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TBLUNAMI



RAPPIN'
THOMAS WYATT

FEAR OF A BLACK PLANET

Donald Trump and the sycophant **GOP**ers who worship him learned a harsh but truthful reality this week. The midterms weren't only a rebuke of far right-wing policies coupled with deliberately cruel intentions, but a stark reminder of what this country will become when we rise together as one against all those who oppose us.

For years, **American politics** has wrestled with a familiar temptation: the use of demographic change as a source of fear rather than a source of possibility. When political leaders frame growing **racial diversity** as a threat, they are not merely describing a changing nation. They are asking voters to see neighbors, coworkers, and fellow citizens as rivals in a zero-sum contest for belonging.

The idea that **America** is becoming a "**Black Planet**", or any similar phrase suggesting that Black political, martial, educational, industrial, or social participation represents a danger to the country, misunderstands both democracy and history. A healthy democracy is not diminished when more diversified people participate. It is strengthened. The expansion of civic engagement among Black Americans, Latinos, Asian Americans, Indigenous communities, immigrants, and young voters reflects the continuing promise of a nation that has long struggled to live up to its founding ideals.

Justice-centered politics begins with a simple principle: every community deserves equal voice, equal dignity, and equal access to power. Efforts to mobilize voters through fear of racial change ultimately reveal more about the anxieties of those making the argument than about the realities of the communities being targeted. Families want good schools, safe neighborhoods, affordable housing, quality healthcare, and economic opportunity. Those aspirations are shared across racial and cultural lines.

The future of American democracy will not be secured by warning voters about demographic transformation. It will be secured by building coalitions capable of addressing common challenges. Attempts to divide citizens according to race may generate headlines, but they rarely generate lasting solutions. A multiracial democracy is not a crisis to be managed. It is the unfinished promise of America itself. It is the American dream.



By Thomas Wyatt | EIC, The Villager

(EDITORIAL) – At the time of this writing, these are the most updated facts I have. Texas politics entered uncharted territory Tuesday night as decades of Republican dominance gave way to a stunning Democratic breakthrough, prompting both celebration among supporters and deep soul-searching within Republican ranks. According to reporting from the ***Texas Tribune***, Republican leaders and activists quickly began assigning blame for a sweeping election setback that saw Democrats make gains across the state and exposed growing divisions within the GOP coalition.

At the center of the political earthquake were the victories of **James Talarico** and **Gina Hinojosa**, two Austin-area Democrats whose wins shattered barriers that had stood for generations. Talarico defeated Republican Attorney General **Ken Paxton** and Elon Musk's money to capture a U.S. Senate seat, becoming the first Democrat elected to the Senate from Texas since 1988. Meanwhile, Hinojosa unseated Governor **Greg Abbott** (and Elon Musk's money), ending more than three decades of Republican control of the governor's office and becoming Texas' first Latina governor.

For many Texans, these results were not simply partisan victories. They reflected growing frustration with a political system that many voters felt had become disconnected from everyday concerns such as public education, health care access, affordability, voting rights, and government accountability. Throughout their campaigns, both Talarico and Hinojosa emphasized people-centered governance, economic opportunity, and broad civic engagement. Their victories suggest that a coalition of urban voters, young people, communities of color, suburban moderates, and disaffected independents may have become powerful enough to reshape statewide politics.

The upset Senate victory was particularly remarkable. Texas had long been considered one of the nation's most difficult states for Democrats to win statewide. Yet Talarico, a former public school teacher and state representative, overcame long odds to defeat the Trump-backed Paxton, delivering what political observers described as one of the most significant Democratic victories in modern Texas history.

Equally historic was Hinojosa's triumph over the three-term incumbent governor. For decades, Democrats pointed to Texas' changing demographics and growing urban population as signs that the state's political future could eventually become competitive. With her victory, that long-discussed possibility became reality.

These election results raise important questions about representation and power. Communities that have often felt overlooked in statewide policymaking now see leaders who campaigned on expanding opportunity, strengthening public institutions, and increasing civic participation. Whether those promises translate into policy remains to be seen, but many advocates believe the election results have created new possibilities for addressing disparities in education, health outcomes, voting access, criminal justice, and economic development.

The long-term effects could be profound. A Democratic governor and a Democratic U.S. senator from Texas may alter the national political map and force both major parties to rethink their strategies. Republicans may be compelled to broaden their appeal beyond their traditional base, while Democrats will face the challenge of governing a state that remains ideologically diverse and politically complex.

The economic implications could also be significant. Texas has long marketed itself as a low-tax, business-friendly state. The new leadership will likely face pressure to balance economic growth with investment in public education, infrastructure, workforce development, and social services. How successfully they navigate those competing priorities could determine whether this election represents a temporary shift or the beginning of a lasting political realignment.

For now, one fact is undeniable: Texas voters have delivered a message that the future is not predetermined. The victories of Talarico and Hinojosa have transformed what many believed was politically impossible into historical fact. Whether that transformation leads to greater equity, broader opportunity, and a more inclusive vision of Texas will depend not only on the state's new leaders, but also on the continued engagement of the communities whose votes helped make history.

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Trump to stop sending billions to Israel by the end of the year, Congress has say. See AID, page 4

Question of 2026

Do you believe if John Cornyn were the nominee for Texas Senate, Talarico would've won this midterm election?

