

Texas Politics 2026: Governor’s Race Tightens, Senate Contest Remains a Dead Heat

By Villager staff

(TEXAS RACES) – Now that the primaries are over, Texas heads into the final stretch of the 2026 election cycle with two fiercely competitive statewide races: the gubernatorial contest between **Gov. Greg Abbott** and **Rep. Gina Hinojosa**, and the U.S. Senate race between **Attorney General Ken Paxton** and **Rep. James Talarico**. Recent polling shows both races narrowing, with Democrats gaining ground but Republicans still holding structural advantages.

Multiple late-August polls show Gov. Greg Abbott maintaining a lead over Democratic challenger Gina Hinojosa, though the gap has tightened compared to earlier in the year.

- UT Austin / Texas Politics Project (Aug. 25): Abbott 45%, Hinojosa 40%

- Texas Politics Project (late August): Abbott 45%, Hinojosa 40% — down from a 7-point lead two months prior

- RealClearPolitics average (June–Aug): Abbott 48.6%, Hinojosa 43.9%

- Pollsmax Aggregated Average (Aug. 24): Abbott 48.6%, Hinojosa 42.9%

- Slingshot Strategies (Aug. 24): Abbott 49%, Hinojosa 42%

The tightening margins reflect Hinojosa’s gains among independents and her focus on affordability and “kitchen table issues,” while Abbott continues to benefit from incumbency, name recognition, and a substantial campaign war chest.

The U.S. Senate race—one of the most closely watched contests in the country—remains

extremely tight. Recent polling shows James Talarico with a slight but consistent lead over Ken Paxton, though still within the margin of error.

- UT/Texas Politics Project (Aug. 25): Talarico 42%, Paxton 39%

- Previous UT Poll (June): Paxton 43%, Talarico 42%

The race is defined by unusually high levels of undecided voters and Paxton’s polarizing profile following his primary victory over Sen. John Cornyn. Talarico’s advantage among independents is notable, but Republicans remain confident that late-cycle consolidation could tighten the race further.

Across both contests, Texans cite inflation, affordability, and data-center expansion as top concerns:

- Inflation and rising prices dominate voter priorities, benefiting candidates who emphasize economic relief.

- Data centers have emerged as a surprising flashpoint, with 57% of Texans opposing new data-center construction in their communities.

Hinojosa and Talarico have both leaned into affordability messaging, while Abbott and Paxton emphasize stability, economic growth, and conservative governance.

Both races remain highly competitive, with undecided voters likely to determine the final outcome. As Election Day approaches, Texans can expect intensified campaigning, sharper contrasts, and continued national attention on the state’s shifting political landscape.

Crockett Staying Home, Not Campaigning for Talarico

By Villager staff

(TEXAS RACES) – U.S. Rep. (D-TX) **Jasmine Crockett** stepped off the small stage in Dallas with the same steady resolve she’d carried since the spring. Reporters clustered nearby, waiting for her to repeat what she had already told CNN, The Texas Tribune, and anyone else who asked: this election season, she was turning her attention away from the marquee Senate race and toward the overlooked contests that shaped everyday life in Texas.

She had congratulated James Talarico after he defeated her in the Democratic primary — that part was true, and she meant it. But campaigning for him? Sharing a stage, joining his statewide tour, lending her viral magnetism to his bid? No. She had made that clear. “I will be campaigning down ballot,” she had said, a line that ricocheted across headlines.

Monday night, she repeated it again, but with a softer edge. Texas was too big, she told the crowd, and its political future too fragile to hinge on a single race. She remembered 2018 — the excitement, the money, the hope — and how it still wasn’t enough. Down-ballot candidates needed oxygen. They needed introductions. They needed someone who could walk into a room and make voters feel seen.

Her new FIRE PAC had already begun endorsing county judge hopefuls and state House contenders, the people who would decide budgets, shape courts, and keep communities functioning. She planned to release a full slate soon: four



James Talarico and Jasmine Crockett

House candidates, three county judge nominees, all from places where turnout could tip the balance.

As she moved through the crowd, she felt the familiar tug — questions about Talarico, about whether she’d reconsider, about whether unity demanded a joint campaign stop. She answered the same way she always did: Texas needed more than one big race. It needed a bench, a pipeline, a reason for voters to show up even when the weather was bad or the headlines were bleak.

So, she kept walking, shaking hands with local candidates who didn’t have national profiles or viral clips. These were the races she believed could rebuild the party’s foundation. These were the people she intended to lift.

And as the night wound down, Jasmine Crockett felt certain: her work wasn’t smaller than a Senate campaign. It was deeper. It was local. It was hers.



