

Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

(The) Base or Base Voters Voters that consistently vote for Democratic candidates. Also refers to precincts with a Democratic Performance Index (DPI) of 65% and above. Areas always targeted by Democratic organizations for Get-Out-The-Vote (GOTV) efforts.

Block Captain A volunteer willing to assist the precinct chair. A block captain is typically responsible for one “block” in a precinct.

Block Captain Program A program consisting of one person per street, group of streets, city block, or group of blocks to assist the precinct chair in the coordination of Democratic campaign activities at the precinct level.

Blog A web log or blog is a website dedicated to posting messages typically focused on a point of view or issue.

Blue Dog Democrat A Democrat who votes more “conservatively” than a Yellow Dog Democrat.

Canvass An act or process of obtaining votes or soliciting opinions. To canvass a neighborhood involves contacting people either by mail, phone calls, door-to-door, or e-mail for the purpose of obtaining Democratic votes and/or obtaining opinions on various political issues.

Canvass the Vote To canvass a vote is to verify the unofficial election results, thereby making them official.

Caucus: A closed meeting of people from one political party, especially a local meeting to select delegates or candidates. Caucus also refers to a group of people, often within a larger group (e.g., a legislative assembly,) who unite to promote a particular policy or particular interests. (e.g., During Presidential election years, Democrats caucus by Presidential preference at their conventions).

Conventions (Precinct, County, Senatorial District, State) System to elect delegates, select resolutions, and make platforms.

Convention Committees:

Credentials (County, Senatorial, and State) Establishes the permanent roll of the convention and makes recommendations to the convention to resolve challenges to delegate credentials.

Nominations (County and Senatorial) Recommends delegates to fill and balance the state convention delegation. (State) Nominates State Democratic Executive Committee officers; SDEC members, as recommended by senatorial district caucuses; and, in presidential years, DNC representatives. In presidential years, the duties of the Nominations Committee for At-Large Delegates to the National Convention and the Nominations Committee for Presidential Electors shall be those implied by their titles or as assigned by the National Party Rules.

Platform (County and Senatorial) Typically combined with the resolution committee to screen and forward platform recommendations. (State) Writes and recommends to the convention a Party platform for the November General election.

Resolutions (County and Senatorial) Reviews and combines similar resolutions. Each resolution is then sent to convention with a “for” or “against” recommendation.

(State) Considers resolutions submitted to the Convention, other than those within the proper jurisdiction of the Platform Committee; makes recommendations to the Convention.

Rules Committee (County, Senatorial, and State) (1) Ensures the *Texas Statute Election Code* and the *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party (TDP Rules)* are followed and

(2) Considers questions about rules.

(State) (1) Considers and recommends to the Convention proposed amendments to the permanent *Rules of the Texas Democratic Party* and (2) then *makes the new rules available online at www.txdemocrats.org*. The *Texas Statute Election Code* is available at (<http://tlo2.tlc.state.tx.us/statutes/el.toc.htm>)

County Chair Elected by the primary voters of a county to preside over the County Executive Committee (CEC). The county chair and CEC oversee the Democratic Party in that county.

CEC or County Executive Committee A body composed of the county chair and all the precinct chairs of a county. The CEC oversees the County Democratic Party’s activities.

Cycle Term generally refers to the period between one General election and the next.

Convention Chair – presiding officer of the convention

Delegation Chair – presiding officer and spokesperson for the delegation

DNC or Democratic National Committee Governing body of the national Democratic Party.

Down Ballot Candidate positions on a ballot listed below the highest office running.

DPI or Democratic Performance Index Average Democratic performance in a precinct or a given area based on recent elections. The DPI is calculated by averaging the percentage of votes that selected Democratic candidates received.

DRT or Data Retrieval Team Group that collects voting information from polling sites on Election Day and reports back to the Party and area coordinators. The turnout information is used to guide GOTV efforts.

E-Day Election day.

EV or Early Voting Texas allows voters to vote at selected voting locations prior to Election Day. Times vary but the days are set by statute, beginning the 17th day before an election and ending on the 4th day before the election. The term technically includes mail-in balloting (VBM=vote by mail) but is normally used to refer to early in-person voting. Votes cast in early voting are not counted until polls close on Election Day.

Election Judge A non-partisan administrative authority at a polling site.

FEC or Federal Elections Commission. Federal agency which governs all Federal campaign finance.

General Election The election in November of even-numbered years that determines who will hold state and county offices. This is a partisan election.