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Texas House Flips to Democrats in Historic Political Realignment

By Thomas Wyatt | EIC, The Villager

(VILLAGER) - Texas voters delivered one of the most significant political upsets in modern state history Tuesday night, handing Democrats control of the Texas House of Representatives for the first time in more than two decades while simultaneously electing Democrats to several of the state's highest offices. The results shattered a Republican governing trifecta that had defined Texas politics since 2003 and signaled a dramatic shift in the state's political landscape.

Democrats entered Election Day facing long odds. Holding just 62 of the Texas House's 150 seats, the party needed to gain 14 Republican-held districts to secure a majority. By Wednesday, election returns showed Democrats not only meeting that goal but exceeding it substantially, positioning themselves to gain approximately 21 seats and potentially claim an 83-67 majority when the Legislature convenes in January.

The House takeover ends a Republican reign that began in 2003 and represents the first Democratic control of the chamber in a generation. Political observers had widely expected Republicans to maintain their grip on the lower chamber, despite growing Democratic strength in suburban and urban areas across the state. Instead, Democratic candidates produced strong performances in key battleground districts, turning longtime Republican strongholds into competitive territory and, in many cases, outright victories.

While Democrats celebrated their breakthrough in the House, Republicans managed to retain control of the Texas Senate. According to election projections, Republicans are expected to hold a 19-12 majority in the 31-member chamber, preventing Democrats from achieving complete control of state government.

The split Legislature sets the stage for a new era of divided government in Texas. For more than twenty years, Republicans controlled the governor's office, the Senate, and the House, enabling the party to advance its legislative agenda with few institutional obstacles. That arrangement has now ended. With Democrat **Gina Hinojosa** winning the governor's race and Democrats securing the House, Republican lawmakers will no longer enjoy unilateral authority over state policymaking.

The election's impact extended beyond the Legislature. Texas voters elected Democrats to several key statewide offices, including Hinojosa as governor, **James Talarico** to the U.S. Senate, **Vikki Goodwin** as lieutenant governor, **Nathan Johnson** as attorney general, and **Jon Rosenthal** as railroad commissioner. Those victories contributed to what many analysts described as a statewide Democratic wave fueled by strong turnout in urban centers, border communities, and increasingly competitive suburban counties.

Particularly notable were Democratic gains in areas that had long served as pillars of Republican strength. Political strategists pointed to suburban counties such as Collin, Denton, Fort Bend, and Williamson as critical battlegrounds where Democratic candidates outperformed expectations. The party also recorded significant successes in South Texas and portions of the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex, demonstrating an ability to compete across diverse regions of the state.

For Republicans, the losses triggered an immediate period of reflection and finger-pointing. Following the election, party leaders and strategists began debating the causes of the defeat, with some questioning campaign strategies, candidate selection, and the broader political environment. The outcome marked one of the most difficult election nights Texas Republicans have experienced since becoming the dominant political force in state government more than two decades ago.

Despite the Democratic breakthrough, the divided structure of the next Legislature means that major policy initiatives will likely require negotiation and compromise between the House, Senate, and governor's office. Democrats will possess greater influence than at any time since the mid-1990s, but Republican control of the Senate ensures that the state's political future remains highly competitive.

As Texas prepares for the 2027 legislative session, the implications of the 2026 election are expected to reverberate far beyond Austin. Long viewed as the centerpiece of Republican political power, Texas now enters a period of uncertainty, transition, and intensified competition between the state's two major parties. Whether the Democratic gains represent a temporary backlash or a lasting political realignment may become one of the defining questions in Texas politics for years to come.

Austin Voters Reshape City Priorities as Council Races Head to Runoffs

By Thomas Wyatt | EIC, The Villager

(AUSTIN, TX) — Austin voters delivered a mix of continuity, change, and clear policy direction in the Nov. 3 municipal election, approving major investments in parks and libraries while sending three City Council contests to December runoff elections. The results ensure that political campaigning will continue for several weeks as voters in key districts, including East Austin's District 3, prepare to make final decisions about who will represent them on the Austin City Council.

Among the biggest outcomes of the election was voter approval of two significant bond propositions championed as investments in public infrastructure and community amenities. Proposition A, a $260 million bond package dedicated to parks, recreation facilities, aquatic centers, and open space improvements across Austin, received majority voter support. Proposition B, a $35 million bond measure focused on improvements to library facilities, also passed comfortably. Together, the measures signal strong public support for maintaining and expanding quality-of-life services as Austin continues to grow.

Not every proposition found favor with voters. Proposition I, a proposed charter amendment that would have required periodic external audits of city spending and audits before certain tax-rate increase elections, failed at the ballot box. Several other proposed charter amendments likewise failed, including measures that would have removed language requiring the City Council to meet at least once each week and changes related to council procedures and governance structure. Meanwhile, Proposition C, which updated charter language concerning the Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission, was approved by voters.

The election also determined the outcome of two City Council races while leaving three others unresolved. In southwest Austin's District 8, former Austin-Travis County EMS Commander **Selena Xie** won election to the City Council, defeating **Jeffery Bowen** and becoming the district's first new council representative in eight years. During the campaign, Xie emphasized affordability concerns, public safety modernization, and district-specific issues such as wildfire preparedness. She will take office in January.

In Central Austin's District 9, incumbent Council Member **Zohaib "Zo" Qadri** secured reelection, successfully holding his seat against multiple challengers and avoiding a runoff. His victory provides some continuity on a council that will soon see changes in membership due to term limits and election outcomes.

