

Voter Guide for Gillespie County

Primary Elections on Tuesday - March 5, 2024



League of Women Voters - Hill Country Texas

P. O. Box 290303 Kerrville, Texas 78029-0303

Email: president@lwvhillcountrytexas.org

Website: lwvhillcountrytexas.org

The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan civic organization and does not support or oppose any candidate or candidates or political party or parties. This Voter Guide provides voters an opportunity to read about candidates who have filed for an office. The League of Women Voters of the Hill Country Texas makes contact with each candidate in a contested election using a variety of methods to contact and invite each candidate to participate in a county voter guide. The candidate makes the decision about responding to the voter guide invitation, as participation is voluntary. All responses to questions come directly from the candidates and are not edited by League of Women Voters.

Get Ready to Vote in a Primary Election in Texas!

Read both the Texas State Voter Guide and the Gillespie County Voter Guide

The Texas State Voter Guide is published by the League of Women Voters of Texas with information on candidates for President and US Senate, as well as state offices like Railroad Commissioner, Texas State Courts and State Board of Education. All these elections are for offices which serve every citizen in the state of Texas. This voter guide is printed in color and has a larger paper format.

The County Voter Guide is published by the League of Women Voters of the Hill Country Texas with information on candidates for state districts like US Congress House of Representatives, Texas House of Representatives, and Court of Appeals, as well as candidates for county offices. This voter guide is printed on colored paper and has letter sized paper format.

Both voter guides are available in printed form at public libraries and other locations. Voters may read and print both voter guides at the website: lwvhillcountrytexas.org.

VOTE411.org is a League website which provides the election information on the candidates: a voter enters the address on their Voter Registration card to access the information.

Deadline Dates for Primary Elections on Tuesday - March 5, 2024

Register to Vote/Change Address	Monday	February 5	Last day to register to vote
Voting by Mail	Monday	January 1	First day to apply for Mail in Ballot
	Friday	February 23	Last day to apply for Mail in Ballot
	Tuesday	March 5	Last day to return Mail in Ballot
Early Voting	Monday	February 20	First day to vote in-person
	Friday	March 1	Last day to vote in-person
Election Day	Tuesday	March 5	In-person at voting location

Election and Voting Information for Gillespie County

Sample ballots and other Information from the Gillespie County Election Department posted online:
https://www.co.gillespiecounty.org/page/election_info

Take a photo ID AND the yellow voter registration card with you to the voting location.

Curb-side voting is available for Early Voting and on Election Day.

Remember: no cell phones, no texting, no photos, no campaign clothing & material, no loitering

Yellow voter registration card details the elections for the voter residence address.

EARLY VOTING - One Voting Location: Democratic Primary & Republican Primary

Fredericksburg Gillespie County Annex 3 95 Frederick Road

Monday February 19	Tuesday February 20	Wednesday February 21	Thursday February 22	Friday February 23	Saturday February 24
Presidents Day	8:00am to 5:00pm	8:00am to 5:00pm	8:00am to 5:00pm	8:00am to 5:00pm	7:00am to 7:00pm
Sunday February 25	Monday February 26	Tuesday February 27	Wednesday February 28	Thursday February 29	Friday March 1
1:00pm to 7:00pm	7:00am to 7:00pm	7:00am to 7:00pm	7:00am to 7:00pm	7:00am to 7:00pm	7:00am to 7:00pm

ELECTION DAY VOTING: Tuesday - March 5, 2024

Yellow voter registration card details the elections for the voter residence address.

Take a photo ID AND the yellow voter registration card with you to the voting location.

Curb-side voting is available for Early Voting and on Election Day.

Remember: no cell phones, no texting, no photos, no campaign clothing or material, no loitering

Democratic Primary Voting Locations for ELECTION DAY Gillespie County - open 7:00am to 7:00pm

Precinct #	Location	Address	City
1	Golden Hub	1009 North Lincoln Street	Fredericksburg
2	Historical Society - Sanctuary Hall	312 West San Antonio Street	Fredericksburg
3	American Legion Hall Commanders Room	726 South Washington Street	Fredericksburg
4	Democratic Party Headquarters	209 North Crockett Street Suite 1	Fredericksburg
5	Harper Library Community Room	23247 West US Highway 290	Harper
6	Stonewall Chamber of Commerce	250 Peach	Stonewall
7	American Legion Hall Commanders Room	726 South Washington Street	Fredericksburg
8	Golden Hub	1009 North Lincoln Street	Fredericksburg
9	Democratic Party Headquarters	209 North Crockett Street Suite 1	Fredericksburg
10	Historical Society - Sanctuary Hall	312 West San Antonio Street	Fredericksburg
12	Golden Hub	1009 North Lincoln Street	Fredericksburg
13	Democratic Party Headquarters	209 North Crockett Street Suite 1	Fredericksburg
15	Tierra Linda Stone House	3759 Oak Alley	Kerrville

Republican Primary Voting Locations for ELECTION DAY Gillespie County - open 7:00am to 7:00pm

