



Austin Landline Report October 2018

As the general election approaches, the airwaves and internet are getting jammed with campaign-related content. Despite all the attention and money being spent by opponents, none of the incumbents running state-wide appear to be in any jeopardy, though one or two polls have shown Beto O'Rourke gaining some ground on Ted Cruz. Though there are competitive Congressional races in each of the largest metro areas, the weakest for the Republicans is one that is rated a "toss-up" in the Dallas area.

The state House races may yield a few upsets by Democrats, but Republicans will still hold a large majority. Jockeying for the Speakership is already briskly underway. There was an upset in a special election for the state Senate seat that stretches along most of the Mexican border, with a Republican winning for the first time in 139 years, partially due to very light voting and a feud within the Democratic Party. Possible wildcard factors in some races in November may be an increase in state-wide voter registration, which hit a record of over 15 million, and stories that are playing out at the national level.

In the meantime state House committees are completing hearings on their interim charges and both the state House and Senate committees will begin releasing their interim reports soon. Eminent domain remains a hot topic of discussion and members of STPRA's sub-committee and staff are in the middle of trying to shape legislation on that issue. We are closely monitoring efforts to eradicate Carrizo cane and salt cedar and the most recent developments related to fever tick control. There is also a lot of attention being paid to Harvey recovery and we are monitoring that topic, though fortunately, much of our membership was spared serious damage or loss.