



Texas Secretary of State  
ELECTIONS DIVISION



# SOS Updates: Looking Ahead to the Primary Election



## Agenda

- 1 Elections Division Updates
- 2 Legal Team Updates
- 3 Election Administration Team Updates
- 4 Training and Compliance Team Updates
- 5 SB 2753 Updates



## Elections Division Updates

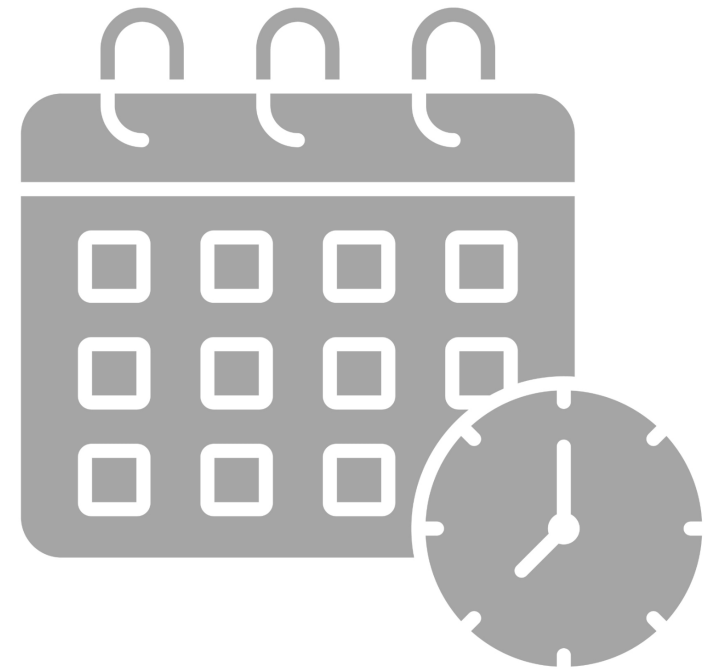
- Leadership Changes in the Elections Division
- TEAM Redevelopment Project
  - “Am I Registered?” Portal
  - Communication About Tickets/Issues
- County Focus Groups
- Ongoing Primary Election Support
  - Webinars
  - Weekly emails





## Extended Hours

- The Elections Division will be available for extended and weekday hours during early voting:
  - 8 a.m.—6 p.m. on Tuesday, Feb. 17—Friday, Feb. 20
  - 7 a.m.—7 p.m. on Saturday, Feb. 21
  - 10 a.m.—6 p.m. on Sunday, Feb. 22
  - 7 a.m.—7 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 23—Friday, Feb. 27





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# Legal Team Updates



## Legal Team Updates

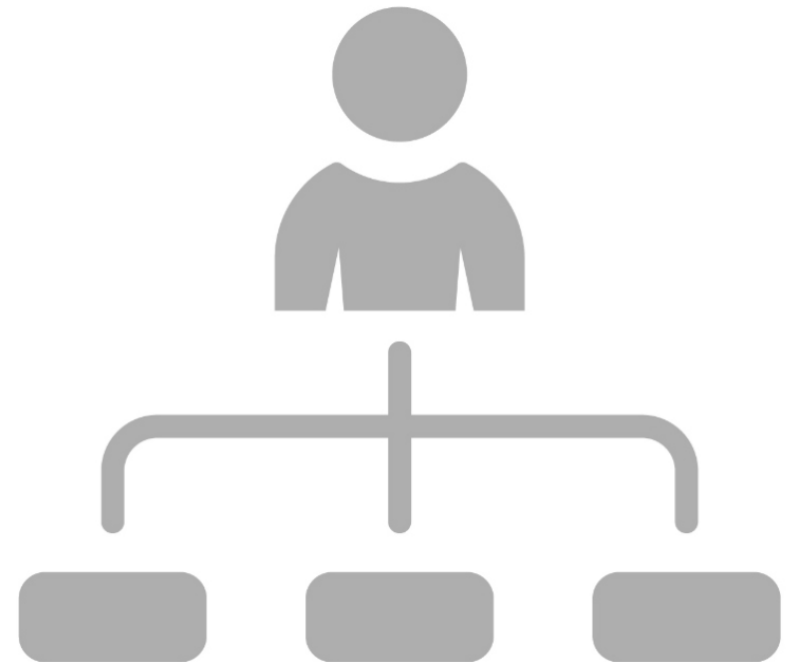
- Legal Team Updates
- Common Questions About the Primary Election
- Spring Webinar Schedule
- Election Technology and Security Team






