

LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DENTON VOTERS GUIDE[©]

GENERAL ELECTION - NOVEMBER 4, 2008

This **VOTERS GUIDE**[©] is published by the League of Women Voters of Denton, with partial funding from the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund. *An electronic version of this guide is available at www.lwvdenton.org.* The purpose of the guide is to help eligible voters make an informed decision about candidates in contested races. Candidates are listed by District, Precinct or Office, then in alphabetical order by the last name. Candidates who do not have an opponent on the ballot are listed in the guide for your information. Questions were developed by the Board of the League of Women Voters of Denton in cooperation with the Denton chapter of the American Association of University Women. Candidates were asked to reply within specific word limits. (Answers exceeding the word limit are abbreviated at that limit.) The League has not edited any responses for grammar, spelling, or punctuation.

This guide lists responses from candidates in contested races whose constituency covers Denton County; i.e., U.S. Representative District 26; Texas Senate District 9, Texas House Districts 63, 64, and 65; County Commissioner, Precinct 1; and Constable, Precinct 5. Candidates for the Presidency of the United States, U.S. Senator from Texas, Railroad Commissioner, Supreme Court, Court of Criminal Appeals, Courts of Appeal districts, and the State Board of Education are included in the Voters Guide published by the League of Women Voters of Texas Education Fund, and can be viewed on the web site of the League of Women Voters of Texas at www.lwvtexas.org.

EARLY VOTING will be available at Denton County Administration Building, 401 W. Hickory, and the North Texas State Fair Grounds (Fair Hall), 2217 N. Carroll Blvd. Early voting by personal appearance will be conducted on the following dates:

October 20 – 24: 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

October 25: 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

October 26: 1:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

October 27 – 31: 7:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m.

POLLING PLACES on Election Day will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Locations will vary according to your precinct. Contact the Denton County Elections Administration at 940-349-3200 or www.elections.dentoncounty.com for assistance.

The **LEAGUE OF WOMEN VOTERS OF DENTON** is a nonpartisan organization that works to promote political responsibility through informed and active participation in government. The League does not support or oppose any political party or candidate. The League publishes and distributes factual information to help prepare citizens to cast an informed vote. The League takes action on selected governmental issues that it has studied.

Join us in making our community Fair, Vibrant and Strong.

Membership in the League of Women Voters is open to men and women of all ages. With more than 80 years of experience, the League is one of America's most trusted grassroots organizations.

The League is where hands-on work to safeguard democracy leads to civic improvement. Join the League and be directly involved in shaping the important issues in our community. Visit www.lwvdenton.org for information and a membership application, or send your name, address, phone number and email address, plus \$50 membership fee to: PO Box 424945 TWU Station, Denton, TX 76204.

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VOTERS GUIDE FOR DENTON COUNTY GENERAL ELECTION

United States Representative, District 26

Questions for United States Representative:

1. What changes, if any, would you propose for access to and delivery of health care? (100 words)
2. What first steps should the U. S. Congress take to address global climate change? (100 words)
3. How would you address government secrecy and still facilitate citizen participation in government? (100 words)

Michael Burgess (Republican)

1. My physician and policymaking experiences tell me Americans are ready for change in health care. They're frustrated with an expensive system that's not portable. Other people don't get any care at all. And doctors are discouraged by red tape, mandates, and shrinking reimbursements. To improve health care we need to keep it centered on the doctor-patient relationship, give people more private options to make care more affordable, transition to a system of preventative care rather than sick care, and encourage and incent innovation rather than stifle it. We need to keep government out of the treatment room.

2. Global climate change is a global problem. The first step is to conduct an accurate cost benefit analysis. Many of the carbon target levels imposed by proposals in Congress would force the economy to meet carbon output levels from last century. I'm interested in seeing the cost impact of U.S. decisions. Carbon restrictions may cause our economy to further decline, effectively creating economic growth opportunities in developing countries where environmental concerns are an afterthought.

3. For better or worse, there will always be a need for the government to keep certain sensitive information secret. There has been decades of debate on the balance between a citizen's right to know and the government's effective use of secret information to keep us safe. The debate continues today and will continue for decades to come. I believe in a simple, straightforward policy of not divulging information that will put people's lives at risk, including, and perhaps most importantly, those serving our Nation. This common-sense approach will encourage people to participate in their government.

