



Texas BOMA Legislative Update
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The elections are *finally* over. Correction, the elections are over *for the most part*. Next up: the job of governing the state.

On November 4, 2014, Texas and other states around the nation held their general elections. As we will describe more fully below, two material things happened nationwide: first, voter participation was down as compared with 2012 (a presidential election year) and 2010 (the last midterm election).

Statewide Races

In Texas, all statewide Republican candidates won their election. At the top of the ticket (and the only non-judicial Republican seeking re-election), Senator John Cornyn (R) handily defeated Dallas dentist and businessman David Alameel (D) 62% to 34%.

On the state level, Attorney General (now Governor-elect) Greg Abbott carried his race against Senator Wendy Davis (D-Fort Worth) 59% to 39%. In addition to easily winning this race (the Associated Press called the race at 8:01 PM, right after the polls closed in El Paso), Governor-elect Abbott made significant inroads with Hispanic voters, winning 44% of their vote and carrying Hispanic male voters (according to exit polls).

Other statewide Republicans winning were Senator Dan Patrick (R-Houston), defeating Senator Leticia Van de Putte (D-San Antonio) in the race for Lt. Governor; Senator Ken Paxton (R-McKinney) defeating attorney Sam Houston (D) in the race for Attorney General; Senator Glenn Hegar (R-Katy) defeating businessman Mike Collier (D) in the race for Comptroller; George P. Bush (R) defeating John Cook (D) in the race for Land Commissioner; former Representative Sid Miller (R) defeating rancher Jim Hogan (D) in the race for Agriculture Commissioner; and businessman Ryan Sitton (R) defeating Sam Brown (D) in the race for Railroad Commissioner.

Legislative Races

True to form, election night brought its share of surprises. Chief among them was the defeat of Representative Mary Ann Perez (D-Houston) and Philip Cortez (D-San Antonio) by Republican challengers. In the open seat to replace Senator Wendy Davis, Konni Burton, the Republican candidate, easily defeated Democrat Libby Willis. All other incumbents won their races. In the Senate, there will be 19 Republicans and 10 Democrats when session starts (the 31st member will be selected at a special election to replace Senator Hegar, who will advance to Comptroller on January 1). In the House, there will be 98 Republicans and 42 Democrats.

Speaker's Race

Speaker Joe Straus was first elected to his post in 2009, and has been re-elected in 2011 and 2013. At this time, he faces a challenge from Representative Scott Turner (R-Frisco), who will start his second term in 2015. At this time, Speaker Straus appears to have the votes needed to handily win re-election as Speaker for a fourth term, though Representative Turner has promised to take the matter to a floor vote.

Governing

On November 5—just 15 hours after being declared the winner—Governor-elect Abbott held a press conference to announce the leader of his transition efforts. He promptly began meeting with various state leaders, including Speaker Joe Straus (R-San Antonio) and Lt. Governor-elect Dan Patrick, as well as heads of various agencies. Lt. Governor-elect Patrick has conducted similar efforts. These transition meetings will continue to take place over the coming months. Both Abbott and Patrick will be sworn in on January 20, 2015.

The Legislative Session starts on January 13, 2014, when all Representatives and all the new Senators will be sworn in to office. Pre-filing of legislation began on November 10, and there have already been approximately 400 bills and resolutions filed. We are closely monitoring the newly filed legislation and will alert you to anything that requires immediate attention.

We will continue to monitor these issues as they develop, and we will keep you informed.