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# Texas Politics

## IDEAL AND REALITY

Enhanced  
Thirteenth Edition

**Charldean Newell**

Regents Professor Emerita of Public Administration  
University of North Texas

**David F. Prindle**

Professor of Government  
University of Texas at Austin

**James W. Riddlesperger, Jr.**

Professor of Political Science  
Texas Christian University



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Charldean Newell, David F. Prindle,  
James W. Riddlesperger**

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# Brief Contents

<b>Chapter 1</b>	The Context of Texas Politics	3
<b>Chapter 2</b>	The Constitutional Setting	31
<b>Chapter 3</b>	Interest Groups	55
<b>Chapter 4</b>	Political Parties	81
<b>Chapter 5</b>	Voting, Campaigns, and Elections	109
<b>Chapter 6</b>	The Texas Legislature	133
<b>Chapter 7</b>	The Governor	165
<b>Chapter 8</b>	The Administrative State	189
<b>Chapter 9</b>	The Judiciary	215
<b>Chapter 10</b>	The Substance of Justice	239
<b>Chapter 11</b>	Local Government	263
<b>Chapter 12</b>	The State Economy and the Financing of State Government	293
<b>Chapter 13</b>	Public Policy—People	317
<b>Chapter 14</b>	Public Policy—Resources	339

# Contents

## Chapter 1

### The Context of Texas Politics 3

#### Texas History: A Chronology 4

- The Earliest Days 4
- Anglo-American Colonization 5
- Revolution 5
- Early Statehood 6
- Post-Civil War Texas 8
- The Late Nineteenth Century 8
- The Early Twentieth Century 10
- Wars and Depression 11
- Post-World-War II Texas 13
- Gradual Political Change 14
- Late Twentieth-Century Texas 14
- Modern Times 15

#### Texas as a Democracy 17

#### Texas and American Federalism 18

#### Texas in the International Arena 18

#### The Texas Political Culture 20

#### Economy, Taxes, and Services 24

#### The People of Texas 26

- The Census 26
- The Political Relevance of Population 27

## Chapter 2

### The Constitutional Setting 31

#### American Federalism 32

- Division of Power 32
- Federalism at Work 33

#### Purposes of Constitutions 34

- Legitimacy 35
- Organizing Government 35
- Providing Power 35
- Limiting Governmental Power 37

#### Texas Constitutional Development 37

#### The Present Texas Constitution 39

- General Features 39

#### Specific Features 40

- Bill of Rights 41
- Separation of Powers 41
- Legislative Branch 43
- Executive Branch 44
- Judicial Branch 44
- Local Government 45
- Suffrage 46
- Amendments 46

#### Constitutional Change 46

- Overview of the Need for Reform 47
- Constitutional Politics 48
- Something for Everyone 48
- The Political Process 49

## Chapter 3

### Interest Groups 55

#### Interest Groups 56

- Definition 56
- Classification 56
- Functions 57
- Interest Groups in the Political Process 58

#### Who Is Organized? 58

#### Activities 58

- Information 59
- Electioneering 60
- Lobbying 61
- Who Are the Lobbyists? 61
- What Lobbyists Do and How They Do It 62
- Money 62
- Persuading the Public 62
- Influencing Administrators and Co-Opting Agencies 64
- Interest Groups and the Courts 65

#### Regulation of Interest-Group Activity 66

#### Major Interest Groups in Texas 67

- Texas for Lawsuit Reform 67
- Doctors 68



The Christian Right 69  
 Organized Labor 72  
 League of United Latin American Citizens 74  
 Teachers 75

## Chapter 4 Political Parties 81

### Functions of Political Parties 82

#### Ideology 82

Conservatism 82  
 Liberalism 83  
 Ideology in Texas 84

#### Political Socialization 85

Family 85  
 Schools and Churches 86  
 Media 86  
 Evaluation 87

#### Interests 87

### Texas Political Parties: A Brief History 89

#### Party Organization 93

The Temporary Party Organization 94  
     Precinct and County Conventions 94  
     The State Convention 94  
 Permanent Party Organization 96  
     Precinct Chairpersons 96  
     County Executive Committee 96  
     District Executive Committee 96  
     State Executive Committee 96  
 The (Un)Importance of Party Organization 97

### Two Parties, Three Factions (or Perhaps Four) 100

Republicans 100  
 Geographic Distribution 101  
 Socioeconomic and Ethnic Distribution 101  
 Conservative Democrats 101  
 Geographic Distribution 102  
 Socioeconomic and Ethnic Distribution 102  
 Liberal Democrats 103  
 Geographic Distribution 103  
 Socioeconomic and Ethnic Distribution 103  
 The Future of the Three-Faction System 103

### Third Parties in Texas 104

## Chapter 5 Voting, Campaigns, and Elections 109

### Voting 110

Why Vote? 110  
 Suffrage 111  
 Registration 111

### Texas Turnout 113

Government by the People? 113  
 Why Don't Texans Vote? 114  
 The Consequences of Nonvoting 114

### Election Campaigns 117

Campaign Resources 117  
 People 118  
 Money 118  
     Where Does the Money Come From? 119  
     Control of Money in Campaigns 119  
     The Revenue Act of 1971 121  
     The Federal Election Campaign Act of 1972 121  
     The Texas Campaign Reporting and Disclosure Act of 1973 121  
     1991 Ethics Law 121  
     *Hard v. Soft* 122  
 Negative Campaigning 123

### Public Elections 124

Primary Elections 124  
 Texas's "Open" Primary 124  
 When Held 125  
 Administration and Finance 125  
 General Elections 125  
 Special Elections 127  
 Absentee or Early Voting 127

### Recent Elections in Texas 127

Elections of 1994 through 2016 128  
 Election of 2018 129

## Chapter 6 The Texas Legislature 133

### Functions of Legislative Bodies 134

#### Basic Facts About the Legislature 135

Size, Elections, and Terms 135  
 Sessions 136  
     Regular Session 136  
     Special Sessions 136

