

FAQ: TPEA VOTING INITIATIVE

Why does TPEA want state employees and retirees to register to vote?

Plain and simple: if you don't register to vote, you cannot vote. The last day to register to vote in the March 1, 2022 primary is January 31, 2022.

Why should I care about the primary in March?

In Texas, primaries are highly competitive, and more than one person may run to be the Republican or Democrat candidate in the general election. There are 67 positions that have more than one candidate in the Republican primary for house, senate, and statewide elected offices and 37 positions that have more than one candidate in the Democratic primary.

There are, according to the Quorum Report, early indications that only 39% of senators do not have a primary or general election opponent. In the Texas House, 23% of incumbents have primary challenges, 25% have a general election challenge, 15% have both.

Does my vote matter?

Yes, your vote makes a difference, especially in local and state elections. There are plenty of cases where a small number of votes have decided elections.

Remember- the winner will be your representative whether you vote or not. It is crucial to make sure they know what issues you care about.

What is the difference between a Primary and General election?

In a primary election, Republicans run against Republicans, and Democrats run against other Democrats. Political parties use primaries to select a candidate for office that will run against the other party's candidate in the general election.

The general election determines which candidate is elected to office. (Voting during the primary does NOT mean you have to vote for that same person during general elections.)

How do I find candidates that support state employees and retirees?

First, look at each candidate's website, press releases, and media ads for any mention of state employee and retiree issues.

NOTE: If the candidate is a current legislative member, check at this link: <https://capitol.texas.gov/Home.aspx>, click on their name and bill records to see if they supported state employees and retirees during the past session.

Second, introduce yourself. Please send an email and call the local campaign office to let them know your name and interest in their campaign. Set up a meeting with their office. [Click here for TPEA's Advocacy Toolkit.](#)

Third, sign up for the candidate's newsletter, and attend local events or town hall meetings where the candidate will be appearing. Ask for their support on across-the-board pay increases for state employees and a benefit enhancement for state retirees. Let them know it has been six and one-half years since state employees had an across-the-board pay raise, and 21 years since state retirees have seen a retirement increase.

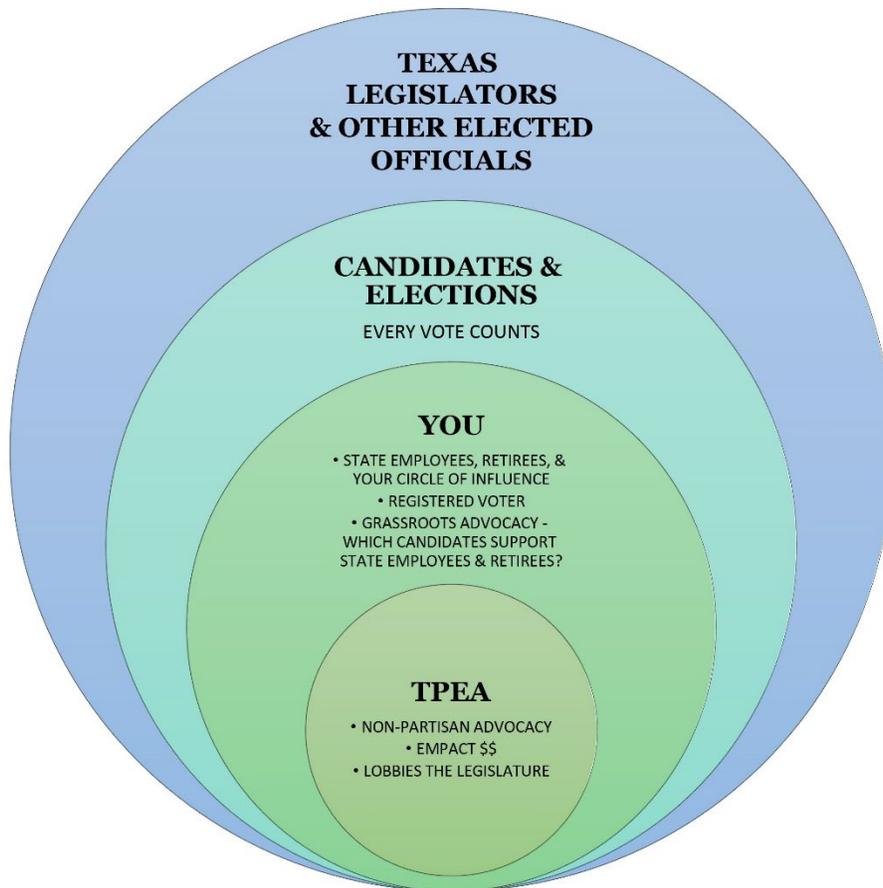
What if my state agency does not want me to talk to candidates?

We get this a lot. Voting is an essential and valuable civic right, but there are certain things that state employees can and cannot do concerning elections:

State Law Dos and Don'ts

Dos: A state employee has the rights of freedom of association and political participation guaranteed by the state and federal constitutions.

Don'ts: use **state funds** or state **property** for political purposes, and don't engage politically during work hours.



"TPEA plays the hand that it's dealt." What does this mean?

Elected officials care about the issues that are important to their district and the people who elected them. TPEA works to be your voice before the Legislature, legislative committees, and individual legislators, but TPEA can only talk to the people that you and other people elect. TPEA does not elect any house or senate members.

Electing people who care about state employee and retiree issues ensures TPEA's success in getting pay raises and funding for state retiree pension increases. **We have much more on this + tips to get involved at this link:**

<https://www.tpea.org/index.php/advocacy/advocacy-toolkit>