

Texas 2018 General Election Report for Blanco County Texas

November 11, 2018

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Blanco County Democratic Chairman

This report is based on preliminary results provided by Blanco County officials, the Texas Secretary of State, The Texas Tribune, and the New York Times. Results are not official until each County's canvass of votes is completed. State rules require the canvass to be completed by November 20. Blanco County's canvass will be completed on November 19. There will be minor changes to counts stated here due to receipt of military and overseas ballots. All ballots are subject to review of the Ballot Board but no material changes are expected. We have not received the final breakdown of the County's votes by Precinct and will update this report when final results are available.

Overview

We can look at the 2018 General Election results from two perspectives – who won and what we achieved as Democrats. Certainly these views are linked but each reveals a different lesson. Who won defines a point in time. What we achieved illustrates momentum and provides insights into what the future may hold.

Blanco County has become increasingly conservative since the early 1990's. Coming into 2018, we knew that as hard as we might work, Blanco County would remain Republican after this election. But we also knew that Blanco County is benefiting from clear demographic trends as Texas becomes more urban, more progressive, more diverse, and more Democratic. Indeed, this momentum resulted in victories in the Texas House, U.S. House, and judicial races that did not seem possible a year ago. The momentum is real. Our ongoing work is to capitalize on this progressive wave that can bring positive change to Blanco County.

This trend produced some notable results in 2018. **Erin Zwiener won the contest for Texas House District 45** to represent Blanco and Hays Counties, defeating Ken Strange by 3% overall. This win was propelled by the aforementioned demographic changes, which are having a major impact on Hays County. Blanco County results were 25.5% for Zwiener and 74.5% for Strange. However, it is important to note that the Zwiener campaign gave Blanco County Democrats a goal of 1200 votes and **we exceed that goal with 1461 votes.**

Democrats lost races for U.S. Congressional District 21 and U.S. Senate; however, we exceeded our Blanco County Democratic turnout goals in both races:

- Beto O'Rourke's campaign for Senate gave us a goal of 1300 votes. **We exceeded the goal with 1567 votes.**
- Joseph Kopser's campaign for U.S. Congress gave us a goal of 1260 votes. **We exceed the goal with 1511.**

Judicial races usually do not garner much attention. This year, there was an unusually strong and active group of Democratic candidates, including a high proportion of women running for the bench. This strength produced **four Democratic victories for the Texas 3rd Court of Criminal Appeals that has jurisdiction over Blanco County.** The winners include Edward Smith, Chari Kelly, Thomas Baker, and Gisela Triana. Democrats now hold the majority on seven of the 14 Criminal Appeals Courts.

These positive results would not have occurred were it not for the many hundreds of hours that Blanco County Democrats gave to the effort. We organized, raised money, phone-banked, block-walked, worked the polls, talked to our friends and neighbors, displayed signs, paraded, represented Democrats at Market Days (and sold more than a few grassroots Beto T-shirts), and we voted. It is this effort that has given life to the Democratic momentum in Blanco County. Everyone who contributed should be proud of these results. More importantly, we should know that ongoing efforts will continue to propel positive changes as independents, progressives, and Democrats see results.

Detailed County Details

Details of every race in Blanco County are available at the [Blanco County Elections](#) site, and the [Texas Secretary of State Elections](#) County results site (select Blanco County from the drop down menu).

Results for Blanco County Precincts are incomplete as of this date. The County has published only the Early Vote Precinct results and not the full results that will include the votes made on Election Day. This report will be updated when full results are available.

Precinct	Dem Votes	Rep Votes	Other Votes	Total Votes	Rank	Dem % of Vote	Rank	% of Dem Votes in County	Rank
102	209	651	8	868	3	24.1%	5	18.5%	3
201	317	846	11	1174	1	27.0%	4	28.1%	1
302	208	391	8	607	4	34.3%	2	18.4%	4
303	55	200	1	256	5	21.5%	6	4.9%	5
304	41	75	0	116	6	35.3%	1	3.6%	6
401	298	715	5	1018	2	29.3%	3	26.4%	2
Total	1128	2878	33	4039		27.9%		100.0%	

Footnotes	*		**			***
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The table shows surprising Democratic strength in the rural and sparsely populated Precinct 304 and Precinct 302, which includes most of Johnson City and the area to the north of the Pedernales River. However, analysis will be postponed until final results are available.

Analysis of Blanco County Results

Summary level Blanco County results for the U.S. Senate race between Beto O'Rourke and Ted Cruz:

2018 General Election Results – Blanco County				
Total Votes	Democratic	Republican	Other	Dem %
5804	1567	4066	144	27.0%

The Democratic vote total is an all-time high for Blanco County (based on online records from the Secretary of State beginning in 1992). **Twenty seven percent of the total vote is the highest**

Democratic percentage since 2010, the mid-term election during President Obama’s first term. The table below shows the available historical results.