GPAC or General-Purpose Political Committee A Texas political committee that, supports/opposes more than one candidate or candidates voted on in more than one county (e.g., statewide candidates), but is not a committee of an identified candidate. If a County Party Executive Committee spends more than \$25,000 in a calendar year, it must form a type of GPAC by appointing a campaign treasurer within 15 days, and file reports of contributions and expenditures with the Texas Ethics Commission. County parties usually file on a special set of forms. Any other group that raises or spends \$500 must appoint a campaign treasurer and start filing reports.

GOTV or Get Out The Vote A program or program component to motivate and turn out voters.

Household List A list of registered voters grouped by address; used for phone banking and block walking purposes.

Independent (voter) A voter who votes in general elections but not in party primaries. A person not associated with a major political party.

LGBT An acronym referring collectively to Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender/Transsexual individuals.

Marginal (vote/voters) See swing voters.

PAC Political Action Committee a private group, regardless of size, organized to elect or defeat government officials or to promote or defeat legislation. Legally, what constitutes a "PAC" for purposes of regulation is a matter of state and federal law. Source: Wikipedia

Platform A declaration of principles and policies adopted by a political party or candidate.

Poll Watcher A poll watcher is someone who is appointed by a candidate or a political party to observe the election day procedures.

Poll Worker Poll Workers are the people who ensure the conduct of fair and accurate elections. They prepare the election site by setting up voting equipment, greeting voters, verify registrations and providing voters with appropriate ballots.

Precinct Chair Party official directly elected by the primary voters in a voter precinct. Serves on the County Executive Committee, chairs the precinct convention, and is responsible for coordinating all campaign activity in a precinct. This is a partisan position vs. an Election Judge, which is a non-partisan position in the General election.

Primary Election Election held in March of even-numbered years to determine which of a party's candidates will be the party's nominee in the November General election.

Robert's Rules of Order Book of rules governing parliamentary procedure in all Party conventions, caucuses, and convention committees, except where contrary rules or procedures are specified by the *Rules of the Democratic Party*.

Rules of the Texas Democratic Party (TDP Rules) Official rules of the Texas Democratic Party. The Party rules can be found at the Party's website, which is www.txdemocrats.org.

Runoff Election Election to determine a party's nominee when no candidate receives more than 50% of the vote in an election. Only the two top vote-getters are on the ballot in a runoff election. There is no run-off in the General Election.

SDEC or State Democratic Executive Committee The SDEC governs the party between conventions. Body composed of the State Party Chair, Vice Chair, and other officers elected at the State Convention; two members elected by the delegates at the State Convention from each senatorial district; and representatives of several Democratic organizations.

Steering Committee A body representing all Democratic organizations, interests, and candidates in a given area for the purpose of coordinating activities.

Super Saturday (or Sunday) Weekend (and in some cases weekends) scheduled during Early Vote. Usually produces the highest turnout outside of Election Day.

Swing Voters Voters with an unpredictable history of voting for Democratic candidates. Precincts with a DPI between 45% and 65%. Areas usually targeted by candidates for voter persuasion.

Targeting Process of determining which demographic groups and precincts that have voters who are more likely to support a favored candidate or party.

TEC or Texas Ethics Commission. State agency which governs all Federal campaign finance.

TDP or Texas Democratic Party a.k.a. The State Party. The Democratic Party organization on the State level.

TDW or Texas Democratic Women Statewide organization in the Texas Democratic Party. Their goal is a re-emphasis of local, grassroots politics and specifically the role of women in the political process.

TDP Rules Rules of the Texas Democratic Party. A copy of the *Texas Democratic Party Rules* can be obtained at no charge from the State Party Office or online at www.txdemocrats.org

Texas Election Code The official election code of the state of Texas. The Texas Election Code outlines the rules for voter registration, campaigning, elections, precinct conventions, etc... The Texas Election Code can be found at the Texas Secretary of State website.

VAN (Voter Activation Network) Also referred to as Texas VAN, the TDP's online voter file system. It is a voter identification program that helps the user manage voter data and create lists based on various voter characteristics such as voting history, geography, and demographics.

VBM or Vote By Mail A means of voting via the postal system that is available to elderly voters, voters with physical disabilities, people who will not be home for the election, and military personnel.

Voter File The Texas Democratic Party owns and maintains a database of all registered voters in Texas that is available on-line to precinct chairs, counties, and candidates.

Walk List A list of registered voters grouped by street and address; typically used for block walking purposes.

Yellow Dog Democrat In the late 19th century and throughout the 20th century, Yellow Dog Democrats were voters in the U.S. Southern states who consistently voted for Democratic candidates. The term arose from the notion that loyal Southern Democrats would vote for a yellow dog before voting for a Republican. Source: Wikipedia