



**2024  
ANNUAL REPORT**



Kylie Cooper/The Texas Tribune

## DEAR FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS,

As we look back on 2024, we are proud to share a year of ambitious journalism, deep public service, and meaningful impact across Texas. The Texas Tribune continues to remain a trusted source for millions of readers navigating political shifts, policy changes, and pressing challenges in communities across the state.

This year, we delivered comprehensive coverage of a high-stakes election cycle, including the most expensive U.S. Senate race in the country and a dramatic political realignment in South Texas. Our reporting helped voters make informed decisions and understand the broader implications of elections, choices and the historic outcomes.

We also brought clarity and accountability to major policy developments — from new laws affecting everyday life, such as the end of mandatory vehicle safety inspections, to landmark court rulings that reshaped access to online content. Our investigations into voter roll purges, campaign finance violations, and border security underscored our commitment to transparency and democracy.

In a year marked by extreme weather, including the largest wildfire in state history and a major hurricane, our newsroom responded with urgency and depth, helping Texans understand the growing impact of climate change and the state's preparedness.

Our data and visual journalism teams produced some of our most engaging and widely shared work, offering insights into public education, housing, border security, and more. These stories helped Texans connect the dots between policy decisions and the impact on their everyday lives.

The 2024 Texas Tribune Festival brought together thought leaders, elected officials, and engaged citizens for timely conversations on the future of our state and country. It remains one of the most influential civic events in Texas and the nation.

Throughout it all, we've remained focused on the people we serve — Texans from every region, background, and political perspective. Your support makes this work possible, and we are deeply grateful.

In the pages that follow, you'll find a deeper look at the stories, impact, and milestones that defined our year. Thank you for standing with us in our mission to inform and engage Texas.

In Service,

Sonal Shah  
CEO

Matthew Watkins  
Editor-in-Chief

# MISSION VISION DIFFERENCE

## OUR MISSION:

The Texas Tribune is a member-supported, digital-first, nonpartisan media organization that informs Texans — and engages with them — about public policy, politics, government and statewide issues.

## OUR VISION:

We envision a Texas where every Texan is empowered with the civic information they need to become full participants in our democracy. We believe that a more engaged, better informed, more civically aware Texas will help bring about a healthier, better educated, more productive, more prosperous and more equitable Texas.

## WHAT SETS THE TEXAS TRIBUNE APART:

Tribune journalists work to inform millions of Texans about the state of politics, the challenges and changes in public and higher education, health and human services, immigration, criminal justice, energy, the environment, urban affairs and so much more. We deliver this important coverage through engaging storytelling forms, including vivid text narratives, striking photo and video packages, and quality data visualizations. The Tribune's storytelling breaks down complicated issues that matter to everyday Texans. As a result, those Texans have the tools to be more thoughtful and engaged — and not just at election time.

This is why the work of The Texas Tribune is so important. In everything we do, the Texas Tribune newsroom strives to:

- Own breaking and developing stories on Texas politics and policy that have repercussions across the state.
- Hold those in power accountable for their actions while amplifying the voices of the people they serve.
- Write stories and produce projects that have a lasting impact and relevance to a broad audience of Texans.
- Share our journalism and resources widely and freely with other state and national news organizations.
- Connect and engage with our audience through the journalism we produce — on our website, in our newsletters, through social media and at in-person events.



Photo by Lorianne Willett/The Texas Tribune

# BY THE NUMBERS

The Texas Tribune delivers news and information through many different platforms and formats to reach people where they are, including websites, newsletters, Apple News, Smart News, YouTube, Instagram, Reddit, Tiktok, republishing by local outlets, events and much more.

**13,031** Members

**38** Full Time Reporters & Editors

**85** Total Staff

**\$15,914,116** Raised to Support Journalism

**55.2M** On-Site Page Views

**2.46M** On-Site Monthly Readers

**11.4M** Texas-Based Readers

**156,836** Newsletter Subscribers

## REPUBLISHING

The Texas Tribune is free to read and to republish. Therefore dozens of local newspapers and websites publish articles relevant to their communities on the front pages of their papers or on their digital platforms.