Elsewhere, voters were unable to produce outright winners, forcing three races into runoff elections scheduled for Dec. 12. In District 1, the contest to replace term-limited Council Member ***Natasha Harper-Madison*** narrowed to **Misael Ramos** and **Amber Goodwin**, who advanced as the top two candidates in a crowded six-person field.

In District 3, incumbent Council Member **José Velásquez** failed to secure the majority necessary for reelection and will face challenger **Neha Shah** in a December runoff. District 3, which encompasses Central East and East Austin, attracted significant interest throughout the campaign season, with several candidates seeking the seat. The runoff will give voters a direct choice between the incumbent and Shah, setting up one of the city's most closely watched races in the weeks ahead.

District 5 voters in South Austin also will return to the polls after incumbent Council Member **Ryan Alter** and challenger **David Weinberg** advanced to a runoff election. Like the District 1 and District 3 contests, neither candidate captured the majority required under Austin's electoral system to win outright in November.

According to election reporting, seven of the eight local races advancing to runoff elections across the region involve city council seats, demonstrating how competitive municipal politics have become as residents debate issues ranging from affordability and transportation to public safety, development, and city spending. Early voting for runoff elections is scheduled to begin Nov. 30 and continue through Dec. 8, with Election Day set for Dec. 12.

The election results arrive as the Austin City Council prepares for its next regular meeting on Nov. 5. Council members will continue managing policy decisions while several districts remain engaged in active campaigns that could influence the body's future direction. The combination of voter-approved infrastructure investments, rejected governance reforms, and highly competitive council races reflects a city balancing growth, accountability, and neighborhood priorities as Austin enters the final months of 2026.

For East Austin residents in particular, the District 1 and District 3 runoffs now become the focal point of local politics. The outcome will help determine who represents one of Austin's most historically significant and rapidly changing Black and Brown communities on the dais for the next term, ensuring that the conversation about growth, affordability, and neighborhood identity remains at the center of city politics through December.

Nathan Johnson: Texas Attorney General-Elect Promises a Return to Consumer Protection, Government Accountability, and Civil Rights

By Villager staff

(VILLAGER) - Texas voters have elected **Nathan Johnson**, a Democratic state senator from Dallas, as the state's next attorney general in a result widely viewed as one of the most significant political upsets in recent Texas history. Johnson becomes the first Democrat elected Texas attorney general since 1994, defeating Republican state Sen. Mayes Middleton and ending more than a decade of Republican control of the office under former Attorney General **Ken Paxton**.

Throughout his campaign, Johnson argued that the Texas Attorney General's Office had drifted away from its traditional responsibilities and become overly focused on partisan political battles. He campaigned on a promise to restore what he described as the agency's core mission: protecting consumers, enforcing child-support obligations, combating corruption, and providing impartial legal services to the people of Texas.

One of Johnson's central policy themes is consumer protection. He has pledged to aggressively enforce laws against price gouging, consumer fraud, scams, unfair business practices, and anti-competitive behavior. Johnson has argued that Texans need an attorney general who serves consumers and honest businesses rather than powerful special interests. His campaign platform emphasized increasing enforcement against companies that exploit consumers while promoting fair competition throughout the Texas economy.

Johnson has also made government accountability and anti-corruption efforts a major priority for his administration. He frequently criticized what he characterized as political favoritism and ethical failures in state government, promising that public officials would be investigated and prosecuted when warranted regardless of political party. He has said restoring integrity and public trust in the Attorney General's Office will be among his administration's first objectives.

Another significant component of Johnson's agenda is a renewed emphasis on the office's traditional legal functions. He has pledged to improve child-support enforcement, issue timely legal opinions that help state and local governments function effectively, increase transparency, and strengthen cooperation with local governments. Johnson has repeatedly described his vision as a "back-to-basics" approach that focuses on the everyday responsibilities of the attorney general rather than headline-driven political litigation.

On federal-state relations, Johnson has signaled a dramatic departure from the approach taken by former Attorney General Ken Paxton. While Paxton frequently challenged Democratic administrations in court, Johnson has stated that he is prepared to sue the Trump administration when he believes federal actions violate the Constitution or improperly interfere with Texas interests. He has pledged to work with other Democratic attorneys general around the country to challenge what he views as unlawful federal overreach.

Johnson has also indicated that civil rights protections will receive greater attention under his administration. During the campaign, he highlighted the importance of defending individual rights, enforcing anti-discrimination laws, and ensuring equal treatment under the law. Supporters say these priorities reflect a broader effort to reposition the Attorney General's Office as an advocate for Texans rather than as a vehicle for partisan political objectives.

One of Johnson's first major policy announcements after the election concerned abortion-related litigation. He stated that he would not continue the practice of suing out-of-state physicians who prescribe and mail abortion medication to Texas patients. Johnson argued that Texas law should not be used as a tool for intimidation or political showmanship and said he would respect other states' legal protections for physicians operating within their jurisdictions. At the same time, he acknowledged that the attorney general does not have the authority to repeal Texas abortion laws, which remain in place unless changed by the Legislature.

Johnson also campaigned on strengthening institutional professionalism inside the Attorney General's Office. He has promised to recruit experienced public servants, improve workplace culture, and ensure that the office focuses on delivering competent legal representation for the State of Texas. He has argued that an agency dedicated to public service rather than political spectacle will better serve taxpayers and strengthen confidence in state government.

