

## ELECTIONS '26

# Candidates await results

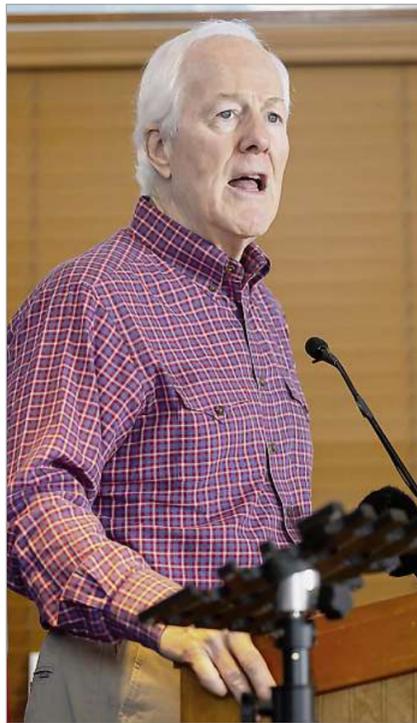
### Months of hard-fought campaigning reach climax



Tom Fox/Staff Photographer



Ashley Landis/The Associated Press



Annie Mulligan/The Associated Press



Tony Gutierrez/The Associated Press

Texas' Senate primary ended Tuesday as Republicans and Democrats waited to see what toll months of infighting would take in a race that could help decide control of Congress.

### ANALYSIS

## Deep rifts exposed in both parties

### GOP, Democrats' tensions could stand in the way of victory

By **GROMER JEFFERS JR.**  
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Texas' Senate primary didn't just pick nominees. It exposed tensions inside both parties that could stand in the way of victory in November.

The early shape of Tuesday's vote deepened those strains. Republicans potentially face another round of combat over identity and direction, while Democrats must prove they can put aside internal conflicts and stay competitive.

With Texas as the country's first race of the midterms, the contest doubled as a gauge of political strength and strategy, but did little to answer whether Republicans sustain their

statewide dominance or Democrats end their drought.

The chief divide in the primary, whether voters would opt for confrontation or caution, was baked into the ballot.

Republicans were choosing among four-term incumbent John Cornyn, pitching steadiness and clout; Attorney General Ken Paxton, a MAGA loyalist shadowed by political liabilities; and U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt of Houston, a next-gen conservative.

Democrats were split between U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett of Dallas, pushing base turnout and promising to challenge President Donald Trump, and state Rep. James Talarico of Austin, an aspiring preacher reaching for disaffected Republicans and others.

Primary voters tend to

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### ONLINE

Follow live, real-time Texas primary results on key matchups, from U.S. Senate and House to governor and other statewide, legislative, judicial and county offices. **dallasnews.com**

### INSIDE

**GOVERNOR'S RACE:** Gov. Greg Abbott's renomination was easily assured in the GOP primary Tuesday, moving him closer to a historic fourth term. Meanwhile, Texas Democrats rallied around state Rep. Gina Hinojosa. **4A**

**AGRICULTURE COMMISSIONER:** Beekeeping Frisco businessman Nate Sheets had a comfortable lead over three-term Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller in an unusually heated Republican primary on Tuesday. **4A**

## Parties watch closely ahead of midterms

By **JOSEPH MORTON**  
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WASHINGTON — Texas' bitter, big-money Senate primary left Republicans fractured Tuesday night as Democrats fought for an edge, all in a showdown that could help decide control of Congress.

Sen. John Cornyn was leading the GOP field with Attorney General Ken Paxton close behind, but neither secured a majority, setting up a May rematch and weeks of renewed attacks. U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt finished a distant third.

On the Democratic side, state Rep. James Talarico of Austin edged ahead of U.S. Rep. Jasmine Crockett of Dallas, after pushing rival strategies for a party shut out of statewide office for more than three decades.

Already the most expensive Senate primary in U.S. history, it has topped \$125 million in ad spending, and the national parties are watching closely for clues about turnout, messaging



Shafkat Anowar/Staff Photographer

Residents waited in line to cast their votes past 10 p.m. on Tuesday night in the primary election at the Samuel Grand Recreation Center in Dallas.

and momentum ahead of the midterms.

In the three-way Republican brawl, Cornyn stressed experience and electability, Paxton ran on his MAGA loyalties and Hunt cast himself as a younger, conservative alternative.

With more than two-thirds of the expected statewide vote counted, Cornyn remained slightly ahead of Paxton.

Signaling an aggressive runoff fight ahead, Cornyn said late Tuesday that the race comes down to character.

"I refuse to allow a flawed, self-centered and shameless candidate like Ken Paxton risk everything we've worked so hard to build," he told reporters in Austin.

He warned Paxton would be "an albatross around the neck" of Republican candidates in November.

Paxton, at a watch party in Dallas, blasted Cornyn and his allies for heavy ad spending, accusing them of "trying to steal

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Juan Figueroa/Staff Photographer

First-time voter Brandy McIver (center left) was directed to a different polling location as she tried to vote at Oak Lawn Branch Library on Tuesday.

## Hundreds of voters turned away at polls

### Residents frustrated after being redirected to their assigned sites

By **TRACEY MCMANUS**  
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Hundreds of voters were turned away from Dallas County polls Tuesday when they arrived at typically universal voting sites but were rerouted to their assigned polling place due to a switch prompted by the county Republican Party.

The GOP's decision to hold a separate primary from Democrats this year required precinct-based voting on election day, a change from the county-wide voting system in place since 2019 that allowed residents to vote at any center regardless of their address.

The switch surprised and frustrated residents who stopped to vote during their work day or between errands only to be redirected elsewhere — an outcome predicted by county officials and voting

rights activists who feared the GOP's arrangement would disenfranchise voters.

"They ought to be making it easier for people to vote, not harder," said Nancy Stacy, 73, after being turned away from Royal Lane Baptist Church, where she has voted for years. She was directed to a recreation center nearly 2 miles north.

County officials deployed trained navigators to the busiest sites with iPads loaded with voter registrations to help redirect people to their correct polling locations.

Still, confusion persisted throughout the day and the Democratic Party petitioned a judge to extend voting by two hours through 9 p.m. After Judge Staci Williams granted the motion, the elections department extended hours for the 279 Democratic locations only.

"This is not just disenfranchising Democratic voters, this is disenfranchising everyone

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### Breezy with PM storms



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### NATION & WORLD

**Drones strike embassy**  
Two Iranian drones hit the U.S. Embassy in Saudi Arabia Monday. **3A**

### METRO

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The Dallas Zoo held its first Dog Days event. **2B**

### BUSINESS

**Markets spooked**  
Stocks drop on war fears. **3B**

### MAVERICKS

## CEO: No deal tied to City Hall decision

### Dallas team to leave AAC after lease ends in 2031

By **DEVYANI CHHETRI**  
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Dallas Mavericks CEO Rick Welts says there is no deal, no project and no leverage tied to Dallas

City Hall's fate, and the team is not driving the debate over whether to repair or abandon the aging building.

"There's no project to talk about until the city would signal to us that there's something to talk about," Welts told *The Dallas Morning News* in an exclusive interview Monday at the team's Design District headquarters.

The "dominoes will fall based on what is being decided there," he said. "And that will determine if there's an opportunity" for the city and the Mavericks to engage and talk about it, "but that hasn't happened yet."

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