**1,532** Stories Published

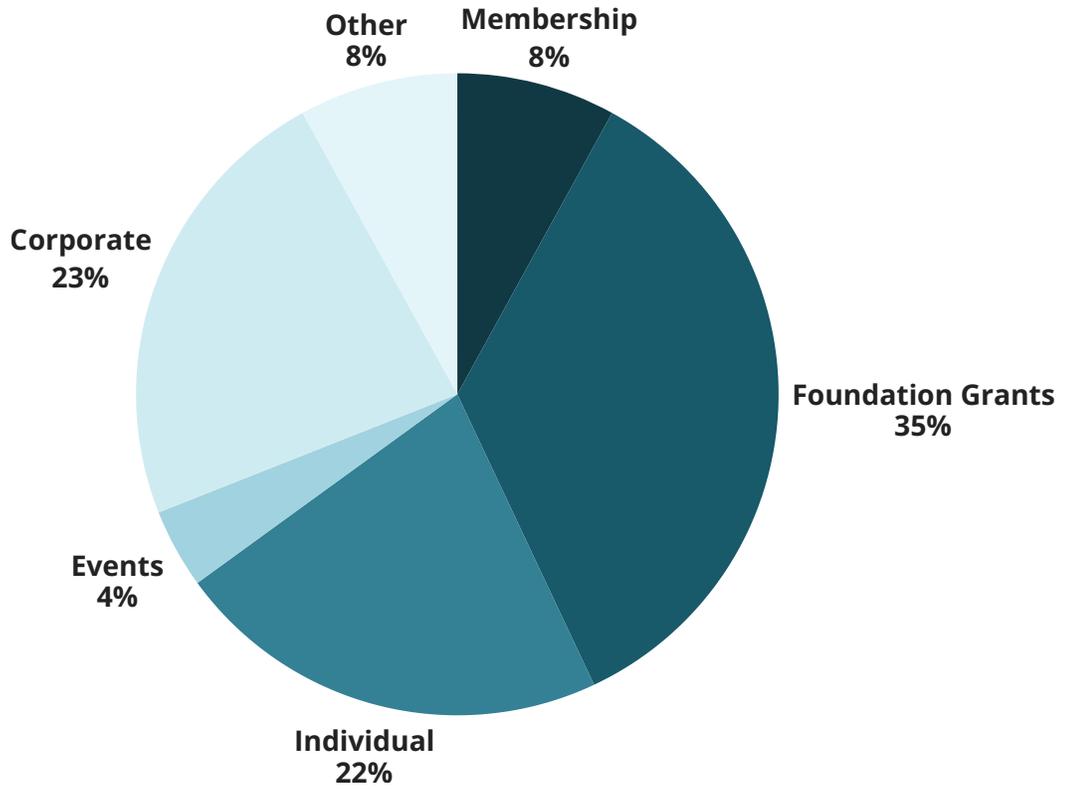
**403** Front Page Republishes

**3,149** Unique Stories Republished

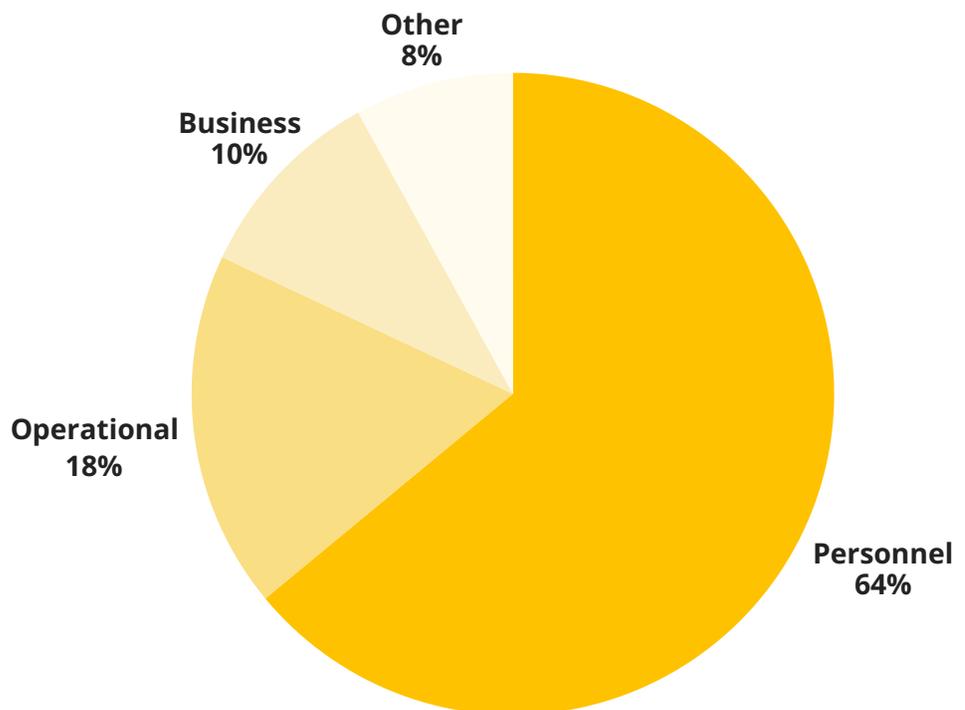
**30** Publishers Featuring Tribune Stories  
on Front Page Print Editions