Precinct #	Location	Address	City
1	First United Methodist Church - Gym	1800 North Llano Street	Fredericksburg
2	Bridge Church	224 FM 2093	Fredericksburg
3	AgriLife Building	38 Business Court	Fredericksburg
4	Girl Scout Cabin	202 West Austin Street	Fredericksburg
5	First Baptist Church - Gym	23038 West US Highway 290	Harper
6	Stonewall Volunteer Fire Station	14854 East US Highway 290	Stonewall
7	Gillespie County Farm Bureau	237 Equestrian Drive	Fredericksburg
8	Willow City Volunteer Fire Station	2553 Ranch Road 1323	Willow City
9	Doss Volunteer Fire Station	14500 North Ranch Road 783	Doss
10	One Quilt Place	648 Post Oak Road	Fredericksburg
12	Faith Baptist Church	3022 North State Highway 16	Fredericksburg
13	Herman's Hill Auction Haus & Event Center	2736 North US Highway 87	Fredericksburg
15	Tierra Linda Volunteer Fire Station	406 Oak Alley	Kerrville

Gillespie County 2024 Primary Elections: State Districts

United States Congress - House of Representative District 21

The United States House of Representatives has 435 seats and is the lower chamber of the US Congress. US House of Representatives Texas District 21 serves 10 counties: Bandera, Bexar (part), Blanco, Comal, Gillespie, Hays, Kendall, Kerr, Real, and Travis (part). The term of office is two years.

Duties: represents a specific geographic area of a state; creates, debates, and votes on bills that become law for the United States; creates and votes on a two-year budget; and oversees the administration of public policy by serving on committees.

Democratic Primary	Kristin Hook	Candidate unopposed in the Democratic Primary Election.
Republican Primary	Chip Roy	Candidate unopposed in the Republican Primary Election.

Texas Legislature - House of Representative District 19

The Texas House of Representatives has 150 seats and is the lower chamber of the Texas Legislature. Texas House District 19 serves 5 counties: Blanco, Burnet, Gillespie, Kendall, and Travis (part). The term of office is two years.

Duties: passes bills on public policy that become the law for the State of Texas; sets levels for state spending by passing a two-year budget; votes to raise and lower taxes for the state; and votes to uphold or override gubernatorial vetoes of bills.

Democratic Primary

Dwain Handley	Zach Vance
Website: www.handley4texas.com	No response received.

What in your background qualifies you to serve the as a state representative in Texas?

Handley: I come to this race with a background in grassroots field organizing. I've chaired Democratic precincts in six of the last eleven years, and was trained by Battleground Texas as a Neighborhood Team Leader, organizing a full grassroots field for the Wendy Davis campaign. I have BBA and MS degrees in Finance from Texas A&M. My professional career was in banking and later, wireless telecommunications, and finally, as a self-employed fitness trainer. Though raised Republican, I came to disagree with the party's direction. I've been a Democrat now for a quarter-century.

Vance: No response received.

What are the most pressing issues facing the next session of the Texas Legislature?

Handley: My number one issue is DEMOCRACY. While there are so many pressing imperatives today – climate change, voter suppression, underfunded public education, children slaughtered by guns of war, a legislature practicing medicine without a license – NOT ONE of these demanding issues may be rectified without democracy. And democracy is in peril. Our politics are broken, and we must heal them. Only then can it once again function as we need it. Fortunately, I believe this is entirely possible. It begins by electing Democratic majorities that will stand firm for the principles of republican democracy.

Vance: No response received.

What are your three top priorities for the next session of the Legislature?

Handley: If Democrats come to control both houses of the Legislature, the best way to enact reforms while bypassing the governor's veto will be by amending the Texas Constitution. I want to submit a constitutional amendment that prohibits partisan gerrymandering of districted elections – Legislature, Congress, SBOE – any jurisdictions where elections are conducted on party lines. I want to draft another amendment restoring full voting rights as they stood prior to the U.S. "Shelby County" decision. And I envision a third amendment affirming the authority of counties and home-rule cities to exercise primary control over local affairs.

Vance: No response received.

What are your priorities for education in the next session of the Legislature?

Handley: The greatest imperative with public education is to fund it fully. Right now, Austin literally usurps tax revenues collected by school districts and directs them toward thoroughly unrelated uses. High property taxes are increasingly burdensome, and yet our schools are underfunded. How does this paradox exist? Because the Republican majority imposes a dishonest tax, making school districts "do the dirty work" of raising them while Austin gets to scheme over how the loot gets spent. There are other pressing matters, to be sure. Banning books, privatizing it all for billionaire enrichment. But that discussion exceeds 100 words.

Vance: No response received.

What are the greatest concerns of the voters in your district?

Handley: Voters in HD19 are concerned about many of the same things as other Texans. They're concerned about water scarcity – a consequence of climate change. I've talked about education and preserving democracy. They're worried sick, dropping off their daughters and sons, that it may be their last goodbye. They suspect our best years may be behind us and our future is a diminished one. But this need not come to pass. Just one institution stands between us and the bright future we all know we can build, and that's the Republican Party. Return Democrats to power, and we'll restore that future.

Vance: No response received.

Republican Primary

Kyle Biedermann	Manny Campos	Ellen Troxclair
Website: www.KyleforTexas.com	Website: www.manny2024.com	Website: www.TroxclairforTexas.com

What in your background qualifies you to serve the as a state representative in Texas?

Biedermann: I was a state representative from 2017-2023 in HD 73. I am not a career politician so I decided not to run in the last election cycle and instead go home to my family and business. I have 7 daughters and 15 grandchildren. I have owned and operated Biedermann's Ace Hardware in Fredericksburg for 39 yrs as well as opened Harper Feed & Hardware last year.

