

# BCDP NEWSLETTER

## BASTROP COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

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Some 35 Bastrop Dems assembled on Bastrop's bridge Sunday, May 31, joining the nationwide protest against racism and inequity.



## Message from the chair

# Thanks for doing your part

*By Steve Chamberlain*

I want to take this opportunity to thank the real heroes of this pandemic that we are all currently experiencing. Thanks to those of you who have endured the isolation in an effort to reduce the spread of the virus, which has taken so many lives. Thanks to you who have diligently worn masks not only to protect yourselves but primarily to safeguard the health of everyone with whom you come in contact. And thanks to you who venture outdoors for keeping your distance and keeping your cool. You are among the heroes in this crisis.

This in no way takes away from the fantastic and necessary jobs being performed by doctors, nurses, medical technicians, and other healthcare workers. And let's not forget cleanup crews in hospitals, nursing home workers who keep clean sheets on the beds, and the workers who provide meals for nursing home residents and hospital patients. These and countless other jobs in our society are important to our lives and well-being. Sometimes we don't realize just how important each of us is to society, and that is not always clear as we push through our daily lives. And sometimes it takes a crisis to see how the working class—those working two shifts or two jobs to make ends meet—is the real backbone of this nation.

Thank you for being there and for all you do in an effort to help us reach our goals. Thank you for being kind to others, even when others are not kind to you. Thank you for keeping informed and for keeping grounded when it seems so often that insanity reigns. We can reach our goals as long as you keep pushing forward. Keep doing the tasks that are your expertise. Keep volunteering to help. We are all in this together, so let's keep standing together and standing strong.



The 2020 Census is happening now and your response matters.

Census results help determine how billions of dollars in federal funding flow into states and communities each year for the next 10 years.

**You can respond online, by phone, or by mail.**



[www.2020census.gov](http://www.2020census.gov)



844-330-2020



You can mail back the paper questionnaire sent to your home.

**#BastropCountyCounts**

## Upcoming events

We're all still observing social distancing as much as possible, so June will be another month of virtual meetings.

- **June 1-6.** Texas Democratic Party 2020 convention. Get your virtual ticket and much more info here: <https://texasdemocraticconvention.com/>
- **June 6,** 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. The convention will host a debate between M.J. Hegar and Royce West. If you have a convention virtual ticket (above), you're all set. Otherwise, go here to sign up: [txdem.co/virtual-ticket](http://txdem.co/virtual-ticket)
- **June 11,** 7:00 p.m. Bastrop County Democratic Party monthly community meeting. To join the Zoom meeting, you will need to register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEIfu6hrTwvHNK-4XAH6g5Dxb3gI2Saxsfl>  
The meeting will also be live streamed to the Bastrop County Democratic Party Facebook page.
- **Every Friday** at 6:30 p.m.: Join candidate Madi Eden and her wing woman Aimee Cook for virtual roundtable discussions. People are encouraged to join the discussions, either in the live stream comments section on Facebook, or by joining the Zoom video call itself. Sign up for reminders about the events here: [mobilize.us/edenfortexas/event/269902/](http://mobilize.us/edenfortexas/event/269902/)
- **Are you ready** to get to work flipping Bastrop County? Madi and Aimee will be hosting several text and phone banking sessions throughout June. If you are interested in signing up to help with them, please fill out this form: [forms.gle/R59FYKPTuyZxUGoQ7](https://forms.gle/R59FYKPTuyZxUGoQ7)

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## Convention prelude

Our state convention actually started a couple of weeks ago with some preliminary activities. On May 18, Texas Democratic Party Chair Gilberto Hinojosa called the 2020 Virtual State Democratic Convention to order. Since then, delegates from across the state have been casting their ballots to decide who will become delegates to the National Convention, who will sit on the convention committees, and who the SDEC committee members will be until the 2022 convention. For more information, you can visit the Convention and Delegate Information page here: [texasdemocraticconvention.com/delegates/](http://texasdemocraticconvention.com/delegates/)

## Why I vote BLUE, no matter who

### *Bonnie Coffey*

I come from a long line of independent, fabulous women. When I was little, my mother took me with her when she voted. I recall how proud I was the first time I voted. As a military wife, I made sure to vote in every election, even overseas. As director of a women's commission, I fought for the rights of all women. I have marched in many parades and attended rallies that supported women's rights. I attended a White House Christmas party where the Obamas danced and laughed with us.

