

March 22<sup>nd</sup> Primary runoff

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Remember – Primary election runoffs will be Tuesday – March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Early voting will be May 14<sup>th</sup> through May 18<sup>th</sup>. To vote in either party runoff – you must have either voted in THAT party primary – or – not have voted in the primary at all (but simply want to vote in that party runoff). You do not have to re-register to vote in the runoff elections.

As the Texas Secretary of State recently said – voter turnout in Texas is “underwhelming”. Only 16 % of our “eligible voting population” cast a ballot in the recent primary elections. Runoff election turnout is traditionally quite a bit below the primary turnout. You will be required to have the same ID that was required in the primary election.

Statewide – there will be a number of runoffs. Two Democratic candidates for Governor will be in a runoff. Several of Texas’ congressional members are facing either a party runoff candidate – or – a candidate of the opposite party in the November general election. Some actually are facing a party runoff vote – then still will be facing a candidate of the opposite party in the November general election. This will become a VERY EXPENSIVE seat – for whomever the winner eventually proves to be.

You might wish to go to The Texas Tribune on line and sign up for “The Brief”. This will perhaps be the most factual and current method of obtaining updates in the 2018 Texas political election process.

On yet another note – one in which we have no control what-so-ever – let us take a look at the deepening drought conditions over large areas of Texas. The Texas Water Development Board maintains a constantly updated drought status report. You can reach this by simply going on line to: Texas Water Development Board – Water Weekly – where Tulsì Oberbeck has the current water / drought status for the entire state of Texas. The 42 counties in the northern most portion of the panhandle are currently the only area of the state classified as having Extreme Drought Conditions. The combination of extremely low humidity levels and 20 – to 45 mph wind speeds is a wildfire awaiting ignition. Texas A & M Forest Service on their Wildfires and Disasters page - give a continuing daily/hourly update on fire threats over the entire state.

In closing – let me address one Senate committee hearing specifically. The Senate Ag and Water Committee will be meeting at the Capitol – Monday March 26<sup>th</sup> – at 10 AM. The sole content of the hearing will be centered around a review of licensure and fee costs as imposed by Texas Department of Agriculture. Many of these fees and license costs were increased quite dramatically within the past two years.

Recommendations will be made by the committee that these fees and license costs be reduced. Justification is being based on a State Auditors report – which stated that TDA has accrued a surplus – due to these increases. Water related issues – as overseen by this Senate Committee – will be scheduled at later dates.

Now I am about the business of monitoring how these legislative runoff election races turn out. These unknowns can have major influence on how the Texas House is organized during the next legislative session. The winners of these runoff races can determine who becomes the Speaker of the House – as well as who chairs the major House committees.