



LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS
OF COLLIN COUNTY
www.lwvcollin.org

Nonpartisan

VOTERS GUIDE

March 1, 2016, Primary Election
Texas Representative District 70

Early voting: February 16-26

Election Day: March 1 – Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

About this Voters Guide

This *Voters Guide* is published by the League of Women Voters of Collin County to help citizens prepare to cast an informed vote. The League of Women Voters encourages informed and active participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate.

This guide lists candidates for Texas Representative District 70. It is available online at www.lwvcollin.org, along with separate guides for statewide offices and other offices that include all or part of Collin County. A separate online *Voters Guide* gives general information about voting in the primary elections, including how to register to vote, where to vote, and how to vote by mail.

Candidate responses for all races are also available at www.VOTE411.org, where you can enter an address and review a personalized ballot with races specific to that address.

Questionnaires were sent to all candidates for each office, whether or not the race is contested. Candidate replies were subject to a character limit and are printed without editing or verification. If a candidate did not respond by the deadline, "No response received" is printed. Candidates were asked to avoid references to their opponents. Photos are included for candidates who provided them.

This *Voters Guide* is organized by office sought, with candidates listed in alphabetical order, regardless of their political party.

Texas Representative District 70

2-year term. Must be 21 years or older, a U.S. citizen, a resident of Texas, and a resident of the district represented. Responsible for representing the citizens of the district in which he/she is elected in the Texas House of Representatives.

QUESTIONS

Education: What changes, if any, should be made to public education financing in Texas?

Water: What should be done, if anything, to ensure sufficient capacity and safety of water in Texas?

Energy/Environment: How would you balance the development of energy sources with environmental concerns?

Human Trafficking: What, if anything, should Texas do to reduce human trafficking?

Payday and Auto Title Loans: What, if any, state regulations are needed on Payday and Auto Title loans, and why?

Transportation: What are the main transportation needs in Texas, and how should they be funded?

Other Issues: What other issues do you believe will be most pressing in the next session of the Texas Legislature, and what is your position on these issues?

League of Women Voters is a Nonpartisan Organization

The LWV never supports or opposes candidates for office or political parties, and any use of the League of Women Voters name in campaign advertising or literature has not been authorized by the League.

John Bryant (Democratic Party)



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Education: A lifelong resident of North Texas who attended Dallas Hillcrest High School, John has a Master's Degree in Architecture from the University of Texas at Arlington and a Bachelor's Degree from Austin College.

Experience: Associated with hospitality and retail for more than 40 years from small business owner to employee of a multinational corporation, John's been active in political, civic, and humanitarian organizations including the Red Cross and the Boy Scouts.

Education: Texas' future depends on providing the best education possible, and that takes money. However, Texas's school finance system has failed to provide sufficient revenue to our schools for years. When the Lottery was established Texans were told it would fund Texas schools, but only about a quarter of the lottery proceeds go to the schools. That needs to be changed to more than 50%. Also businesses who benefit from having a well educated workforce need to pay their fair share. There needs to be an ad valorem tax on property development transactions and a raise in commercial property tax rates.

Water: Texas has lots of seawater and undrinkable ground water, but most of our water comes from rainfall accumulated in our lakes and rivers. Sometimes there's too much and sometimes too little, but it's almost completely used by people, or business, or agriculture already, and some is needed for wildlife. Water Plans can't provide more rainwater when it doesn't rain. We've got to take better care of our water resources, and get much more serious about efficiency and conservation. There are developed countries that use a tenth of the water that we do. We have to look at what they're doing.

Energy/Environment: The most efficient solar panel ever mass produced is being manufactured in the US, and it is affordable. Green industries like this are producing jobs for Americans and helping to reduce our impact on the planet. Texas has an abundance of wind and sun so it seems reasonable that we should be leading the nation in renewable energy sources. I support more jobs for Texans in green energy industries like the production of wind turbines, batteries and solar panels. We don't want to be left at the mercy of price fluctuations in the fossil fuel industries and we must reduce our carbon footprint.

Human Trafficking: There are those in Texas government that want to deny there is a link between human trafficking and undocumented immigration and sometimes they're not right.