I am a lifelong liberal and Democrat who votes blue and celebrates the inclusivity of ALL women at ALL levels. As a woman, how could I be anything else?



### *Aimee Cook*



It has become clearer than ever how important it is that we elect competent, compassionate leadership at every level in 2020. The world is watching, and November will be our only chance to keep this country from sliding deeper into tyranny. I'll gladly cast my ballot for Joe Biden. I will also vote all the way down the ballot, for every Democrat at every level. I plan to spend the next several months dedicated to registering Democrats, encouraging ballot by mail voting, and helping people engage in the political process.

## Volunteer poll workers needed

*By Steve Chamberlain*

In this time of self-isolation, we seem to have a lot of time to think about our lives and times. Whenever I think about where life is headed, my favorite quote by Martin Niemoller comes to mind: "Then they came for me, and there was no one left to speak for me."

To truly be a part of life we must participate. We must take an active role and influence the direction life takes us. This means getting involved in our communities. Sitting on the sidelines is not a viable option.



There are countless opportunities available for you to volunteer to help shape your future. One such opportunity is the upcoming Democratic primary runoff and special state Senate District 14 election. We need poll workers for early voting and for election day, July 14. With the ongoing pandemic, it must be an individual and personal decision to work the polls. This is one reason we need to recruit more younger volunteers. We must allow the

younger volunteers to gain the experience to successfully keep the polls open so that we can all exercise our right to a democratic society.

If you would like to volunteer to work the election, please email me at

[chair@bastropdemocrats.org](mailto:chair@bastropdemocrats.org) or Bastrop Elections at [kristin.miles@co.bastrop.tx.us](mailto:kristin.miles@co.bastrop.tx.us).

Please include your name, address, phone number, and email address. Early voting is scheduled for June 29 through July 2 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and from July 6 through 10 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Election day, July 14, the polls will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Split shifts can be arranged. Also, don't miss the Q&A with Bastrop County Elections Administrator Kristin Miles on the next page of this newsletter, covering details of how the runoff and special elections will be conducted.

If we are going to turn Texas blue, we must get out the vote and we must be able to vote. We must participate, not only for the July election but in November as well. As James Carville says, our new battle cry is "Remember, remember, it's all about November."

Kristin Miles, REO  
Elections Administrator | Bastrop County



The BCDP Communications Committee posed the following questions to Kristin Miles regarding the July 14 elections. We appreciate her prompt response, which we are sharing with you below.

Q: What is your position regarding applications to vote by mail, and to what extent do you plan to investigate claims of disability?

A: If a voter submits an application for a ballot by mail claiming disability as the reason, our office will process the application and mail the voter a ballot. The law does not require that the voter indicate their disability or provide proof. Any investigation of claims of disability would not come from our office.

Q: What personal protective equipment (PPE) will be provided to election workers?

A: Election workers will be provided masks, a face shield and gloves. A new mask should be worn each day. If wearing gloves to assist voters, the gloves should be sanitized after each voter.

Q: How will voting locations be designed to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 by people who vote in person?

A: Protection shields will be placed between the voter and election worker at both the check-in computer and the ballot distribution location. Hand sanitizer will be available to both the voters and the election workers. Election workers will clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces between voters. Proper social distancing will be maintained between voting booths, and voters will be encouraged to practice social distancing while waiting in line. Masks will be available for voters who are unable to provide their own. Voters will be issued a clean pen at the voter check-in area. After voting, they will place the pen in a bin designated for un-sanitized pens. Election workers shall clean and disinfect the pens prior to issuing them to the next voter.