As he prepares to take office, Johnson has presented his election as an opportunity to redefine the role of Texas' chief legal officer. Whether through consumer protection enforcement, anti-corruption efforts, child-support collection, government transparency, civil-rights advocacy, or legal challenges to federal policies he views as unconstitutional, Johnson has promised what he describes as a "new era" for the Texas Attorney General's Office focused on public service, accountability, and the rule of law.

Mayor Watson Applauds Austin Voters for Approving $295 Million in Parks and Library Bonds

By Villager staff



(AUSTIN, TX) - Austin Mayor **Kirk Watson** praised voters after residents approved two required tax-increasing bond propositions totaling $295 million for parks, recreation facilities, public pools, open spaces, and library improvements across the city. The measures, known as Proposition A and Proposition B, received strong voter support during the November election and represent a major investment in Austin's public infrastructure and quality of life.

The bond package includes $260 million dedicated to parks, recreation, aquatic facilities, and open space improvements through Proposition A, while Proposition B authorizes $35 million for library projects. Austin City Council placed the measures on the ballot earlier this year, arguing that aging facilities, growing population demands, and long-delayed capital needs required significant public investment.

According to unofficial election results, Proposition A earned roughly 61% voter approval, while Proposition B received just over 60% support. The outcome signals that a majority of Austin residents were willing to support additional public spending for community amenities despite ongoing concerns about affordability and property taxes.

Speaking after the election, Watson described the voter-approved bonds as investments in Austin's future. He emphasized that the city has ambitious goals and must deliver on the projects voters authorized. Watson said the city's responsibility now is to complete the promised improvements efficiently, effectively, and with costs in mind.

The mayor's endorsement of the election results is notable because earlier in the bond discussion process he had expressed concerns about the impact on taxpayers. City estimates indicated the bond package could increase annual property tax costs by approximately $41.60 for the average homeowner once the bonds are fully issued. Despite those reservations, Watson welcomed the voters' decision and pledged to focus on implementation.

Supporters of the parks bond argued that many public facilities have reached a critical stage where delaying improvements would ultimately cost more. Funding from Proposition A will support a broad range of projects, including upgrades to recreation centers, park facilities, aquatic amenities, trails, playgrounds, athletic fields, and the acquisition of additional parkland. Planned investments also include work at facilities such as the Doris Miller Auditorium, Mayfield Park, and several public pools that require major renovations or replacement of aging infrastructure.

Advocates emphasized that Austin's parks system has struggled to keep pace with rapid population growth. Organizations supporting the bond package argued that investments in parks and open spaces improve public health, environmental sustainability, and neighborhood quality of life while preserving amenities that residents rely on every day.

The library bond, though smaller in size, is expected to have a significant impact on two major projects. Proposition B provides funding for the renovation and expansion of the Hampton Branch at Oak Hill Library and supports development of a new library facility in the Colony Park area of Northeast Austin. Community leaders and library supporters have argued that both projects will help meet increasing demand for public library services, educational programs, community gathering spaces, and digital resources.

The election results also carry broader political significance. In recent years, Austin officials have faced increased scrutiny over spending, taxes, and unspent bond funds from previous elections. Passage of the parks and library bonds suggests voters remain willing to fund highly visible community projects when they see clear public benefits and long-term value.

For supporters, the vote represents an endorsement of Austin's commitment to maintaining public spaces, expanding recreational opportunities, and investing in educational and cultural resources. For city leaders, it now marks the beginning of the more difficult task of turning voter approval into completed projects that improve daily life across the city.

As Austin continues to grow, the $295 million bond package is expected to shape neighborhoods and public facilities for years to come. Mayor Watson's post-election message was clear: Austin voters made their choice, and city government must now deliver on the promises behind those investments.

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From left to right: District 4 Councilmember Chito Vela, Airbnb CEO Brian Chesky, Grandma Wisdom, former Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, and Adam Powell, Executive Director of the Austin History Center Association, at the project announcement at the Austin Central Library.

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Republicans, Pete Hegseth, and the GOP's Hunt for the Great Scapegoat

By Villager staff

(VILLAGER) - In the aftermath of the Republican Party's total annihilation in the 2026 midterm election performance, a fierce internal debate has emerged over who bears responsibility for the losses. At the center of that dispute is **Pete Hegseth**, the Defense Secretary and one of the Trump administration's most visible advocates for the military campaign against Iran. While President **Donald Trump** has publicly defended Hegseth, many Republicans are increasingly portraying him as a convenient target for voter frustration over the war and its political consequences.

The election results were a major setback for Republicans. Democrats regained control of both chambers of Congress, and Republican strategists immediately began searching for explanations. For many within the party, the prolonged conflict with Iran became the obvious culprit. Vice President **JD Vance** bluntly summarized the argument, stating that "the reason we lost is the war."

That assessment has fueled a growing effort by some Republicans and Trump allies to place responsibility on **Hegseth**. Critics argue that he was among the administration officials who strongly supported military action and promoted expectations of a swift and successful outcome. As the conflict continued and political support weakened, those same Republican voices began questioning the Pentagon's strategy and the administration's handling of the war's domestic consequences.

According to reports, lawmakers and party insiders have privately argued that Hegseth helped persuade President Trump to pursue military action without a clear exit strategy or a comprehensive plan for managing the political fallout. Some Republicans reportedly believe the administration underestimated public concerns about rising costs, economic uncertainty, and growing war fatigue.

