



Kristie Loescher, who was on UT's faculty council, says not having a council is "leaving money on the table."

Worries after UT councils abolished

Regents act after law aimed at influence of faculty in decisions

By Lily Kepner
STAFF WRITER

To Kristie Loescher, an expert on employee management from the University of Texas' McCombs School of Business, a workplace is like a canoe. Of 10 rowers in the canoe, two or three are "rowing their hearts out." A couple in the back are rowing the other way. Four are "just sitting there."

At UT, she said, the faculty council was how the employer could "turn them into rowers."

Through the council, employees engage in collaborative decision-making with peers from across the campus. Employees work harder and stay longer with this engagement, generating more profit for UT, said Loescher, who once served on the council. The canoe moves faster.

"It's a win-win," she said. Not having one is "leaving money on the table."

But after a state law passed that places the fate of those bodies in regents' hands and limits their oversight in hopes of curbing faculty control in decisions, the UT System's Board of Regents decided to abolish the councils — including UT-Austin's body — five days before the semester began.

The vote, for now, leaves the 3,700 faculty employees at UT without elected representation or a direct line to the university's top leadership for the first time since 1928. Faculty members who spoke to the Austin American-Statesman said they were surprised and saddened by the decision and that they fear how their input and work will be redistributed.

"The message is unmistakable," said UT faculty representative and astronomy professor Paul Shapiro. "Faculty are now just employees, 'educational workers,' without a seat at the table."

UT System officials said institutions can create advisory groups to take up the "essential" work, but they did not give public guidance on what those advisory groups should be beyond saying they can't be the same makeup as faculty senates. Sen. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe, who authored the law to regulate faculty senates' *Faculty continues on A4*

GOP lawsuit calls for closing primaries



Mikala Compton/Austin American-Statesman file photo

Texas GOP Chair Abraham George says his goal for a new lawsuit is to "get as many conservatives elected to office as possible."

Court urged to allow only registered party members to decide contests

By Bayliss Wagner
STAFF WRITER

After lawmakers declined to overhaul Texas' open primary system this year, the state Republican Party is turning to the courts, asking a federal judge to close GOP primary participation to only registered party members.

In a lawsuit filed against the state and Republican Secretary of State Jane Nelson, the

party alleges that primaries open to all voters violate its First Amendment right to freedom of political association.

The current system "forces the Party to allow voters who may fundamentally oppose the Party's principles and candidates to choose the Party's nominees," reads the lawsuit, filed Thursday in federal court in Amarillo.

The litigation escalates a long-running effort by the

state GOP to push the state further to the right. In a phone interview Friday, Republican Party of Texas Chair Abraham George said his goal for the lawsuit was to "get as many conservatives elected to office as possible."

"What we really want is Republicans to elect Republican nominees," George said.

He said the party is hoping the lawsuit will allow it to close the primaries for the 2026 elec-

tions but that the litigation may take longer than that.

The lawsuit is sure to inflame divisions between grassroots conservatives and many Republican members of the Legislature. George and the party's backers have consistently gone after lawmakers they view as too moderate, including by dispatching hundreds of thousands of dollars in advertisements to oppose *Elections continues on A3*

1900 Storm helped redefine Galveston

Seawall, grade raising, readiness show resilience 125 after devastating hurricane

By Justin Ballard
NEWSROOM METEOROLOGIST

Before the Great Storm of 1900 — which made its Texas landfall 125 years ago today — Galveston had become one of the busiest ports in North America with electric streetlights, grand hotels and Victorian mansions, a city rivaling New Orleans as the Gulf Coast's crown jewel.

Galveston's destiny was changed the night of Sept. 8, when a wall of water nearly 15 feet high surged across the is-

land. Entire neighborhoods were swallowed by angry Gulf waters. Merciless winds screamed at more than 100 mph. Families clung to rafters, watched houses splinter, and prayed for survival.

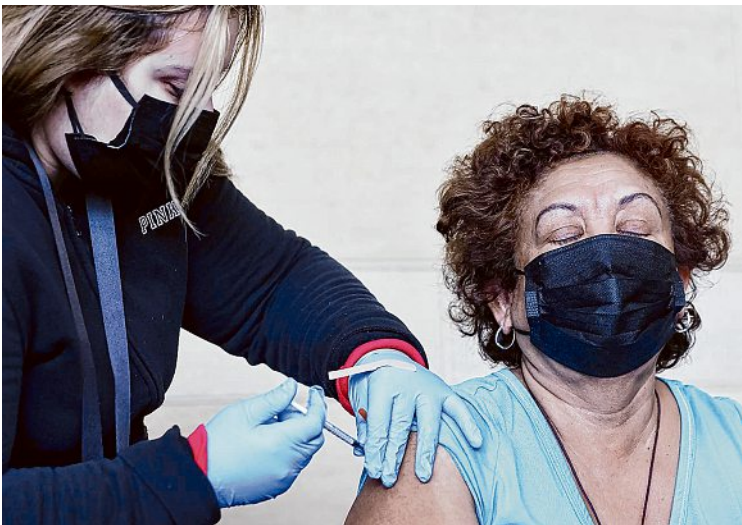
By morning, silence hung over a city in ruins. As many as 8,000 souls perished during the storm, according to estimates. Yet, even in the aftermath of the deadliest natural disaster in U.S. history, the seeds of resilience began to take root.

Storm continues on A2



Raquel Natalicchio/Houston Chronicle

The 1900 Storm Memorial on the Galveston seawall honors the thousands of lives lost in a hurricane on Sept. 8, 1900.



Mario Tama/Getty Images/TNS

Seniors in some areas say they are being denied COVID-19 vaccinations, following new policies from federal agencies.

Vaccine chaos: Some seniors can't obtain COVID-19 shots amid surge

By Rong-Gong Lin II
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Seniors in some parts of the country say they are being denied COVID-19 vaccinations amid an ongoing spike in cases, leading to rising frustration over new Trump administration policies that are making it harder to get the shots.

Matthew D'Amico, 67, of New York City, said a Walgreens declined to administer COVID-19 vaccines to him and his 75-year-old wife on Friday because they

didn't have a prescription. They're trying to get vaccinated ahead of a trip.

"I can't believe we can't get" the vaccine, D'Amico said in an interview. "I've been inoculated a number of times and never had to get a prescription. And it's just very frustrating that this is where we are."

He's not alone in his exasperation. Under the leadership of the vaccine skeptic Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr., federal agencies have effectively made it more dif-

ficult to get vaccinated against COVID-19 this year. The Food and Drug Administration has only "approved" COVID-19 vaccines for those age 65 and up, as well as younger people with underlying health conditions.

That means across the country, people younger than 65 interested in getting the COVID-19 vaccine must now either consult with a health care provider or "attest" to a pharmacy that they have an underlying health condition. It's a potential hurdle that *Vaccines continues on A3*

