



YOUR VOTE MATTERS

As I write this column, on the morning after Super Tuesday, headlines are touting surges in voter turnout in Texas and other states. Many people faced long lines to exercise their right to vote, but they endured because they understand that self-governance is worth it and that their vote matters.

I can only hope that sentiment carries over to the 2020 State Bar of Texas elections. Lawyers on active status with the State Bar of Texas are eligible to cast a ballot.

All ballots include the race for 2020-2021 State Bar president-elect between Pablo Almaguer, of Edinburg, and Sylvia Borunda Firth, of El Paso. If you're a member of the Texas Young Lawyers Association, your ballot also includes the race for TYLA president-elect between Donald Delgado, of College Station, and Jeanine Novosad Rispoli, of Waco. You also may be asked to vote on the directors who represent your district on the State Bar and TYLA governing boards, depending on where you live in Texas.

State Bar President Randy Sorrels calls our bar an organization "of the lawyers, by the lawyers, and for the lawyers of Texas." That's not to minimize the State Bar's role in serving and protecting the public, which is a vital part of the bar's statutory purpose. It's to encourage us to embrace self-governance and view the State Bar of Texas as *our bar*—where we as lawyers get to vote on the people who represent us, the rules that regulate us, and the dues we pay for the right and privilege to practice law.

Does it even matter who is president-elect or who sits on the board?

The State Bar Board of Directors governs all manner of bar administration, programs, policies, and budget management as provided by statute and Texas Supreme Court rules. The State Bar president-elect is a voting member of the board and chairs the budget committee, where he or she has significant input on the bar's financial decisions and organizational priorities. The winner of this race will serve a year as president-elect before being sworn in as State Bar president, when he or she will become the spokesperson for and face of the bar on the state and national levels.

It'd say it matters.

This edition of the *Texas Bar Journal* features Q&As with the State Bar and TYLA president-elect candidates. Pablo and Sylvia also sat down for an interview with Rocky Dhir for the latest episode of the *State Bar of Texas Podcast*, which will be released in early April.

You can find additional election information at texasbar.com/elections.

I encourage you to research the candidates and cast a vote, because your vote matters.

Coronavirus Update—Voting Will Be Online Only and Deadline Is Extended: Our world and our profession have seen significant changes since I wrote the column above. The 2020 State Bar and TYLA elections will proceed; however, because of uncertainty regarding the ability of our election vendor to receive and process paper ballots during the COVID-19 pandemic, paper ballot services will not be utilized. Voting will be online only. To ensure Texas lawyers have ample time to vote, the Nominations and Elections Subcommittee of the State Bar Board agreed to extend the voting period by one month. That means online ballots will be accepted from April 1 until 5 p.m. CDT May 29, instead of April 30. Although these are challenging times, we believe it is important to continue our efforts at self-governance of the bar. By electing the president-elect and district directors, Texas attorneys can exercise their right to self-governance and ensure the board continues to fulfill the mission and statutory purposes of the State Bar. Go to texasbar.com/coronavirus for the latest information.

Sincerely,

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