Q: What are the chances that the Bastrop Elections Office will offer curbside voting for the July 14 election?

A: As in past elections, curbside voting will continue to be an option at all early voting and election day locations. If a voter wishes to vote curbside they can call our office at 512-581-7160 and we can notify the election workers.

## Newspaper hits Cook on arrest policy

*Commentary by Robin Rieck*

As many county sheriffs across Texas introduce policies to reduce arrests for minor traffic violations Bastrop County Sheriff, Maurice Cook, has done the opposite. A recent *Austin American-Statesman* article and a followup editorial raised questions about a policy introduced by Sheriff Cook on Feb. 1, 2019, that directed Bastrop County deputies to arrest drivers caught without a license, with a suspended license, and those who do not have auto insurance. All of these violations are minor Class C misdemeanors that carry fines only for first offenders.

Sheriff Cook stated that his intent in implementing this policy was to improve safety on our roads. However, the number of fatal traffic accidents on Bastrop County roads has increased, and Bastrop County now leads the state in the number of traffic deaths per capita in Texas counties with over 50,000 residents.

A closer look at the numbers reveals a very different outcome than Cook's stated objective and points to what has ultimately made our roads and neighborhoods far less safe. In 2016 Bastrop County sheriff deputies made 65 arrests for driver's license and insurance violations. In 2019 that number soared to 430 arrests. Over that same period of time the percentage of those arrested for these violations with Hispanic surnames increased from 38.5% to 71.2%. The number of ICE detainments in our county rose from 66 to 343.

While Cook's policy has failed to improve the safety on our roads, it has succeeded in stoking fear in the Hispanic community in Bastrop County. Many Hispanic residents now hesitate to report crimes knowing that they, their family members, or their neighbors are more likely to be detained than the criminals they are seeking to report.

Bad policy leads to bad consequences. Bastrop County needs a new sheriff who will serve each and every resident in our county and who will build the trust necessary to succeed in making our roads and neighborhoods safer. In November let's put Democratic candidate Mike Renck to work to end racial profiling in Bastrop County.

## Why I vote BLUE, no matter who

### *Frieda Borth*



I have been a Democrat my entire life and always voted blue. Why? I believe strongly in empathy, compassion and respect for others, protecting our wildlife, environment and climate, better wages and protections for workers, women's equal rights, the Right to Choose and working against misogyny. We must get rid of the electoral college. We have to get rid of tRump to protect all we hold dear.

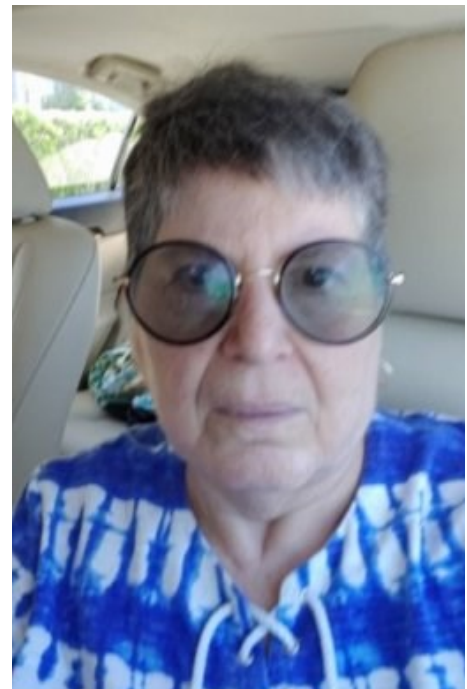
This election is the vote of a lifetime. I am voting blue no matter who up and down the ballot.