Ken Leach (Democrat) No Response

State Senator, District 9

Questions for State Senator:

1. Redistricting will be a major task of the 2010 Legislature. How would you facilitate citizen participation in the process? (75 words)
2. What state resources should be made available to help homeowners utilize alternate sources of energy? (75 words)
3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should existing roads become toll roads? (75 words)

Chris Harris (Republican)

1. Citizen participation in redistricting should begin with public testimony during the earliest stages of redistricting, and continue as specific plans are introduced and debated at the Texas legislature. My first goal for redistricting is to keep together communities of interest, such as cities, whenever possible.
2. Texas needs more sources of non-traditional energy, including wind and solar energy, and homeowners and businesses should be able to designate the source of energy. Texas must also improve conservation of energy, where economically feasible, and invest in new energy sources, including nuclear generation.
3. Our area will continue to need a combination of new highways financed both with the gas tax and with toll roads for new highway construction. I oppose converting any existing roads and highways from gas tax roads to toll roads. Along with mass transit options, highways are a critical part of the transportation mix in our area.

Melvin Willms (Democrat)

1. If I am going to represent you, I need to know what you want. Poll your organization and let me know. I want more than anything to help develop a respectable justice system for Texans.
2. The state should develop standards and issue permits to businesses that want to supply wind, coal, natural gas, solar, nuclear and hydro-electric power.
3. Fuel tax is the only way to finance construction and maintenance of roads and bridges. I will strongly oppose toll roads, but let me know if your organization wants them.

State Senator, District 30

Craig Estes (Republican) Unopposed

State Representative, District 63

Questions for State Representative:

1. Redistricting will be a major task of the 2010 Legislature. How would you facilitate citizen participation in the process? (75 words)
2. What state resources should be made available to help homeowners utilize alternate sources of energy? (75 words)
3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should existing roads become toll roads? (75 words)

Jesus Carrillo (Democrat) No Response

Tan Parker (Republican)

1. My constituents know that they can always come to me and share their perspective on any issue, including redistricting. The growth in Denton County means that we will be greatly affected by the 2011 redraw, but right now I am most focused on addressing the issues facing the 2009 Legislature.
2. Texas' energy demands are only going to grow as our population increases. To meet this need we should continue exploring renewable energy resources, such as solar and wind, and also offer incentives to homeowners by expanding on such programs as our energy efficiency sales tax holiday.

3. We must start by ending the practice of diverting our state transportation dollars into other areas of spending. Next, we must better leverage our federal transportation dollars. I do not support the concept of tolling existing free roadways. New tolled projects - which compliment free alternatives – provide motorists the choice to utilize toll roads at their own discretion.

John Turner (Libertarian)

1. Citizens need to be aware of how district lines are drawn and why. I would encourage citizens in my district to voice their opinions in public hearings and in written responses once any bills have been proposed.

2. I encourage citizens and business to use clean and efficient energy sources. However, I would not mandate the use of alternate sources of energy, nor would I support subsidies; just as I would not support subsidies for any other source of energy.

3. Taxes citizens currently pay are in part supposed to go toward construction and maintenance of roads. Government-constructed toll roads could result in anti-competitive incentives, creation of monopolies and increased expenses to citizens that have already paid taxes for the very same roads. Texas should control spending in other areas and make better use of tax dollars when it comes to road construction and maintenance.

State Representative, District 64

Questions for State Representative:

1. Redistricting will be a major task of the 2010 Legislature. How would you facilitate citizen participation in the process? (75 words)
2. What state resources should be made available to help homeowners utilize alternate sources of energy? (75 words)
3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should existing roads become toll roads? (75 words)

Myra Crownover (Republican)

1. Redistricting is a critically important undertaking by the legislature every ten years. In recent years the process has become increasingly political. I would like to see the process become less political in the future. Currently, the boundaries of District 64 are largely respectful of the communities inside the District. I would encourage all citizens to contact their State Representative and let them know that communities should not be divided for political gain.