Yet the debate goes beyond one individual. Critics of the emerging narrative say it is politically convenient for Republicans to focus on Hegseth while avoiding direct criticism of President Trump. After all, the decision to launch military operations ultimately rested with the commander in chief, not solely with his Defense Secretary. Even some Republicans privately acknowledge that the party's losses cannot be explained by the Iran conflict alone. Inflation concerns, affordability issues, and broader voter dissatisfaction also contributed to the electoral outcome.

President Trump's public comments have reflected that tension. While reports indicate he has discussed Hegseth's future with advisers, Trump has repeatedly stated that the Defense Secretary is doing "a very good job" and denied that he is actively seeking a replacement. The White House has similarly maintained that the president retains confidence in Hegseth's leadership.

The speculation surrounding Hegseth's future has intensified as impeachment efforts gain attention in Washington. Reports indicate that members of Congress are preparing additional challenges to the Defense Secretary, and some Republican figures have openly discussed whether leadership changes are necessary following the party's defeat.

For Republicans, the political danger is clear. If the party blames Hegseth alone, critics may accuse leaders of avoiding a broader examination of strategic and political decisions made throughout the administration. If they spread responsibility more widely, they risk opening divisions within the party and potentially challenging President Trump's leadership heading into the next phase of his presidency.

The controversy highlights a familiar pattern in American politics. After major electoral defeats, parties often search for a single figure to embody broader frustrations. Whether **Hegseth** ultimately remains Defense Secretary or becomes the chief scapegoat for Republican losses remains uncertain. What is clear is that the battle over accountability has already begun, and it may shape Republican politics as much as the election results themselves.

Trump Says He Will End Billions in U.S. Military Aid to Israel, Signaling Major Shift in Foreign Policy

By Villager staff

(VILLAGER) - President Donald Trump has announced that the United States will end roughly $4 billion in annual military aid to Israel by the end of 2026, a declaration that, if implemented, would mark one of the most significant changes in U.S.-Israel relations in decades. According to interviews and subsequent reporting, Trump said he had reached an understanding with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to phase out the aid, arguing that Israel has become economically and militarily strong enough to no longer require direct American assistance.

Speaking during an interview on Fox News, Trump said, "They've become a very successful country. They don't need it, and we won't be paying anymore." He added that the United States would still support Israel if necessary and emphasized that the two nations would remain close allies.

The announcement immediately drew international attention because Israel has long been the largest recipient of U.S. military assistance. Under a 10-year memorandum of understanding signed during a previous administration, Israel receives approximately $3.8 billion annually in military aid, with much of the funding used to purchase American-made defense equipment. The agreement is currently scheduled to remain in effect through 2028.

Trump framed the move partly as a response to domestic political pressures. During his remarks, he suggested that U.S. aid to Israel had become a political issue used by Democratic candidates and critics of the Republican Party. He argued that continuing to provide billions of dollars annually to a prosperous ally creates an unnecessary political liability when Israel is capable of financing more of its own defense needs.

The proposal appears to echo comments made earlier by Netanyahu, who previously expressed interest in gradually reducing Israel's dependence on American military assistance. Netanyahu said in a televised interview earlier this year that he would like Israel to eventually "wean" itself from U.S. military support and reduce the financial component of the relationship over time. However, he described a gradual transition spanning roughly a decade rather than an abrupt cutoff.

Questions remain about whether Trump can implement the policy unilaterally. Congressional approval plays a major role in foreign aid appropriations, and the current aid package is embedded within a long-term bilateral agreement. Analysts note that ending assistance before the expiration of the memorandum could require legislative action and would likely encounter scrutiny from lawmakers in both parties.

Israeli officials reportedly were surprised by the announcement, and requests for clarification from both the Israeli government and the White House initially went unanswered. Opposition figures in Israel called on Netanyahu to explain whether such an agreement exists and what its implications might be for Israel's long-term security planning.

Supporters of Trump's proposal argue that Israel's modern economy, advanced military capabilities, and thriving defense industry justify ending direct U.S. aid. They contend that the relationship should evolve from one based on assistance to one centered on strategic partnership, intelligence sharing, joint military exercises, and defense technology cooperation. Critics, however, warn that military aid remains an important symbol of America's commitment to Israel's security and helps maintain Israel's qualitative military edge in a volatile region.

Even if direct funding ends, experts note that close military cooperation between the two countries would almost certainly continue. Israel remains heavily integrated with American defense systems and purchases large quantities of U.S. military hardware. Trump himself emphasized that Israel would still be free to buy American weapons and that Washington would continue to assist its ally when necessary.

The announcement comes at a time when U.S. policy toward Israel has become increasingly debated across the political spectrum. Public opinion, the Gaza conflict, regional security concerns, and broader questions about foreign aid have all contributed to renewed scrutiny of America's longstanding financial commitment to Israel. Whether Trump's pledge becomes official policy or remains a political statement will likely depend on future negotiations with Congress and the response of both Israeli and American policymakers.



Future Ancestors Weekend Celebrates Black Creativity and History at Huston-Tillotson University

By: Melissa Fontenette-Mitchell | Special to the Villager



Ms. Earnestine Strickland



Panel Ryan Fontenette-Mitchell, Miriam Conner and Harrison Eppright Moderated Rudi Dizer



Ryan Fontenette-Mitchell and Ms. Strickland

All photos courtesy Melissa Fontenette-Mitchell

(AUSTIN, TX) — Huston-Tillotson University hosted Future Ancestors: Black Creators on Bluebonnet Hill, a three-day celebration held October 30–November 1, 2026. Presented by Reggie Rap's Room in association with NEO GRIOT, with the Austin Film Festival as a programming partner, the event featured film screenings, music, performances, panels, and oral histories celebrating Black creativity and cultural heritage.

