

The Villager

www.TheAustinVillager.com



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AUSTIN, TX 78723



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Vol. 52 No. 42

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May 29, 2026



RAPPIN'
Thomas Wyatt

UNDERRATED FORCE

Ken Paxton's commanding performance in Texas' Republican primary runoff underscores both his resilience among the GOP's overall base and the continued gravitational pull President Donald Trump holds over Texas Republican voters. Paxton secured a decisive advantage, powered by the same coalition that has repeatedly elevated him through controversy, impeachment, indictments, and internal party battles.

Paxton's victory was less a surprise than a reaffirmation of a political reality: in today's Texas GOP, Trump's endorsement remains the single most valuable asset a candidate can possess. Paxton leaned into that dynamic from the start. Trump not only endorsed him but actively campaigned for him, framing the attorney general as a loyal ally targeted by what he described as political enemies. That message resonated deeply with many primary voters who have grown increasingly distrustful of establishment Republicans and institutions.

The result was a primary electorate that treated Trump's backing as both a seal of approval and a call to action. Paxton's legal troubles, once seen as vulnerabilities, became rallying points for voters who view him as a fighter aligned with Trump's combative style. His opponent struggled to counter that narrative in a political environment where ideological distinctions mattered less than proximity to Trump.

Paxton's win also signals the broader direction of the Texas GOP heading into the 2026 Texas U. S. Senate race and beyond. Trump's influence remains unmatched, shaping not only candidate viability but the tone, priorities, and internal power structure of the party. For Texas Republicans, the primary wasn't a contest between candidates but rather a referendum on Trump's continued reign.

As the head-to-head fight against democratic candidate James Talarico approaches, Paxton enters with momentum and a base energized by Trump-engrossment, reinforcing a political landscape where loyalty to the 2nd-term president remains one of the most potent forces in Texas politics.

CESAR CHAVEZ STREET



By Villager staff

(AUSTIN, TX) - Austin has opened the first phase of public engagement on whether to rename Cesar Chavez Street, launching what is expected to be a months long conversation about how the city should respond to recently surfaced allegations against the late labor leader.

City staff confirmed that the renaming application has been formally filed, triggering Austin's standard review process: historical analysis, community outreach, and an assessment of impacts on residents and businesses along the corridor. No replacement name has been proposed, and officials emphasized that the city is gathering input before drafting any recommendations.

The discussion carries particular weight in East Austin, where the street's name has long been tied to Latino organizing, labor history, and the neighborhood's cultural identity. Community

groups, business owners, and longtime residents are preparing to weigh in as the city schedules listening sessions and opens online feedback channels.

The move follows national reporting detailing allegations from two women who say Chavez sexually abused them in the 1970s. Those claims have prompted cancellations of Chavez related events across the country and renewed scrutiny of how public institutions commemorate historical figures.

City Council members have not indicated a timeline for a vote. Under Austin's naming policies, any change would require Council approval after the public engagement period and a formal staff recommendation.

For now, the city is asking residents to participate in the early stages of a process that will test how Austin balances historical recognition, community values, and new information that complicates long standing public honors.

GOV. ABBOTT CONTINUES FREEZE ON ALL COLLEGE TUITION INCREASES STATEWIDE

By Villager staff

(VILLAGER) - Gov. Greg Abbott has ordered a statewide freeze on college tuition increases for the 2026-27 academic year, extending a policy first enacted in 2023 to curb rising higher education costs. The directive applies to all public universities and community colleges, effectively halting any planned tuition hikes for the next fiscal year.

Abbott framed the move as part of his administration's broader affordability agenda, citing the need to "keep Texas students in Texas schools" amid growing concerns about student debt and out of state migration. The governor's office said the freeze will remain in effect until lawmakers revisit higher education funding formulas in the 2027 legislative session.

The decision drew mixed reactions from campus leaders. University administrators praised the stability it offers families but warned that stagnant tuition could strain budgets already pressured by inflation and deferred maintenance. Community



colleges, meanwhile, welcomed the extension, noting that affordability remains central to enrollment recovery after pandemic era declines.

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board will issue updated guidance next month outlining compliance procedures and reporting requirements for institutions.

Abbott's tuition freeze marks one of the longest statewide holds on college costs in the nation, positioning Texas as a test case for balancing affordability with institutional sustainability.

Cornyn's Loyalty to Trump Not Enough to Earn His Support

By Villager staff

(VILLAGER) - John Cornyn's four decade political career ended Tuesday with a decisive defeat to Attorney General Ken Paxton, marking a dramatic shift in the Texas GOP toward a more hardline, Trump aligned identity. Once emblematic of the party's establishment wing, Cornyn had survived its evolution from the Bush era through the Tea Party and into the dominance of Donald Trump. But his bipartisan work — especially the 2022-gun safety bill he negotiated after the Uvalde shooting — became a defining liability, provoking sustained backlash from grassroots conservatives and Trump himself.

Despite voting consistently with Trump's agenda

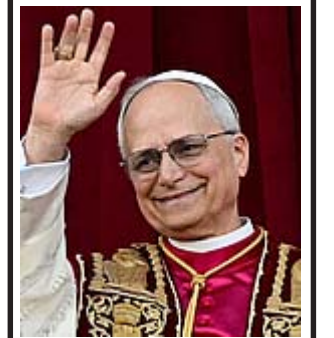
and serving as the Senate GOP's No. 2, Cornyn was increasingly cast as insufficiently loyal. Trump attacked him as a "RINO" and ultimately endorsed Paxton, sealing Cornyn's fate in the runoff. Paxton capitalized on the moment, portraying Cornyn as an out of touch Washington insider while presenting himself as the true champion of the MAGA movement, bolstered by his legal vindications and aggressive litigation against the Biden administration.

Cornyn warned that Paxton's nomination could endanger Republican dominance in Texas, but GOP voters rejected his appeals. His loss underscores the shrinking space for traditional, consensus driven conservatism in a party increasingly defined by loyalty to Trump and mainstream confrontation.

INSIDE



A changing of the guard in Texas. See **CHAPTER** Page 2



Pope's mea culpa wasn't just pathetic; it was insulting. See **APOLOGY** Page 3

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