

Cornyn, Paxton hit road in final push

Senator has blitzed media with ads, while AG has focused on high-profile lawsuits

By James Osborne
WASHINGTON BUREAU

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn and Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton are beginning their final push to rally GOP voters, with early voting kicking off Monday in the Republican runoff for Texas' senate seat.

Cornyn is scheduled to travel to San Antonio and Austin for

events with former Gov. Rick Perry and U.S. Rep. Michael McCaul, while Paxton heads to Dallas and Tyler, as part of multi-day campaign tours to close out what is one of the nation's most closely watched elections.

Despite Cornyn's razor-thin victory in the March 3 primary, neither candidate has spent much time on the road to campaign ahead of the runoff on May

26. Instead, Cornyn and the groups backing him have spent close to \$18 million on television, radio and digital ads since the primary — more than triple spent for Paxton — raised from a network of wealthy donors he has built up over more than two decades in the Senate.

Meanwhile, Paxton has largely relied on conservative influencers to carry his message online, while also generating news with a series of legal actions aimed at Netflix, school districts resisting posting the Ten Com-



U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, left, and Texas AG Ken Paxton are in a runoff for the GOP nod.

mandments and transgender care at Texas Children's Hospital in Houston.

"His strategy is not to communicate through paid advertising

but targeted lawsuits," said Brandon Rottinghaus, a political science professor at the University of Houston. "You don't have to have a deep bank book to be successful in that respect."

Last week, Paxton's campaign reported raising more than \$590,000 between April 1 and May 2, while Cornyn reported a haul of \$4.3 million between his campaign and joint fundraising committee.

Candidates are not required to
Runoff continues on A6



Courtney Isaak Pichon, who became Good Reason Houston's CEO in March, said HISD's academic progress should be celebrated. Raquel Natalicchio/Houston Chronicle

'Not a startup anymore'

Good Reason Houston CEO takes helm amid nonprofit's expanding reach

By Megan Menchaca
STAFF WRITER

When education nonprofit Good Reason Houston launched nearly a decade ago, it had a handful of employees, \$8.4 million in seed funding and ambitious goals to rapidly improve student performance in the largest city in Texas.

Since then, Pasadena ISD and San Jacinto College credit the nonprofit with kick-starting a college access program that now has reached over 11,600 students. Aldine ISD has teamed up with them to overhaul struggling campuses. And Houston ISD



Alex Hales Elizondo, then-CEO of Good Reason Houston, gave Pichon a compelling pitch to join the organization. Michael Wyke/Houston Chronicle

has leaned on the group throughout the state takeover — backing a \$4.4 billion bond, helping boost pre-K enrollment and paying for consultants.

Fast forward to 2026, and Good Reason Houston now works with nearly 20 public and charter school systems, influencing district planning, classroom strategy and college access.

"What Good Reason Houston has the power to do is pull together lots of school districts that work with multiple colleges, and so it's a broader base ... not just a few districts here and a few districts there," said
Nonprofit continues on A6

Action is urged on Ebola outbreak

Emergency declared by WHO as nearly 90 have died in Africa

By Chinedu Asadu and Saleh Mwanamilongo
ASSOCIATED PRESS

ABUJA, Nigeria — The World Health Organization declared an Ebola disease outbreak caused by a rare virus in Congo and neighboring Uganda a public health emergency of international concern on Sunday, after more than 300 suspected cases and 88 deaths.

WHO said the outbreak doesn't meet the criteria of a pandemic emergency like COVID-19, and it advised against the closure of international borders.

WHO said on X that a laboratory-confirmed case has also been reported in Congo's capital, Kinshasa, which is about 620 miles from the outbreak's epicenter in the eastern province of Ituri, suggesting a possible wider spread. It said the patient had visited Ituri and that other suspected cases have also been reported in North Kivu province, which is one of Congo's most populous and borders Ituri.

On Sunday, the rebel government of Goma, eastern Congo's largest city, said in a statement that the first confirmed case of Ebola was detected in the city. The infected person traveled from Ituri and was under isolation, the statement said. Goma was the site of a rapid rebel offensive early last year, and the conflict between the Congolese armed forces and the Rwandan-backed M23 rebel paramilitary group has displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

Ebola is highly contagious and can be contracted via bodily fluids such as vomit, blood or semen. The disease it causes is rare but severe and often fatal.

WHO's emergency declaration is meant to spur donor agencies and countries into action. By
Ebola continues on A6

Housing authority is planning to shut 318-unit Irvington Village

By R.A. Schuetz
STAFF WRITER

Houston's housing authority was planning to redevelop Irvington Village, a 1941 public housing development not far from White Oak Music Hall, with the same grant it is using to catalyze the \$671 million redevelopment of Cuney Homes and the surrounding Third Ward.

Then came the Federal Emergency Management Agency's

draft of its updated flood maps, which placed 85% of the public housing in the 100-year flood plain.

On Thursday morning, the housing authority announced that it was ending its redevelopment plans. Instead, it will ask the federal government for permission to shutter the 318-unit public housing complex. If permission is granted, residents would be given housing vouchers and relocation services to move before demolition.

The housing authority, which rebranded this year as Housing Alliance HTX, said it expected that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development would take until the end of the year to grant approval to close down Irvington Village. Then relocation services would start in the first quarter of 2027. Residents would be given flexibility to move as late as summer 2027 so that families with school-age children would

Housing continues on A5



Residents of Irvington Village would be given housing vouchers and relocation services to move before the homes are demolished. Brett Coomer/Houston Chronicle