

# Houston Chronicle Political Endorsements

## HOUSTON CHRONICLE ELECTION 2023

### Chronicle's Editorial Board Endorsements

Early voting starts Oct. 23 and ends Nov. 3. Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 7. Mail-in ballots must be received by 7 p.m. on Election Day if the carrier envelope is not postmarked. If your ballot is postmarked by 7 p.m. on Election Day, the county can receive it until 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Nov. 8.

#### HOUSTON MAYOR: JOHN WHITMIRE

After 50 years in Legislature, he's a proven bridge-builder guided by data and common sense -- not unbending ideology. He's a Democrat who has assembled a broad coalition of liberal and conservative support for his goals of transparency and good governance in this nonpartisan position.

#### TEXAS CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

**Prop 1, Right to farm:** Against Texas already has strong laws protecting agriculture. This amendment could limit lawmakers' ability to balance rural and urban interests in the future.

**Prop 2, Child care center tax cut:** For Child care deserts increased during the pandemic. We hope this property tax break, while imperfect, will trickle down to providers and families.

**Prop 3, Wealth tax ban:** Against Texas doesn't tax individual wealth. Elon Musk's bank account isn't at risk here. Amendment isn't needed.

**Prop 4, Homestead exemption:** For After two legislative sessions, Republicans finally agreed on a property tax relief package. The homestead exemption is the fairest way to distribute tax relief to ordinary homeowners.

**Prop 5, Texas University Fund:** For The fund would split \$4 billion across the endowments of four universities including the University of Houston. The investment would be transformational for UH and our city.

**Prop 6, Texas Water Fund:** For Though the proposal includes money for sources of water that could harm the environment, including desalination, most of the \$1 billion dedicated to this fund would go to needed projects in the state water plan.

**Prop 7, Texas Energy Fund:** For The imperfect amendment subsidizes fossil fuels with low-cost loans and bars renewables from benefiting, but it could keep our lights on as the energy transition continues.

**Prop 8, Broadband Infrastructure Fund:** For Without fast internet in parts of Texas, students can't complete classes, seniors can't see doctors online and businesses struggle. This \$1.5 billion fund will help bridge the digital divide.

**Prop 9, Teacher retirement adjustment:** For Gov. Greg Abbott's voucher push derailed teacher raises, but at least this amendment would give retired education employees a one-time cost of living bump to their pensions.

**Prop 10, Medical manufacturing tax break:** For While corporate tax breaks shift the tax burden onto others, we recommend this one in hopes that it will boost the Texas Medical Center and support an industry that will benefit Houston.

**Prop 11, El Paso conservation:** For We see no reason why El Paso shouldn't have the same tools as Harris, Fort Bend, Travis County and others to manage public resources such as water. This bond authority is one of those tools.

**Prop 12, Abolish Galveston County treasurer:** For This proposal, which has precedent in other counties, requires a majority of statewide and Galveston County voters to approve it in the same election. If statewide voters say yes, local voters will be the deciding factor.

**Prop 13, Raise judges' retirement ages:** For Raising the mandatory retirement age from 75 to 79 will allow respected judges to help reduce court backlogs. Age shouldn't be the sole determining factor of a senior judge's competence.

**Prop 14, State parks fund:** For We don't have enough state parks in this vast state to accommodate our growing population. This \$1 billion fund would allow for much-needed new acquisitions.

**Harris County Hospital District, Bond:** For This \$2.5 billion bond will fund a new LBJ hospital with a Level 1 trauma center and extend the life of Ben Taub. The need is urgent and the investment overdue.

#### CITY COUNCIL AT-LARGE

**Position 1:** Conchita Reyes An accountant by trade, her sharp eye and outside-the-box thinking will come in handy as Houston addresses fiscal challenges.

**Position 2:** Nick Hellyar A realtor who ran constituent services for a former councilmember and served as district director for a state representative, he's experienced, pragmatic and focused on public safety and infrastructure.