Legislative Districts 136	
Mechanics 136	
History 137	
Compensation 139	
<b>Membership Characteristics 139</b>	
Formal Qualifications 139	
Personal Characteristics 140	
Race, Ethnicity, and Sex 140	
Occupation 140	
Age 141	
Other Factors 141	
Power and Influence in the Texas Legislature 142	
<b>Legislative Officers, Committees, and Staff 142</b>	
Presiding Officers 142	
Lieutenant Governor 143	
Speaker of the House 144	
Centralized Power? 145	
Legislative Committees 146	
Legislative Staff 147	
Legislative Budget Board 148	
Texas Legislative Council 148	
Legislative Audit Committee 148	
<b>How a Bill Becomes a Law in Texas 149</b>	
Step One: Introduction and Referral 149	
Step Two: Committee Action 151	
Step Three: Floor Action 151	
In the House: Steps One Through Three Repeated 152	
Step Four: Conference Committee 153	
Step Five: The Governor 154	
<b>Legislative Dynamics 155</b>	
Handicaps 155	
Changing Alignments 156	
Nonlegislative Lawmaking 156	
Governor 156	
Administration 157	
Courts 157	
Evaluation and Suggested Reforms 157	
Criticisms 157	
Suggested Reforms 159	
Sessions 159	
Size 159	
Salaries 160	
Terms 160	
Committees 160	
Uncontrolled Lobbying 160	
Assessing a Legislative Session 161	
<b>THE 86TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION, 2019 161</b>	
<b>Chapter 7</b>	
<b>The Governor 165</b>	
<b>Basic Structure of the Governor's Office 166</b>	
Election 166	
Term of Office 166	
Tenure 167	
Impeachment and Succession 168	
Compensation 170	
Staff and Organization 170	
<b>Qualifications for Governor 171</b>	
Formal Qualifications 171	
Personal Characteristics 171	
Conservative 172	
Wasp, Middle-Aged Male 173	
Attorney/Businessperson, Community Pillar 174	
<b>Roles of the Governor and Limits on Those Roles 174</b>	
<b>Formal Roles and Limitations 177</b>	
Chief Executive 177	
Budgeting 178	
Planning 179	
Supervising 179	
Clemency 180	
Chief Legislator 180	
Message Power 180	
Session Power 180	
Veto Power 181	
Commander in Chief/Top Cop 182	
Chief of State 183	
Chief Intergovernmental Diplomat 184	
<b>Informal Roles and Limitations 184</b>	
Chief of Party 184	
Leader of the People 185	
<b>Chapter 8</b>	
<b>The Administrative State 189</b>	
<b>State Administrative Agencies 190</b>	
Agencies with Elected Executives 192	
Attorney General 192	



Comptroller of Public Accounts	192
Commissioner of the General Land Office	193
Commissioner of Agriculture	193
<b>Agencies with Appointed Executives</b>	<b>194</b>
<b>Boards and Commissions</b>	<b>194</b>
Elected Boards and Commissions	194
Ex Officio Boards and Commissions	195
Appointed Boards and Commissions	195
Appointed Boards and Citizens	196
The Case of the Public Utility Commission	196
The Case of the College Governing Board	196
The Case of the Parks and Wildlife Commission	196
<b>Big Government: How Did It Happen?</b>	<b>197</b>
Postwar Growth	197
Devolution Politics Since 1980	198
<b>Characteristics of Bureaucracy</b>	<b>200</b>
Traditional Characteristics	200
Modern Characteristics	201
<b>Bureaucratic Survival Techniques</b>	<b>202</b>
Sources of Bureaucratic Power	203
Clientele Groups	203
The Legislature	203
The Chief Executive	203
The Public	204
Expertise and Information	204
Leadership	204
Internal Organization	204
Bureaucratic Involvement in the Policymaking Process	205
Implementation of the Laws	205
Influencing Legislation	205
<b>What Happens to the Public Interest?</b>	<b>206</b>
Bureaucratic Orientation	206
Overstepping the Law	207
<b>Harnessing the Administrative State</b>	<b>207</b>
How Much Accountability to the Chief Executive?	207
How Much Accountability to the Legislature?	208
Legislative Oversight	208
Texas Sunset Act	209
How much Accountability to the Public?	210
Elective Accountability	210
Open Records and Meetings	210
Whistle-Blower Protection	211
Is There Accountability?	211
<b>Chapter 9</b>	
<b>The Judiciary</b>	<b>215</b>
<b>The Myth of the Nonpolitical Judiciary</b>	<b>216</b>
<b>The Players in the System of Justice</b>	<b>218</b>
The Attorney General (AG)	218
Lawyers	219
The State Bar of Texas	219
<b>The Court System</b>	<b>219</b>
Municipal Courts	221
Justice Courts	221
County Courts	221
State Trial Courts: The District Courts	222
Intermediate State Appellate Courts: The Courts of Appeals	222
Highest State Appellate Courts	223
<b>Juries</b>	<b>224</b>
<b>Police</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Removal and Reprimand of Lawyers and Judges</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Issues Facing the Texas Judiciary</b>	<b>225</b>
Too Much Crime, Too Many Criminals	225
Judicial Selection	227
Partisan Elections?	227
Is Justice for Sale?	228
Equal Justice?	230
<b>Chapter 10</b>	
<b>The Substance of Justice</b>	<b>239</b>
<b>Civil Liberties</b>	<b>240</b>
Freedom of Expression	240
Freedom of Religion	242
A Right to Keep and Bear Arms?	245
Abortion	246
<b>Civil Rights</b>	<b>248</b>
School Segregation	248
Education: A Basic Right?	249
Civil Rights in Modern Texas:	
Jasper and Tulia	250
Civil Rights for Convicted Criminals	253
<b>Capital Punishment</b>	<b>254</b>
<b>Torts and Tort Reform</b>	<b>257</b>

**Chapter 11****Local Government 263****Counties: One Size Fits All? 264**

- Historical and Legal Background 264
- Organization and Operation of County Government 265
  - Structure 265
  - Apportionment 266
  - Commissioners Court 266
  - County Officials 267
- County Politics 269
- An Evaluation of County Government 269
  - Structure and Partisanship 269
  - Management Practices 270
  - Lack of Ordinance Power 272
  - Recommendations 272
  - Prospects for Reform 272

**Cities: Managed Environments 273**

- Organization of City Government 274
  - The Council-Manager Form 275
  - The Mayor-Council Form 276
  - The Mayor-Manager Form 277
  - The Commission Form 278
  - Forms Used in General-Law Cities 279
  - What Form Is Preferable? 279
- City Politics 281

**Special Districts: Our Hidden Governments 283**

- What is a Special District? 283
- Why Special Districts? 284
  - Inadequacy of Established Governments 284
  - Ease of Organization and Operation 284
  - Private Gain 284
  - Flexibility 285
  - Apolitical Approach 285
- Assessment of Special Districts 285
- School Districts 286

**Local Government: Prospects for the Future 286**

- Finance 286
  - Revenue 286
  - Spending 287
  - Fiscal Woes 287
- Other Issues 287

**Leadership in Local Government 289****Chapter 12****The State Economy and the Financing of State Government 293****The Texas Economy 295**

- Heart of the Economy 295
- Boom and Bust 295
- Creating a Favorable Business Climate 297

**Where Does the Money Come From? 297**

- Collection and Administration 298
- Nontax Sources of Revenue 299
  - Federal Grants 299
- Borrowing 300
- Other Nontax Sources 300
- Taxation 301

