

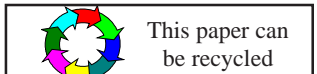


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# The Villager



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RAPPIN'  
Thomas Wyatt

## UNEVENTFUL EVENING

President Trump's State of the Union ran long but delivered little clarity on the biggest foreign policy question facing the country: what he actually plans to do about Iran. Even with two U.S. carrier groups already deployed and talks set for Geneva, Trump repeated familiar lines without outlining a real strategy, leaving the public no closer to understanding whether he's pursuing diplomacy or preparing for confrontation.

At home, he leaned hard on economic messaging—touting stock market highs while rewriting the inflation story. The facts tell a different tale: inflation was not at "record levels" when he took office, and most Americans disapprove of his handling of rising prices. Still, he blamed Democrats for affordability struggles and cast their opposition to his tax bill as an attack on working families.

The night's most explosive moments came on immigration. Trump demanded applause for prioritizing citizens over "illegal aliens," scolding Democrats when they refused to stand. Tensions spiked when he accused the Somali community of "pillaging" taxpayer dollars, prompting Rep. Ilhan Omar to shout back that he was lying. It was a raw reminder of how deeply immigration divides the country—and how quickly Trump is willing to escalate.

Even his recent anger at the Supreme Court cooled in front of the justices. After blasting them for striking down his tariffs, he settled for calling the ruling "unfortunate," avoiding the showdown many expected.

In the end, Republicans got the culture war contrasts they wanted, and Democrats argued he failed to shift a political landscape already turning against him. Their response, led by Virginia Gov. Abigail Spanberger, boiled down to three questions: Is he making life affordable? Is he keeping people safe? Is he working for you?

For everyday readers, the takeaway is simple: Trump offered plenty of heat, but little direction—especially on Iran, affordability, and the issues shaping daily life.

# Complicated Electability

EDITORIAL: Why I Voted for Talarico — And Why Texas Isn't Ready to Elect Jasmine Crockett Statewide



Top row (L-to-R): John Cornyn, Jasmine Crockett, Ken Paxton.  
Bottom row (L-to-R): Colin Allred, Beto O'Rourke.

By Thomas Wyatt | EIC, The Villager

(VILLAGER) - Texas Democrats are having a hard conversation about electability, and it's not a theoretical one. It's happening in real time, in early vote lines, in living rooms, and — as the article "*White woman tearfully says she didn't vote for Crockett in Senate primary because 'We need somebody who can win'*" from *TheGrio*, written by Gerren Keith Gaynor, shows — even in tearful interviews that go viral. When Houston voter Sonya Bernhardt said, "I was so ready to vote for Jasmine Crockett, because I love her, but I voted for Talarico because we need somebody who can win," she articulated a tension many of us have been wrestling with for months.

I love Crockett, too, but voted the same way Bernhardt did, for the same reason. I don't believe Crockett can win the Senate seat from Paxton or Cornyn. Not because she isn't qualified, but because this is Texas. And we're not there yet.

Do you know what I see when I look at Rep. Crockett? Colin Allred.

Let's be real. Allred has run for Texas offices more than he did in the National Football League. In 2018, Allred ran for a U.S. House of Representatives seat and lost to Pete Sessions. In 2024, Allred ran for a U.S. Senate seat against Ted Cruz and lost by nine points. And I'll be frank; anybody is better than having Ted Cruz as a representative of the great state of Texas. Anybody!

Rep. Crockett, in my humble opinion, runs circles around Allred in any capacity you could imagine.

This isn't about whether Crockett is smart, capable, or fierce — she is all three. It's about whether Texas, in its current political climate, will elect her to the U.S. Senate over a well funded, deeply entrenched Republican opponent. And when I look honestly at the statewide map, the voting patterns, and the coalition required to break a 30 year losing streak, I don't believe the numbers fall in her favor. However, Texas House of Representatives James Talarico has obvious qualities that Crockett lacks when it comes to conservative voters on the fence and independent voters ready to flip.

The Electability Question Isn't Manufactured — It's Structural

Gaynor's article makes clear that Crockett's supporters see critiques of her electability as rooted in bias. And they're not wrong to name that. Race and gender absolutely shape how candidates are perceived, especially Black women who lead with unapologetic strength. But acknowledging bias doesn't erase the political terrain we're forced to navigate. In order to beat the GOP incumbent or his challenger, we must play by their rules; for now.

Democratic strategist Jamarr Brown told *TheGrio* that some voters are weighing "race of the candidate, gender of the candidate, and then also maybe some of her records." He also noted that Crockett's reputation for "fighting Republicans in Congress" may make some Texans doubt her ability to appeal to moderates or disaffected Republicans.

That's the heart of the dilemma. Texas is not a state where Democrats can win on base enthusiasm alone. It's a

state where you must:

- Maximize turnout among Black, Latino, AAPI, and young voters
- Hold every inch of the Democratic base
- Win Independents
- Peel off a sliver of moderate Republicans

Brown himself said the pathway to victory requires a "deepening of the base" and crossover appeal.

Crockett energizes the base. But the question is whether she can do both.

Texas Voters Have a Pattern — And It Doesn't Favor Polarizing Candidates

Texas has repeatedly rejected Democrats who are perceived — fairly or unfairly — as too combative, too progressive, or too polarizing. That's not a judgment of their worth; it's a reflection of the electorate we have, not the electorate we wish we had.

Crockett's most viral moments are the ones that make her beloved online: the sharp takedowns, the committee room clashes, the refusal to back down. But those same moments are weaponized in GOP messaging, especially in rural and suburban counties where Democrats already struggle.

Bernhardt's emotional admission — "*That was one of the most difficult votes I've ever voted in my entire life*" — captures the painful truth. Many voters admire Crockett but don't believe she can win statewide.

And in Texas, admiration doesn't flip seats. Coalitions do.

Why I Believe Talarico Has the Better Shot

My vote wasn't a rejection of Crockett's talent. It was a calculation about the political math.

James Talarico has built a reputation for policy depth, bipartisan negotiation, and a tone that doesn't immediately trigger partisan reflexes in moderate voters. He's not as flashy, but statewide races in Texas aren't won on flash. They're won on persuasion, coalition building, and the ability to neutralize GOP attack lines before they land.

Crockett argues that critics aren't looking at her perceived achievements, saying, "*Holler at me and say that you have an issue as it relates to my credentials.*" But for many voters, this isn't about credentials. It's about viability.

Texas Democrats Can't Afford to Lose Another Winnable Race

The stakes are too high to gamble on a candidate who electrifies the base but struggles with the middle. Texas Democrats have been burned by that pattern too many times. See Beto O'Rourke!

I voted for Talarico because I want a Democrat who can actually win the general election — not just the primary, not just the internet, not just the hearts of those already convinced.

Sonya Bernhardt said it plainly: "*We need somebody who can win.*"

I agree.

And until Texas proves it's ready to elect a candidate with Crockett's style and profile statewide, I'm voting with the map, not the moment.

## INSIDE



Early voting showing signs of high turnout for March elections. See **HISTORIC** Page 3



City of Austin attempting to correct its homeless situation. See **STRATEGY** Page 4



Former Xavier University president passes at 94. See **FRANCIS** Page 5

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