Total Votes (Based on Major Dem Candidate Receiving Most Votes)					
YEAR	Total	Democratic	Republican	Other	Dem %
1988 (Pres. Yr.)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1990 (Mid-term Yr.)	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
1992	3109	891	1370	848	28.7%
1994	2431	1516	915	0	62.4%
1996	3255	1092	2097	66	33.5%
1998	2604	1183	1389	32	45.4%
2000	3767	811	2777	179	21.5%
2002	3053	1164	1801	88	38.1%
2004	4584	1267	3277	40	27.6%
2006	3250	938	2206	106	28.9%
2008	4939	1467	3418	54	29.7%
2010	3966	1200	2589	177	30.3%
2012	4912	1281	3408	223	26.1%
2014	3608	874	2622	112	24.2%
2016	5685	1244	4212	229	21.9%
2018	5804	1567	4066	144	27.0%
2018 Records	All-time High	All-time High			

For perspective, the last year a Democratic candidate won a majority of the vote in Blanco County in a national or statewide race was in 1994. That year, Bob Bullock ran for Lt. Governor, Dan Morales for Attorney General, and John Sharp for Comptroller of Public Accounts. All won Blanco County and the election. Ann Richards led the Democratic ticket and lost both statewide and in Blanco County to George W. Bush. That year marks the beginning of the Republican ascendancy in Texas.

In 2018, Blanco County Democrats set a goal of achieving at least 30% Democratic votes compared to total votes. We fell short of this goal. There is little doubt that two factors contributed to this result.

- The Blanco County Democrats became much more active in 2018. This caught the attention of the County’s Republican Party, which then replaced its chairman prior to the completion of the incumbent’s full term. Blanco County Republicans also began to mimic certain Democratic activities and strategies, including attendance at Market Days, membership in the local Chambers of Commerce, and political ads in the newspapers. Political rancor of individual Republicans extended to many instances of vandalism and theft of Democratic campaign signs.
- The second factor was the over-the-top saber rattling of President Trump regarding perceived immigration threats from Central America. This fired-up the ultra-conservative base, including many Blanco County Republicans, and propelled them to vote.

High 2018 voter interest is also shown in an examination of the voter registration and voting percentages.

Blanco County Voter Registration and Voting						
YEAR	Reg Voters	Growth	Voted	Voted %	Early Vote	EV %
1988 (Pres. Yr.)	3785		2719	71.8%	446	16.4%
1990 (Mid-term Yr.)	3624	-4.3%	2371	65.4%	365	15.4%
1992	3831	5.7%	3103	81.0%	739	23.8%
1994	4019	4.9%	2490	62.0%	559	22.5%
1996	4835	20.3%	3316	68.6%	843	25.4%
1998	5318	10.0%	2615	49.2%	418	16.0%
2000	5990	12.6%	3767	62.9%	1262	33.5%
2002	6250	4.3%	3051	48.8%	778	25.5%
2004	6548	4.8%	4584	70.0%	2076	45.3%
2006	6716	2.6%	3352	49.9%	984	29.4%
2008	6935	3.3%	4939	71.2%	2565	37.0%
2010	6956	0.3%	3966	57.0%	1634	23.5%
2012	7195	3.4%	4972	69.1%	2548	35.4%
2014	7390	2.7%	3608	48.8%	1462	19.8%
2016	8033	8.7%	5685	70.8%	3745	46.6%
2018	8504	5.9%	5822	68.5%	4053	47.7%
2018 Records	All-time High		All-time High	Mid-term High	All-time High	All-time High

As the table illustrates, **Blanco County had an all-time high number of total voters.** Note that this is an unusually high vote total for a mid-term election. We not only surpassed the 2014 mid-term vote count, but also the 2016 Presidential election vote count. This result is an indication of the growth of the Blanco Democratic party but also the political intensity felt by many Republican voters. This intensity will affect how we proceed in building toward the 2020 Presidential election.

Texas Successes

Election results in Texas reflect a general trend toward increased voter participation and increased influence from urban and suburban voters who tend to lean more Democratic. Per the Texas Tribune, “More people voted — over 8.3 million — than have ever turned out for midterm elections in Texas. About 72 percent of those votes were cast before Election Day. And instead of one in three voters turning out, the norm in these races, more than half of the registered voters took part this time.” That result bodes well for the Democratic Party, but only if we continue to reflect the values of those voters and build voter turnout.

In Texas, specific gains for Texas Democrats include:

- Flipped 2 seats for the U.S. Congress – Fletcher (D7) and Allred (D32)
- Flipped 2 seats in the Texas Senate –
 - State Senator-elect Nathan Johnson (16)
 - State Senator-elect Beverly Powell (10)
- Gained 11 seats in the Texas House including the defeat of 7 Republican incumbents –
 - State Representative-elect Ana-Maria Ramos (102)
 - State Representative-elect John Turner (114)
 - State Representative-elect Terry Meza (105)
 - State Representative-elect Julie Johnson (115)
 - State Representative-elect John Bucy (136)
 - State Representative-elect Rhetta Andrews Bowers (113)
 - State Representative-elect Vikki Goodwin (47)

- State Representative-elect James Talarico (52)
- State Representative-elect Jon E. Rosenthal (135)
- State Representative-elect Michelle Beckley (65)
- State Representative-elect Erin Zwiener (45)

Note: Texas House races remain undecided and could further boost these results

- Flipped four State Appeals Courts to Democratic majorities, with Democrats now holding majorities on seven of the 14 courts.
- Elected the first two Latinas to the U.S. Congress from Texas: Sylvia Garcia, and Veronica Escobar

Detailed Texas results are available at the [New York Times Texas Election Results](#) site and the [Texas Secretary of State](#) site.

National Successes

Nationally, Democrats had significant success in the U.S. House of Representatives. As of this date, we have gained 31 seats in the House and will now hold the majority. Eleven seats remain undecided as of this report.

Democrats gained 7 gubernatorial seals nationally and will have Governors in 23 states.

More National results are available at the [New York Times Election 2018](#) site.