

PAA Delegate Strategy Summary for March 25 Texas Senatorial District & County Conventions

Note: Where it says "Senatorial District (or SD) Convention" below, this means the portion of your Texas senatorial district that is in your county. In areas outside metropolitan areas, where there is only one Senatorial District for the entire county, there is a County Convention.

Overall Objectives for March 25

- Get as many **progressive delegates to the state convention** as possible.
- Get **progressive resolutions** passed.
- **Prepare for organizing** to get progressive candidates elected in November.
- **Network** with others in your district, listen to interesting speeches, and have fun!

Be Prepared - Before March 25

- **Get names of other progressive delegates** in your Senatorial District (SD).
- Contact, in the following order of priority:
 - Kucinich & Dean supporters (from 2004) and other progressives that you know in your SD -- Just remind them to come on Mar. 25, & tell them why it's important.
 - Uncommitted, and Edwards delegates from 2004, or other possible progressives:
 - First, determine if they are interested in supporting our issues
 - If yes, then encourage them to come Mar. 25
 - Contact them before Mar. 25 to see if they can come to that convention, and also ask if they can be delegates to the state convention (see below). This year, most precincts had trouble filling all their delegate slots, and there's an excellent chance they can be delegates at the SD convention as long as they voted in the Democratic primary this year. Tell them to contact their precinct chair or precinct delegation chair to see if they can be a delegate.
- Buy, make, get a t-shirt or button likely to be popular with Democrats at convention
 - any anti-Bush, impeach, or out-of-Iraq slogans are good
- Volunteer to be on a committee at the convention
 - Resolutions committee may be the most fun if it's your first SD convention
 - Other committees of interest:
 - Credentials (review delegate sign-ins to make sure they are qualified)
 - Nominations (select at-large delegates to state convention-very important, too!)
 - Don't forget about the setup and cleanup committees -- a good way to show your SD leadership that you want to work with them. Be sure to tell them you want to be a delegate to the state convention, and ask that they tell the Nominations committee that, if you aren't selected by your precinct caucus on Mar. 25.
 - To get on a committee, contact the chairperson for your Senatorial District ASAP.
 - To find your chairperson, call your county Democratic party headquarters.
 - For Harris County, see http://hcdp.org/steering_committee.html (some info is out of date, though)
 - Then contact the committee chair to volunteer, verify when & where they'll meet
- Contact your PAA coordinator/floor leader for your SD convention **before** Saturday
 - Ask how you can help (set up early on Saturday, distribute leaflets, clean up after, etc.)
- Get a copy of the **2006 Texas Democratic party rules** and be familiar with them. You can get them from:
<http://www.txdemocrats.org/files/Rules2006.pdf>

On Saturday, March 25

Preliminary information

- **Bring** a sack lunch, especially if you aren't sure whether lunch will be available at the convention (not always required, but a good idea).
- **Wear** a Democrat-friendly T-shirt or button (an anti-Bush one is especially good this year).
- Be there on time, but also bring something to read if you're not on a committee.
 - Note: The Resolutions committee often starts meeting before the convention officially begins.
- **Sign in** uncommitted, as there is no presidential election this year. Don't forget to sign in -- at some conventions you do this when you arrive, and at other conventions you do it in your precinct caucus.
- Check in with the PAA coordinator/floor leader for your SD convention.
- If you're on a committee, find where it's meeting & go there.
 - Usually you sign in as a delegate to the convention first. If your committee is meeting early, then make sure you will be notified when the sign-in starts, so you can do that.
- Besides the sign-in, the first order of business is to elect a chairperson and secretary for the convention. Usually only one person will be nominated for each position and it doesn't matter too much who it is, as long as they are fair and follow the rules. It would help if someone publicly mentions the importance of being fair and inclusive and allowing everyone to participate, before the chair is elected.

Selecting Delegates to the State Convention

- The **Texas state Democratic convention** will be in Ft. Worth this year, Fri.-Sat. June 9-10, 2006. Many people don't want to spend their weekend doing this, but it's a place where you can hear some great speeches, and do some of the most important and critical work needed to turn the Democratic party around, so we can get candidates people will want to vote for, and to encourage them to talk about issues we care about instead of being afraid of alienating the right-wing voters who will never vote for Democrats anyway. The current state party chair is not running for re-election, so this is a wide open race. The state party leadership is chosen by those few people who have the interest and dedication to go to the state convention -- you should be one of those people!
- At the SD conventions, each precinct, or group of paired precincts, **vote to select their delegate(s)** to the state convention, according to the Democratic party rules. Make sure people in your precinct want to send you as a delegate! This is where a popular Democratic T-shirt comes in handy.
- If/when attendees are asked to sign up to be **at-large delegates**, be sure to **submit your name**, if you were not selected from your precinct caucus at the SD convention. Listen for this announcement!
- Make sure that you **CLEARLY print your e-mail address** and other contact information if you want to be a delegate, so you'll get important information before the state convention.
- The **Nominations committee** selects **additional ("at-large") delegates** to the state convention. This is why it's important to have some friendly faces, who know who you are, on that committee.
- An even better way to get to be a delegate to the state convention, and to help other progressives get to be delegates, is to be on the Nominations committee yourself (unless you are on the Resolutions committee), so you can nominate yourself and other progressives from your Senate District. Note that according to the Democratic party rules, delegates to the state convention do NOT have to be present at the SD/Co. convention (although it certainly helps) -- the only requirement is that they must have voted in the Democratic primary this year, either by early voting or in person on primary election day, and they must have someone at the SD convention to put their name in nomination for the state convention. That's where you come in!

Resolutions

- Just as in the Precinct Conventions, resolutions are where grassroots democracy starts. Resolutions, although they are sometimes ignored by candidates (at their own peril), form the basis of the state party platform, and help to educate attendees about issues. Resolutions need to pass several different SD or County conventions to be considered by the state convention committees.
- When the Resolutions Committee finishes going over the resolutions from the Precinct Conventions, and after the delegates are determined, someone from the resolutions committee will read the resolutions, one at a time, and move that each one be adopted. Often the Resolutions committee will send someone with a few resolutions at a time to present to the convention, rather than waiting until the end to bring all of them up. If you are on the Resolutions Committee, it's best to suggest that they do this. Otherwise, many convention attendees may want to adjourn before all the resolutions are voted on. It's also best to bring out the least controversial resolutions first if you have a choice, so people don't get started questioning every detail in each resolution.
- Bring backup material (facts to support your favorite resolutions) if necessary, and be willing to speak up for any resolution that someone challenges.
- Stay until all the resolutions are read and approved, if possible. This sometimes takes until mid-afternoon or later, depending on how many resolutions there are and how much discussion takes place in the committee.

Be friendly, have fun, network, make new friends and contacts -- you'll need them for future organizing!

Another **good and concise reference** for the SD conventions is at the Progressive Populist Caucus web site at <http://www.texaspopulists.com/node/899> -- Note that some of the addresses for the SD conventions in Harris Co. on that list and on the HCDP web page are not correct, though. Check with your SD chair to make sure of the location before Mar. 25!

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Progressive Action Alliance, ProgressiveActionAlliance.org

This summary is at <http://www.paa-tx.org/node/1560>