton came out on top of an impressive group of strong opponents for the Attorney General position; however he fell short of the threshold to avoid a runoff. It is said Middleton fronted \$10 million of his own money to start the race. He and Congressman Chip Roy will go head-to-head again in the May runoff.

The Comptroller race was decisively won by former state Senator and businessman Don Huffines as he took 57.4% of the vote.

State Rep. Steve Toth delivered a shocking upset over incumbent Congressman Dan Crenshaw: 57.6% to 39%. Despite a massive \$1.3M fundraising lead, Crenshaw's clashes with the populist wing and his lack of a Trump endorsement proved fatal after redistricting brought more conservative elements into his district.

On the Texas state Senate side, Rep. Trent Ashby took the reins with 62.3% of the vote over his primary election opponent. Ashby faces Bobby Tillman on the Democratic ticket in the general election. The Senate seat was formerly held by Senator Robert Nichols who retired.

Rep. Dennis Paul ran for SD 11 (formerly Middleton's Senate seat) and will face Shannon Dickey on the Democratic ticket in the general election.



Brett Ligon easily won his primary election for Senate District 4, belonging to former Senator Brandon Creighton, and will face Ron Angeletti on Democratic ticket in the general election.

Rep. David Cook won his primary for Senate District 22, currently held by Senator Brian Birdwell. Senator Birdwell has been tapped by President Trump to serve as Assistant Secretary of Defense. He is awaiting confirmation by the Senate. David Cook will face Amy Martinez-Salas on the Democratic ticket in general election in November.

Over on the West side of the Texas Capitol, there were several incumbent casualties.

Rep. Cecil Bell, Jr. lost in House District 3. Bell served as chairman of Intergovernmental Relations.

Rep. Stan Kitzman lost in House District 85. He served on three committees with one being chair of the subcommittee on Article 3 of the House Appropriations Committee.

Rep. Chris Turner was a solid incumbent but lost his Democratic primary race. Turner served 13 years in the Texas House and served on 4 committees, one being the chair of the subcommittee on Property Tax Appraisals.

After the primary elections results, we will have 28 new House members and 4 new Senators.

TTA will work to get to know all of these new members and visit with all returning members. We will share the economic importance of the travel industry and our industry's value to the Texas economy.