



FRIENDS ★ of Texas Public Schools ★

Open Letter to the Terrific Teachers of Texas

Message from our Founders, Scott and Leslie Milder

Congratulations on your amazing success on behalf of your students as evidenced by Texas students achieving the highest graduation rates in America! You are doing the Lord's work and Texans are grateful for your work and dedication. [Click here to read more about graduation rates.](#)

We have a critical calendar year ahead of us for the future of public education in Texas. The Texas Legislature has been working against you and your schools for decades and will continue to do what it can to undermine your ability to do your jobs in the classroom. While some of our elected representatives and senators are friendly toward public education, many are not. Their campaign contributors want vouchers and charters so they can profit from the billions invested annually in our public schools. They also want to attack your benefits such as TRS and your health insurance. That's the simple and ugly truth.

Although your vote alone may not have great influence, if combined with your 600,000+ peers across Texas, public school educators would own the outcome of virtually any election. Why is this important to you? Currently, the education profession has very low voter turnout, which means elected officials do not listen to educators. They listen to those who vote and those who contribute. While educators are not known for their wealth and ability to contribute, they can show up at the polls in great numbers and elect education-friendly candidates! That is what we need to do next month.

Remember that politics is local and is more complicated than red vs. blue. Now, when you do go vote you'll want your vote to count. As a result of gerrymandering, most state elections (90%) are decided in the primaries, which are in February and March of this year. Please consider this assignment. Determine the following: **(1)** Do I reside in a Texas House or Senate District that routinely elects a Republican or Democratic candidate? **(2)** Which candidate in that party is the most helpful to public education?

Let's send a message to Austin that public education is important by voting early—on the first day of early voting, Tuesday, February 16. We urge you to vote in the primary election that typically determines the Texas Senate or House member where you reside.

The winners of the Democratic primary and the winners of the Republican primary face off against each other in the November general election. In many parts of Texas, most Democrats don't stand a chance in the general election because Texans are largely Republican voters. Therefore, whoever wins the Republic Primary in March is likely to win the general election in November.

For those of you inclined to vote in the Democratic primary to support your presidential candidate of choice, please know your vote would be less meaningful than if you vote in the Republican Primary for the reasons noted in the previous paragraphs. Most elections in Texas are decided in the Republican Primary. You'll be able to vote for the Democrat or Republican presidential candidate in the November general election.

What's the takeaway of this message? Register to vote, VOTE, and vote in the Republican Primary during early voting February 16-26, or on the Primary Election Day, March 1. Need help determining who are the most education-friendly candidates? We always check in on who the Texas Parent PAC has endorsed. They will post their slate of candidates online at www.txparentpac.com.

Wondering if your voter registration is current? You can check by visiting [Am I Registered to Vote](#). You may also register to vote at this same link. The last date to register to vote is Monday, February 1, 2016.

God bless you for choosing to serve in the public schools of Texas!

--Scott and Leslie

P.S. If you are a school principal or superintendent, we encourage you to make this message available to your teachers and staff.