Campos: Manny Campos' multifaceted background as a small business owner, a business director at a large corporation, and a board member of a non-profit small business incubator uniquely equips him for State Representative in District 19. His entrepreneurial experience offers a firsthand understanding of local business challenges, advocating for policies promoting economic growth. Serving on a non-profit's board demonstrates his commitment to community development. Manny Campos' diverse roles reflect a comprehensive grasp of business needs, enabling him to navigate legislative intricacies effectively, advocate for small businesses, and foster initiatives fostering economic resilience in District 19.

Troxclair: I am a mom, a business owner, and a proven conservative with a record of passing the largest property tax cut in US history, fighting to secure our border by adding \$6.5B for the border wall and barriers, banning COVID vaccine mandates, protecting children from sexual predators and big tech, fully funding our policy, and saving women's sports. I have built a reputation as a hard-working, principled, and effective leader for our district who keeps my promises.

What are the most pressing issues facing the next session of the Texas Legislature?

Biedermann: Border security and election integrity.

Campos: The next Texas Legislature faces a gamut of pressing issues. Vouchers and school finance demand attention to ensure equitable access to quality education. Immigration and border security remain pivotal due to their impact on demographics and state resources. Higher education requires support for affordability and accessibility. School safety concerns mandate proactive measures. Property taxes need reform to ease burdens. The electric grid's resilience and water supply infrastructure are critical for a sustainable future. Addressing these multifaceted challenges will shape Texas' socio-economic landscape, demanding comprehensive, strategic legislative action for the state's well-being.

Troxclair: Securing our southern border remains the most pressing issue for our state. In addition to investing in border security and enforcing the Remain in Mexico policy that I helped pass last session, we must continue to do everything in our state's power to protect our citizens from the trafficking of humans and drugs across our border. Additionally, I am working to eliminate school property taxes and Robin Hood by fully funding schools through our state revenue.

What are your three top priorities for the next session of the Legislature?

Biedermann: Water availability and growth in the Hill Country were my top priorities while I was a Representative and will continue to be one of my top priorities when elected. Border security and election integrity are also top priorities.

Campos: The 2024 Texas political issues we see as the most important are, vouchers and school finance, immigration and border security, and water infrastructure stand as pivotal issues. Vouchers and school finance drive at the heart of educational equity, shaping future generations. Immigration and border security remain hot topics, impacting Texas' demographics, economy, and national identity. Water infrastructure, vital for sustenance, is a constant challenge particularly in small communities. Addressing these concerns not only reflects Texans' immediate needs but also determines the state's trajectory, defining its educational, social, and economic landscape for years to come.

Troxclair: In addition to further cutting property taxes, we must secure the border and cut off the incentives that encourage illegal immigration in order to keep our communities and schools safe. We must preserve the Hill Country's natural resources and beauty by managing growth and protecting our water resources. We must give parents the ability to choose the best education for their children and put an end to lobbyists being paid with taxpayer dollars.

What are your priorities for education in the next session of the Legislature?

Biedermann: My priorities for the next legislative session focus on advocating for increased parental choice in education, particularly for low-income families. Additionally, I aim to allocate more resources to enhance classrooms and support teachers in public schools. Addressing the issue of excessive bureaucracy in the school system, which diminishes local control and teacher salaries, remains a key concern. Despite facing setbacks in passing a bill for teacher input through an anonymous survey, and efforts to make the Robin Hood system fairer to contributing ISDs, I will persist in pushing for positive changes in the public education system.

Campos: In the upcoming Texas Legislative session, educational priorities focus on expanding school choice options, fostering accountability through rigorous standards, and empowering local districts. Enhancing teaching quality, particularly through merit-based incentives are crucial. Prioritizing STEM education aligns with preparing students for evolving careers. Fiscal responsibility in budgeting and funding allocations while addressing special education needs and promoting alternative education programs round out key focuses. Creating a dynamic, accountable, and locally controlled educational environment that maximizes opportunities for all students across Texas is important.

Troxclair: Every child deserves access to an excellent education. We must ensure our education funding ends up in the classroom to benefit teachers and students, and not lost in red tape. I will continue fighting to ensure inappropriate content and CRT/DEI content stay OUT of our schools and universities, and that teachers are supported. We must ensure our children are taught HOW to think instead of WHAT to think, and that reading, writing, math, science, and history are prioritized in the classroom.

What are the greatest concerns of the voters in your district?

Biedermann: Water, density, growth and property taxes.

Campos: In Texas House District 19, water infrastructure holds immense significance due to its arid climate, necessitating reliable water sources for agriculture, industry, and community sustenance. Addressing water infrastructure ensures a stable supply vital for growth and resilience against droughts. Simultaneously, school vouchers impact educational access, particularly crucial in diverse communities. They determine the quality of education accessible to students, shaping their futures and the district's socio-economic vitality. Prioritizing both issues in District 19 is imperative for securing essential resources and fostering educational opportunities, driving sustainable development and prosperity.

Troxclair: For the last three years, the current Administration has done everything they can to open our borders, cripple our access to reliable energy, and destroy traditional family values. They have spent over \$6 TRILLION dollars catapulting our national debt to \$34 TRILLION and increasing the cost of gas, groceries, and commodities through inflation. Families just want safe communities, quality schools, an affordable cost of living, and to have their personal liberties protected. I have fought, and always will fight, for these things.