**Fairness and Equity in the Revenue System 302**

- Who Pays? 303
  - Taxes Paid by Individuals 303
  - Taxes Levied on Businesses 304
- Who Benefits? 305
- Contemporary Issues 305
  - Perspectives from the Past 305
  - What's Next? 306

**How Are Budget Decisions Made? 308**

- Planning and Preparation 308
- Authorization and Appropriation 311
- Execution/Spending 311

**Where Does the Money Go? 312**

- Education 312
- Health and Human Services 313
- Business and Economic Development 314
- Other Major Expenditures 315

**Chapter 13****Public Policy—People 317****The Public Policy Process 318**

- The Policy Agenda 318
- Mandates 319

**Poverty, Welfare, and Health Care 320**

- Poverty in Texas 320

**The Players and the Major Programs 321**

- Recent Policy Developments 325
- Analysis 327

**Public Education Policy 328**

- Education Reform 330
- Nontraditional Education Proposals 330
- Texas Textbooks and Curricula 331
- Analysis 332

**Texas Higher Education 332**

- Issues 333
- Analysis 333
- Immigration Policy 334

**Chapter 14****Public Policy—Resources 339****Climate Change 340****Water Supply 341**

- Urban Dwellers versus Farmers 342
- Private Property Rights versus State Regulation 343
- Economic Development versus Environment 344

**Energy Supply 346**

- Sources of Energy 346
  - Oil 347
  - Natural Gas 348

Coal 349

Nuclear Power 350

Renewables 354

Efficiency 355

The Politics of Energy in Texas 356

**Protecting the Environment 358**

NIMBY and YBNIIMP 359

Texas and Environmental Protection 360

Public Policy and Private Interests 360

The Problems Continue 362

**Transportation 363**

The Costs of the Internal Combustion Engine 364

Which Way Transportation Policy? 365

Strategy Number One: Build More Roads 365

Strategy Number Two: Make Cars Cleaner and Safer 366

Strategy Number Three: Create Alternatives to

Transportation by Automobile, and Persuade

People to Use Them 368

**Notes 371**

**Glossary 389**

**Index 395**



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# Texas Politics Helps You Meet the State Learning Outcomes for GOVT 2306

1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.
3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.
6. Analyze the state and local election process.
7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

Chapter in <i>Texas Politics</i>		GOVT 2306 State Learning Outcomes (SLO) that are specifically addressed in the chapter
1.	The Context of Texas Politics	SLO 2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government. SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens. SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
2.	The Constitutional Setting	SLO 1. Explain the origin and development of the Texas constitution. SLO 3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas. SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.
3.	Interest Groups	SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government. SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.
4.	Political Parties	SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government. SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. SLO 6. Analyze the state and local election process. SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens. SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
5.	Voting, Campaigns, and Elections	SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government. SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. SLO 6. Analyze the state and local election process. SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens. SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.
6.	The Legislature	SLO 3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas. SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government. SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas. SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.

Chapter in <i>Texas Politics</i>		GOVT 2306 State Learning Outcomes (SLO) that are specifically addressed in the chapter
7.	The Governor	<p>SLO 3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.</p> <p>SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.</p> <p>SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.</p> <p>SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.</p>
8.	The Administrative State	<p>SLO 3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.</p> <p>SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.</p> <p>SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.</p>
9.	The Judiciary	<p>SLO 3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.</p> <p>SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.</p> <p>SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.</p>
10.	The Substance of Justice	<p>SLO 2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.</p> <p>SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.</p> <p>SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.</p> <p>SLO 7. Describe the rights and responsibilities of citizens.</p> <p>SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.</p>
11.	Local Government	<p>SLO 2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.</p> <p>SLO 6. Analyze the state and local election process.</p>
12.	The State Economy and the Financing of State Government	<p>SLO 2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.</p> <p>SLO 3. Describe separation of powers and checks and balances in both theory and practice in Texas.</p> <p>SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.</p> <p>SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.</p>
13.	Public Policy: People	<p>SLO 2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.</p> <p>SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.</p> <p>SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.</p> <p>SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.</p>
14.	Public Policy: Resources	<p>SLO 2. Demonstrate an understanding of state and local political systems and their relationship with the federal government.</p> <p>SLO 4. Demonstrate knowledge of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Texas government.</p> <p>SLO 5. Evaluate the role of public opinion, interest groups, and political parties in Texas.</p> <p>SLO 8. Analyze issues, policies, and political culture of Texas.</p>



# Letter to Instructors

The authors have observed and taught Texas politics for more than 125 years collectively. We remain fascinated by the foibles of Texas government and the dynamic changes that have occurred in the politics of the state since this book was first published in 1979. We write *Texas Politics: Ideal and Reality* because we think the governance of the second-largest state in the United States warrants close scrutiny and that instructors and students deserve a book that takes both a broad view and provides enough details to allow readers to evaluate their government. We are aware that most students take the Texas politics course only because the state says they must, but we hope that by emphasizing current events and recent history, we can pique the interest of both those who teach and those who learn.

## The Book's Themes

The dominant theme of this book is *ideal and reality*, that is, how democratic ideals of participation, majority rule, minority rights, and equality before the law are met by the realities of politics in a state that, through most of its history, has been a one-party state—not always the same party—and that emphasizes the values of individualism and traditionalism far more than a moralistic political culture. Two other themes help to shape the book: persistent but not unchallenged *conservatism* and *conflict* arising from various political factions and ethnic, racial, and economic diversity in the state. As political scientists, we are trained to be analysts, not apologists, for the system. Thus, in chapter after chapter, you will see questions raised about whether political processes and practices in Texas meet the test of democratic morality and suggestions about how to improve the Texas political system. We also examine the evolution of today's political conservatism and the state's political disagreements and their consequences for public policy.

## New to This Edition

In this edition, we have continued to focus on aligning our narrative with the state learning outcomes for GOVT 2306, to help students use higher-order thinking to master these objectives. New to this edition, we have introduced a strategy for addressing the skills-based core objectives required of the discipline, as defined by the Undergraduate Education Advisory Committee (UEAC) of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). The enhanced edition has been designed to support students' development of these core objectives, prompting students to engage in critical thinking, develop communication skills, evaluate social responsibility, and reflect on their own sense of personal responsibility. Each of these exercises is designated by icons throughout the text:



In addition to refining our traditional analyses of Texas politics, and updating essential facts, for the Enhanced 13th edition we have provided new content, in the form of either adding

new themes or expanding our coverage of previously mentioned subjects. For the text as a whole, we have introduced two topics that are discussed in several chapters: the politics of climate change and immigration. This edition also contains major substantive updates in the following chapters:

**Chapter 1:** In the historical section, we have added detail about slavery and secession, and provided a new “You Decide” box in which the reader is asked, “How Do You Remember the Alamo?”

