

# Delegate Guide to the 2020 Texas Democratic State Convention

*By André Treiber*

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## Introduction

Hey y'all, my name is André Treiber, and I am putting this guide together because I want every Democrat to be as informed as possible at the Texas Democratic Convention - [TexasDemocraticConvention.com](https://www.texasdemocraticconvention.com). If you find this guide useful, I hope that you'll share it with your fellow delegates.

We are facing more challenges than ever this year as we practice social distancing and move to a fully digital convention. But know that everyone involved, from volunteers like myself, to TDP staff, are doing their best to make this thing work. And while there are challenges, I also believe there are a lot of opportunities presented with a digital convention. Throughout this guide, I'll be sure to highlight the most important things along the way.

A little bit about myself - I'm a State Democratic Executive Committee Member out of SD 14 in Travis County, I work for Representative Sheryl Cole, and I have done a couple of State Conventions in my time. In 2012 I was elected a National Delegate out of SD21, in 2014 I gave a presentation at the State Convention on Precinct Organizing, and in 2016 I wrote the first version of this very delegate guide. Since then, I have served on the SDEC Rules Committee and Convention Processes Subcommittee, and am the current Vice Chair for Rules.

This guide is a living document that I'll be updating in response to feedback and constructive criticism. Please send any comments my way either on Facebook or to my email at [treiber.andre@gmail.com](mailto:treiber.andre@gmail.com).

Now, let's get organized!

## What CAN We Do at the State Convention?

- We can elect our National Delegates to the Democratic National Convention.
- We can improve the TDP platform.
- We can improve the TDP rules.
- We can pass resolutions that reflect our Democratic values.
- We elect people to the State Democratic Executive Committee (SDEC).
- We can elect people to the Democratic National Committee (DNC).
- We can hear from our elected officials and candidates from across the state.
- We can connect with our fellow Democrats from across the state.
- We can show up online in large numbers as proud Texas Democrats!

## What CAN'T We Do at the State Convention?

- We can not change the number of National Delegates that ANY Presidential campaign has been allocated by the popular vote.
- And, unfortunately, we can't meet in San Antonio. But we're staying apart now, so that in the future we can come back together.

## The Road to the State Convention

The 2020 Texas Democratic State Convention is both an important event for the Texas Democratic Party and a key step in the selection of our Democratic Presidential Nominee. But there are a couple of steps before we get there! Well before the conventions, we had the Democratic Primary on **March 3rd**! The Primary is incredibly important in Texas, because it determines how many national delegates each candidate will be awarded, and nothing that occurs after the Primary will change that. After the Primary came a round of local conventions before the State Convention. Due to COVID-19, these conventions looked quite different across the state, with many being heavily abridged compared to normal years. Speaking of...

## Convention Changes in Light of COVID-19

In short, there are *a lot* of changes being made to accommodate the convention this year. The biggest change, of course, is the shift from in-person to completely digital, and the SDEC has passed some 10 or more pages of emergency rules to enable what we need to. Now, don't worry, I'm not going to bombard you with all of those rules, and you don't need to know these changes inside and out to participate. I will make sure all of the most important changes are highlighted in this document, especially regarding procedures and deadlines.

So, what does a digital convention look like? Well, we're kind of figuring that out as we go! TDP will be streaming two channels of content, one exclusively for party business, and one for everything else. These live streams will be available both on the convention website and social media. You'll be emailed electronic ballots (by a schedule shared below) for you to vote on everything you normally would have in person.

## State Convention Schedule Overview

**(The convention schedule is under construction, and is being updated as more dates are locked in.)**

There are a lot of individual committee deadlines that I won't include in this broad schedule - I am choosing to include the deadlines that instead will matter for the vast majority of delegates. If you're on a committee, you'll receive direct and constant contact for that work.

For elections, you will receive your by noon for the starting date, and they are due back by 5 p.m. on the ending date.

On **Friday, May 15th**, the State Chair will call the convention to order via email and on the convention website. This Call to Order will include directions for the Credentials Committee, chairs and appointed members for Credentials, Rules, Platform, Resolutions, Nominations of Party Officers, and Nominations of National Delegates committees, and calls for certain elections. This is also the deadline to file to run for something at the convention!

On **Sunday, May 17th**, you will receive an electronic ballot to elect members of Credentials, Rules, Platform, Nominations of Party Officers, and Resolutions Committees, due by 5 pm on **Tuesday, May 19**.