Texas 4th Court of Appeals

The 4th Court of Appeals is one of 14 state courts and has jurisdiction in a 32-county region of the state. This court has a Chief Justice and six other justices, who are elected at large for a term of six years.

Duties: receives appeals in civil and criminal cases from district and county courts; has intermediate appellate jurisdiction of both civil and criminal cases appealed from lower courts; in civil cases where judgment rendered exceeds \$250, exclusive of costs, and other civil proceedings as provided by law; and in criminal cases except in post-conviction writs of habeas corpus and where the death penalty has been imposed.

Justice, Place 2

Democratic Primary

Velia J. Meza	Beth Watkins
No contact information received.	Website: www.KeepBeth.com

Qualifications: What training, experience and characteristics qualify you for this position?

Meza: I currently serve as a Criminal District Court Judge in San Antonio, Texas. I have 22 years of combined jury trial and appellate experience in both criminal and civil matters.

Watkins: I have been on this bench 5 years, am one of the most productive justices in the State, and am rarely overturned. I'm Board Certified in civil appellate law. I work really hard and I love my job!

Ethics: Since judicial candidates solicit donations and raise money to be elected, how can voters be assured that campaign donations will not impact how judges interpret the law and/or review lower court decisions?

Meza: The public can rest assured that campaign contributions are used for the specific purposes allowed by the Texas Ethics Commission. Judges routinely file campaign finance reports to assure full compliance and transparency.

Watkins: This is a hard question, but I have an easy answer—I do not accept campaign contributions from lawyers or parties appearing before me. Period. Judges must avoid even the appearance of impropriety, and taking campaign contributions from someone who has a case pending in your court just doesn't pass the smell test.

Separation of Powers: What is your view of the role of courts relative to the other branches of government?

Meza: My view is that the Judiciary is an independent branch of government. We are called upon to interpret the law. We are also called upon to collaborate with the other branches for the proper functioning of our government. As part of an independent Judiciary, I faithfully and impartially discharge my duties without regard for a litigant's background, influence, or status.

Watkins: The US Constitution is a sacred document and I revere it. I have taught constitutional law at St. Mary's University School of Law for years and have studied the Constitution extensively. The Framers created three separate, distinct—and equal—branches. Our role is to interpret the laws passed by the legislature and to resolve conflicts that arise in their execution. It's a brilliant system.

Equity: What can be done to improve access to justice for all, including persons or groups who may be underserved?

Meza: We need to encourage access to justice as early as law school and encourage the State Bar members to remain engaged in representing those who cannot afford representation. When I was in private practice I frequently helped single moms to establish or collect court ordered child support payments for their children.

Watkins: To live our values of "justice for all," we must close the justice gap. We need more funding for legal aid organizations, so they can represent low-income Texans in critical cases involving landlord-tenant disputes, child support, and insurance conflicts. Groups like the Texas and San Antonio Bar Foundations do this work every day. I am a proud long-time sustaining member of both organizations.

Court System: What effect will the new business court and statewide court of appeals have on the administration of justice in Texas?

Meza: Since the courts were recently created by our Legislature and have not started operating, it is unclear how the courts will improve or not improve the administration of justice in Texas.

Watkins: I understand lawsuits have already been filed to challenge these courts. Those challenges could come through my court. The Texas Canons of Judicial Conduct provide, "A judge shall abstain from public comment about a pending or impending proceeding which may come before the judge's court...." As a result, I must respectfully decline to answer this question.

Republican Primary	No one filed for this office
---------------------------	-------------------------------------

Justice, Place 3

Democratic Primary	Cynthia Marie Chapa	Candidate unopposed in the Democratic Primary.
---------------------------	----------------------------	---

Republican Primary

Todd McCray	Website: www.mccrayforjudge.com	Michael J. Ritter	Website: www.vote4ritter.com
--------------------	---	--------------------------	---

Qualifications: What training, experience and characteristics qualify you for this position?

McCray: 34 years experience representing both the State of Texas as prosecutor and low-income individuals in trial and appeal court. Tried 100 plus jury trials. Board Certified by the TBLS since 1997.

Ritter: I'm a current elected official with 10+ years of judicial experience. I've written 450+ opinions and worked on 1,000+ appeals. I'm double board certified in both civil appeals and criminal appeals.

Ethics: Since judicial candidates solicit donations and raise money to be elected, how can voters be assured that campaign donations will not impact how judges interpret the law and/or review lower court decisions?

McCray: Our judicial system should be independent, fair and impartial. Candidates should refrain from financial dealings that reflect adversely on impartiality. Although the Code of Judicial Conduct does not prohibit candidates from soliciting funds for appropriate expenses, in order to uphold judicial integrity, candidates should adhere to the Judicial Conduct Code and personally observe those standards.

Ritter: Voters should select candidates with judicial experience and a proven record of applying the law fairly, despite having received donations. Candidates without prior judicial experience are more likely to be influenced by the donors who got them into office. Judges' ability to rule fairly, uninfluenced by donations, only comes from confidence in their experience and qualifications to be a judge.

Separation of Powers: What is your view of the role of courts relative to the other branches of government?

McCray: Our judicial branch of government should be independent and impartial relative to the other branches. Judicial independence is derived from the U.S. Constitution which means that courts should be protected from undue influence from the other branches. Judges should be free to decide cases fairly and impartially, relying only on the facts and law. The judiciary should uphold the rule of law.

