

Texas US Senate 2026

THE ISSUES

KEN
PAXTON

REPUBLICAN

JAMES
TALARICO

DEMOCRAT

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ABORTION Ban or legal?	Ban. Will “defend the unborn.” Sued out-of-state healthcare providers who send abortion medication to Texas residents. Affirmed Texas’ abortion trigger law in 2022 after Roe v. Wade was overturned. Sued to prevent the use of public funds to assist Texas patients seeking abortions outside the state.	Legal. Supports putting Roe v. Wade into law. Says Texas’ abortion ban is “dangerous,” that women are “dying needlessly.” Introduced an amendment “prohibiting the legislature from restricting an individual’s access to abortion and related health care.” Would “protect access to contraception and IVF.”
CLIMATE CHANGE Should climate change be a top priority?	No. Sued asset managers to “protect the coal industry.” Applauded major banks for leaving “an anti-oil and gas activist organization.” Urged U.S. withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement in 2017.	Yes. Introduced a 2021 bill to “ fight climate change,” regulating greenhouse gas emissions and energy efficiency standards. Would strengthen climate-caused-disaster preparedness and create jobs in “geothermal and hydrogen-fueled energy.”
CRIMINAL JUSTICE How to ensure effectiveness and fairness in law enforcement?	Sued Dallas officials for not fully funding law enforcement. Adopted a rule “to rein in rogue district attorneys.” Called for “accountability and transparency” from law enforcement after George Floyd’s death in 2020. Dropped a series of human trafficking and child sexual assault cases because in some cases they were unable to find the victims.	Would invest “in police training, oversight, and accountability” and equip them with resources to “prosecute criminals.” Introduced a 2021 bill that bans reality TV shows from partnering with state law enforcement.
ECONOMY Cut or increase government investment in, and regulation of, the economy?	Cut. Sued to block a Harris County guaranteed income pilot program for households in poverty, calling it an “ illegal and illegitimate government overreach.” Would cut “fraud and the wasteful spending that’s driving inflation.” Has opposed the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau ; says its funding model is legal.	Increase. Voted to expand funds and eligibility for loans in rural communities. Would “ increase funding” to expand “high-speed internet access.” Would create “a clear regulatory structure” for cryptocurrency. “ Before we make progress on the cost of living crisis, we have to tackle the corruption crisis.”
EDUCATION Use public funding for private and/or for-profit schools?	Yes. Said in a legal opinion that public funds “can be directed to public and private schools, including sectarian schools.” Called Texas’ universal school choice law “a major victory.”	No. Opposes “taking tax dollars out of our public schools to subsidize private education.” Is “ passionately against ” private school vouchers. Wants to allow Texas voters to directly decide the vouchers question. “It’s the only thing that would put this issue to bed.”
ENVIRONMENT Loosen or tighten environmental regulation?	Mixed. Sued the Biden administration, opposing offshore drilling restrictions. Sued the federal government to oppose a rule that limited coal mining near waterways. Secured a \$60 million judgment from companies “illegally dumping pollutants in Texas waterways and lands.”	Tighten. Would “protect the air we breathe and the water we drink” by “strengthening the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act.” “ Access to clean drinking water is a basic human right.”

ISSUES	PAXTON (R)	TALARICO (D)
GUN LAWS Loosen or tighten gun laws?	Loosen. “The Second Amendment is a cornerstone of...freedom.” Sued the city of Dallas “for banning lawful license holders from carrying handguns” in entertainment venues. Sued Biden administration for pistol brace sale restrictions. Sued the ATF for regulating private firearm sales.	Tighten. Would “protect the Second Amendment while protecting...from gun violence.” Supports “universal background checks for gun sales” and prosecution of illegal firearm traffickers. Voted against allowing 21+ Texans to carry handguns without a license, training, or background check.
HEALTHCARE Increase or decrease government support for healthcare?	Decrease. In 2018 led a team of states seeking to end the Affordable Care Act. In 2020 asked the U.S. Supreme Court to declare the ACA unlawful. In 2021, called the ACA “a massive government takeover of health care” that was “sold on a lie to the American people.”	Increase. Supports “an affordable not-for-profit health care option for every American.” Sponsored a 2021 bill to cap the cost of insulin at \$25 for a 30-day supply. Sponsored a 2023 bill to establish wholesale prescription drug importation from Canadian suppliers.
IMMIGRATION How to handle immigration?	Supports “securing the border and deporting illegal aliens.” Sued Houston officials for limiting local police cooperation with ICE. Opposed the “parole in place” policy, meant to grant undocumented spouses of U.S. citizens a path to citizenship. In 2018, led a challenge to the DACA DREAMers program for undocumented youth.	Would “create a path to citizenship for the immigrants who have been here the longest and...spouses and DREAMers.” Supports “the deportation of criminals, gang members, and human traffickers.” “Our southern border should be like our front porch. There should be a giant welcome mat out front and a lock on the door.”
IRAN WAR Support the war in Iran?	Yes. “ I am very glad that [Trump] did it. Iran is a great threat to our country.” Says Iran should never “obtain a nuclear weapon.” Proposed rules to enforce a Texas law banning land purchases by foreign adversaries such as Iran, rules that would “strengthen the reporting of suspicious activity.”	No. “We can support the democracy movement in Iran, we can prevent Iran from getting a nuclear weapon, all without bombing innocent school children or sending our American troops off to die.” “The president ...should come before Congress” and make the case for the war.
LABOR Make it easier or harder for unions to organize workers?	Harder. Said that employees should be required to regularly re-consent to paying union fees. Sued city of Austin in 2016 for allowing city employees to do union work during working hours. In 2017 opposed automatic union dues collection.	Easier. Supports “workers’ right to unionize.” Supports the PRO Act to expand and protect employees’ organizing and collective bargaining rights. Introduced a bill to repeal restrictions on labor unions.
LGBTQ RIGHTS Limit or expand LGBTQ rights?	Limit. Said mental health providers can’t provide gender-transitioning care to minors. Said that state district courts don’t have the authority to change the sex on government IDs. In 2015 after Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage, said county clerks can refuse to issue such licenses.	Expand. Supports protecting “the legality of gay marriage,” defending LGBTQ+ people from “government overreach,” and protecting healthcare for transgender children. Voted against limiting the use of restrooms in certain Texas public buildings based on sex at birth.
MINIMUM WAGE Raise the federal minimum from \$7.25 per hour?	Likely no. In 2022 opposed raising the minimum wage to \$15 for all federal contractors. Opposed a labor rule expanding minimum-wage protections for tipped workers.	Yes. Supports raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour. Would “implement tax credits and subsidies to help small- and medium-sized businesses adapt to a minimum wage raise.”
TAXES Raise or lower taxes on corporations and wealthier individuals?	Likely lower. Says Big Beautiful Bill’s extension of the 2017 Trump tax cuts, which included the largest one-time cut on the corporate tax rate, will “unleash economic growth.”	Raise. Would close “billionaire tax loopholes” by banning “tax write-offs for luxury items,” and cracking down on “offshore accounts.” Supports “raising the corporate tax rate.”
VOTING RULES Make voting harder or easier?	Harder. Supports the SAVE America Act , requiring that anyone registering to vote in a federal election provide proof of U.S. citizenship. In 2020 opposed expanding mail-in voting. Supports voter ID for Texas mail-in ballots.	Easier. Supports removing “unnecessary barriers to registering to vote and casting a ballot.” Opposes the 2026 Supreme Court decision that “gutted the Voting Rights Act — a cornerstone of the Civil Rights Movement.”

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