### *Carole Marmell*

Not so long ago, Americans had shared values. Now a rogue faction has taken over the country, focusing on greed and power. Those with money are solidly behind this group. False enemies are created to whip up their supporters, who then fail to notice the looting of the Treasury.

This is not voting for one side vs another; it's voting for the people who will speak for us, who will bring back American ideals of fairness and justice. There is no other side.





## Ask the candidates

On July 14 Texas will hold a runoff election. One of the runoff races is to decide which Democrat will run in November to unseat Michael McCaul as U.S. Representative, District 10. The district takes in the northern half (roughly) of Bastrop County. We asked candidates Pritesh Gandhi and Mike Siegel to answer some questions on matters of interest to Bastrop County residents.

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### Q&A with Dr. Pritesh Gandhi Candidate for U.S Representative, District 10

**Q:** The coronavirus pandemic has put the spotlight on significant problems that affect thousands of people in Bastrop County. One of those is rural internet. We are finding that many school children and small business owners in our county have little or no access to adequate, reasonably priced internet while being encouraged to stay at home during the pandemic. What's more, they have no access to telemedicine. As congressman, what would you do to address this ongoing problem?

**A:** Rural broadband access is critical for education and, increasingly, telemedicine. I support H.R.1328, a bipartisan bill to expand broadband access. If passed, it would establish an Office of Internet Connectivity and Growth at the National Telecommunications and Information Administration, which would be directed to streamline access to federal resources and simplify the process for small businesses to apply for federal broadband assistance.



Further, I support treating broadband like a utility, so the government can play a bigger role ensuring access and protecting consumers from price gouging.

**Q:** Never has adequate, available, reasonably priced healthcare been so important to so many people in the U.S., especially in rural counties. As congressman, what would you do to make sure that all residents of Bastrop

*(Continued on page 10)*

*(Continued from page 9)*

County have access to excellent healthcare no matter where they live or how much money they make?

A: As the associate chief medical officer of a local community health center, my job is to provide care to nearly 20,000 uninsured & underinsured central Texans. In Congress, I will fight to defend the Affordable Care Act from Republican attacks, and I will build on it by enacting a public option for any American to enroll in a Medicare-like plan. Importantly, healthcare is not just health insurance. We must address housing, education, poverty, race, and so much more to improve health outcomes.



Q: Households, businesses, and farmers throughout Bastrop County depend on a clean, reliable supply of groundwater. Population growth will continue to put increasing demands on that supply, as will large public and private water marketers who plan to pump large amounts of groundwater for sale inside and outside of the county. As congressman, what would you do to ensure that outsiders don't overpump our groundwater, leaving residents and farms high and dry?

A: We are seeing this in Bastrop County with the LCRA application to drill water wells to access groundwater from the Simsboro aquifer. Environmental groups rightly protested and asked that monitoring wells be installed to check water levels. In Congress I will fight for strict oversight on these kinds of deals to ensure that water supply is protected for local households. Also, I will fight back against the Trump Administration's efforts to undermine the Clean Water Rule and work to pass legislation like H.R.1417, the Water Affordability, Transparency, Equity, and Reliability Act.

Q: What makes you the most qualified candidate in U.S. House District 10 to address issues of importance to the residents of Bastrop County, including rural internet, groundwater protection, and healthcare?

A: I am proud to have won Bastrop County in the primary. We did so because this campaign is not driven by conceptual ideas; rather, we are focused on pragmatic, science-driven, common-sense solutions that go beyond partisan politics. For years I've worked at the intersection of housing & food insecurity, immigration, poverty, access to utilities, and healthcare. This experience, coupled with being a physician and public health expert at a community health center, uniquely qualifies me for leadership in this time. We need to defeat McCaul and we've built the campaign to do so.

## Q&A with Mike Siegel Candidate for U.S Representative, District 10

Q: The coronavirus pandemic has put the spotlight on significant problems that affect thousands of people in Bastrop County. One of those is rural internet. We are finding that many school children and small business owners in our county have little or no access to adequate, reasonably priced internet while being encouraged to stay at home during the pandemic. What's more, they have no access to telemedicine. As congressman, what would you do to address this ongoing problem?