On **Monday, May 25th**, you will receive an electronic ballot to elect National Delegates, due by **Wednesday, May 27th**.

On **Thursday, May 28th**, certain caucus elections will be held. Depending on the caucuses you are a member of, you might receive an electronic ballot to elect DNC and SDEC members, due by **Saturday, May 30th**.

On **Sunday, May 31st**, you will receive an electronic ballot to elect Presidential Electors and members to the SDEC, due by **Tuesday, June 2nd**.

By **Wednesday, June 3rd**, permanent committees must submit their committee reports, to then be passed on to delegates for approval. Here is one of the moments

that I consider an opportunity this year - delegates will get the chance to vote up or down on Rules and Resolutions proposals, with all of them available to read! Official TDP caucuses will also have the opportunity to host an online caucus meeting before this day.

On **Thursday, June 4th**, you will receive a ballot for committee reports, due by **Friday, June 5th**.

On **Monday, June 8th**, at 6 p.m., National Delegates will convene online to take up certain party business.

There is a lot more to come for the schedule. TDP will effectively be running two parallel streaming channels - one focused entirely on party business, and the other one covering speeches, trainings, panels, presentations, and more. Stay tuned to find out what's in store!

## What Are We Electing or Running For?

Within your Senate District, you will elect:

- **2 State Democratic Executive Committee Members, 1 man, 1 woman**
  - [The SDEC](#) votes on interim and statutory business by the TDP. It involves meeting several times a year, usually in Austin, to discuss TDP business and vote on a variety of rules, resolutions, etc. It's a 2 year term, and a kind of heavy time (and monetary) commitment, way more than any other thing voted on here. Certain caucuses will also elect SDEC members.
- **1 Platform Committee Member**
  - Works on the TDP platform. You'll be given a skeleton to work with and the committee will get to work its way through the pieces, amending as they see fit. I'm proud that the Texas Platform is often ahead of the National Platform in terms of pushing our values, and I look forward to seeing what we will champion this year!
- **1 Nominations for Party Officer Committee Member**
  - Nominates party officials; in Presidential years, this committee will handle DNC members.
- **1 Resolutions Committee Member**
  - Resolutions work their way up from the County Conventions to the state. This committee gets to vote to pass them at the state level, as well.
  - This year, we have an amazing organizing tool available to us with resolutions - If any issue can collect enough petition signatures from among delegates at the state convention, then you are able to submit that resolution directly. If a petition gets the signature of 30% of the

delegates, then it is automatically brought to a floor vote. If it gets 50%, then it is automatically adopted.

- **1 Rules Committee Member**
  - Can amend, change, and update the permanent TDP rules. [You can check out the current TDP rules here.](#)
- **1 Credentials Committee Member**
  - The Credentials Committee is responsible for certifying the role for the convention. If there are any credentials challenges (which are very, very rare), they would be taken up by this committee to determine delegate eligibility.
- **1 or 2 Presidential Electors**
  - These are the folks that will represent Texas on the Electoral College when we turn the state blue!

Then, within your SD Caucus, delegates with a presidential preference whose candidate was awarded at least one National Delegate will elect:

- **At least 1 National Delegate**
  - Each SD is allocated a number of National Delegates based on Democratic turnout in the 2018 General Election. Then, in order for a candidate to qualify for delegates, they need to earn at least 15% of the Primary popular vote within that Senate District. Once that threshold is reached, National Delegates are then apportioned accordingly.
- **1 Presidential Preference Delegate Recommendation Committee Member**
  - For longtime convention-goers, this Committee will be new to you! We have replaced the old At-Large delegate process with a new, two-step committee process. Members of this committee will convene with other PPDR members of the same presidential preference to create the list of delegates that will be brought forward to the Nominations Committee for At-Large Delegates - two for each At-Large slot they have been awarded. This ensures grassroots input in the At-Large delegate process!
  - After the PPDR Committees have finished up, some members of the PPDR committees representing each presidential preference will convene the Nominations Committee for At-Large Delegates, which is where the horse trading takes place for the final list of At-Large National Delegates.

Within certain Caucuses, and a couple at-large, you will be electing or recommending:

- **Members of the Texas delegation to the Democratic National Committee (DNC)**

- DNC members make up the executive board of our national party, and need to travel out of state several times a year to attend to party business (current situation notwithstanding) - similar structure to the SDEC, but on the national level.

For all of the positions mentioned above, you can see who has filed [here, on the bottom half of the page](#).

## National Delegate Overview

You can read the full and very in depth [National Delegate Selection Process](#) - it's an in depth and detailed process, but I'll do my best to summarize it in about a page.