**Chapter 2:** In our discussion of constitutional rights, we have added a box examining the conflict over the question of whether the state can force parents to vaccinate their children.

**Chapter 3:** This chapter contains our usual updates on major interest groups, including the conflict between the Christian Right and former speaker of the Texas house of representatives Joe Straus, the Christian Right’s successes in persuading the legislature to pass anti-abortion laws, and the political flirtation of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) with President Donald Trump.

**Chapter 4:** We continue to recount the evolution of state parties through the election of 2018, including a box containing statements from the 2018 state platforms of the two major political parties. We also update and evaluate the changing role of partisanship in the state house versus the state senate.

**Chapter 5:** This chapter contains updates on the Texas Election Commission’s efforts to enforce the election and campaign-finance laws; discussions of Russian interference in the 2016, and possibly 2018, elections, and a detailed analysis of 2018 campaigns in Texas.

**Chapter 6:** We report on the evolution of power in the state senate and house, especially the impact of lieutenant governor Dan Patrick on the Senate and Joe Straus on the house. We discuss the way that their differing viewpoints on policy, and institutional power, played out over the 85th legislative session in 2017. We have also added a new “You Decide” box on whether the legislature should be reformed, and if so, how.

**Chapter 7:** We have somewhat restructured the discussion of gubernatorial power by classifying the use of such power as “aggressive” (Rick Perry), “cooperative” (George W. Bush), or “deferential” (Dolph Briscoe).

**Chapter 8:** We have recast the analysis of the relations between the national and state governments after 1980 in terms of “devolution.”

**Chapter 9:** We have updated the section on judicial selection to address the swing of the Harris County judiciary from Republican to Democratic in the election of 2018, including the election of 19 African American women to the county’s benches. We consider how this change has renewed discussion of the use of partisan election as the process for the selection of judges.

**Chapter 10:** We update our discussion of chronic racism in Texas with the observation that while overt racism is now relatively rare, subtle forms of racism are still embedded in the state’s culture. Additionally, we have included a new discussion box about the “new slavery” in Texas—human trafficking.

**Chapter 11:** In Gail Collin’s book *As Texas Goes*, she dilates on the concept of “open space politics”—the idea that the state’s citizens still see the state as dominated by the frontier. In this chapter, we apply and expand upon Collin’s insight, especially in the way that the frontier myth has made governing a now-largely-urban state difficult.

**Chapter 12:** We have updated discussion of block grants and expanded the account of the Texas lottery as a source of state income.

**Chapter 13:** The “politics of immigration” is a major new topic in this chapter.

**Chapter 14:** In addition to updates in our previous discussions of water supply, energy supply, environmental protection, and transportation, we focus on the topic of global climate change, both as a subject in itself and as a theme that has an impact on the other four topics.

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## From the Authors

We hope you find *Texas Politics: Ideal and Reality* to be readable, thorough, and interesting. We welcome your comments and your reactions not only to the book itself but also to the new and exciting digital features designed to make your teaching job easier.

*Charldean Newell*

*David F. Prindle*

*James W. Riddlesperger, Jr.*

dprindle@austin.utexas.edu

j.riddlesperger@tcu.edu

# Letter to Students

Few students in Texas politics classes are political science majors, but every student is affected by the political processes common in the state and by the policy outcomes that are a result of the Texas political culture, the state's diversity, the attitude toward the national government, and the boom-and-bust economy. For those at a public college or university, how does diminishing support for higher education affect you personally? Most readers of this book will continue to live in Texas and be affected by its political decisions. Are the highways congested and rutted or nicely paved with free-flowing traffic lanes? Are the public schools adequate to prepare students for success in both college and the modern workforce? Is justice dispensed fairly and impartially or according to ethnicity, race, or wealth? Can the state attract employers offering high-end jobs, or is the quality of life in Texas inadequate to the task? As citizens, you need to not only vote in every election but also understand the issues and the candidates. Gaining that understanding can actually be a lot of fun once you begin to realize just how "crazy" the Texas political system really is.

## The Book's Themes

The dominant theme of this book is *ideal and reality*, with the themes of *conservatism* and *conflict* also appearing throughout the text. Texas politics so often presents two contrasting sides of a situation. For example, elected officials constantly rail against the national government, but also depend on it for a large share of the state's budget. Should a state always be a willing participant in the United States? Should it be consistent and either decline federal dollars or participate in all the programs available? The state has chosen not to expand Medicare and not to have a state pool under the Affordable Health Care Act even though Texas has the highest percentage of uninsured residents in the country. Yet this position is very popular with voters. Does the state meet the test of democratic morality—participation, majority rule, minority rights, and equality before the law—by the realities of its political practices? Similarly, the state is basically anti-tax, and, as the introduction to the finance chapter notes, a politician would rather handle a rattlesnake than suggest a tax increase. Resentment of taxes is a classic conservative position. Does the low-tax stance really save taxpayers money, or do they make their "contributions" in other ways such as college tuition, local utility rates, and borrowing?

Questions of democratic morality and conservatism exist in an environment of conflict. Politics is always about conflict, about disagreement, but Texas has extremes not only in its weather but also in its people—rich and poor, Anglo and non-Anglo, religious fundamentalists and non-religious humanists. Too often, these diverse groups play a "zero-sum" game, with the winner taking all and the loser receiving nothing. The room for compromise has grown smaller.

All of these conditions affect you now and will continue to affect you in the future. How much do you pay for tuition? Is there adequate student aid? Are there enough faculty members? Has a president or favorite faculty member been forced to resign because he or she disagreed with the politically appointed board of regents? How well are international students treated on your campus, especially those from the Middle East? Will you be paying college debt for the next twenty years? Did you miss a vital course due to campus cutbacks that will leave you ill-prepared for a future job? Has the college experience given you an appreciation of different cultures that will stand you in good stead in the future?

## Features of the Book

Some of the key features of this book are:

- ▶ **Learning objectives for each chapter** that guide the organization of and discussion of the chapter and are also summarized at the end of the chapter
- ▶ **Key term definitions in the margins** of each chapter as well as in the glossary
- ▶ **Critical thinking questions** for review
- ▶ A **“Texas Politics and You” feature in each chapter** that asks you to become directly involved in an often controversial issue, often through social media
- ▶ A **“You Decide” feature in each chapter** that poses a question, gives pro and con arguments, and then asks you to make a decision on the issue
- ▶ **Cartoons**, mainly by Pulitzer Prize winner Ben Sargent, designed to provoke your reaction and spur discussion
- ▶ **Digital tools and interactive media** are outlined below to help you master the course material

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## From the Authors

We hope that you will enjoy *Texas Politics: Ideal and Reality* and find it a useful tool to sparking your interest in state and local government and politics. At a minimum, we hope the book helps you to appreciate why you need to understand state and local politics and government and to vote regularly. Texas is a big, boisterous, sprawling state, and its politics follow suit. Think of Texas politics as a primetime soap opera.