Ritter: My judicial philosophy is very conservative. To protect the rule of law, judges must not be activists who legislate from the bench. When judges impose their own personal views of what the law should be (not what it is), it's wholly unfair to those who followed the law, destroys confidence that judges are unbiased, and ends up in reversals from higher courts, just wasting everyone's time and money.

Equity: What can be done to improve access to justice for all, including persons or groups who may be underserved?

McCray: I have 34 years of experience representing the rights of low income and underserved individuals before trial and appellate courts throughout Texas. Board Certification was established by the Texas Supreme Court to "promote the availability, accessibility and quality of services of attorneys to the public." Advocacy for access to justice improves equity for all Texans.

Ritter: One access-to-justice barrier is the unnecessary costs of inefficient courts. Inefficient courts run by inexperienced judges only increase the expense of hiring a lawyer to go through wasteful proceedings. Judges also take too long to rule. Many don't show up to work because they know voters often don't find out. With experienced judges, you get better courts and more affordable justice for all.

Court System: What effect will the new business court and statewide court of appeals have on the administration of justice in Texas?

McCray: As a board-certified attorney I am able to say that Texans will benefit from courts and judges that have the experience and expertise to fairly and efficiently resolve cases. Trial and appeal courts with more experienced judges operate more effectively, alleviate caseloads in trial and appeal courts, and burdens on the higher courts.

Ritter: The new courts will reduce inefficiencies by ensuring more qualified judges, but at a cost. Our appellate courts are so backlogged that we now must pay more tax dollars on more courts. All courts must implement better efficiency methods. While working for the judiciary, that's what I've done. If all judges would do the same, we wouldn't need to pay more taxes for bigger government and more courts.

Justice, Place 4

Democratic Primary	Luz Elena Chapa	Candidate unopposed in the Democratic Primary.
Republican Primary	Lori Massey Brissette	Candidate unopposed in the Republican Primary.

Justice, Place 5

Democratic Primary	Liza A. Rodriguez	Candidate unopposed in the Democratic Primary.
Republican Primary	Adrian Spears	Candidate unopposed in the Republican Primary.

Justice, Place 7

Democratic Primary	No one filed for this office	
Republican Primary	Lori I. Valenzuela	Candidate unopposed in the Republican Primary.

Gillespie County 2024 Primary Elections: County

Democratic Primary - No one filed to run for a county office.

Republican Primary - All candidates listed below are on the ballot and are *unopposed*.

District Judge, 216th: Albert "Pat" D. Pattillo III

District Attorney, 216th: Lucy Wilke

Gillespie County Court at Law Judge: Christopher Nevins

Gillespie County Treasurer (unexpired term): Vicki J. Schmidt

All candidates listed below are on the Republican Party ballot and *opposed*.

Gillespie County Attorney

A county attorney in the state of Texas is elected for a term of four years.

Duties: provides legal advice to the Gillespie County Commissioners Court and to other elected county officials; brings civil enforcement actions on behalf of the county or state; represents the state in mental health hearings; represents the state in misdemeanor criminal cases; and represents victims of violence in protective orders.

Republican Primary

Sara Neel	Steve Wadsworth
Facebook: Sara Neel for County Attorney	Email: stevenwadsworth@msn.com

What in your background qualifies you to serve as the Gillespie County Attorney?

Neel: Whether prosecuting or defending cases, my values remain the same: seek justice, act with integrity, and work diligently in service to others. Licensed since 2011, I served as a criminal prosecutor for the first half of my career ending as the First Assistant Gillespie County Attorney where I worked under then County Attorney, Chris Nevins. Before that, I worked as a felony first chair and an assistant district attorney at the Nueces and Bexar County District Attorney's Offices, respectively. Currently, I represent individuals facing criminal accusations by the government.

Wadsworth: I am currently serving as Gillespie County Attorney (2019-present) and was Assistant District Attorney for Gillespie County (2006-2019). My specialized qualifications include being Board Certified in Criminal Law (since 2009) and Board Certified in Criminal Appellate Law (since 2017). I have a Doctorate of Jurisprudence from top-tier UT School of Law and hold bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Dallas, a conservative Christian university. I have prosecuted thousands of cases from misdemeanors through first degree felonies and have expertise in all aspects of law enforcement from grand jury to post-conviction appellate writs.

What are the most pressing issues facing the Gillespie County Attorney?

Neel: First is the effective use of tax dollars in prosecuting cases: when jurors are called to serve, they should see their tax dollars working for them rendering justice in our community. This means identifying which cases should be taken to trial and which should be resolved through other means; working with law enforcement in finding time in their demanding schedules to prepare for court; and seeking justice in every case. Regarding the recent increase in juvenile cases: developing a strategy to handle them in ways that reflect our community's values of justice and safety while simultaneously safeguarding our children's futures.

Wadsworth: Our county is facing the challenges presented by success and growth. The volume and complexity of cases handled by the County Attorney has expanded. The office requires someone experienced and specialized to guide it. We need to continue to foster business growth, while enforcing laws and protecting citizens. Since becoming County Attorney, my court has been among the most efficient courts in Texas. I balance being a good steward of taxpayer's funds with enforcing the laws in a fair and just manner. I am accomplishing this by having the experience that comes from a career devoted to public service.

What are the citizens of Gillespie County telling you about law enforcement problems?