National Delegate numbers are set in stone! No matter who shows up to the state convention, our Presidential candidates will be receiving the same number of National Delegates they were awarded by the popular vote. At this convention, we are instead choosing *who* will be these National Delegates.

Each SD is allocated a number of National Delegates based on Democratic turnout in the 2018 General Election. Then, in order for a candidate to qualify for delegates, they need to earn at least 15% of the Primary popular vote within that Senate District. Once that threshold is reached, National Delegates are then apportioned accordingly. National Delegates are elected by delegates with the same presidential preference.

[You can see who has filed for National Delegate here](#). The filing deadline is May 15th.

In the Texas Democratic Party, we strive for gender representation requirements for our National Delegates. The easiest example of this is that, if you are electing 4 National Delegates, then you will elect 2 women and 2 men. There are some exceptions when your SD has an odd number of National Delegates or your presidential preference was only awarded an odd number of National Delegates by the popular vote - this was handled by random draw several months ago by the SDEC. We have also explicitly made it clear in our rules that transgender, nonbinary, and intersex folks are completely welcome and eligible to run, however they identify.

After these elections, the results are compared to our representation goals, to determine what the Nominations Committee for At-Large Delegates needs to do to approach these goals.

We have replaced the old At-Large delegate process with a new, two-step committee process. Members of Presidential Preference Delegate Recommendation Committees will meet with members of the same presidential preference to create the list of delegates that will be brought forward to the Nominations Committee for

At-Large Delegates - two for each At-Large slot they have been awarded. For example, if a candidate has 6 At-Large spots available, their PPDR Committee will recommend 12 for the committee to work with. Official representatives from each presidential campaign will work with their members to keep the process fair and make sure delegate choices are properly vetted and represent the values of their campaigns.

They will select from among Party Leaders and Elected Officials, or PLEOs, who are a separate pool, and don't compete for spots with other delegates. Then, they will select from among anyone that submitted their name for At Large consideration. Lastly, they will select Alternates, following the same representation goals.

After the PPDR Committees have finished up, some members of the PPDR committees representing each presidential preference will convene the Nominations Committee for At-Large Delegates, which is where the horse trading takes place for the final list of At-Large National Delegates. This is where the members of the committee will strive to do their best to reach our affirmative action representation goals, and often will horse trade spots across campaigns in order to stick to these goals.

## Accessibility

The Texas Democratic Party is working closely with the Texas Democrats with Disabilities to ensure CART is available for all streams. For folks without internet access, TDP is setting up a staffed hotline to enable people to vote over the phone.

More accessibility details to follow as logistics are figured out and put in place.

## Special Interest Caucus Schedule

To be announced. Caucus chairs are currently working with TDP to schedule. Another opportunity this year - no overlapping caucus schedule! You'll get the chance to attend every caucus you'd like to.

## My Advice from Experience

Typically, I would try to share a lot of practical advice about attending the convention here. Well, that is all out the window! But I'll try to be as helpful as I can.

- Put candidates through their paces if someone campaigns you. If they say they want to bring change to the TDP rules, ask them specifics. If they say they will be looking to add progressive updates to our platform, make them spell



those out. The people we elect reflect who we are as a group, so please take a moment to consider that when voting.

- [Brush up on Robert's Rules of Order here](#) so you can be on top of things at committee meetings or caucuses.
- Consider glancing at [the TDP rules here](#) - though don't feel the need to memorize the whole thing, that's why we're putting out information like this guide! [Here are the emergency rules, as well.](#)
- This is the Texas Democratic Party Convention - a vast majority of the delegates in attendance will be Democrats above all else. A lot of these people have spent a long time fighting the Republican rule in Texas - and a good number of them have been doing that longer than I've been alive. Remember the common ground that unites us - like how much we all need to work together to defeat Donald Trump and to flip the Texas House!

## FAQ

- **This convention business sounds awesome! How do I sign up to be a delegate?**
  - Unfortunately, at this date, if you're not already a delegate, the deadline has passed.
- **How do I know if I'm already a delegate?**
  - You can check [the public state delegate list here](#).
- **How do I find out what SD I live in?**
  - Use [Who Represents Me?](#) and look up your Texas State Senator.
- **What do guests do?**
  - Guests can do just about everything a delegate can except for vote on party business. They are welcome to attend every event, along with the general sessions, caucuses, and committee meetings.
- **How can I contact you if I have further questions or feedback?**
  - A bunch of ways! I am active in a whole bunch of Texas Democratic Facebook groups. You are also free to add me as a friend and message me as well. If a question comes up in a comment thread, you are more than welcomed to tag me (André Treiber) to summon me for an answer, and I'll get back to you as soon as I'm able to.
  - You can email me at [treiber.andre@gmail.com](mailto:treiber.andre@gmail.com).

