



Austin Landline Report January 2018

In Austin, there is much attention being paid, along with political contributions, to the upcoming March 6th primary elections. In South Texas, two races in particular stand out. One is a replacement for resigning Congressman Blake Farenthold and the other is a challenge to veteran State Representative Ryan Guillen of Rio Grande City.

STPRA's board of directors has endorsed Bech Bruun to replace Farenthold. Bruun, an attorney originally from Corpus Christi, served as chief of staff for Rep. Todd Hunter before heading Gov. Perry's appointments office and more recently the Texas Water Development Board. Our board has not yet made an endorsement in Ryan Guillen's race, but STPRA has endorsed him in the past and has worked closely with his office in passing legislation important to our members.

Statewide, Republican incumbents holding all executive elected positions are seeking reelection. Governor Greg Abbott and Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick both face token primary contests. Attorney General Ken Paxton and Comptroller Glen Hegar are seeking re-nomination unopposed. Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller faces challenger attorney/lobbyist Trey Blocker. Land Commissioner George P. Bush is being challenged by Jerry Patterson, who preceded Bush as Commissioner.

At the federal level, many on the Texas Coast are watching to see the progress of hurricane relief funding when Congress reconvenes. It also remains to be seen what the White House will do about appointments that were made last year. With the appointees not confirmed before Congress adjourned at the end of the year; two high-profile Texans, Susan Combs, for a spot at Interior, and Kathleen Hartnett White, as head of the White House Environmental Office, were caught in the limbo.