In both cases we have people being brought into Texas, frequently youths, under false pretenses to be taken advantage of for labor or sex. They're often trying to escape terrible circumstances. We need to see them as victims and realize that those who are taking advantage of these people are the criminals. That is who we need to concentrate on stopping and arresting, those who are reaping the benefits.

Payday and Auto Title Loans: The problem is that banks are often costlier for the poor than check cashers and other alternative financial services. This isn't just a problem for third world countries, but it affects the indigent in Texas as well. Texas can certainly stand to regulate these money lenders to keep them from taking such great advantage of our indigent. It used to be though that small financial services were supplied by savings & loans, credit unions, and even the post office. Texas needs to provide a framework for the re-emergence of these services in lieu of usurious Payday loans.

Transportation: The Texas transportation system has not kept pace with the needs of a rapidly increasing population and just proposing more highways isn't going to fix the problem. First, the gas tax currently only covers about a third of the transportation budget. We clearly need to increase the gas tax, but it can't be increased enough to take care of everything, and toll roads just discriminate against the indigent who need to get to their jobs. We need to redesign or civic and transportation systems. We need to provide living communities near jobs and reliable mass transit to build our economy.

Other Issues: We need to successfully address the 2nd Amendment to safely preserve our rights. Current State regulations don't do that. We need to revisit and improve these.

The costs of healthcare are increasing exponentially and access for all Texans is decreasing. The policies in Austin rejecting our own tax dollars need to be changed so that we

can improve access to healthcare in Texas. The cost of attending State Universities has risen phenomenally yet Texas has less tier 1

research universities than any comparable state. We have got to reduce the financial barriers to higher education.

Emmett Merwin (Green Party) – No response received

Scott Sanford (Republican Party) – No response received

Rachel Wester (Libertarian Party)



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None provided

Education: Masters of Arts in Teaching, Austin College
Experience: Secretary for Collin County Libertarian Party, Delegate to State Convention

Education: Every effort should be made to keep funding as locally controlled as possible. I am also in favor of allowing parents to use their school tax dollars to send their child to any school they see fit, to include home schooling. Funds should be allocated away from textbooks and testing.

Water: Education campaigns are key. It is the responsibility of each citizen to use water as efficiently as possible, whether in times of drought or in record rainfall years such as 2015. Decreased watering of yards should be supported by the Homeowners Associations that are so prevalent in Texas. Rainwater collection should be encouraged along with drought tolerant landscaping, especially with new builders as areas of Texas explode with growth.

Energy/Environment: Taken directly from the Party Platform: "While energy is needed to fuel a modern society, government should not be subsidizing any particular form of energy. We oppose all government control of energy pricing, allocation, and production." Since deregulation of the energy market, Texans have reaped the benefits of competition, with 10% of energy now produced by wind, making Texas the largest producer of wind energy in the country. Green energy is actually more affordable than conventional dirty sources and its use will continue to grow.

Human Trafficking: I am referring here specifically to sex trafficking. The perpetrators

of sex trafficking, especially of minors, should be heavily penalized as it is a horrific crime and violates the Non Aggression Principle upon which the Libertarian party is founded.

However, in most instances it is the victims of trafficking who are penalized for engaging in prostitution under current law. We should decriminalize sex work in order to empower women to reach out for help without fear of a jail sentence. We should also end the failed War on Drugs for this same reason.

Payday and Auto Title Loans: While I in no way recommend using these institutions and I do not support predatory lending practices, it is the right of an individual to borrow money under any terms to which they have voluntarily agreed. As long as Payday and Title Loan institutions are forthcoming in their disclosures upfront, they should be allowed to set the terms as they see fit.

Transportation: Privatize the construction of roads, to include increased use Toll Roads. Examples of this approach working well can be found in Paris and California. Private companies have an incentive to provide safer, more efficient roads that attract and keep drivers. No one should have to pay tolls on top of taxes, and there are many people who do not make much use of our roads. Therefore taxes should be reduced accordingly.

Other Issues: No response received

You may bring this *Voters Guide* into the voting booth! In 1995, the Texas law prohibiting use of printed materials, such as this *Voters Guide*, in the polling place was ruled unconstitutional (*Texas Election Code, Section 61.011*)

Your vote is your voice. Be heard.