## Legal Team Updates

- Leadership Updates:
  - **Chuck Pinney**—Legal Director
  - **Lena Proft**—Managing Attorney
- Legal Team will be available for extended and weekday hours during early voting
- Election Security and Technology Team:
  - **Charlie Johnson**—Election Certification Manager
  - **Caitlin Arzate**—Election Security Manager
  - **Erik Buntin**—Risk-Limiting Audits





## Common Questions–Party Affiliation

- Voters can affiliate with a party by voting in a primary election or by taking an oath of affiliation with the party
  - Once a voter affiliates with a party, they cannot vote in another party's primary or participate in another party's convention in the same year
    - This includes the primary runoff election
  - Affiliation also comes with restrictions on independent candidacy or candidacy with a different political party, but generally doesn't impact write-in candidates
- Party affiliation expires on December 31 of the year in which the voter affiliated
- [Party Affiliation Questions](#) on  **VOTETEXAS.GOV**  
POWERED BY THE TEXAS SECRETARY OF STATE





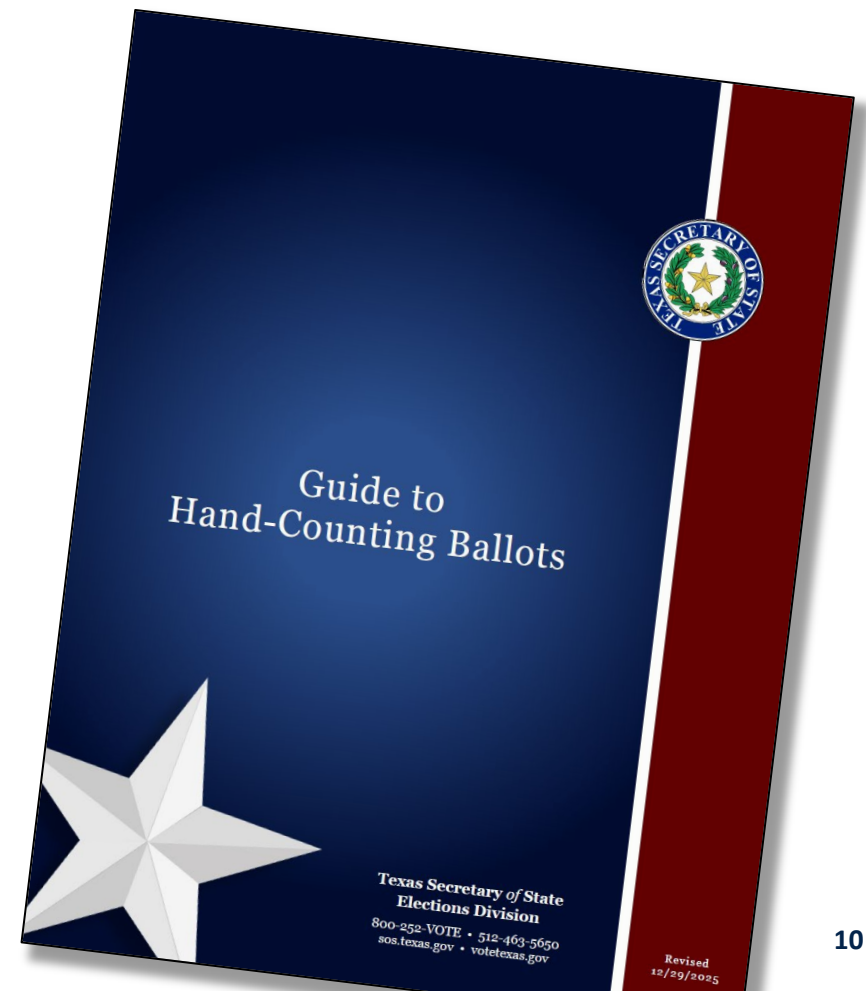
# Common Questions–Primary Litigation

- In some instances, there is litigation challenging whether a candidate should be removed from the ballot, or whether a candidate who was rejected should be placed on the ballot
- Consult with party chairs regarding the status of any ongoing litigation that may impact candidates that are on your ballot
- Party chairs may request primary fund reimbursement of legal expenses for this type of litigation
  - Must submit a written request for reimbursement of legal expenses to [elections@sos.texas.gov](mailto:elections@sos.texas.gov) (must be approved in writing by Elections Director)
  - Must provide copies of all pleadings and other court filings in the case
  - Reimbursement will occur after the litigation is concluded



# Common Questions–Hand-Counting Procedures

- Our office has created additional resources and training materials to assist in conducting an election using hand-counted paper ballots:
  - [Advisory No. 2025-18](#) – Hand-Counting Procedures
  - Guide to Hand-Counting Ballots **(COMING SOON)**
  - Online Poll Worker Training–Hand-Counting Module **(COMING SOON)**
  - Webinar on Hand-Counting Procedures scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026





# Common Questions–Ballot Preparation and Testing

- Counties can finalize ballot preparation process once the ballot content and format has been approved by the party chair
- Wednesday, Jan. 14, 2026—**L&A testing deadline**
  - If you are unable to meet this deadline, please send notice to our office via email ([elections@sos.texas.gov](mailto:elections@sos.texas.gov)) within 24 hours of your determination that you will miss the deadline
