



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

Nonpartisan

VOTERS GUIDE

Nov. 4, 2014, General Election
Texas Representative District 89

Early voting: Oct. 20-31

Election Day: Nov. 4 – 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 89. 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, which allows voters to enter an address and review 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 and party, with candidates listed in order by political party.

Texas Representative District 89

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

Health Care: Approximately one million uninsured adult U.S. citizens below the poverty line in Texas cannot get health coverage through either Medicaid or the health insurance marketplace. Should Texas work with federal Medicaid officials to pursue a "Texas solution" to close the coverage gap? Why or why not?

Education: The 2013-2015 budget included \$3.4 billion in education funding, but that was only 85% of what was cut in 2011 and still left the per-pupil funding more than \$500 short of the level reached before the recession. What changes, if any, need to be made to the financing of public education in Texas?

Infrastructure: Texas is the fastest growing state in the nation. The annual 12% population growth is placing a strain on water, energy, schools and transportation. What measures do you support to meet our growing infrastructure needs while continuing to grow a business-friendly state?

Chemicals: Since the explosion of a fertilizer plant in the town of West, many Texas residents have been concerned about chemicals stored near their homes. What changes, if any, would you support regarding regulations about and oversight of storage of chemicals and transparency of information about them?

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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.

QUESTIONS (CONT'D)

Mental Health: With Texas at the bottom of all 50 states in per capita spending for public mental health and substance abuse services, the state legislature made some increases in funding in 2013. Is additional funding needed? Why or why not?

Payday Loans: Payday and auto title loans are widespread in Texas, and many families become

trapped in a revolving door of debt because of high interest rates and unfavorable repayment terms on such loans. Are state regulations needed on this type of loan? Please explain.

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?

Jodie Laubenberg (Republican Party) – No response received

Sameena Karmally (Democratic Party)



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Education: University of Texas at Austin, Juris Doctorate, 2004
University of Texas at Austin, MA in Middle Eastern Studies, 2000

University of Dallas, BS in Biological Sciences, 1997

Experience: Worked at Akin Gump for 7 years, advising investors and investment fund sponsors on various issues related to the formation and administration of private equity investment funds. Volunteered for Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program & served on the Board of Hurst Public Library.

Health Care: According to the TX Health and Human Services Commission, if Texas had invested to expand Medicaid under the Affordable Care Act, the state could have accessed an additional \$80 billion in federal funds for low-income Texans to have insurance. We can't afford to miss out on this important program, and neither can our hospitals. We pay into the program, but we refused the benefits, and we have increased emergency room bills on top of that from the uninsured poor. I would accept the \$80 billion of medicaid dollars so our county hospitals can continue to save lives. Healthcare is not a luxury.

Education: Education is the single best predictor of socioeconomic success, and we must invest in pre-K education which will set kids on a path to high school graduation and higher education. An educated workforce benefits us all. Raising teacher pay and directing more funds to school should be the #1 priority of the Texas Legislature. School districts should not have to sue the state to ensure adequate funding. Education dollars should not be diverted elsewhere; we need a dedicated funding source and everyone needs to pay their fair share. It's an investment we can't afford not to make.

Infrastructure: Stop kicking the can down the road. We have crushing transportation debt, critical gaps in school funding, and failure to fund basic services. Businesses that make

profits in Texas must pay their fair share. The impetus to privatize public services to save money is a dangerous one that often results in taxpayers getting stuck with the bills while a large company lines its profits (e.g., toll roads, private prisons, student testing companies). I'd rather (1) spend public money on public services and (2) evaluate every corporate tax break on the books (\$44 billion).

Chemicals: I agree with the reforms outlined in the Dallas Morning News "Blueprint for Keeping Communities Safe" published 12/28/2013. I would advocate (1) requiring county fire codes and expand the State Fire Marshal Office's inspection authority; (2) requiring disclosure reports of hazardous chemicals and fire inspection history be accessible online, with a map; and (3) Increase penalties, and enforce those penalties, for lax storage and handling practices; fire inspection violations; failure to disclose chemicals. I would require businesses to procure adequate liability insurance.

Mental Health: Our state schools that house the mentally disabled are still rife with abuse despite several federal investigations. Texas should allocate the resources needed to comply with the settlement they reached in court with the DOJ in 2009 to adequately remedy the horrific conditions of our state schools. As of last fall not a single school has complied with even a third of the provisions in that settlement. Elected officials, including the

Attorney General, and our lawmakers, need to take this court mandate seriously instead of minimizing and ignoring this problem.

Payday Loans: Payday lending in Texas is out of control. We have the industry policing itself through the state government via millions of dollars in campaign contributions and appointed officials who are straight from the industry - outrageous! Many of the resolutions adopted by major cities in Texas should be adopted at the state level. For example, Dallas limits the number of times a loan can be refinanced, requires that payments be applied to pay down the loan's principal, and that loan amounts should be based on a borrower's capacity to repay.

Other Issues:

State leadership must restore confidence that government can deliver basic services effectively. We need to take back government from special interests and return it to its roots in the people, and its function: meeting their needs. I will continue to speak out on the issues of funding public education, water planning, fracking, foster care abuse, domestic violence, the environment, and other issues that we all need to be aware of. The most pressing of these are funding public education and resolving transportation debt - in other words, being fiscally responsible with tax dollars.

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.