



Exercise Your Right of **SELF-GOVERNANCE**

IT'S APRIL, WHICH MEANS IT'S TIME TO CAST YOUR VOTE for president-elect and district directors of the State Bar of Texas. Voting takes mere minutes—you can vote by paper ballot or online—and doing so sends a strong message that Texas lawyers value self-governance.

Lawyers are unique among professionals in Texas. We get to vote on the leaders of our regulatory body, the disciplinary rules that govern our professional conduct, and the dues we pay for the right to practice law. Doctors, dentists, architects, accountants, and other professionals do not enjoy the same status. Self-regulation comes with responsibility, and one way to carry out that responsibility is to vote whenever the opportunity arises. Failure to participate in this most simple way sends the wrong message that we just do not care.

I know that is not true. I have personally spoken to hundreds of lawyers and heard them passionately articulate their pride in the profession and their concerns about how we can better serve the public and improve the State Bar, access to justice, and our independent grievance system.

Voting is underway from April 1 to 5 p.m. CDT on May 2. At the top of the ballot are two strong candidates for president-elect: Joe Escobedo Jr., of Edinburg, and Cindy V. Tisdale, of Granbury. Both are former chairs of the State Bar of Texas Board of Directors and respected lawyers, and they share a commitment of service to Texas lawyers and the public we serve. I encourage you to learn more about them and their platforms at texasbar.com/election.

Depending on where you live in Texas, your ballot may also include a State Bar district director race. Candidate bios will be distributed with your paper ballot and are available on the State Bar website.

The election also will decide president-elect and district director races for the Texas Young Lawyers Association. This is the first TYLA election under a new membership structure approved by the Texas Supreme Court in November that broadened membership to all Texas lawyers licensed 12 years or less. Previously, Texas lawyers were TYLA members if they were 36 years old or younger or in their first five years of practice. This change better ensures the unique needs of newer lawyers are addressed, particularly those practicing law as a second career.

Your vote is important

Typically, less than 25% of active Texas lawyers vote in State Bar elections. This isn't exactly shocking, considering the even-lower turnout often seen in statewide constitutional amendment elections, local school board and city council races, and other important elections across the state. But my hope is that Texas lawyers—even those of us with little interest in “bar politics”—would understand the importance of our vote. Voting in State Bar elections is a powerful way to support and maintain our system of self-governance as we work together to regulate the profession and improve the quality of legal services available to our fellow Texans.

SYLVIA BORUNDA FIRTH

President, 2021-2022
State Bar of Texas

VIRTUAL CANDIDATE FORUM

State Bar of Texas president-elect candidates Joe Escobedo Jr. and Cindy Tisdale will participate in the second of two live, virtual candidate forums from noon to 1 p.m. CDT on April 5. The event is free, but registration is required. Register at texasbar.com/election. The forum is not approved for CLE credit.

Submit questions for the candidates in advance by email to webmaster@texasbar.com or during the forums by using the Zoom Q&A feature. If submitting questions by email, please use the subject line “Questions for the Candidates.”