- Saturday, Jan. 17, 2026—**45th day deadline to send mail ballots to military and overseas voters**
  - If you are unable to meet this deadline, please send notice to our office via email ([elections@sos.texas.gov](mailto:elections@sos.texas.gov)) within 24 hours of your determination that you will miss the deadline



# Common Questions–Party Propositions

- Parties can prescribe ballot language for party propositions
- Parties can also prescribe “Yes” or “No” for ballot selections instead of “For” and “Against”
- Parties cannot prescribe additional party-specific instructional language for the ballot
- Section 52.073 of the Texas Election Code prescribes the ballot instructions
- Section 52.075 of the Texas Election Code allows for the use of modified ballot instructions for electronic voting systems
  - Consult your vendor about the instructions that have been approved for use with your system



# Primary Election Webinar Schedule–Legal Team

- Live webinars every week before the primary
  - Q&A panelists available in the chat
- Pre-recorded webinars on specific topics
- All legal webinars will be available for future viewing on Training and Educational Resources page after they have been conducted





# Primary Election Webinar Schedule–Legal Team

January Webinar Schedule	
Date	Topic
Week of Jan. 5, 2026 (Pre-Recorded)	Logic and Accuracy (L&A) Testing
Thursday, Jan. 15, 2026	Reviewing ABBMs and FPCAs
Thursday, Jan. 22, 2026	Voter Registration
Week of Jan. 26, 2026 (Pre-Recorded)	Voter Identification and Resources
Tuesday, Jan. 27, 2026	Hand Counting Procedures
Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026	Common Questions on Party Affiliation



# Primary Election Webinar Schedule–Legal Team

## February/March Webinar Schedule

Date	Topic
Week of Feb. 2, 2026 (Pre-Recorded)	Certain Activities in Vicinity of Polling Places
Tuesday, Feb. 3, 2026	Overview of the Corrective Action Process
Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026	EVBB and Signature Verification Committee
Tuesday, Feb. 10, 2026	Cancellation of Mail Ballots
Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026	Early Voting–Things to Remember
Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026	Central Counting Station
Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026	Post-Election Hand Count Audit for the Primary
Thursday, Mar. 5, 2026	PIRs – How to Prepare for Election Related Requests





## Election Technology and Security Team

- Voting System Certification
  - SOS recently held a certification exam for the first VVSG 2.0 voting system—*Hart Vanguard 1.0* (system is still under consideration for certification)
- Pollbook Certification
  - Pollbook certification occurs annually with every pollbook vendor in Texas
  - Vendors also have ability to submit minor modifications periodically throughout the year







