



League of Women Voters
of Plano/Collin County
www.lwvcollin.org

Voters Guide

Mar. 2, 2010 Primary Elections Texas Senate and House

Early voting – February 16 – 26, 2010

Election day – Polls open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.

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

This guide includes contested races in which two or more candidates are running regardless of party. All candidates for the respective offices were invited to participate. If a candidate did not respond by the deadline, "No response from the candidate" is printed. Responses were limited to 100 words and truncated with /// after the 100th word. Where there are multiple candidates for the same office in a party, the candidates appear in ballot order.

Candidates for Texas Senate, District 8

4 year term. Must be 26 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 Senate.

Florence Shapiro (Incumbent), Republican – No response from the candidate

Ed Kless, Libertarian

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1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the position of member of the Texas Senate/House of Representatives.

Ever since graduating magna cum laude from Pace University in New York, I have been working in one capacity or another to help make small businesses better. Within the past decade, I have begun studying economics, especially price theory, and believe that the lack of basic economic understanding drives most bad government policies. There are two words that all economists agree upon regardless of their political leaning, "Incentives matter." Legislators motivated by the best of intentions have created perverse incentives that interfere with free market activities. Government is the problem in many cases, not the solution.

2. Texas ranks very low among states in percentage of persons with health insurance. What measures would you support for improving access to health care in Texas?

While health care and insurance reform have been debated mostly at the federal level, once again government has created a problem that must be dealt with on a local level. The best way to improve access to care is to create competitive delivery

systems. I would advocate for the Texas Medical Board to allow more creative delivery of basic care. Texas should allow our citizens to purchase health insurance across state lines thus spurring more competition among insurance companies. If elected, I would lead the charge against the implementation of a national insurance scheme on state's rights (Tenth Amendment) grounds.

3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should the gas tax be raised? Should the gas tax be dedicated solely to road construction and maintenance? Do you support increased construction of toll roads?

I believe bonds would be the best way to finance road construction. Maintenance should be paid for by a combination of local real estate taxes and gas tax. In principle, I have no problems with allowing private companies to develop toll roads. However, I am drastically opposed to the government use of eminent domain to confiscate private property for the purposes of turning that property over to another private developer. That said, toll roads owned and operated by the state should be eliminated. Combined with the gas tax, they amount to double taxation.

4. Do you consider Texas' current per-student public school spending to be adequate and equitable? If not, what measures would you support to increase funding of public school education?

The question while well intentioned, implies a false economic premise of measuring inputs rather than results. Enough statistics available if cherry-picked would create arguments for increasing or decreasing school spending. While many of the public schools in Senate District 8 are exemplary, as a state we are in the middle of the pack. We can do better. I believe that Texas should lead the nation by adopting a free market throughout all levels of education. We need more charter and magnet schools. Better still, I would propose creating a voucher system allowing parents to decide where to send their children.

5. Texas is one of the largest emitters of carbon dioxide in the U.S. What changes would you support to Texas' energy policies?

While I am sure we are one of the largest emitters of CO₂, we are also one of the more economically productive states. Creating any kind of a restriction on CO₂ levels would create an undue burden on the people of Texas. Remember, plants photosynthesize CO₂ into oxygen, as least that is what I learned in school; it is **not** toxic. I remain unconvinced about the dreaded outcomes of global warming, now called climate change. The last 10 years produced no increase to average surface temperature. It is only highly flawed models that predict these catastrophes.

6. State hospitals that serve people with mental illness have reduced the number of available beds, yet the need for services is increasing. How do you propose that Texas provide for the care of those with severe mental illness?

Again, the question implies government as the solution here, it is not. We need to reduce the overall tax burden on citizens. Texans, I have come to learn, are an extremely generous and hospitable people. Well-run private charities would be a better alternative to any form of state-run system.

7. 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?

The problems with **immigration** are not related to the immigrants themselves, but from the services the government provides them. The government at any level should not provide these services. We need to increase the number of worker visas allowing people a chance to earn a living and return to their homes and families.

Governments have wasted billions of dollars fighting an unwinnable “**war**” on **drugs**. I believe each person has the right to put into their bodies any substance of their own choosing be it alcohol or marijuana. They are responsible for their actions while under the influence of these.
