

# PRACTICING TEXAS POLITICS

*Seventh Edition*

Jones ★ Ericson ★ Brown ★ Trotter



# PRACTICING TEXAS POLITICS

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# Preface



Since *Practicing Texas Politics* first was published in 1971, a new edition has appeared every three years. This Seventh Edition of our text-reader is designed for use in college and university courses in state and local government and in the two-semester course required in Texas state colleges and universities. About two-thirds of the book contains text material written by four authors who have critically examined the processes of public policymaking by the people of Texas through their institutions of government. To supplement our contribution and to provide a variety of views on Texas politics, we have added readings selected from a wide range of sources. Most of the readings are drawn from current newspapers, magazines, and government documents, all of which are important sources of political information for citizens in their postcollege years; others were written especially for *Practicing Texas Politics* by political scientists.

## *Features of This Edition*

This Seventh Edition of *Practicing Texas Politics* focuses on developments in Texas government from 1985 to 1989. To reflect these events and changes, we have rewritten much of our narrative and replaced approximately 90 percent of the readings with new selections. Coverage now includes the "Super Tuesday" primaries and state party conventions of 1988, Texas Supreme Court politics in a presidential election year, major educational reforms, and effects of the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 on undocumented aliens in the state. Special attention is given to public policy issues, such as the problems of budgeting and taxation at a time of low-priced oil, failing banks and savings and loan companies, and serious economic crises affecting Texas farmers and ranchers.

To enhance learning, key terms and concepts are printed in boldface type where defined in the text, and a complete list of these items appears after the endnotes for the text portion of each chapter. Every reading is introduced by a brief description intended to prepare students for what follows. At the end of the volume, readers and researchers can consult a glossary of key terms as well as a selected bibliography that lists more than 400 books and articles, most of which have been published in the 1980s.

The illustrative component of our work has been significantly revised also. A new two-color design highlights the text and allows students to analyze effectively charts and diagrams. As in earlier editions, graphic illustrations and quantitative data are provided in numerous maps, diagrams, photographs, cartoons, and tables. Maps have been re-edited for increased clarity, and cartoons and photographs have been updated as well to complement the text.

## *The Complete Teaching/Learning Package*

Learning and teaching ancillaries contribute to the usefulness of the text. The comprehensive *Study Guide*, written by Lyle C. Brown and Thomas Myers, contains performance objectives; summaries of the text discussion and readings; key terms and concepts; hundreds of objective questions (true-false, multiple-choice, and completion), vocabulary exercises, and essay suggestions; research projects designed to encourage political participation; and exercises keyed to valuable skills such as gathering and interpreting political data. Based on the Study Guide, *MicroStudy Plus* is a computerized collection of learning modules intended to reinforce study. It supplies both extensive review information and a wide variety of self-testing questions covering every chapter in the book. Unique to MicroStudy Plus is its multiple-choice option: For every answer given, students are told why it is right or wrong and are directed to the appropriate page in the textbook.

The *Instructor's Manual with Test Items*, prepared by Lawrence W. Miller, offers a complete lecture outline of each chapter in *Practicing Texas Politics*, approximately 600 test questions (including true-false, multiple-choice, and essay exercises), suggested class activities, and numerous audiovisual resources. Also available to teachers who adopt *Practicing Texas Politics* are *MicroTest*, a computerized test preparation system based on the test questions in the Instructor's Manual; a set of 20 two-color overhead *transparencies* that present diagrams, maps, tables, and other graphic aids; and a complimentary subscription to *The Texas Government Newsletter*, a weekly newsletter that provides up-to-the-minute information on Texas political campaigns, legislation, executive and judicial matters, and other public affairs.

## *Acknowledgments*

Again, we are indebted to various political scientists and colleagues in other disciplines who have shared with us the results of their research and have stimulated our efforts to produce a better text-reader for classroom use. In particular, we wish to thank the following political scientists who read the manuscript of this Seventh Edition and provided useful suggestions for its development:

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 Theron Waddell, Galveston College

In addition, we owe much to friends, state and local government officials, newspaper editors and reporters, and librarians who have helped find new readings

and locate hard-to-obtain facts. Also, we want to extend our appreciation to the staff of Houghton Mifflin Company. Without their efforts, our book would be of lesser quality.

Of course, words of thanks are due to departmental secretaries who typed and retyped drafts of this edition and to understanding wives who tolerated the irregular working hours of authors struggling to meet deadlines. Last, and most important, we rededicate our book to Texas students and instructors who, we hope, will continue to be the chief beneficiaries of our labor.