# Election Technology and Security Team

- Election Security
  - Developing resources and materials to assist counties in developing their own security procedures and resources
- RLAs
  - Working with counties to develop procedures and best practices for risk-limiting audit in Texas
  - Currently conducting a pilot program
  - Will be required for elections occurring after Sept. 1, 2026



**RISK  
LIMITING  
AUDIT**



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# Election Administration Team Updates



# Election Administration Team Updates

- Division Operations
- Legislative Tracking
- Special Projects
- TEAM
- Public Information Requests





## Special Projects

### State Election Inspectors

- Appointments
  - SOS may appoint inspectors to locations deemed appropriate
  - SOS must appoint one or more inspectors if a written request from at least 15 voters in the county is received by our office at least (4) business days before the election
- Volunteers
  - (8) State Agencies
  - Training and Certification
- Role:
  - Observe all activities at a polling place, ballot board, or central count
  - Do not conduct audits or provide election training
  - Must report any violations of law to our office
- 2024 Primary
  - EV: 34 Counties    ED: 61 Counties    118 Inspectors    816 Locations



## Special Projects

- One Portal – Several Online Courses

- Poll Watcher Training
- Poll Worker Training

- [PollWorkerTraining@sos.texas.gov](mailto:PollWorkerTraining@sos.texas.gov)
- 1.800.252.8683

## Texas Election Training Portal

Training and resources for Poll Workers and Watchers

Online Poll Worker Training 7 of 86 lessons complete (8%) Exit Course

**Introduction**  
1 lesson

**Chapter 1: Election Resources**  
1 lesson, 1 quiz

**Chapter 2: Prior to the Election**  
Quiz

Objective 2.1A | Statutes and Requirements for Appointing Deputy Early Voting Clerks, and Election Clerks  
Quiz

Objective 2.1B | Responsibilities and Duties of Deputy Early Clerks, Presiding Judges, and Election Clerks  
Quiz

**Chapter 3: General Policies**  
15 lessons, 15 quizzes

**Chapter 4: Setup Inside a Polling Place**  
12 lessons, 12 quizzes

**Chapter 5: Setup Outside a Polling Place**  
2 lessons, 2 quizzes

**Chapter 6: Opening a Polling Place**  
2 lessons, 5 quizzes

**Chapter 7: Qualifying and Processing Voters**  
18 lessons, 18 quizzes

**Chapter 8: Early Voting – Suspending and Closing the Polls**  
2 lessons, 2 quizzes

**Chapter 9: Election Day**

**Presiding Judges**

To serve as a presiding judge, a person must be a qualified voter in the precinct they wish to serve, or if unavailable, qualified voters from the political subdivision may be considered, though additional requirements might apply. Political subdivision employees are permitted to serve as judges, provided no legal or practical conflict of interest arises. A presiding judge **cannot**:

- Be a candidate running for a contested office on election day and appear on the ballot in that precinct.
- Be related within the second degree by consanguinity or affinity (blood or marriage) to an opposed candidate (see figure below).<sup>1</sup>
- Be an employee of an opposed candidate on the ballot.
- Be a campaign manager or treasurer.
  - Serving in any other campaign role is also discouraged for election judges and clerks.
- Hold elective public office.
- Have been convicted of a felony or election offense.

It is highly recommended to appoint the presiding judges by the deadline for ordering the election. This ensures that the judges are prepared and ready to oversee the election process efficiently. It is imperative to adhere to this timeline to avoid any disruptions or delays in the election process.<sup>2</sup> Presiding judges generally affiliate with the party holding the primary election. Judges must be capable of performing required duties, such as maintaining order and assisting voters, without engaging in disruptive or partisan activities.

- Sample Order of Appointment of Election Judges and Alternate (Form 4-15)
- Notification of Appointment as Judge (Form 4-16)
- Will of Election (Form 4-17)
- Will of Election for General Election for State and County Officers (Form 4-18)



## TEAM

- March 3 Primary
  - MMO/AMMO
  - ABBM/FPCA Module
  - Jury
- Daily Vendor Meetings
  - 8:30 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.—Weekdays
  - 1:00 p.m.—Saturday and Sunday
- Communication with counties





## TEAM Webinars

- TEAM Webinar – Thursday's at 9 a.m.
- MMO/AMMO
- Polling Locations
- ENR: Entering Stats, Contacts and Data Entry
- DPS Web Portal