Friday's opening program, "Open the Archive," featured an "Earnestine Strickland Fireside Chat," connecting the university's history with contemporary Black creative voices. Moderated by Ryan Fontenette-Mitchell, the conversation highlighted Ms. Strickland's remarkable legacy as Huston-Tillotson University's longtime registrar. Having served the university for more than 50 years, she has personally helped more than 5,100 graduates earn their degrees. Strickland shared how her own journey at HTU led to a lifelong career of service. Her message to students was clear: complete your education, discover your purpose, and give back to your community.

Sunday's "Mapping Black Austin" panel featured three Austin natives: Ryan Fontenette-Mitchell, Miriam Conner, and Harrison Eppright. The discussion explored who tells Austin's African American stories, the importance of preserving historic buildings, and the need to educate future generations about Freedmen's communities and the city's rich Black history.

Future Ancestors was more than a celebration of Black creativity; it was a powerful reminder that preserving history requires participation, intentional storytelling, and a commitment to passing knowledge forward. Throughout the weekend, speakers and participants emphasized the importance of elevating community voices and ensuring future generations understand the stories and contributions of those who came before them.

As the next generation of creators, historians, and community leaders' step forward, the message is clear: We must preserve our history, tell our stories, honor those who came before us, and create opportunities for future generations to carry our legacy forward.

Follow Melissa at **https://www.instagram.com/north_starphotography/**





TEXAS WOKE UP DIFFERENT

By Austin Justice Coalition

Ishia Lynette (Executive Director) & Chas Moore (Organizing Director)

Hi ,

And we think it's important that we take a moment to recognize what it took to get here. This didn't happen overnight, and it certainly didn't happen because the political climate suddenly became more favorable. It happened because everyday people, organizers, advocates, and communities continued to believe that Texas could be different, even when the odds suggested otherwise. We've spent years doing this work, and one thing we know for certain is that progress is never accidental. It is built through relationships, persistence, sacrifice, and people who refuse to accept that things have to stay the way they are.

After years of being told this state would never change, after years of organizers being dismissed, communities being ignored, voters being suppressed, and people being told to accept politics as usual, Texans showed up and changed the political landscape of this state. And yes, we should celebrate. We should celebrate the organizers who kept organizing when nobody was paying attention, the people who knocked doors, registered voters, made calls, showed up at the Capitol, testified late into the night, marched, protested, educated their neighbors, and refused to give up on Texas.

But let us be crystal clear: we did not fight this hard just to change the names on the doors. A blue Texas does not automatically mean a just Texas. Our communities still need affordable housing, fully funded schools, healthcare, living wages, dignity for immigrant families, protection of our democracy, and real public safety that does not rely on over-policing Black and Brown communities. The people we elected now have a responsibility to turn campaign promises into policy.

That means our work is not finished because Election Day is over. Accountability cannot disappear when preferred candidates win. If we demanded transparency, justice, courage, and action from the people who held power before, we have to demand the same thing now. Movement work cannot become team sports. Austin Justice Coalition has never existed to protect politicians. We exist to protect people.

We are excited to return to the Texas Legislature with a political landscape many people told us we would never see. But we are not going back as spectators. We are going back as organizers, advocates, and community members who understand that politicians do not give people power. Organized people create power.

So celebrate this moment. We earned some joy. But do not confuse celebration with completion. We still need you making calls, reading bills, contacting lawmakers, showing up at town halls, testifying, and organizing your neighbors. And when elected officials forget the promises they made to our communities, we need to be loud enough to remind them.

Texas changed at the ballot box. Now it is our responsibility to make sure that change reaches our schools, neighborhoods, budgets, laws, families, and the people who have been pushed to the margins for far too long.

As we move into this next chapter, remember that our responsibility is bigger than any election cycle. At Austin Justice Coalition, our commitment has always been to the communities we serve. That commitment doesn't shift based on who wins, who holds office, or which political party has the majority. Our communities deserve more than access to decision-makers. They deserve policies, resources, and systems that actually improve their lives.

We have an opportunity in front of us, but opportunity requires participation. It requires us to stay engaged, stay critical, and continue organizing even when the political conditions feel more favorable. Let's carry the energy of this moment into the work ahead, because the people who made this possible deserve to experience the change they've spent years fighting for.

The work continues. And we'll be right there doing it with you.

See y'all at the Capitol!

STATEMENT: Congressional Progressive Caucus PAC on the Midterms

Congressional Progressive Caucus PAC Co-chairs Greg Casar, Pramila Jayapal and Maxwell Frost released the following statement on Tuesday night's midterm results.

"[Tuesday night], voters delivered a mandate for bold change to bring down costs, root out corruption and end foreign wars. A record-breaking number of CPC PAC's candidates won in swing districts, including Randy Villegas, Will Lawrence, Bob Brooks, Sam Forstag, and Katy Padilla Stout. And all across the country, new members of Congress campaigned on progressive ideas like taking on the billionaire class and ending corporate price gouging. We are grateful to Democratic leadership, voters, and volunteers for believing in our candidates and making these historic wins possible.

"But we can't take a good midterm as a sign that all our problems are solved. Democrats now have to show people we will fight to deliver on our campaign promises. We should pass bold pro-worker policies and dare the President to veto them. Let Trump show the country how out of touch he is and let us show Americans that we are fighting for them."