Charldean Newell

David F. Prindle  
dprindle@austin.utexas.edu

James W. Riddlesperger, Jr.  
j.riddlesperger@tcu.edu

# Resources

## Students



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A screenshot of the MindTap interface for Chapter 9: The Judiciary. The interface shows a list of activities with their submission status, average score, and total points. The activities include a practice quiz, a reading assignment, a focus activities quiz, a wrap it up quiz, and an adaptive test prep quiz.

Activity Name	Submitted	Avg. Score	Points
Watch and Consider: Should Texas Stop Holding Partisan Judicial Elections? PRACTICE	0% submitted	-- avg. score	5 points
Chapter 9 Reading: The Judiciary			
Chapter 9 Focus Activities: The Judiciary PRACTICE	0% submitted	-- avg. score	8 points
Chapter 9 Wrap It Up Quiz PRACTICE	0% submitted	-- avg. score	25 points
Chapter 9 Adaptive Test Prep PRACTICE	0% submitted	-- avg. score	1 points



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# Acknowledgments

Many people have helped in the preparation of the Enhanced Thirteenth Edition of this book. Our colleagues also offered constructive criticism and helpful hints. Sometimes we agreed with the reviewers but were unable to comply with their suggestions because of page limitations. Nevertheless, many changes in this edition are due to their comments and the comments of colleagues across the state who called our attention to points deserving coverage or correction. We are similarly indebted to students who raised provocative questions and pointed out places where greater clarity would be appreciated.

Additionally, many other individuals offered valuable assistance in helping us find specific information or documents. They include librarians and other faculty members, graduate students, legislative and state agency staff members, and journalists. We are especially grateful to two people who have been endlessly helpful to us over the course of the many editions of this textbook: Ben Sargent, who makes his editorial cartoons from the *Austin American-Statesman* and *Texas Observer* available to us. Additionally, political science undergraduate students at Texas Christian University were very helpful in the preparation of each chapter's "Texas Politics and You" feature. We would also like to thank Terri Wise for authoring this edition's Instructor's Manual and Powerpoint.

# Reviewers

We would also like to thank the instructors who have contributed their valuable feedback through reviews of this text:

For the Enhanced Thirteenth Edition:

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Justin Moeller *WTAMU*  
James Goss *Tarrant County College-Trinity River Campus*  
Jeff Stanglin *Kilgore College*  
Sarah Perez *University of Texas Rio Grande Valley*  
Mary Louis *Houston Community College*  
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Blake R. Farrar *Austin Community College*  
Mary Linder *Grayson College*

# About the Authors

## Charldean Newell

Charldean Newell was Richard Kraemer's co-author for the first edition of this textbook in 1979 and continued as the lead author when Kraemer retired from the project in 1992. She died in 2014, at the age of seventy-five.

A Fort Worth native, she earned her doctorate in Government at the University of Texas at Austin in 1965. In addition to this textbook, she was also the author of *The Effective Local Government Manager* (ICMA Press, 2004) and *City Executives* (SUNY Press, 1989), and editor of *Managing Local Government: Cases in Local Government Effectiveness* (ICMA Press, 2009). In her thirty-seven year career at the University of North Texas she won awards from students, colleagues, and alumni, as well as prizes from national public administration organizations. Her memorial service ended with the playing of "Singing Glory to the Green," the North Texas alma mater.

Despite her ferocious work ethic, Charldean was a cheerful and generous writing partner. Phone conversations about the next edition of this textbook were conducted amidst laughter, often including her continuing critiques of the travails of her beloved Texas Rangers baseball team, and generally included helpful advice. She always beat her deadlines, and invariably provided acute but respectful commentary on the chapter first drafts of her co-authors. Although she is no longer contributing new information to this book, many of her sentences and paragraphs continue to adorn its prose, along with continuing themes that reflect her passion for the subject matter. We are pleased that her name is still on the cover.

## David F. Prindle

David Prindle was born in Los Angeles and raised in Hermosa Beach, California. He earned a BA from the University of California, Santa Cruz in 1970, an MA from UCLA in 1972, and a PhD from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1977. He was hired by the Government Department of the University of Texas at Austin in 1976.

He is the author of *Petroleum Politics and the Texas Railroad Commission* (University of Texas Press, 1981), *The Politics of Glamour: Ideology and Democracy in the Screen Actors Guild* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), *Risky Business: The Political Economy of Hollywood* (Westview Press, 1993), *The Paradox of Democratic Capitalism: Politics and Economics in American Thought* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), *Stephen Jay Gould and the Politics of Evolution* (Prometheus Books, 2009), and *The Politics of Evolution* (Routledge/Taylor and Francis, 2015). He has won five teaching awards at the University of Texas. His hobbies include fly-fishing, reading detective novels, and getting lost in beautiful places.

## James W. Riddlesperger, Jr.

James W. Riddlesperger, Jr. (PhD, University of Missouri) is Professor of Political Science at Texas Christian University (TCU). A native of Denton, he has taught American politics, with interests in Texas politics, Congress, and the Presidency, at TCU since 1982.

Recipient of the TCU Chancellor's Award for Distinguished Achievement as a Creative Teacher and Scholar and the Honor's Professor of the Year award at TCU, his publications include *The Austin-Boston Connection: Five Decades of House Democratic Leadership, 1937–1989* (Texas A&M University Press, 2009), and *Lone Star Leaders* (TCU Press, 2011); he also co-edited *The Wright Stuff* (TCU Press, 2013), a collection of the writings of former House Speaker Jim Wright, and *Reflections on Rayburn* (TCU Press, 2017). A former president of the Southwestern Political Science Association, and Chief Reader for the U.S. Government Advance Placement exam, he enjoys reading, baseball, and walking.



The San Jacinto Monument near Beaumont commemorates the 1836 battle in which Texans won their independence from Mexico.

*iStock.com/PaulWolf*



# The Context of Texas Politics

# 1

## Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- LO1.1** Give a brief account of the causes and consequences of the major events in Texas history, such as the Texas Revolution, slavery, Civil War, Reconstruction, the cotton and oil industries, world wars and Depression, political changes from the Old South to modern Texas, and the state's evolution to a modern economy.
- LO1.2** Summarize democratic theory, and the standards that it supplies us in order to permit us to evaluate the democratic legitimacy of any state or country.
- LO1.3** Discuss whether it is desirable, or even possible, for Texas to have a "foreign policy."
- LO1.4** Give a brief description of the three political cultures, and explain how they apply to Texas.
- LO1.5** Summarize the overall pattern of the relationship of Texas government to the Texas economy, and explain why it is difficult to determine if Texas is or is not a good place to live.
- LO1.6** Discuss the ratio of Anglo, Latinos, and African Americans in the Texas population, and explain why these ratios matter to a book about state government.