*Eugene W. Jones*

*Joe E. Ericson*

*Lyle C. Brown*

*Robert S. Trotter, Jr.*

# Contents



Preface xiii

## **1 The Environment of Texas Politics 1**

Political Behavior Patterns 2

Politics, Policy, and Government 2

Political Culture: A Typology 3

Political Culture in Texas: Frontier Experience 4

Texas and Texans: Land and People 6

Land: The Politics of Geography 6

People: Numbers and Distribution 11

People: Ethnic Groups 16

Some Social and Economic Policy Issues 22

Immigration: Federal and State Problems 22

Texas's Changing Economy 26

Texas in the Course of National Affairs 30

Notes 32

Key Terms and Concepts 32

### ***Selected Readings***

1.1 The 25th Senatorial District Could Be a Very Big State (*Le Killgore*) 34

1.2 Going Home (*Michael Quintanilla*) 37

1.3 Higher Education Is the Key to Austin's High-Tech Future  
(*Bruce Renfro*) 41

1.4 The "60 Minutes" Man (*Jess F. Blair*) 43

## **2 Federalism and the Texas Constitution 46**

The American Federal Structure 47

The Distribution of Powers 47

An Evolving Process 50

The Texas Constitution: Politics of Policymaking 52

Historical Developments 53

Constitutional Revision and Amendment 57

A Major Reform Effort 57

The Amendment Process 60

The Texas Constitution Today: A Summary 61

The Bill of Rights 61

The Powers of Government 62

Suffrage 62

Local Government 62

Other Articles 63

Notes 63

Key Terms and Concepts 63

### *Selected Readings*

2.1 Ancient Texas Constitution Due More Patches (*Jim Davis*) 65

2.2 Modernizing the Texas Constitution: The 1972 to 1987 Experience  
(*Donald D. Gregory*) 67

2.3 Six Hours—and No Reprieve (*John Kamensky*) 72

2.4 Amending the Constitution of Texas: Article XVII as Amended in 1972 76

## **3 Local Governments 78**

Municipal Governments 79

Legal Status of Municipalities 79

Forms of Municipal Government 80

Municipal Politics 84

Municipal Services 85

Financing Municipal Government 88

The County 91

Structure and Operation 91

County Finance 96

Reform Areas 98

Special Districts 99

School Districts 99

Junior or Community College Districts 100

Nonschool Districts 101

The Politics of Special Districts 102

Metropolitan Areas 103

Councils of Governments 103

Stopgap Approaches 104

Future Alternatives 105

Conclusion 106

Notes 106

Key Terms and Concepts 107



## *Selected Readings*

- 3.1 A Tale of Two Cities (*Geoffrey Rips*) 108
- 3.2 The Sheriffs Association of Texas—County Politics in the State Capitol  
(*James G. Dickson, Jr.*) 112
- 3.3 Austin Community College: A Case Study in Local Politics  
(*George Wilkerson*) 116
- 3.4 Transportation Policy in Houston (*James David Fairbanks*) 121

## 4 *The Politics of Elections and Parties* 126

### The Politics of Elections 127

- The Texas Voter 127
- Primary Elections 134
- General Elections 139
- Special Elections 142
- Administration of Elections 142

### The Politics of Parties 143

- Party Structure: Temporary Organization 144
- Party Structure: Permanent Organization 148

### The Quest for Political Democracy 149

- Ideology: Conservatives and Liberals 150
- Republicans and Democrats 150
- A Question of Party Realignment 152
- Women in Texas Politics 157
- Ethnic Politics 158

### Some Election Issues: Campaigns and Money 161

- Financing Campaigns 162
- Giving and Spending 164
- Government Regulation of Campaigns 166

### Notes 168

### Key Terms and Concepts 168

## *Selected Readings*

- 4.1 Party Realignment and the 1986 Elections in Texas  
(*Jeanie R. Stanley*) 170
- 4.2 Is Texas Ready for a Woman Governor? (*Virginia Ellis*) 174
- 4.3 The Emerging Hispanic Vote (*Mary Lenz*) 178
- 4.4 Politics for Profit (*Tim Richardson*) 182
- 4.5 Limits Needed on Gifts to Judges (*Glenn R. Lewis*) 187
- 4.6 Ticket Prices on the Political Bandwagon (*Jim Davis*) 189