## Glossary of Terms

- DNC
  - The Democratic National Committee or the Democratic National Convention. DNC Members are elected during Presidential election cycles.
- Gavel In / Gavel Out



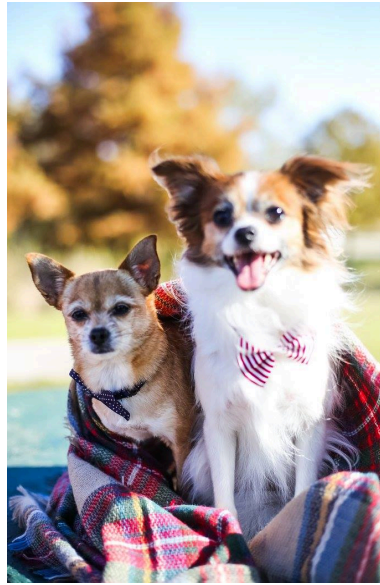
- To Gavel In a convention or caucus is to formally call it to order. Gavel Out means to adjourn.
- Horse Trading
  - Back-and-forth negotiating, usually used in the context of trading votes or positions.
- Nominations (Party Officials) Committee
  - NOTE: Under Construction
- Platform Committee
  - Works on the Texas Democratic Party platform. The committee given a skeleton to work with and will get to work its way through the pieces, amending as they see fit. This is a solid opportunity for Democrats across the board to come together and work on a platform we can be proud of.
- PLEO
  - Party Leaders and Elected Officials.
- Resolutions Committee
  - Resolutions work their way up from the County Conventions to the state. This committee gets to vote to pass them at the state level, as well.
  - This year, we have an amazing organizing tool available to us with resolutions - If we can collect enough petition signatures from among delegates at the state convention, then we are able to submit that resolution directly, rather than requiring it come up through the local level.
- Rules Committee
  - Can amend, change, and update the permanent TDP rules. [You can check out the current TDP rules here.](#)
- SD
  - Senate District, the Texas State Senate Districts are how the Texas Democratic Party divides up the state for conducting business. To find out what SD you live in, you can visit [Who Represents Me?](#)
- SDEC
  - State Democratic Executive Committee. Each Senate District elects 2 members, not of the same gender identity, and certain other caucuses get to elect 2 members as well. [The SDEC](#) votes on interim and statutory business by the Texas Democratic Party. It involves meeting several times a year in Austin to discuss TDP business and vote on a variety of rules, resolutions, etc.
- Slate
  - A proposed list of candidates from a person or group of people.
- TDP
  - The Texas Democratic Party.

## Credits and Thanks

Delegate Guide for Texas Democrats - [bit.ly/2020TXDemDelegateGuide](https://bit.ly/2020TXDemDelegateGuide)

André Treiber, SDEC 14 - [treiber.andre@gmail.com](mailto:treiber.andre@gmail.com)

- Glen Maxey, for being a mentor and a friend, and for helping out with answers to difficult or obscure rules situations.
- Too many members of the SDEC and TDP staff to name, due to their contributions and hard work to get a convention planned... twice.
- Everyone who knocked on a door, made a phone call, or registered a voter for this Primary. That kind of work is what it takes to bring long term change.
- You, for reading this far! Here, you earned a picture of my cute tiny dogs wearing bow ties.



## Link Dump

[Official Texas Democratic Convention Website](#)

Convention Schedule - **coming soon**™

[The Texas Democratic Party Rules](#)

[Emergency Convention Rules](#)

[Texas Democratic Party Officers and Executive Committee](#)

[Robert's Rules of Order Cheat Sheet](#)

## Older Sections

This is where County / SD convention section will live after those conventions happen.

Delegate Guide for Texas Democrats - [bit.ly/2020TXDemDelegateGuide](https://bit.ly/2020TXDemDelegateGuide)  
André Treiber, SDEC 14 - [treiber.andre@gmail.com](mailto:treiber.andre@gmail.com)

## Version History / Planned Updates

- **History**
  - 2020 Draft 0.1 presented 01/06/2020
  - 2020 Draft 1.0 presented 02/13/2020
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