**M**uch has changed in Texas between its entrance to the United States of American in 1845, and the present era in which journalist Erica Grieder, quoted below, described the state as a model for the nation. During the entire nineteenth century, and much of the twentieth century, the state was poor, agricultural, and sparsely settled. Today, it is the nation's second most populous state, four-fifths of the population lives in cities or suburbs, and it leads the country in consuming energy and producing semiconductors, among other distinctions. Yet, as we shall see, in some ways, Texas has changed little since 1845. The Lone Star State is a constantly developing mix of old and new.

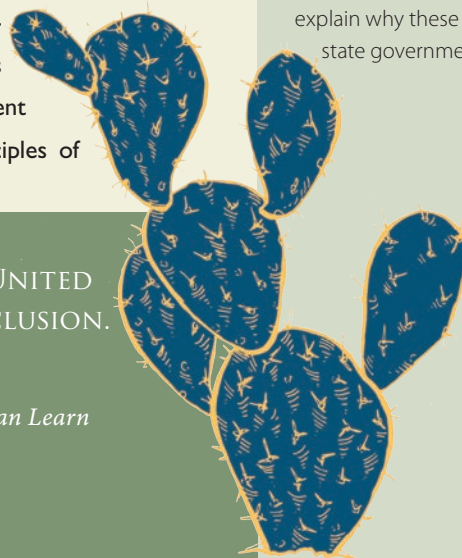
Old habits of thought and behavior evolved to meet the problems of the nineteenth century, when Texas was settled by Americans of western European background. They persist today, despite serious new problems created in the latter decades of the twentieth and first decades of the twenty-first century. As Texans prepare themselves to meet the challenges of the future, they have to ask themselves if the habits and institutions they have inherited are up to the job.

In this chapter, the first topic is a summary of the history of Texas, with an emphasis on important political events and the development of the economy. Some of the most basic principles of

TEXAS SOMETIMES LOOKS LIKE THE UNITED STATES TAKEN TO ITS LOGICAL CONCLUSION.

Erica Grieder,

*Big, Hot, Cheap, and Right: What America Can Learn from The Strange Genius of Texas* 2013



democratic theory are then discussed, along with an explanation of why it is vital to understand them, and a brief look at one of democracy's problems. Two discussions then situate Texas within the American federal system and the international arena. The focus then shifts to Texas's political culture and some historically crucial social and political attitudes. The next subject is the economy of Texas and the way it interacts with the state's political system. As an introduction to some discussions later in the book, the origin and distribution of the state's population are then considered. Finally, there is a brief outline of the agenda for the rest of the book.

## Texas History: A Chronology

Like a human being, a state is partly what it is because of what it has experienced. A review of Texas history will highlight the background and context of the themes, institutions, behaviors, and events we discuss in this book.

### The Earliest Days

Humans have inhabited Texas for much longer than there has been such a thing as a state. Skull fragments found near Midland (dubbed "Midland Minnie") and a complete female skeleton discovered near Leander have been dated at 10,000 to 13,000 years old; a larger Clovis period (10,000–9,000 B.C.) site has been excavated in Denton County. At the time of the first European exploration in the sixteenth century, perhaps 30,000 to 40,000 Native Americans inhabited what is now Texas, and some estimates run as high as 130,000. Among the major groups were the Caddo tribes of North and East Texas, Tonkawas in Central Texas, Karankawas along the coast, Coahuiltecas from the Rio Grande to what is now San Antonio, Lipan Apaches and Comanches in West Texas, and Jumanos in the Trans Pecos region. Determined to keep their lands, they violently resisted European settlement. Westward advancement in Texas cost seventeen White lives per mile. One can only guess at the cost to the Native Americans, although it was undoubtedly much higher.

As early as 1519, just twenty-seven years after the European discovery of the New World and a century before the English Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, Spanish explorer Alonso Alvarez de Pineda mapped the entire Gulf Coast. Several expeditions followed, but Spanish activity was not extensive until 1685, when the French explorer Rene Robert Cavaliere de Sieur La Salle built a small fort in what is now South Texas. This threat of competition from their imperial rivals spurred the Spanish to establish a series of missions beginning in 1690.

The purposes of these missions were to extend the sphere of Spanish domination and civil law and to convert Native Americans to Christianity. Spanish influence extended across South Texas from Louisiana to New Mexico, and by the time of the American Revolution in 1776, about 2,300 Native Americans had been baptized.

However, Spanish power was already waning as a result of economic and military factors. After one abortive attempt, Mexico achieved independence from Spain in 1821. By that year, despite the centuries of Spanish influence, there were only three permanent European settlements in Texas—San Antonio, Nacogdoches, and Goliad—and the European population had declined to 7,000 during the previous thirty years. Although their numbers were relatively small, Spaniards and Mexicans left rich and indelible influences on Texas through their language, law, religion, and culture.

## Anglo-American Colonization

Colonization from the south did not succeed in Texas because of shortsighted economic policies. The Spanish government exploited the few settlers by paying poor prices for their cattle and other products and, at the same time, by charging them high prices for trade goods. As a result, few settlers moved to the giant province.

Texas was potentially much more attractive to settlers from the neighboring United States. There, frontier land was sold to would-be settlers, but in Texas, land was free if one could get a government grant. Because the Spanish government had failed to persuade Mexican citizens to colonize the area, it was nervous about expansionist impulses in the United States. Spain decided to gamble that it could acculturate Anglo settlers and use them to protect Mexican interests against the growing, rambunctious democracy to the north.

Moses Austin, a native of Connecticut, abandoned his unsuccessful business activities in Missouri and turned his attention to Texas. Moses died after filing a formal application for settlement with the viceroy of Mexico in 1819. He was succeeded by his son, Stephen F. Austin, who received a generous land grant, as well as permission to bring in 300 families for colonization. The first settlements were at Columbus on the Colorado River and at Washington-on-the-Brazos. As impresario, or agent, Austin had wide powers over his colony to establish commercial activity, organize a militia, and dispense justice.

Other colonies quickly followed and the non-Native American population jumped from 7,000 to more than 35,000 between 1821 and 1836. The great majority of the settlers came in good faith, intending to take the oath of allegiance to Mexico and be good Mexican citizens. However, the cultural differences they encountered made this difficult. Not only was Spanish the official language, but the colonists, mostly Protestant, were required to accept Roman Catholicism.