Neel: In some instances, cases are not being fully investigated. When law enforcement does not complete a thorough investigation, it leaves our community vulnerable to unjust outcomes for victims of crime and those facing criminal accusations. All relevant witnesses should be interviewed, and all evidence should be collected. At the time of trial, officers should be familiar with their cases. Missing documents should be caught early on so as not to delay trial or outcomes. Retention of highly trained and qualified law enforcement personnel is essential in resolving this problem.

Wadsworth: My fellow citizens have shared that their concern is for a safe Gillespie County. My goal as County Attorney is to keep protecting our citizens, our water resources, our border, our elections, and the right to life by upholding our laws in a just but thorough manner. I will remain tough on crime and strong on law enforcement. As a conservative pro-life Republican, I humbly ask for your re-election support so that I can continue to enforce our laws, protect our border, and be on the forefront of making sure that no one tramples upon our 2nd Amendment rights.

Gillespie County Sheriff

A county sheriff in the state of Texas is elected for a term of four years.

Duties: serves as a licensed peace officer who is responsible for enforcing the criminal laws of the State of Texas; manages and operates the county jail; supervises prisoners in the county jail; provides security for the county and district courts; serves writs and processes of the courts; seizes property after judgment; and enforces traffic laws on county roads.

Republican Primary

Chris Ayala	Nick Krupa	Buddy Mills
Phone: 210-563-6474	Website: www.nickkrupaforsheriff.com	Facebook: Re-Elect Sheriff Buddy Mills

What in your background qualifies you to serve as the Gillespie County Sheriff?

Ayala: I am blessed to have over 30 years of law enforcement experience with 24 of those years right here in Gillespie County. I have served as a patrol officer, SRO-School Resource Officer and Active Shooter instructor with the Fredericksburg Police Department for 24 years. I hold a Masters Peace Officers License with TCOLE-Texas Commission of Law Enforcement. I have a passion for our community and, I was awarded Public Servant of the Year in 2020 by the Fredericksburg Chamber of Commerce based on my community involvement. I have a servant's heart and wished to serve the people of Gillespie County.

Krupa: I have been a licensed peace officer for nearly twenty years and a Master Peace Officer since 2014. In my career, I've had assignments as a patrol and tactical officer, detective, and field trainer. While with the Houston Police Department, I was a member of the Gang Task Force Division Tactical Unit, Major Offenders, and Homicide Division-Special Investigations Unit, tasked with investigating officer-involved shootings and public corruption offenses. I worked as an investigator for the Gillespie County Attorney's Office from 2017 to 2022, and currently work as an investigator in the Kerr County Attorney's Office.

Mills: My law enforcement career began 9/1/1980 as a State Game Warden. I transferred to Gillespie County in 1992 and continued serving until I retired in 2007. I was elected Sheriff on 1/1/2009. The extensive and advanced law enforcement training and public interaction during my state career, along with 15 years as Sheriff has provided valuable qualifications. I have addressed the outdated jail facility. Through public awareness and support we now have a 96-bed facility. I have increased the number of staff, launched two K9 units, advanced technology, training, and equipment while always seeking the best value for the taxpayer.

What are the most pressing issues facing the Gillespie County Sheriff?

Ayala: I believe two of the biggest issues we face are illegal narcotics and mental health. We need to have a clear direction on how to work with the community to deter illegal drug use. We need to work and collaborate with all agencies possible within the county and surrounding counties to assist people who struggle with addiction and mental health.

Krupa: The most pressing issues facing the Sheriff are: addressing and reducing crime rates is a constant challenge for community safety and crime prevention; recruiting and retaining skilled law enforcement professionals; allocating resources effectively with budget constraints to keep up with technology and training; building and maintaining positive relationships with the community; working to establish trust and collaboration between law enforcement and the public we serve; emergency response and preparedness, mental health and crisis intervention, and substance abuse.

Mills: The rapid growth of businesses and tourism, traffic, open borders, drugs and human smuggling, increase in calls for service, employee pay, and retention are the most pressing issues I am continually facing. I was able to launch a competitive pay package for the employees due in part to my active involvement in the 87th legislative session, which should help with retention. I am always looking at the future needs of the county, and actively create plans for the Sheriff's Office to meet those needs of the citizens.

What are the citizens of Gillespie County telling you about law enforcement problems?

Ayala: The main concern was many citizens stated there is a disconnect with the current Sheriff's office. Many citizens stated they have not had positive interactions. They are concerned whether deputies are getting the training needed to handle all aspects of law enforcement in our county. There were many concerns by our citizens and this is just a few stated.

Krupa: Citizens would like to see an increase in deputies on patrol and response to all calls for service, across all portions of the County. They would also like to see more complete and thorough investigations, enabling the prosecution of criminal cases with effective report writing and follow-up. Thirdly, citizens want an increased Sheriff's Office presence at our schools. Finally, citizens need an increase in coordinated training with all local law enforcement agencies, including the Fredericksburg Police Department, the Department of Public Safety, the Texas Rangers, and our School Resource Officers.

Mills: Open borders, the influx of illegal immigrants, and drugs (fentanyl) are the biggest concerns I am hearing from the citizens in the county. The citizens are very satisfied with our pro-active enforcement actions and community involvement. By engaging and informing the citizens about what we are doing in the news, on the radio, and on social media greatly adds to the realization that this is a safe and secure county to work, raise a family, and live in.