## 5 *The Politics of Interest Groups* 191

### Interest Groups in the Political Process 192

What Is an Interest Group? 192

Interest Groups and Political Parties 193

Interest Groups in American Politics 194

### Organization of Interest Groups 196

Organizational Patterns 196

Membership in Interest Groups 197

Leadership in Interest Groups 197

### Classification of Interest Groups 197

Economic Groups 198

Professional Groups 199

Ethnic Groups 199

Public Interest Groups 201

Public Officer and Employee Groups 201

Texas Power Groups 202

### Interest Group Activities 203

Techniques of Interest Groups 203

### Interest Group Power and Public Policy 208

Interest Groups and Public Policy in Texas 209

Interest Group Power Linkage 210

### Hazardous Waste Disposal Policies and Interest Group Activity 211

Disposal of Radioactive Waste 211

Disposal of Nonradioactive Hazardous Waste 213

Hazardous Waste: A Continuing Problem? 216

### Pinpointing Political Power 216

Notes 217

Key Terms and Concepts 217

## *Selected Readings*

5.1 Starting a Successful PAC (*Lynn Swann Haag*) 219

5.2 "We Don't Do Bars": Austin's Best Play by a New Set of Rules  
(*Virginia Ellis*) 222

5.3 High Tech Powers State's Top Lobbyists (*Raul Reyes and  
Patti Kilday*) 225

5.4 Money's Effect on Legislation (*Sam Kinch, Jr.*) 227

5.5 David and Goliath: The Pennzoil-Texaco Battle in Texas  
(*Donald D. Gregory and Ronald G. Claunch*) 229

## 6 *The Legislature* 236

### Legislative Framework 238

Composition 238

Election and Terms of Office 238

Sessions 239

Districting 239

Compensation 242

### Membership 245

Qualifications of Members 246

Characteristics of Membership 246

### Powers and Immunities 252

Nonlegislative Powers 252

Legislative Powers 253

Immunities 254

### Organization and Procedure 255

Formal Organization 255

Caucuses 260

Procedure: A Bill Becomes a Law 262

### Influences in the Legislative Environment 267

The Governor's Influence 268

Influence of the Courts, the Attorney General, and the Comptroller of  
Public Accounts 268

Influence of Lobbyists 269

### Prospects for Legislative Reform 270

Notes 272

Key Terms and Concepts 273

## *Selected Readings*

6.1 Annual Sessions of the Legislature—Making Unofficial Policy Official  
(*Thomas L. Whatley*) 275

6.2 Redistricting the Texas House of Representatives (*William G. Adams  
and Richard B. Riley*) 278

6.3 Struggle and Compromise: Setting Texas's Public Policy on Abortion  
(*Gary McNeil*) 284

6.4 Ethical Mutterings Are Often a Tongue-in-Cheek Subject  
Around Austin (*Molly Ivins*) 288

## 7 *The Executive* 290

### Overview of the Governorship 291

Qualifications and Term of Office 294

Election and Compensation	295
Succession	295
Removal from Office	296
Staff	298
<b>Powers of the Governor</b>	<b>299</b>
Executive Powers	299
Legislative Powers	303
Judicial Powers	305
Informal Powers	305
<b>The Plural Executive</b>	<b>306</b>
Lieutenant Governor	306
Attorney General	307
Commissioner of the General Land Office	308
Commissioner of Agriculture	308
Comptroller of Public Accounts	308
Treasurer	309
Secretary of State	310
<b>The Bureaucracy and Public Policies</b>	<b>310</b>
Personnel	311
Public Education Policy Issues	311
Higher Education	314
Human Services	316
Health	319
Mental Health and Mental Retardation	319
Employment	320
Major Areas of State Economic Regulation	321
Other Important Areas of State Economic Regulation	324
Certification in Trades and Professions	325
Promotion of Commerce and Economic Development	326
Conservation of Wildlife and Plant Resources	328
Coping with the Problem of Bureaucratic Proliferation	328
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>Notes</b>	<b>329</b>
<b>Key Terms and Concepts</b>	<b>330</b>

## ***Selected Readings***

- 7.1 The Rebirth of Clements's Administration (*Scott Bennett*) 331
- 7.2 Lieutenant Governor Bill Hobby and Higher Education  
(*Scott Jaschik*) 333
- 7.3 Texas's Response to the AIDS Issue (*Joseph Kahn*) 336
- 7.4 Sunset Reform in Texas: A Controversial Policy Comes of Age  
(*Cynthia Opheim*) 338