**Position 3:** Richard Cantu A former director of citizens' assistance for two mayors who lost his daughter to gun violence, he emphasizes community policing without expanding the police budget.

**Position 4:** Letitia Plummer Her willingness to be an independent voice for Houston and a check on the mayor is refreshing in a strong-mayor form of government in which some councilmembers shrink from engaging on controversial issues such as ShotSpotter.

**Position 5:** Sallie Alcorn A longtime city staffer before and now the incumbent, she relishes picking apart ordinances and getting public input on everything from stray dogs to drainage. She's a workhorse, not a grandstander.

#### CITY CHARTER AMENDMENTS

**Prop A:** For This charter amendment would let three Houston City Council members team up to place a proposal on the agenda for full council consideration, even if the mayor doesn't approve. This change adds some balance in our strong-mayor form of government without infringing on the mayor's leading role.

**Prop B:** For This effort to give Houston and other populous jurisdictions a fairer say in regional planning could give us more control over disaster relief and where we build highways, walkable neighborhoods, flood detention and other critical infrastructure.

#### CONTROLLER: CHRIS HOLLINS

His communication skills will help average Houstonians better understand the city's financial challenges. He shined during his brief stint as Harris County Clerk during the 2020 elections and promises to inject the same kind of energy and public-facing purpose to the controller's office.

#### CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS

**District B:** Tanisha Jackson  
**District C:** Abbie Kamin  
**District D:** Carolyn Evans-Shabazz  
**District E:** Martina Lemond Dixon  
**District G:** Mary Nan Huffman  
**District H:** Mario Castillo  
**District I:** Joaquin Martinez  
**District J:** Edward Pollard

**HOUSTON ISD**  
**Trustee, District III:** Dani Hernandez  
**Trustee, District IV:** Patricia K. Allen

**KATY ISD**  
**Props A, B, C and D:** For

Houston Chronicle political endorsements play a significant role in shaping the political landscape of Texas, particularly in the Houston area. As one of the largest newspapers in the state, the Houston Chronicle provides its readers with insights and evaluations of candidates running for various offices. These endorsements are not just recommendations; they reflect the newspaper's editorial stance on issues that affect the community and the state as a whole. This article delves into the importance of these endorsements, the process behind them, and their implications for voters and candidates alike.

# The Role of Endorsements in Elections

Political endorsements are a critical aspect of electoral politics. They serve several purposes:

- **Influencing Voter Decisions:** Endorsements can significantly sway public opinion, particularly among undecided voters. A respected publication like the Houston Chronicle can lend credibility to a candidate.
- **Highlighting Candidate Positions:** Endorsements often summarize a candidate's stance on key issues, helping voters to make informed decisions based on their values and priorities.
- **Encouraging Voter Turnout:** When a publication endorses a candidate, it can motivate readers to participate in elections, particularly among demographics that may feel disenchanting or disengaged.

## The Endorsement Process at the Houston Chronicle

Understanding how the Houston Chronicle arrives at its political endorsements is essential for grasping their significance. The process typically involves several key steps:

### 1. Candidate Interviews

The editorial board of the Houston Chronicle conducts interviews with candidates running for various offices. These interviews provide an opportunity for candidates to present their qualifications, policies, and vision for their respective roles.

### 2. Issue Evaluation

The board evaluates candidates based on their positions on pressing political issues. This evaluation is not limited to party affiliation; it encompasses a candidate's track record, proposed policies, and overall impact on the community.

### 3. Editorial Discussions

After the interviews and evaluations, the editorial board engages in discussions to weigh the strengths and weaknesses of each candidate. This collaborative process ensures that multiple perspectives are considered.

### 4. Final Decision and Publication

Once a consensus is reached, the Houston Chronicle publishes its endorsements, often accompanied by a detailed explanation of the decision. This transparency allows readers to understand the rationale behind each endorsement.