Gillespie County Tax Assessor/Collector

A county tax assessor/collector in the state of Texas is elected for a term of four years.

Duties in Gillespie County: processes motor vehicle and trailer title transfers; issues motor vehicle and trailer registration and licenses; collects motor vehicle sales tax for the State of Texas; processes boat and motor titles and registrations; collects boat and boat motor sales tax for the State of Texas; county liaison for the Texas Association of Counties; county liaison for the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts; and collects various other fees for the county and the state.

Republican Primary

Carol Rode Durst	John Huffman
Email: durstcarol@yahoo.com	Email: john.w.huffman@sbcglobal.net

What in your background qualifies you to serve as Gillespie County Tax Assessor/Collector?

Durst: Being in county government for more than 40 years including 25 years at Gillespie Appraisal District, current position is Administrative Assistant, and 16 years in the County courthouse. In both jobs I work with and for the people and businesses of the county. My work ethics and experience make me qualified for this job. I am the 5th generation Gillespie County resident, I am not going anywhere. My family are still active farmers and ranchers on family land in this county.

Huffman: I have proven tax leadership. I worked 22+ years for the State Comptroller's office and retired as a tax policy manager. My accomplishments included successful leadership, workload management, business acumen and employee development. More importantly, I provided guidance to all counties and taxpayers about tax, titling, and registration for vehicles and boats. I was the State liaison to the Texas Association of Counties; conducting training, sharing tax knowledge, and answering key questions from the public and County employees about all taxes. My family has deep, strong family roots (1868) in the County; therefore, I am dedicated to its citizens.

What are the most pressing issues facing the Gillespie County Tax Assessor/Collector?

Durst: Like every government office it is keeping up with all the changes from the local to state laws and regulation and to apply them and enforce them.

Huffman: The newly elected official will face staffing challenges and implementation of new 2025 legislative mandates for motor vehicle tax, titling, and registration. Two long-time tax office employees are retiring at the end of 2024. It will be key to have trained, friendly, and competent replacements. Moreover, the State is implementing changes to how new vehicles are titled and registered at car dealerships. It will be important to have good knowledge of vehicle titling and registration, how to train and communicate to see these changes go smoothly for the public and our local dealerships.

What changes or improvements would help the Gillespie County Tax Office improve services?

Durst: To address this question about changes or improvements I would want to hear from the people I serve and the staff of the Tax Assessor-Collector office. If there are any issues and/or suggestions that need to be addressed I am here to listen. They will be looked into and see where or what can be done to improve the office.

Huffman: We need to eliminate barriers that hinder customer service and communication with County residents. As a current Deputy in the tax office, I can say that prompt customer service and friendliness from current staff is exemplary. However, we need to improve or remove physical obstacles that can delay taxpayer service and communication. Additionally, we can enhance the customer experience online by revamping the County website so that questions about tax information and TXDMV titling and registration can be found. Also, more staffing, training and new hire development can improve service.

Gillespie County Commissioner Precinct 1

A county commissioner in the state of Texas is elected to the County Commissioners Court to conduct the general business of the county. The Court consists of the county judge who is elected at-large and four commissioners who are elected by geographical precinct. Each commissioner is typically responsible for building and maintaining county roads and bridges with the precinct. The term of office is four years.

Duties: adopts the county budget and the county tax rate; approves all budgeted purchases of the county; sets all salaries and benefits for county employees; authorizes all county contracts; provides and maintains all county buildings and facilities; and fills vacancies in elective and appointed county offices.

Republican Primary

Wesley Hesker	Charles Olfers
Website: www.Wesley-Hesker.com	Email: colfers@hotmail.com

What in your background qualifies you to serve as the Gillespie County Commissioner for Precinct 1?

Hesker: As a business executive with over 20 years of proven experience in corporate finance, I have learned to focus on an entity's essential functions as they operate and budget accordingly. Gillespie county is the second wealthiest county in the state of Texas. I believe there is an opportunity to engage our community resources from within to really address the challenges that face our local dynamics. I feel this is a strength we have an ability to further capitalize on in being more independent from the national stage of failure we have witnessed during our lifetime.

Olfers: I am a 4th generation Gillespie County resident and have served as your Precinct 1 Commissioner for the past 7 years. During this time, I have contributed to developing a Human Resource Office, helped initiate an Engineering Department, construction of a new AgriLife Resource Facility, along with managing budgets and personnel. Previously I served as General Manager in my family's business for 33 years managing employees and budgets. I am well vested in my community serving on the Economic Development Commission, Stonewall Chamber of Commerce, and Region K Development Water Board, to just name a few.

What are the most pressing issues facing the Gillespie County Commissioners Court?

Hesker: The primary focus of the commissioners court is managing budgeted expenditures with the approval of actual disbursements. With the growth of housing, drought, burn bans, water restrictions, planning is key to making our community function as well as possible in the face of difficulties. We face a time where the small community feeling many have enjoyed here for generations is at risk of tracking towards the ambitions of growth that Texas cities and suburban communities have gone through in recent years. Knowing firsthand the pitfalls of this kind of growth I seek to keep the small community feeling alive.

Olfers: One of the largest challenges for the commissioner's court is managing the county's budget. The county has one main source of revenue in the budget process, so managing a tight budget to serve the needs of the county yet trying to maintain a low tax rate is our goal. Another issue facing Gillespie County is our rapid growth. With limited state resources and staffing issues, it is hard to keep pace with the extensive growth in our community. Lastly, the courthouse is in need of renovations and updating to be more efficient and accommodating to our growing needs.