A: I will fight for universal, high-speed Internet. We need an Internet for All program that will create good jobs building essential Internet connections for every American — a 21st Century version of the Rural Electrification Act. We also need to create more opportunities for a publicly owned and controlled Internet. Through federal financing, we can help cities and counties create municipal Internet companies that will serve customers who are left out of the current market. Read my full policy at <https://siegelfortexas.org/universal-broadband/>.

Q: Never has adequate, available, reasonably priced healthcare been so important to so many people in the U.S., especially in rural counties. As congressman, what would you do to make sure that all residents of Bastrop County have access to excellent healthcare no matter where they live or how much money they make?

A: I will replace a GOP “representative” who attacked every healthcare program from Obamacare to Medicare. I will fight for healthcare for all. The best path is Medicare for All, which will make healthcare universal, comprehensive, and free at the point of service, with no co-pays, deductibles or premiums. Rural hospitals will have a new funding lifeline; patients will have the choice of doctor, hospital and specialist. We will also redirect funds that are going toward corporate profits and administrative costs and put them toward patient care. More at <https://siegelfortexas.org/healthcare/>.

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**Q:** Households, businesses, and farmers throughout Bastrop County depend on a clean, reliable supply of groundwater. Population growth will continue to put increasing demands on that supply, as will large public and private water marketers who plan to pump large amounts of groundwater for sale inside and outside of the county. As congressman, what would you do to ensure that outsiders don't overpump our groundwater, leaving residents and farms high and dry?

**A:** I will be an advocate for homeowners, farmers, conservationists and environmentalists. Although the State has primary jurisdiction over groundwater issues, we can push the federal government to create incentives for local water conservation and to stop profiteers from ruining homes, farms and businesses. My pledge will be to be available and accessible to the people of Bastrop, and to fight for you at every level of government. My campaign video "Can't Bring it Back," showing our work to protect farmers in Texas 10 can be seen at [www.siegelfortexas.org](http://www.siegelfortexas.org).



**Q:** What makes you the most qualified candidate in U.S. House District 10 to address issues of importance to the residents of Bastrop County, including rural internet, groundwater protection, and healthcare?

**A:** We've built a movement across nine counties to replace McCaul and provide real representation for this district. My 2018 campaign built on my experience as a public school teacher and civil rights lawyer. We mobilized over 1,000 volunteers, made over 300,000 voter contacts, and transformed a "safe Republican" seat into a national battleground. We are even stronger in 2020 and finished first in the March 3 primary. With your support, we will not only flip the Texas 10th in November, we will turn Bastrop blue!