There were also disagreements about the institution of slavery. The practice of one human being owning another was illegal in Mexico. But the Anglos who arrived from Southern states universally believed that they could not sustain an economy without owning slaves. Stephen F. Austin was typical. Although privately expressing moral qualms about the institution, he wrote in 1824, “The principal product that will elevate us from poverty is cotton, and we cannot do this without the help of slaves.” The Anglo immigrants to the Mexican province brought their slaves with them, and the Mexican government, while officially forbidding them to do so, always found an unofficial way to tolerate the practice.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, the new Mexican nation was suffering from violent political instability, and policy toward Texas was both inconsistent and made 900 miles away in Mexico City by men who knew little about conditions in the area. Moreover, Anglos tended to regard themselves as culturally superior to Mexicans and vice versa. Alienation between Texas and Mexico grew, much as alienation between the colonists and the British had grown prior to the American Revolution two generations earlier.

## Revolution

The Mexican government now feared further Anglo-American settlement and acted to curtail it. The settlers responded with demands for concessions, including the right to use the English language in public business and the separation of Texas from the state of Coahuila. Austin was imprisoned in Mexico City for a time, and conditions degenerated. What followed is known to virtually every schoolchild in the state: Texas’s war for independence. The most celebrated engagement was the battle in San Antonio during March 1836 in which a few Anglos and Texas-Mexicans held the Alamo against a much larger Mexican force for eleven days before being massacred. Nevertheless, although it makes a stirring story, the Alamo was not a decisive engagement. That distinction belongs to the Battle of San Jacinto, which took place between



The Alamo in San Antonio symbolizes the state's colorful political history.

Dennis Flaherty/Photodisc/Getty Images

Competency Connection

**CRITICAL THINKING**

How do you evaluate the phrase 'Remember the Alamo'?



the new Texas army, led by Sam Houston, and the Mexican army, led by General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, on April 21.

Surprising the Mexicans while they took a siesta in the afternoon, the Texans routed them in a mere eighteen minutes, captured Santa Anna, and ordered him to sign a document agreeing to their independence or be executed. Santa Anna signed, but repudiated the treaty as soon as he was safely across the border. Texans, however, considered themselves independent, and the Republic of Texas became a reality.

The history of the republic was eventful, but short. Independence brought sudden growth, with the population rising rapidly to about 140,000. The Mexicans invaded twice, capturing San Antonio both times before being repulsed. Resistant Native Americans continued to cause severe problems as well. The new nation soon found itself in debt and with a depreciating currency. Sentiment for annexation by the United States had always been strong, and on December 29, 1845, the U.S. Congress voted to admit Texas into the Union as the twenty-eighth state. This was one of those rare events in history in which an independent nation voluntarily gave up its sovereignty and became part of another nation. Unlike other states, Texas retained the title to all of its public lands when it accepted statehood.

## Early Statehood

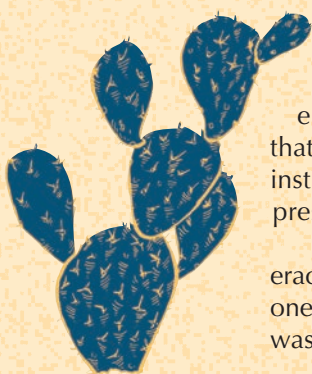
A final peace treaty with Mexico had never been signed, and the Mexican government still considered Texas merely a rebellious province. Annexation of the area by the United States precipitated the Mexican War. This conflict was short and decisive. The first engagement took place at Palo Alto, near present-day Brownsville, on May 8, 1846, and Mexico City fell to United States troops less than a year and a half later, on September 14, 1847. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the defeated nation relinquished all claim to Texas and, in return for \$15 million, ceded all territory west of Texas and south of Oregon to the United States. One can only wonder what the value of this vast tract is today.

No political parties, as such, existed in the Republic of Texas. Sam Houston, the hero of the Battle of San Jacinto, was the dominant political figure, and political debate generally divided along pro-Houston and anti-Houston lines. For the reasons outlined, to the extent that Texans thought about national politics, most were Democrats.

At the time of her independence in 1836, Texas was home to about 5000 Black slaves.<sup>2</sup> By joining the United States, however, the Lone Star State plunged into the political controversy over slavery. That issue simmered at higher and higher temperatures until it boiled over with the



## ISSUE SPOTLIGHT: Arguing about the Past, in the Present



More than a hundred and fifty years after it ended, Americans are still arguing about the meaning of the Civil War of 1861-65. One of the most contentious issues concerns the reasons that the Southern states seceded. Northern Whites, and African Americans in every state, assert that the cause of secession was Southern Whites' determination to preserve the institution of slavery. Southern Whites often insist that the cause was a desire to preserve the rights of states against the tyranny of the federal government.

The Southern viewpoint is on display in a plaque that the "Children of the Confederacy" placed in the Texas capitol building during the late 1950s. The plaque states that one of the "truths of history" is that "the war between the states was not a rebellion nor was its underlying cause to sustain slavery."

But the truth of history is better read in the secession document adopted by the Texas Secession Convention in early 1861, which proclaimed a "declaration of the causes which impel the State of Texas to secede from the Federal Union." That document asserts that it is the right of "white men" to preserve "the servitude of the African race," and that because the federal government threatens that right, secession is necessary.

The documentary evidence is thus clear: Texas seceded to preserve slavery. Any other view is an attempt to falsify history.

Many Texans would therefore like to see the Children of the Confederacy plaque removed. No less a personage than Joe Straus, former speaker of the state legislature, has argued that "We should not try to hide the fact that the Confederacy is part of our history. But in a public space like the Texas Capitol, we should also not promote falsehoods." Although many White Texans still cherished the memory of the Confederacy and wanted the plaque to stay, it was removed in January, 2019.

Source: Joe Straus, "Capitol's Plaque Lies About History. Let's Remove It," *Austin American-Statesman*, August 12, 2018, E2.

### Competency Connection SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

What is your opinion?  
Should the plaque  
have stayed or been  
removed?

election of an antislavery Republican, Abraham Lincoln, as president in 1860. Fearful that Republican control would mean a federal effort to emancipate their slaves, the southern states withdrew from the Union. Texas seceded in February 1861 and joined the new Confederacy in March.

Texans fought at home, on an expedition into New Mexico, and in large numbers in West Virginia, Tennessee, and elsewhere during the Civil War. Southern troops and southern generals were usually superior to their northern counterparts and won many battles. The agricultural South, however, was outgunned, outmanned, and outsupplied by the industrial North, and southern political leadership was inferior to Lincoln's. The U.S. president issued the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing the slaves, on January 1, 1863—an act that persuaded European powers not to enter the war on the South's behalf. As a consequence, the North ground down the South's ability to wage war over four years until the Confederacy fell apart in the spring of 1865. With the defeat of the rebellion, federal troops landed at Galveston on June 19, 1865, proclaiming the freedom of the state's 250,000 slaves. "Juneteenth" was originally celebrated by African-American Texans as Emancipation Day, and has now spread to the rest of the country as an informal holiday.