2. I applaud the recent decision by the Public Utility Commission to approve the use of “smart meters” throughout Texas. Smart Meters will give homeowners information about their energy use so they can identify ways to cut costs and increase efficiency. Consumers will now have the power to control their energy use during high-cost “peak” times to save money. Programs like this should be encouraged and supported by government as we move forward.

3. There is no silver bullet right now to finance our transportation needs. The first step we should take is to stop using highway funds for other purposes. However, even without using highway funds for other needs, the current gas tax is an inadequate source of funding for our infrastructure as Texas continues to grow and prosper. Some toll roads may be necessary, but I oppose turning existing roads into toll roads.

Jason Jordan (Libertarian)

1. Redistricting should not be a political issue. As state representative I pledge to put people first, and not politicize a process that determines electoral parity.

2. Positive incentives such as production tax credits and subsidization should be made available to individual home owners, if they should choose to use them. Furthermore, The state as a whole needs to consider moving towards new generation nuclear power as a potential energy source.

3. The current gasoline tax seems fair and appropriate. Pre-existing roads should never be converted into toll roads. We own those roads, they were built and purchased with our tax dollars. The state does not have the right to sell our roads to private interests.

John McClelland (Democrat)

1. The redistricting process should be reformed. A nonpartisan panel of private citizens should be appointed to handle the process, along side Legislators from both parties.

2. Texas should offer more extensive credits to homeowners who wish to purchase solar panels or install wind mills on their properties. Additionally we should invest in the infrastructures needed to support mass projects for power production via solar and wind energy.

3. It can be financed eliminating wasteful spending by the Texas Department of Transportation, such as million dollar campaigns promoting nonexistent toll road projects. Congress should also be making sure all of our money invested in the motor fuels tax is returned to our state by the federal government. Toll roads should only be constructed once free alternate routes are established. Once built, there should be a limited time that tolls remain in place.

State Representative, District 65

Questions for State Representative:

1. Redistricting will be a major task of the 2010 Legislature. How would you facilitate citizen participation in the process? (75 words)
2. What state resources should be made available to help homeowners utilize alternate sources of energy? (75 words)
3. How should Texas finance the construction and maintenance of roads and bridges? Should existing roads become toll roads? (75 words)

Lee Hooper (Libertarian)

1. No Response

2. No state resources. The market will facilitate this on its own.

3. The construction of roads and bridges should be funded by the state for its citizens out of the sales tax revenues. The toll road concept is also good avenue. Should existing roads become toll roads? Toll roads tend to be better constructed, well maintained and manicured. I like toll roads, but I do believe they should become free access roads within a given period of time with no exceptions.

Burt Solomons (Republican) No Response

Sheriff

Benny Parkey (Republican) Unopposed

County Commissioner, Precinct 1

Questions for County Commissioner:

1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for this office. (50 words)
2. What non-mandated services do you consider worthy of support by the County Commissioners? (75 words)
3. What long-range plans should be developed by the county to regulate increasing development in unincorporated areas? (75 words)

Hugh Coleman (Republican)

1. As a former county employee and El Paso County Assistant County Attorney and Assistant Denton County District Attorney I have over a decade of experience representing Texas Counties and advising elected county officials. Furthermore, my education and training as an attorney provide excellent experience for the position of County Commissioner.

2. Counties are entities of limited authority and in my opinion should not be in the business of providing non-mandated services. However, if the situation arose where funds were available I would support funding local municipal libraries with the stipulation that county residents who not live in cities be allowed to have access to library materials.

3. In Texas county governments do not have the ability to regulate development like municipalities. Therefore, I would concentrate on providing resources to the Sheriff's Office and other first responders to make sure that the unincorporated areas have the public safety resources they need to remain protected. I would also make it a priority to have an up to date thoroughfare plan to insure that the transportation infrastructure is in line with the increased development.

Phyllis Wolper (Democrat)

1. Realtor (independent businessperson). Boardmember: (1) Greater Denton Wise Counties Association of Realtors (Governmental Affairs Committee) and (2) Adult Day Stay of Denton, a non profit assisting disabled adults. Established Real Scholarships, real estate program benefiting the TWU Former Student Association Scholarships. Previously headed investor relations for publicly traded companies (SEC reporting).