Congressional Progressive Caucus Fueled Democrats' Historic Night

On Wednesday, Congressional Progressive Caucus PAC (CPC PAC) leadership and newly elected members hosted a press call to discuss Democrats' historic midterm elections, in which voters delivered a mandate for bold change to bring down costs, root out corruption and end foreign wars. CPC Chair Rep. Greg Casar and CPC PAC Co-Chairs Rep. Pramila Jayapal and Rep. Maxwell Frost were joined on the call by several of the CPC's Red to Blue winners, Reps.-elect Randy Villegas (CA-22), Katy Padilla Stout (TX-23), Will Lawrence (MI-07) and Sam Forstag (MT-1).

On election night, progressives flipped five Red-to-Blue districts.All three Frontline incumbents backed by the CPC PAC are also projected to win. CPC PAC-endorsed candidates won multiple districts that President Trump carried by over 10 points in 2024. Initial results show CPC Red-to-Blue and Frontline candidates averaging a 17 point swing to the left over Trump's district performance in 2024—not including Randy Villegas' 33 point lead in a district Democrats have historically struggled to win, with one third of the vote still left to count. The CPC will welcome over 25 new members to the caucus in the next Congress.

"This election cycle, the Progressive Caucus made a big new bet. By endorsing populist candidates in seats that Trump won, we can show that our message can win anywhere. And because of the hard work of our excellent candidates, that bet paid off," said CPC Chair Rep. Greg Casar."This is a message that people in this country are mad as hell and are giving Democrats a shot to show them we can do something about it, and so it's our turn to take them up on that opportunity."

Specifically among the Red-to-Blue candidates, Padilla Stout won a 23 point swing over Trump's district performance in 2024, Forstag a 17 point swing, and Brooks a 15 point swing. Frontline incumbents Rep. Nellie Pou (NJ-09) won a 36 point swing, Rep. Steven Horsford (NV-04) won a 22 point swing, and Rep. Darren Soto (FL-09) won an 18 point swing. Randy Villegas' current lead in CA-22 represents more than a 30 point swing as votes continue to be counted.

"The issues that were most important to voters across the country, affordability, corruption, immigration, these issues were issues that the Congressional Progressive Caucus was front and center on in Congress over the last two years," said CPC PAC Co-Chair Rep. Pramila Jayapal."On all of these issues, we really were first out to say, 'Let's fight, not fold.'"

"We have won immense amounts of political power, and now it's the most important time, which is to deliver so we can keep that political power," said CPC PAC Co-Chair Rep. Maxwell Frost."And the way that we're gonna keep Democrats in office, keep this House majority, and keep a lasting majority in the House and Senate, and eventually take the White House, is by passing bold pieces of legislation that show people that when you vote a Democrat in office, your life becomes better."

Georgia's New Era Is About More Than Its Victories

By Thomas Wyatt | EIC, The Villager



(GEORGIA) – Before I give you the details of this magnificent historical feat in the annuals of Black progression, I just wish to say two things. First, congratulations to all the women you are about to read about. For it is a true honor to write about them and the achievement they have bestowed upon the lineage of our culture. Secondly, I wish my mother, Barbara, my father, Tommie, and my first-born daughter, Angela, could have been here the witness this monumental triumph over adversity given our current state of events. Never underestimate the power of a Black woman!

History is often described as a door suddenly opening. In reality, it is usually the result of generations pushing against a wall that was never supposed to move. The election of **Keisha Lance Bottoms** as Georgia's governor, alongside the victories of at least seven other women in statewide offices, represents not simply a political shift, but the visible outcome of decades of work by women who organized, voted, advocated, governed, and refused to accept that leadership belonged exclusively to men.

Georgia voters have elected **Bottoms** as the first female governor in state history and the first Black woman elected governor of any U.S. state. At the same time, women won statewide offices that include **Tanya Miller**-attorney general, **Penny Brown Reynolds**-secretary of state, **Nikki Porcher**-labor commissioner, **Keisha Waites**-insurance commissioner, **Katherine Juhan-Armold**-agriculture commissioner, **Lydia Powell**-state school superintendent, and **Shelia Edwards**-Public Service District 5.

Without question, the significance of these victories extends far beyond representation alone. Representation matters because power matters. The people who hold public office influence decisions affecting voting rights, education, economic opportunity, consumer protection, public safety, health care, and access to government itself. For generations, many of these institutions were managed almost exclusively by men, even as women carried much of the responsibility for sustaining families, communities, schools, and civic life. Georgia's election results suggest a growing recognition that leadership should reflect the people being served.

Perhaps no story better captures the meaning of this moment than Bottoms' reflection on her family's journey from enslavement to the governor's mansion. Bottoms spoke of her great-great-grandmother, born before emancipation, and of an enslaved ancestor whose name appeared in an 1860 property record. More than a century and a half later, a descendant of that family has been elected to lead the very state where that ancestor was held in bondage.

You should recognize this is not merely a personal achievement. It is evidence of how democracy can expand when barriers rooted in race and gender begin to fall. For communities historically pushed to the margins, symbolic victories are important because they challenge the narratives used to justify exclusion. Yet symbolism alone is not enough.

The true test of this election will not be found in celebratory headlines. It will be found in whether public policy improves the lives of ordinary Georgians. It will be found in whether working families can afford housing, whether children receive quality education, whether health care becomes more accessible, whether voting rights are protected, and whether government remains accountable to the public rather than powerful interests. Justice demands outcomes, not just milestones.