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SCOTUS OPENLY EMBRACES THE DARK SIDE

By Villager staff



U.S. Supreme Court Associate Justices Samuel Alito (L) and Clarence Thomas. (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

(US SUPREME COURT) - The Supreme Court’s latest shadow-docket maneuver is not merely another institutional embarrassment — it is a rupture, a self-inflicted wound that exposes just how thoroughly the Court has abandoned its constitutional role. What unfolded in the White House ballroom case is not a legal dispute so much as a quiet, invisible coup: a majority of justices choosing to hand the president powers that belong to Congress alone, and doing so with the smug efficiency of an unsigned order issued in the dark.

The facts are not in dispute. Donald Trump initiated a White House construction project without congressional authorization, despite Congress’s exclusive **power of the purse** — a foundational principle spelled out plainly in the Constitution. He claimed private donations would cover the cost, then failed to raise the money. Congress never approved the spending, never sanctioned the demolition, never blessed the project. Yet the Court, in its shadow-docket wisdom, referred to the ballroom as something “the federal government” started — a framing that erases Congress entirely and treats the president as the government’s sole branch.

This is not interpretation. It is capitulation.

By embracing the unitary-executive theory — the idea that all executive power resides in the president and Congress cannot limit it — the Court has now drifted into even more dangerous territory: allowing the president to exercise legislative power too. The decision effectively blesses spending that Congress did not authorize and shields that spending from judicial review. It is a blueprint for executive lawlessness.

The insult deepens with the Court’s contorted “standing” analysis. The National Trust for Historic Preservation challenged the project on clear legal grounds, yet the Court’s far-right bloc insisted that a preservationist’s interest in the White House’s historic integrity was not enough to sue. The dissent — Roberts and the three Democratic appointees — correctly noted that precedent recognizes aesthetic, cultural, and professional harm as legitimate injuries. But precedent no longer matters to a majority intent on insulating the president from accountability.

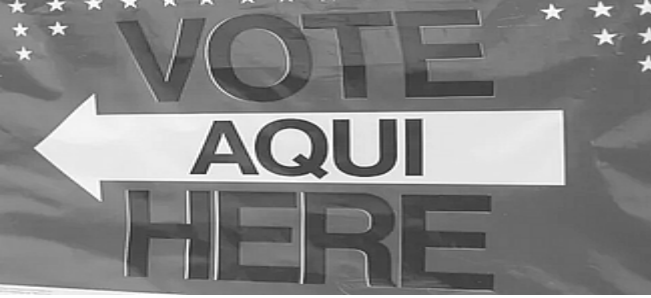
The result is a judiciary that has made congressional statutes unenforceable, executive overreach unchallengeable, and constitutional limits optional. This Court is not merely broken — it is actively breaking the republic.

Tarrant County Slashes 92 Voting Sites, Why Travis Co. Has No Such Plans

By Villager staff

(AUSTIN, TX) - Austin is not on track to cut polling places before the November elections, despite growing concern across Texas about reductions in voting access. The anxiety stems largely from decisions made in other parts of the state—most notably Tarrant County, where officials have approved deep cuts to Election Day locations. Those moves have sparked public protest, statewide scrutiny, and fears that similar reductions could surface elsewhere. But in Travis County, and specifically within the City of Austin, no such plans are underway.

Austin’s City Council has already passed its election ordinance for November 3, 2026, outlining the city’s standard procedures for coordinating with the Travis County Clerk. The ordinance affirms that Austin will use the county’s electronic voting system and specifies that full lists of early voting sites and Election Day polling places will be published as exhibits once finalized. Nothing in the ordinance signals consolidation or elimination of polling locations. Instead, it reflects the routine ad-



ministrative steps the city takes each election cycle.

The contrast with Tarrant County is stark. There, officials have approved a reduction of 92 Election Day sites compared with the 2022 midterms, citing low turnout at certain locations, staffing challenges, and the shift to countywide voting. The decision has drawn criticism from voting-rights advocates who argue that cuts of this scale risk disenfranchising communities already facing barriers to the ballot box. Those concerns have reverberated statewide, prompting questions about whether other counties might follow suit.

In Austin, however, Travis County has not proposed similar reductions. The county has histori-

cally maintained a robust network of polling places and has not been part of the recent controversies surrounding access. Local election administrators have emphasized continuity rather than contraction, and no public statements or filings indicate that polling sites are in danger of being cut ahead of November.

Still, the final list of polling places will not be official until Travis County publishes its updated exhibits, as required by the city’s ordinance. Election administrators routinely adjust locations based on availability, accessibility, and logistical needs, and those updates typically occur closer to Election Day. For now, though, all available information points to stability rather than retrenchment.

Austin voters, watching developments elsewhere in Texas, may understandably be wary. But at this stage, the city is not facing the same threat of widespread polling-place reductions seen in Tarrant County. The infrastructure for November remains intact, and the county’s longstanding commitment to broad access appears unchanged.