2. Institute programs to: (1) Promote clean air and water - from increasing mass transit to tightly regulating polluting industries, to attracting the kind of business that provides living wage jobs so more citizens can work in our own community. (2) Strengthen our social services to aid citizens that lack health care or are under-insured and dealing with major illnesses. (One statistic not discussed is the number of home foreclosures attributed to a major health issue of a family member.)

3. The first question about proposed development should always be, "will this benefit the greatest number of our citizens, or overburden our resources?" Basic needs - such as utilities, adequate classrooms, fire and police, safety signage and warning sirens - should be required in any master plan, and not be afterthoughts that increase the cost of homeownership after the purchase. Proper planning is essential to insure we have the resources, such as clean water, for our growing population.

County Commissioner, Precinct 3

Bobbie J. Mitchell (Republican) Unopposed

Denton County Constable, Precinct 1

James E. Dotson (Republican) Unopposed

Denton County Constable, Precinct 2

Mike Truitt (Republican) Unopposed

Denton County Constable, Precinct 3

Jerry Raburn (Republican) Unopposed

Denton County Constable, Precinct 4

John Hatzenbuhler (Republican) Unopposed

Denton County Constable, Precinct 5

Questions for Constable:

1. Please describe the duties of this office and how you are qualified to perform them. (50 words)
2. What issues do you believe are most pressing for this office and how would you address them? (75 words)

Mike Ballard (Democrat) No Response

Ken Jannereth (Republican)

1. The Constable and deputies have all the powers and responsibilities of any peace officer in Texas. They have additional responsibilities of serving and executing Civil and criminal Court orders. With over 35 years of law enforcement experience and common sense, I am enthusiastic about serving another four years.

2. As the population of Precinct 5 has increased, so have the number of civil/criminal papers and Class C Warrants. Student population and attendance problems have increased within the multiple school districts, and the Constable's office must assist the JP Court and schools in correcting truancy issues. The bottom line is to increase quality service and serve court papers without substantially increasing the budget.

Denton County Constable, Precinct 6

Ron Smith (Republican) Unopposed

District Judge, 16th Judicial District

Questions for District Judge:

1. Please describe the education and experience that qualify you for the duties and responsibilities of this office? (75 words)
2. Do you support creative sentencing options to divert non-violent offenders from prison? Please explain. (75 words)

Karen Guerra (Democrat)

1. I have been an attorney for over 18 years and have extensive trial experience in all types of cases heard in the District Courts, including criminal, personal injury, contract, property, and family law cases. I am certified in Family Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. I will be fair and impartial because I have the balanced perspective that comes from handling all sides of disputes. Please visit www.electkarenguerra.com and www.theguerrallawfirm.com.

2. Yes. For example, we need a Drug Court program for Denton County, where persons convicted of certain drug crimes are given terms of probation that include intensive court supervision. Such a program would reduce recidivism and would improve the quality of life for families devastated by drug usage. Grant monies are available to establish a Drug Court program, and I am willing to give my time and energy to implement such a program.

Carmen Rivera-Worley (Republican)

1. Bachelor's Degree, Texas A & I University, 1977; Master's Degree, Texas Tech University, 1978; Jurisprudence Doctorate, University of Texas School of Law, 1982; Private practice of law, civil, family and criminal, 1984-1988; Assistant County Attorney, 1985-1987 (civil, family and criminal); Val Verde County Attorney, 1987-1992 (civil, family and criminal); Assistant Criminal District Attorney, 1992-2003 (primarily civil); Judge, 16th District Court, 2003-present (civil, family and criminal).

2. Yes, of course, I do. The burden of housing prisoners and the tremendous costs associated with education and rehabilitation will always be borne by the taxpayers. But care must be taken that if they are diverted, that the safety of the public is preserved and that the taxpayers are not forced to pay even greater costs to house and care for these offenders.

District Judge, 362nd Judicial District

Bruce McFarling (Republican) Unopposed

District Judge, 393rd Judicial District

Doug Robison (Republican) Unopposed

Denton County Tax Assessor Collector

Steve Mossman (Republican) Unopposed

You may bring this VOTERS GUIDE[®] into the voting booth!

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League of Women Voters of Denton
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