That standard should apply equally to every elected official, regardless of race or gender. Women in public office should not be burdened with unrealistic expectations, nor should they be shielded from legitimate scrutiny. Equity means neither lowering the bar nor raising it unfairly. It means ensuring that everyone receives a fair opportunity to lead and an equal obligation to deliver.

The election of Penny Brown Reynolds as the first Black woman elected Georgia secretary of state and Tanya Miller as the first woman elected attorney general further demonstrates how rapidly Georgia's political landscape is changing. These offices oversee functions that are fundamental to democratic participation and public trust. Their victories carry special importance because they place women in positions historically associated with institutional power, election administration, and the enforcement of law.

The broader lesson extends beyond Georgia. Across the South and across America, communities are demanding leadership that better reflects the diversity of lived experiences within the electorate. Women, particularly Black women, have long served as organizers, advocates, educators, and community builders. Their influence has shaped public life for generations, often without the corresponding authority of elected office. These election results suggest that voters are increasingly willing to align political power with civic leadership that has already existed on the ground.

A justice-centered reading of this moment does not declare victory over inequality. It recognizes progress while understanding that progress remains incomplete. The election of women to high office does not automatically erase disparities in wealth, health, education, or opportunity. It does, however, expand the possibilities of who can lead and whose voices can be heard.

Georgia's new era is not important because Black women have taken charge of top offices. It is important because voters have expanded the boundaries of democratic participation and representation. The greater challenge begins now: transforming historic victories into lasting justice. The measure of this moment will not be the records broken on Election Day, but the lives improved in the years that follow.

CHARI KELLY ELECTED TO TEXAS SUPREME COURT AS WOMEN GAIN HISTORIC MAJORITY

ALFRED STANLEY & ASSOCIATES

AUSTIN, TX — JUSTICE CHARI KELLY WON TUESDAY'S ELECTION FOR PLACE 2 ON THE TEXAS SUPREME COURT, DEFEATING INCUMBENT JUSTICE JAMES P. SULLIVAN. HER ELECTION IS PART OF A HISTORIC RESULT THAT WILL GIVE WOMEN SEVEN OF THE COURT'S NINE SEATS FOR THE FIRST TIME IN ITS REGULAR HISTORY.

ACCORDING TO UNOFFICIAL RETURNS FROM THE TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE, KELLY RECEIVED MORE THAN 5 MILLION VOTES, OR 52.2 PERCENT, AND LEADS SULLIVAN BY MORE THAN 429,000 VOTES. THE HOUSTON CHRONICLE DECLARED KELLY THE WINNER WEDNESDAY MORNING.

"THE CONFIDENCE THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS HAVE PLACED IN ME MEANS A GREAT DEAL," KELLY SAID. "I WILL CONTINUE TO APPROACH EVERY CASE WITH THE SAME COMMITMENT TO FAIRNESS, IMPARTIALITY, AND THE RULE OF LAW THAT HAS GUIDED ME THROUGHOUT MY JUDICIAL CAREER."

KELLY IS ONE OF FOUR DEMOCRATIC WOMEN ELECTED TO THE SUPREME COURT TUESDAY, JOINING MAGGIE ELLIS, KRISTEN HAWKINS, AND GISELA D. TRIANA. TOGETHER WITH REPUBLICAN JUSTICES DEBRA LEHRMANN, JANE BLAND, AND REBECA AIZPURU HUDDLE, THEY WILL CONSTITUTE THE FIRST FEMALE MAJORITY IN THE COURT'S REGULAR HISTORY. THE ONLY PRECEDENT WAS A SPECIAL ALL-WOMAN COURT APPOINTED IN 1925 TO HEAR A SINGLE CASE.

"THIS IS A REMARKABLE MOMENT IN TEXAS HISTORY," KELLY SAID. "FOR THE FIRST TIME, WOMEN ELECTED FROM BOTH POLITICAL PARTIES WILL CONSTITUTE A MAJORITY OF THE SUPREME COURT. THAT IS WORTH CELEBRATING. BUT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT THE COURT IS NOT WHO SITS ON IT. IT IS THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS WHOM IT SERVES."

TUESDAY'S ELECTION WILL ALSO BRING DEMOCRATIC WOMEN BACK TO THE TEXAS SUPREME COURT FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE JUSTICE ROSE SPECTOR, THE FIRST WOMAN ELECTED TO THE COURT, LEFT OFFICE IN 1998.

KELLY WAS ELECTED TO THE THIRD COURT OF APPEALS IN 2018 AND REELECTED IN 2024. SHE HAS AUTHORED MORE THAN 800 APPELLATE OPINIONS AND IS BOARD CERTIFIED IN CRIMINAL LAW AND JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION. SHE HAS TAUGHT TRIAL ADVOCACY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS SCHOOL OF LAW



KELLY

FOR NEARLY 20 YEARS AND SERVED AS PRESIDENT OF THE AUSTIN BAR ASSOCIATION AND CHAIR OF THE AUSTIN BAR FOUNDATION.

PREVIOUSLY, KELLY SERVED AS AN ASSISTANT DISTRICT ATTORNEY IN TRAVIS AND COMAL COUNTIES AND AN ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS. KELLY IS A U.S. ARMY VETERAN.

TEXAS IS BLUE!

SAVE OUR SCHOOLS!