

# URGENT: DEALING WITH HIGHER TURNOUT, REPORTING PRECINCT CONVENTION RESULTS, COLLECTING PRECINCT CONVENTION DOCUMENTS

To: County Chairs, Precinct Chairs and Precinct Convention Chairs:

On March 4, Texas Democrats could play a historic role in deciding our Party's nominee for President. Record primary turnout is expected, as well as record attendance at precinct conventions, driven by a competitive race that will see our two candidates devote unprecedented resources and organizational efforts to their Texas campaigns.

A look at voter turnout in previous primary states shows turnout increases as high as 240% compared to prior cycles. Therefore, in Texas, we are asking that our County Chairs (as well as Precinct Convention Chairs) be prepared to handle a possible turnout increase of 100-150% over 2004 turnout, as the campaigns and many observers expect turnout to double, at a minimum. As Party officials responsible for administering our primary and precinct conventions in Texas, this enthusiasm and excitement, while beneficial to our Party, also poses numerous challenges and responsibilities.

**1. Our primaries and precinct conventions will be subject to the strictest level of scrutiny by the press, the public and the presidential campaigns, and legal challenges are likely if the rules are not followed.** We must do all that we can to ensure the precinct conventions are held in accordance with state law and TDP Rules. Otherwise, our convention process and the results of precinct conventions could be thrown into chaos.

**2. Due to the closeness of the candidates' delegate count, there will be significant pressure placed upon us by the media, political pundits, candidates and activists alike to collect the results of our precinct conventions and "interpret" those results in terms of national delegate allocation.** We should all remind the press that Texas' convention process allows delegates to switch their presidential preferences up to the state convention sign in; as such, we ask that you not make any sort of predictions/interpretations for anyone given the non-binding nature of those results.

**3. Both campaigns are interested in tracking delegates and verifying results at every level, therefore, we ask that you send your precinct convention minutes and sign in sheets to TDP and your County Party immediately. Also, we have created a Results Hotline for you to call in and report your results immediately after adjourning your convention.**

**4. Given the likelihood of unexpectedly high voter turnout, many Democrats may still be standing in line to vote when precinct conventions are set to begin at 7:15.** You may **NOT** begin the precinct convention until the last voter has voted at the precinct polling place. (TX Elec. Code Sec. 174.022).

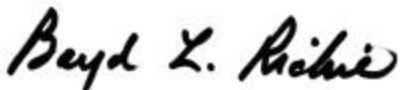
**5. Recognizing that counties may run out of sign-in sheets to conduct their precinct conventions, the TDP will be posting the sign-in sheet (i.e. "Exhibit A") on our website ([www.txdemocrats.org](http://www.txdemocrats.org)), where it can be downloaded, printed and distributed for use at the precinct convention.** We do ask that if you download the document, please be sure to make copies of the completed sheets in sufficient quantity to be able to send one to your County Party and one to the State Party, just as you normally would with the carbon copies. **NOTE: At the top of the precinct convention minutes, please cross out the word "29<sup>th</sup>" day of March and write in "4<sup>th</sup>".**

**6. Provisional voters may participate in the precinct convention.** However, if they are discovered to be ineligible voters, this would disqualify their participation in the convention and your delegate allocation may have to be adjusted.

**7. Delegates and alternates must be elected at the precinct convention.** We understand that in the past it may have been customary to take home the sign in sheets and try to "fill out" your delegation if not enough people attended your precinct convention to meet your delegate allotment. This is contrary to Party Rules (Article IV, C, 3) and therefore you should not do that.

Thank you for your efforts to help Democratic voters in Texas participate in what is sure to be an exciting Primary! Together, we can ensure that a well-run primary will lead to victory in November!

Your Friend and Fellow Democrat,



Boyd L. Richie  
Chairman, Texas Democratic Party