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# Training and Compliance Team Updates





# Training and Compliance Team Updates

- Training Team
- Audit Team
- Complaints Team





## Upcoming Projects

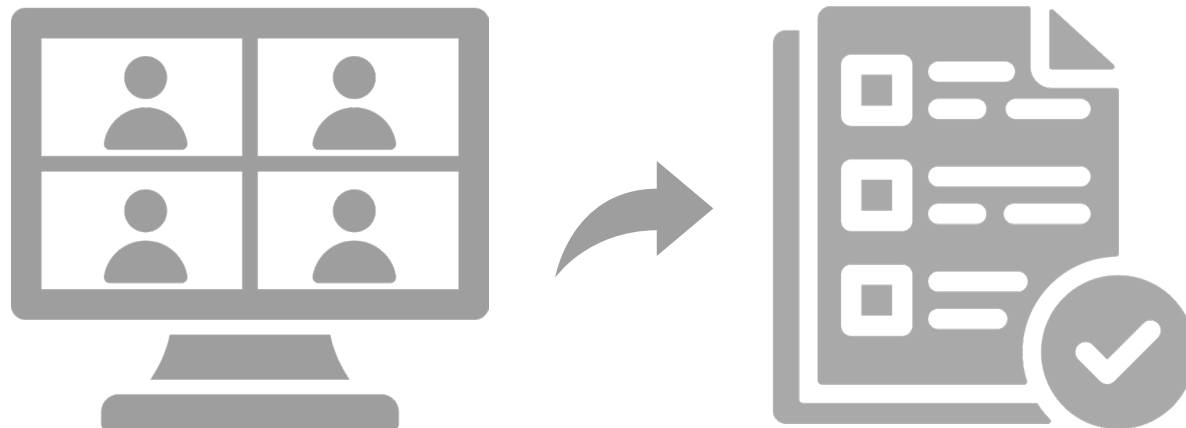
- Training Team
  - Regional Trainings
  - Election Official Training **(NEW)**
  - Individual County Training
- Audit Team
  - County Audits
  - Post-Election Hand Count Audits
- Complaints Team





## SB 2753 Update

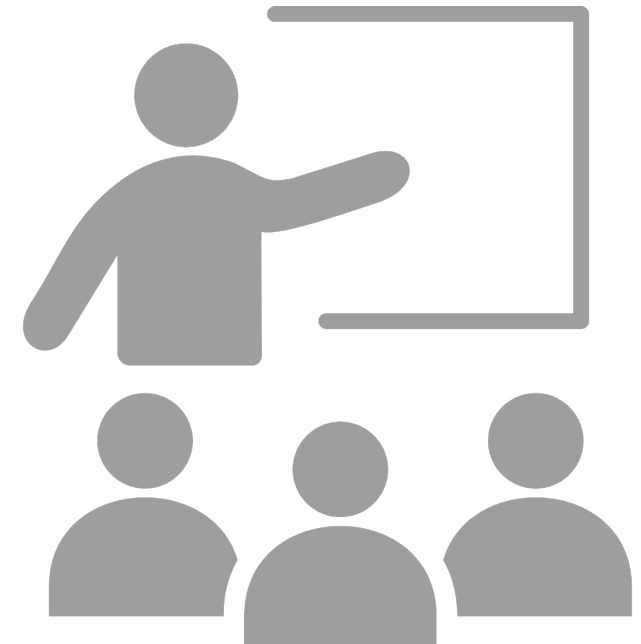
- Our office is working with Steering Committee members to establish working groups and templates to assist us in developing a report on the implementation of SB 2753
- **No specific timeline** for when the report will be issued





## SB 2753 Update—How to Get Involved

- Review your polling places under SB 985
- Read [Advisory No 2025-10](#)—Summary of SB 2753
- Regional workshops planned for the near future
  - If you are interested in participating, please let us know





## Available Support



**WEBINARS**



**TRAINING**



**RESOURCES**

[elections@sos.texas.gov](mailto:elections@sos.texas.gov)

800-252-VOTE • 512-463-5650

[sos.texas.gov](http://sos.texas.gov)