## 8 *Law, Courts, and Justice* 344

### State Law in Texas 347

Code Revision 347

Criminal Law 347

### Courts 351

Minor Trial Courts 351

County-Level Trial Courts 356

District-Level Trial Courts 358

Appellate Courts 360

### Juries 363

The Grand Jury 364

The Trial Jury 364

### Judicial Procedures 365

Civil Trial Procedure 366

Criminal Trial Procedure 367

### Correction and Rehabilitation Policies 369

Institutions of Correction 369

Community-Based Programs 373

### Problems and Reforms: Implications for Public Policy 376

Compensating Victims of Crime 376

Coping with Crowded Dockets 376

Disciplining and Removing Judges and Justices 377

Reorganization of the Court System 378

Politics and Prosecution 379

### Notes 380

### Key Terms and Concepts 381

## *Selected Readings*

### 8.1 Texas Justice Reconsidered: The Case of Lenell Geter

(Richard Battistoni) 383

### 8.2 "You Can't Do This to Me . . ." (Gordon Baxter) 386

### 8.3 Justice Gonzalez Savors Historic Victory (David McLemore) 388

### 8.4 Better Ways to Solve Texas's Prison Overcrowding Problem

(Molly Ivins) 390

### 8.5 The Politics of Dealing with Misconduct on the Supreme Court of Texas (Jeffrey E. Key) 392

## 9 *Revenues, Expenditures, and Fiscal Policy* 396

### The Fiscal Crises of 1984 and 1986 397

The Texas Economy in Transition 398

Demands for Services 398

Traditional Fiscal Policies	400
Budget Policy	401
Taxing Policy	401
Spending Policy	401
Politics of Budgeting and Fiscal Management	402
Budgeting	402
Tax Collection	405
Investment of Public Funds	405
Purchasing	406
Accounting	406
Auditing	407
Politics of Revenue and Debt Management	408
The Politics of Taxation	408
Nontax Revenues	416
The Public Debt	418
Politics of Spending	421
Spending to Purchase Services	422
Spending to Perform Services	431
Fiscal Forecast	431
Notes	432
Key Terms and Concepts	433

## *Selected Readings*

9.1 No Winners, Only Survivors ( <i>Sam Attlessey</i> )	434
9.2 Transportation Appropriations Up: Highways Rolling Along	438
9.3 Bob Bullock's Figures of Speech ( <i>Maria Halkias</i> )	441
9.4 Cash or Credit for Texas Government?	445
9.5 A Balanced Budget Is Not Enough	448

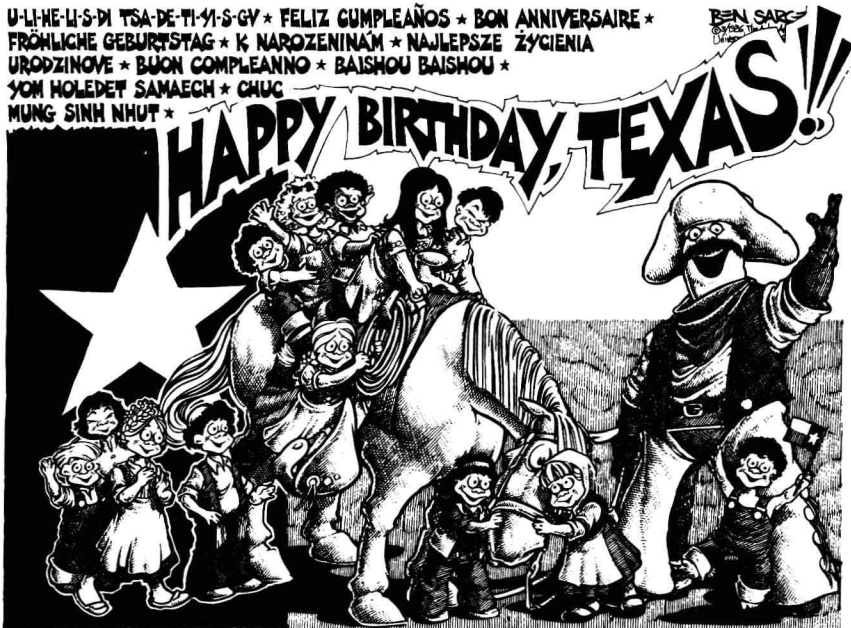
## *Selected Bibliography* 451

## *Glossary* 475

## *Index* 487

## Chapter 1

# The Environment of Texas Politics



Ben Sargent

**G**overnment involves a process whereby, through political action, public policy is formulated, adopted, and implemented. At the state level, public policy is a response to politics involving conflict among legislators, between legislators and the governor, among various government agencies, lobby groups, and citizens, and within the courts. Each policy is, therefore, a response that government adopts to meet a particular need.

