



Austin Landline Report March 2020

Primary Election Results

This year's primary elections were just held on March 3rd. Our PAC took positions in favor of several incumbents; including U.S. Senator John Cornyn, who easily won his primary challenge and will face the Democrat who survives a runoff election in May. Other races with our PAC's direct involvement and the outcomes are listed below:

U.S. Cong. Henry Cuellar (D) Laredo – Narrowly won a hard-fought race.

Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D) Brownsville – Was thrown into a runoff election by the slimmest of margins.

Rep. Bobbie Guerra (D) McAllen – Easily won his race.

Rep. Eddie Lucio III (D) Brownsville – Won his race with a smaller margin than expected.

Rep. Tracy O. King (D) Laredo – Easily defeated a spirited challenger.

In other races of interest, one of our neighbors, Jim Wright of Orange Grove, was the upset victor over an incumbent Railroad Commissioner in the Republican primary. There will be runoff elections to determine the challenger to State Sen. Pete Flores (R) Floresville, to replace retiring State Rep. Pancho Nevarez (D) Eagle Pass, and to replace Speaker Dennis Bonnen (R) Angleton.

On a related note, long-time State Sen. Kirk Watson (D) Austin surprised his constituents by announcing his retirement to head the new Hobby Center for Public Affairs at the University of Houston. The speculation is that the Governor will call a special election to replace him in late May. (A little trivia: with the increases in Texas population over recent decades, we now have more seats in Congress than we have state senators!)

Unfavorable Court Ruling on Easements

In a ruling last week, the Texas Supreme Court issued a decision that was a blow to property owners and a disappointment to groups such as STPRA that submitted amicus briefs in favor of the landowner plaintiff. In their decision in the case, commonly called the SWEPCO case after the name of the involved utility company, the Court gave condemnors much greater latitude in determining easement widths when they are not explicitly stated in the original agreements, without commensurate compensation to landowners.