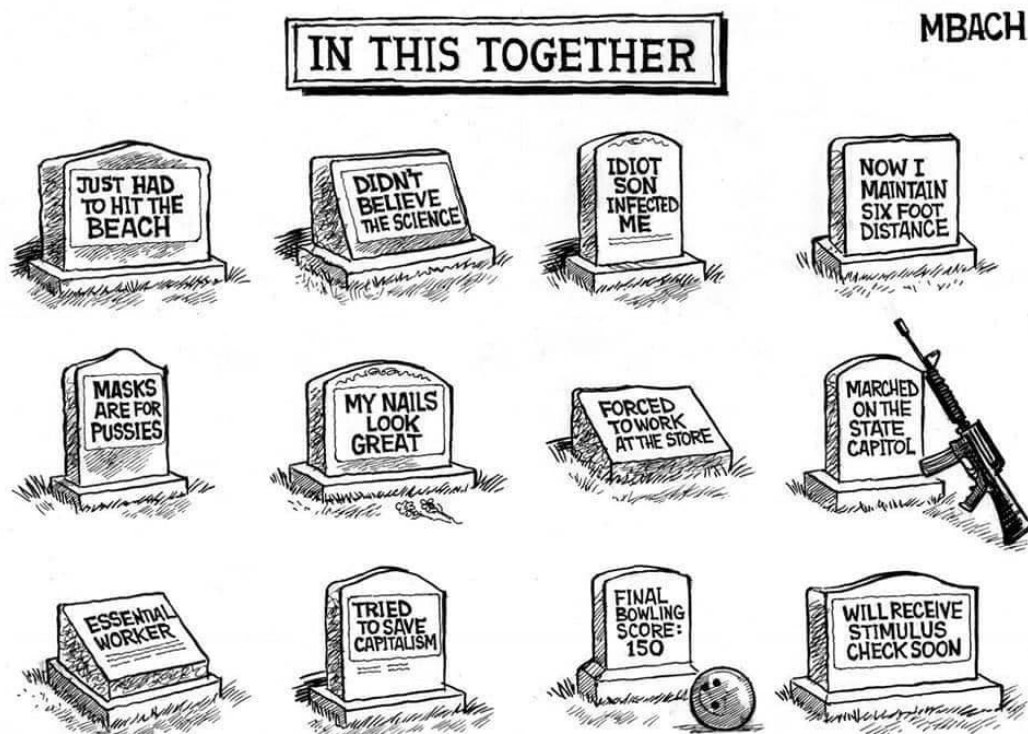
## Our COVID response leaves many questions

Commentary by Mark Timerman

Here are some observations I have made during this COVID-19 pandemic. For one thing, I've noticed that many people trust the advice of politicians over doctors on how best to protect their families from the virus—especially advice from the president and the governor of Texas. All of a sudden because the president or governor says so, it is magically OK to go out and about in public, no masks, no social distancing. Meanwhile, medical experts are predicting a second wave of virus cases coming soon. I hope it won't put hospitals in dire straits again, especially in areas of Texas that really haven't had a peak in cases or deaths yet. Some hospitals in Alabama already ran out of ICU beds recently.

Secondly, the federal government is spending a lot of money trying to keep the cash flowing while so many people are unemployed. This is a necessity. But while the government is spending billions, not one politician is saying how they plan to pay down the debt. I hear no one talking of increasing revenue or taxing the top 5 percent who own 90 percent of the wealth. During World War II the tax rate on the richest people went as high as 94 percent after their first \$200,000. When adjusted for inflation, that would be more than \$2.5 million today.

Lastly, with so many people unemployed now, why aren't we putting people to work on rebuilding infrastructure? This would create jobs that would employ millions, cannot be shipped overseas, and typically pay very good wages. The two private dams that failed recently in Michigan are a sad reminder of the problem with aging dams in many parts of the country, including Texas. Is it going to take a bridge collapse, like the one that happened on I-35 in Minnesota in 2007 to get the politicians moving on it? President Trump says he is a wartime president. He needs to start acting like it.



## Why I vote BLUE, no matter who

### *Dayna Beck*

I vote. And, when I do, I vote blue. I vote because YOU matter, because I matter, because we ALL matter. Our freedom, our voices and our lives matter. In this nation, and at this time in history, we are at a crossroads. Will we turn our backs on the marginalized and give up in the face of adversity? Not me! As a member of the LGBTQ community, I refuse to allow Trump and his minions to take away my hard-earned rights. The only way to prevent that is to vote for every Democrat on the ballot in November. I cannot wait to Vote Blue, No Matter Who!



### *Will Holcomb*



As a self-proclaimed free-thinker, one who doesn't want to limit himself with labels, in 2016 I started voting straight party Democrat. Previously, I voted mostly third party unless there was a Republican or Democrat who merited attention. The travesty of the morally bankrupt Trump administration is destroying the fabric of America. "Truth, justice and the American way" has been exchanged for lies, corruption, and collusion. I welcome the day I can vote on the merit of the individual, but for now, I'm "Voting Blue No Matter Who."

## HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE INVOLVED?

There is much to do at all levels as we strive to thwart the Republican agenda and turn Bastrop County, the State of Texas, and America BLUE. Here are some possibilities for your consideration:

### ACTIVIST GROUPS

- **Bastrop County Indivisible**  
Contact Ginger Redden [bcitx10@gmail.com](mailto:bcitx10@gmail.com) or  
Robin Rieck [rriek@austin.rr.com](mailto:rriek@austin.rr.com)
- **Hogeye Huddle**  
Contact Michelle Ryan [hogeyehuddle@gmail.com](mailto:hogeyehuddle@gmail.com)
- **Stonewall Democrats of Bastrop County**  
Contact Madi Eden [mk@aifx.net](mailto:mk@aifx.net) or  
Dayna Beck [aspenrox@gmail.com](mailto:aspenrox@gmail.com)

### LIVELY DISCUSSION GROUPS

- **Bastrop County Democratic Women's Monthly Luncheon**  
Contact Mary Liz Singleton  
[marylizsingleton@gmail.com](mailto:marylizsingleton@gmail.com)
- **Liberals Dining & Drinking (LDD)**  
Contact Marsha Correia  
[marshac1017@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marshac1017@sbcglobal.net)
- **Uppity Women Monthly Caucus**  
Contact Carole Marmell [cmarmell@hotmail.com](mailto:cmarmell@hotmail.com)

### VOTER REGISTRATION

**Become a Volunteer Deputy Registrar**

Contact Dayna Beck [aspenrox@gmail.com](mailto:aspenrox@gmail.com)

### BCDP LEADERSHIP ROLE

**Precinct Chair • Volunteer Coordinator**

Contact Steve Chamberlain [bcdp16@gmail.com](mailto:bcdp16@gmail.com)

### CANDIDATE FOR OFFICE AT THE LOCAL OR COUNTY LEVEL

Contact Steve Chamberlain [bcdp16@gmail.com](mailto:bcdp16@gmail.com)

### COMMUNICATION COMMITTEE

**Writers to contribute articles/letters to the**

**editor to local newspapers and for this newsletter**

Contact Bill McCann [bmccann42@gmail.com](mailto:bmccann42@gmail.com)

### SUPPORT STAFF ROLE

**Volunteer in the BCDP Office**

Contact Dayna Beck [aspenrox@gmail.com](mailto:aspenrox@gmail.com)

### VOTER OUTREACH

**Block Walking • Canvassing**

Contact James Denny [jedenny@comcast.net](mailto:jedenny@comcast.net)

### CONTRIBUTE TO THE BASTROP COUNTY DEMOCRATIC PARTY

[secure.actblue.com/donate/](https://secure.actblue.com/donate/)

[bastrop-county-democratic-party-1](https://bastrop-county-democratic-party-1)

### KEEP IN TOUCH VIA THE BCDP NEWSLETTER

Visit [bastropdemocrats.org/newsletter/](https://bastropdemocrats.org/newsletter/)

## Who Represents Me?

### U.S. Senate

- John Cornyn: 202-224-2934 (DC); 512-469-6034 (ATX)
- Ted Cruz: 202-224-5922 (DC); 512-916-5834 (ATX)

### U.S. House of Representatives

- Michael McCaul, District 10: 202-225-2401 (DC); 512-473-2357 (Austin)
- Bill Flores, District 17: 202-225-6105 (DC); 512-373-3378 (Austin)
- Michael Cloud, District 27: 202-255-7742 (DC); 361-884-2222 (Corpus Christi); 361-894-6446 (Victoria)

### Texas State Senator

- TBD; election July 14

### Texas State Representative

- John Cyrier: 512-463-0682

Visit [www.bastropvotes.org](https://www.bastropvotes.org) to find out your district and precinct. Additional contact information can also be found at this link.

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