For example, a policy to conserve Texas water resources could be formulated by a government official such as the commissioner of agriculture or by a non-governmental body such as the Texas Farm Bureau, an organization dedicated to conservation of water resources. To be adopted as public policy, the proposed plan would need to be submitted to the Texas Legislature by a senator or representative. There, at public hearings, the plan would be debated before legislators, members of interest groups, and other private citizens. When a bill containing the conservation program is passed by the Legislature and signed into law by the governor, the policy is officially adopted. Then the new public policy must be implemented or put into operation. This responsibility might be assigned by law to the Department of Agriculture or to some other governmental agency specially prepared to administer the conservation program. Here the new policy measure may be challenged in the courts; the judiciary may then uphold, alter, or nullify the legislation.

## *Political Behavior Patterns*

**Politics**, the key to public policy, has many definitions. We are *not* inclined to agree with Ralph Waldo Emerson, who wrote in 1844 of the “censure conveyed in the word *politic*, which now for ages has signified cunning, intimating that the State is a trick.”<sup>1</sup> Rather, we are inclined to accept David Easton’s twentieth-century view of politics: “Political life concerns all those varieties of activity that influences significantly the kind of authoritative policy adopted for a society and the way it is put into practice.”<sup>2</sup> Easton sees policy as a web of decisions allocating values that are expressions of a society’s preferences. For example, we may prefer democracy over dictatorship, national security over national insecurity, a public education system over private schools, a strong and effective civil rights program over a weak and ineffective one. Allocations of values are determined by political decisions and actions. Politics, therefore, is the moving force that achieves **public policy**, which in turn determines the ultimate course to be pursued by government.

### *Politics, Policy, and Government*

Some public policies are narrow in scope and are terminated after a brief lifespan. For example, in 1984, the Texas Legislature enacted a major public education reform law that required public school teachers to pass a comprehensive test on the subjects they taught. Three years later, in 1987, following an outcry from



teachers and as an economy measure, the Legislature rescinded the testing policy without ever having implemented it. Other policies are extremely broad and remain a part of government programs for decades. During the life of such policies, they undergo intensive and extensive modification and revision to meet new public needs and demands. Again using public education as an example, this broad subject has been the basis for public policymaking efforts in Texas since statehood in 1846. Similar long-range developments have occurred in other major policy areas, such as those involving natural resources, crime, prison reform, agriculture, transportation, and taxation. Texas has had an evolving water policy since the early 1900s, and each regular session of the Legislature has revised the laws concerning water rights and conservation.

### *Political Culture: A Typology*

**Political culture** may be defined as the attitudes, habits, and general behavior patterns that shape a state's politics and ultimately its policy formulation and adoption. According to Daniel Elazar, "these culture patterns give each state its particular character and help determine the tone of its fundamental relationships."<sup>3</sup> Political culture is always in flux, with changes occurring constantly but with influences continuing over time. The aggregate of political patterns that today give Texas political behavior its unique quality stems from both remote and recent experiences of all Texans.

In his important study of political culture, Elazar envisions three major political cultures present in varying degrees in all the states. They are the individualistic, traditionalistic, and moralistic political cultures.<sup>4</sup>

Within an **individualistic political culture**, politics is a business. Government is similar to the marketplace; its purpose is to serve the needs of the people, who pursue their individual interests in an economic order based on free enterprise. Political parties are "business corporations" whose purpose is to coordinate individual enterprise. Politics, though "dirty," is a necessary business. Government officials are not expected to initiate new programs unless the public demands them.

A **traditionalistic political culture** reflects paternalism and elitism. Society is hierarchical, and the object of government is to maintain the existing social order. Reins of power are grasped by a small, established ruling class. Political parties are not highly valued, because they tend to disrupt the elitist-dominated social order. Personal politics and loose one-party systems prevail; political leaders are conservative.

The third pattern is the **moralistic political culture**. According to the philosophy of this culture, politics is a healthy institution and is everybody's business. Political parties exist as instruments to achieve goals that are in the public interest, and party competition is based on issues rather than on personalities. Government officials initiate programs needed by the people. In Texas, this pattern is more pronounced, perhaps, within the urbanized population than within the rural population, and it has a greater appeal to citizens who have more formal education.