## Post–Civil War Texas

Confusion and bitterness followed the war. Despite President Lincoln’s stated policy of “with malice toward none, with charity for all,” the reaction in Texas, as in other parts of the South, was to continue to oppose national policy even though the war was over. Confederate officials and sympathizers were elected to state and local office; Black Codes that severely restricted the activities of the former slaves were passed by state legislatures. (It was Anglo refusal to grant full citizenship to Blacks, as much as the scorching Texas summers, that inspired a famous statement by Union General Phil Sheridan’s in 1866, “If I owned hell and Texas, I’d rent out Texas and live in hell.”)<sup>3</sup> This defiance by the defeated South strengthened the position of the Radical Republicans in Congress and caused a hardening of policy, and Lincoln’s assassination prevented him from moderating their desire to punish the states of the defunct Confederacy for their rebellion. During the period known as Reconstruction, military government was imposed on the South, and former Confederate officials and soldiers were largely excluded from voting and from holding public office.

These actions by the federal government intensified the hostility with which most White Texans viewed the Republican Party. African Americans, as one might expect, voted for Republican candidates, giving White Texans even more reason to support the Democrats. Political activity by the freed slaves also spurred White citizens to form the Ku Klux Klan in Texas and throughout the South. Klan members met in secret, bound themselves by oath, and frequently wore hoods to conceal their identities. Their purpose was to keep African Americans in a position of great inferiority. Their methods included intimidation, violence, and sometimes murder.

The best remembered governorship of this Reconstruction period was that of E. J. Davis, one of a number of Texans who had fought for the Union during the war. A Republican, Davis held office from 1870 to 1874. Using the substantial powers granted by the state’s Constitution of 1869, Davis acted like a true chief executive and implemented policies consistent with the philosophy of the Radical Republicans in Washington. To his credit, Davis reformed the penal system and greatly improved public education. To his discredit, during his tenure, state indebtedness increased considerably, and there were allegations of financial impropriety. But whatever the merits of his administration, to White Texans he was a traitorous agent of the hated Yankees.

In 1873, after political restrictions against former Confederate officials and soldiers were removed, a Democrat, Richard Coke, defeated Davis in his reelection bid by a two-to-one margin. Just as important as the return of the Democratic party to power was the repudiation of the Constitution of 1869 and its replacement with Texas’s current basic law, the Constitution of 1876. The adoption of this document represented the end of Reconstruction and a substantial return to the traditional principles of the Jeffersonian Democrats, including very limited government and low taxes.

## The Late Nineteenth Century

Texas did not suffer the physical destruction that burdened other Confederate states, and economic recovery and development came quickly after the Civil War. The Hollywood version of this era in Texas is one of cowboys, cattle drives, and range wars. There is some basis for the mythical view of post–Civil War Texas as a land of ranches and trail drives, for between 1866 and 1880 four million cattle were driven “north to the rails.”<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, the actual foundation of the state’s economy was King Cotton. In East Texas, the fields were worked largely by African Americans, and in West Texas, by Mexican Americans. Cotton remained the cash crop and principal export well into the twentieth century. However, in terms of the self-image of Texans, the myth of cow culture has been far more important than the reality of cotton farming.

Texas has few navigable rivers, and therefore transportation was a major problem. Because of the size of the state, thousands of miles of railroad track were laid. In 1888, railroad construction in Texas exceeded the total for all of the other states and territories combined.

In 1881, embarrassed officials discovered that the state legislature had given the railroads a million more acres of land for rights of way than were available, and the land-grant laws were repealed. In all, more than 32 million acres of land were given to the railroads, thus establishing early on the easy relationship between the state government and large corporations.

Race relations were difficult statewide, but particularly in East Texas. “Jim Crow laws,” severely limiting the civil rights of African Americans, began to make their appearance, and violence against the former slaves was common and often fatal. Between 1870 and 1900, an estimated 500 African Americans died as a result of mob violence, much of it led by the Ku Klux Klan. Although citizenship is much more equal today than it was in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there is still ethnic conflict in Texas, and some parts of the state continue to display “Old South” racist patterns of behavior.

Throughout most of the final quarter of the nineteenth century, conservative Democrats maintained control of the state. Their rule was based on White supremacy and the violent emotional reaction to the Radical Republican Reconstruction era. But other political parties and interest groups rose to challenge them.

With the penetration of the state by railroads and the increase in manufacturing came organized labor. Most notable were the militant Knights of Labor, which struck the Texas & Pacific Railroad in 1885 and won concessions. Another strike a year later, however, turned violent. Governor John Ireland used troops, ostensibly to protect railroad property, and the strike was broken. In the optimistic and growing economy of the 1880s, labor unions were less acceptable in the South than elsewhere. In Texas, they were viewed as “Yankee innovations” and “abominations.” Although a combination of capital was called a corporation and given approval by the state to operate under a charter, combinations of labor, called unions, were frequently labeled restraints of trade by the courts and forbidden to operate. Laws and executive actions also restricted union activities. These biases in favor of capital and against organized labor are still common in Texas.

More important than early labor unions was the agrarian movement. By the 1870s and 1880s, many of those who worked the land in Texas—whether White, African American, or Mexican American—were tenant farmers. Having to borrow money for seed and supplies, they worked all year to pay back what they owed and rarely broke even. Money and credit were scarce even for those who owned land, and railroad rates were artificially high.

The National Grange, or Patrons of Husbandry, was founded in 1867 in Washington, D.C., to try to defend farmers against this sort of economic hardship. The first chapter was established in Texas in 1872 and the organization grew quickly. Grangers were active in local politics, and the state organization lobbied the legislature on issues relevant to farmers. The Grange not only was influential in establishing Texas Agricultural & Mechanical College (now A&M University) and other educational endeavors but also played a significant role in writing the Constitution of 1876.

James S. Hogg, representing a new breed of Texas politician, was elected governor in 1890 and 1892. The first native Texan to hold the state’s highest office, Hogg was not a Confederate veteran. He presided over a brief period of reform that saw the establishment of the Railroad Commission, regulation of monopolies, limitations on alien ownership of land, and attempts to protect the public by regulating stocks and bonds. Unfortunately, it was also an era that saw the enactment of additional Jim Crow laws, including the requirement for segregation of African Americans from Whites on railroads.

Both major political parties were in turmoil, and in the 1890s, opposition to the Democrats in southern states was most effectively provided by the new People’s, or Populist, Party. Populists represented the belief that ordinary people had lost control of their government to rich corporations, especially the banks and railroads. Populists advocated monetary reform, railroad regulation, control of corporations, and other programs aimed at making government responsible to the citizens. Populists reached their peak strength in Texas in 1894 and 1896, but failed to unseat the Democrats in statewide elections. The dominant party adopted some