What are the citizens of Gillespie County telling you about county problems?

Hesker: People are concerned about the burden of taxes rising to pay for government services. They feel that the benefit goes more to the tourists and the burden is increasing each year where their discretionary and essential spending is restricted because of the taxes. Election integrity is also an issue of concern given the rhetoric of recent elections and claims of voter fraud. Our voters are excited this primary will be conducted with paper ballots free of scanners. The goal will be to focus on conducting all elections as the city of Fredericksburg has and continues to with hand counting.

Olfers: The largest concern from the citizens of Gillespie County is the quantity and quality of our underground water due to the extensive growth and drought conditions that we have had in the past years. Additionally, with the growing population outside of the city, a demand for Emergency Medical Services is becoming a major concern for our citizens.

Gillespie County Commissioner Precinct 3

A county commissioner in the state of Texas is elected to the County Commissioners Court to conduct the general business of the county. The Court consists of the county judge who is elected at-large and four commissioners who are elected by geographical precinct. Each commissioner is typically responsible for building and maintaining county roads and bridges with the precinct. The term of office is four years.

Duties: adopts the county budget and the county tax rate; approves all budgeted purchases of the county; sets all salaries and benefits for county employees; authorizes all county contracts; provides and maintains all county buildings and facilities; and fills vacancies in elective and appointed county offices.

Republican Primary

Charles "Chuck" Jenschke	Jeff McHalek	Carlin Duane Mueller
Email: chuckforcommissioner3@gmail.com	Website: www.jeffmchalek.com	No response received.

What in your background qualifies you to serve as the Gillespie County Commissioner Precinct 3?

Jenschke: My background includes earning a Bachelor of Business Administration in accounting, member of numerous volunteer organizations, serving leadership roles on Gillespie Farm Mutual Insurance board and Holy Ghost Lutheran Church council and 22 years as a maintenance technician at Methodist Hill Country. My accounting degree helps provide an understanding of the financial aspects of a budget. Working with the community allows me to better understand the public's needs and expectations while serving in leadership roles. As a maintenance technician, I am exposed to various issues and regulations requiring immediate attention to keep the daily operations of the hospital running smoothly.

McHalek: Experience Matters: 1980 graduate of Fredericksburg High School. 1984 graduate of The College of the Ozarks, BS in Marketing and Business Administration. 38 plus years of Management experience. Highly effective Marker Vice President. Directed 117 Independent Distributors, 11 Sales Managers, and 14 employees out of 10 warehouses in three states. Highly qualified in managing multi-million-dollar budgets. Wrote and secured contracts with government agencies. Spent the last 18 months with Gillespie County Roads and Bridges learning all aspects in anticipation of running for County Commissioner. I am a fourth-generation resident and Gillespie County holds a special place in my heart.

Mueller: No response received.

What are the most pressing issues facing the Gillespie County Commissioners Court?

Jenschke: As a 27-year resident of Gillespie County, I think some of the pressing issues for the Gillespie County Commissioners Court relate to the rapid population growth. These issues include but are not limited to the commercial and community developments throughout the county, the responsible use of water resources and the condition of county-maintained roads.

McHalek: Growth Maintaining roads, easements, and right of ways. Bridge maintenance-new bridges. Budget Rising cost of materials such as gravel, oil, premix, and base. Sheriff Department, Justice of the Peace, DA, County Attorney is 65% of total budget. I will continue to build on the foundation laid by Mr. Neffendorf and Mr. Crenwelge. As a team we will identify bridges and roads that need maintenance and create a plan to correct, with a goal of seal coating every moderate to heavy traveled road every seven years. Bridges and culverts will also be prioritized with Pheister remaining top priority.

Mueller: No response received.

What are the citizens of Gillespie County telling you about county problems?

Jenschke: My family history includes several generations of Precinct 3 and Gillespie County residents. We have seen the changes that Gillespie County has experienced over the years. Many of the concerns and issues are still relevant today. Citizens want to know how an influx of commercial developments and population growth is going to affect the environment, the resources and the lifestyle of the county.

McHalek: Potholes, road conditions, limbs in right of way, and the big one, water. I will be diligent in making sure Precinct 3 tax dollars are used effectively improving county infrastructure. I will be proactive in correcting issues as they arise. Communication and follow up are key and I will communicate daily and inspect what I expect. We cannot turn back growth so we must embrace sustainable water management. Rainwater harvesting, water reuse, and just everyday conservation. Why couldn't we require a multi-unit developer in install rainwater harvesting stations. Keep the Hill Country Country!

Mueller: No response received.

League of Women Voters - Hill Country Texas

For over forty years this League has served Kerr County and now serves six counties in the Texas Hill Country: Bandera, Blanco, Gillespie, Kendall, Kerr, and Llano. Members of this League live in all six counties. Both men and women over the age of 16 are members of the League and there are various membership levels with annual dues as a part of the membership. Visit the website to join: lvvhillcountrytexas.org

If reading this Voter Guide has helped you to be informed and vote, please consider a donation, in any amount, to help the Hill Country Texas League continue to offer this service to voters. Donations are accepted via the website: lvvhillcountrytexas.org or mail to the post office box on the front page.