# FINANCIALS

## REVENUE



## EXPENSES



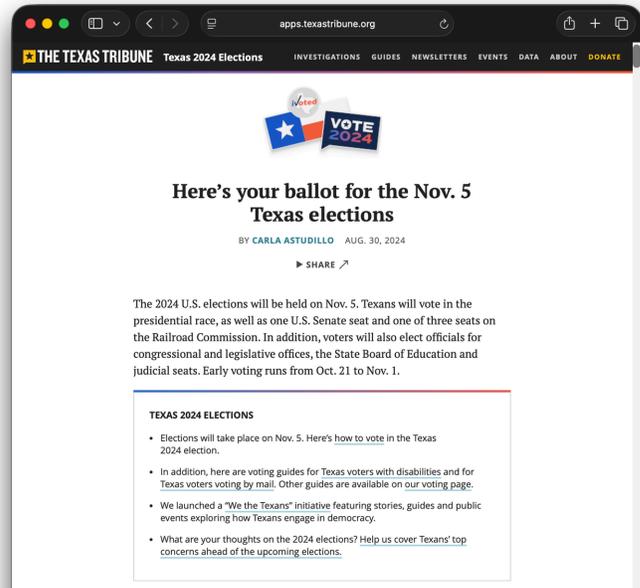
# STORIES THAT RESONATED MOST WITH TEXANS - 2024 HIGHLIGHTS

## TOP STORIES

The most significant stories and highlights for The Texas Tribune in 2024 reflected major political, policy, and societal shifts across Texas, with particular focus on elections, legislative changes, extreme weather events, and high-profile public debates.

## 2024 ELECTIONS COVERAGE:

The Tribune's comprehensive guides and results for the March primaries and November general election were among the most widely read resources. The elections saw Donald Trump win Texas by a large margin, Ted Cruz secured reelection to the U.S. Senate over Colin Allred in the country's most expensive Senate race, and Republicans expanding their majority in the Texas House by flipping two historically Democratic border districts. We showed that South Texas, a predominantly Latino region, continued its dramatic shift to the right, which was described as an "astonishing political shift" with significant implications for the state's future political landscape and has national implications.



## LEGISLATIVE CHANGES:

The Legislature was not in session this year, but we still expended considerable effort to highlight the impact - or potential impact - that this body will have on Texans' lives. This included stories highlighting the millions of dollars spent to defeat Republican lawmakers who opposed a school voucher system, shaking up the Legislature to ensure that such a measure would pass in 2025 and much more.



Lorianne Willett/The Texas Tribune

## VOTER ROLL INVESTIGATION:

A collaborative investigation with ProPublica and Votebeat revealed how Texas officials were "cleaning up" voter rolls, prompting over 20,000 Texans to use our tool to check their registration status. This story underscored concerns about election integrity and voter access.

Read more from the individual stories contributing to these highlights.

# STORIES THAT RESONATED MOST WITH TEXANS - 2024 HIGHLIGHTS



Justin Rex for The Texas Tribune

## EXTREME WEATHER EVENTS:

The Tribune reported on the largest wildfire in Texas history and a major hurricane, both of which tested emergency response systems and highlighted the impact of climate change and extreme weather on the state. Due to declining local news in the Panhandle region, many residents used us as one of our main sources of news on the fires, and local publications republished our stories.



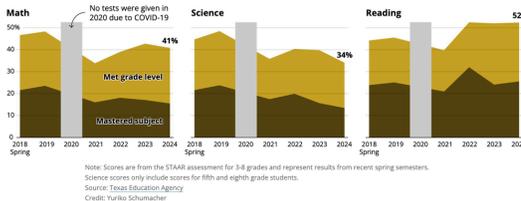
Lorianne Willett/The Texas Tribune

## TEXAS TRIBUNE FESTIVAL 2024:

The annual festival in September featured headline-making interviews and panels with national and state political figures, including Liz Cheney (who revealed her father would vote for Kamala Harris), U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, and others. The event was a focal point for political dialogue and policy debate in Texas, with breaking news and candid discussions on stage.

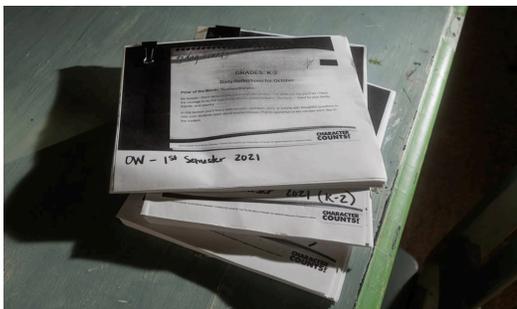
### Elementary and middle schoolers struggle in math and science

Only 34% of students met or mastered grade-level science on this spring's STAAR test scores, which is about 5.7 percentage points lower than last year. Math scores also dropped.



## GOING DEEP WITH DATA VISUALIZATION:

The Tribune's investigative team produced major stories on the state's border wall spending, enhanced by incredible data visualization. The data visualizations on the affordable housing crisis, public education funding, declining STAAR scores, and the rise of uncertified teachers drew significant attention to our stories. These visual stories offered our audiences deeper insights into persistent challenges facing Texas.



Shelby Tauber for ProPublica and The Texas Tribune

## PUBLIC EDUCATION:

Investigations into school districts violating campaign finance laws, the influence of pro-voucher billionaires, and the decline in student performance post-pandemic were key themes, reflecting ongoing debates about the future of Texas education.

Read more from the [individual stories](#) contributing to these highlights.

# 2024 TEXAS POLITICAL ISSUES: KEY THEMES AND WHAT'S AHEAD

## 1. SCHOOL VOUCHERS, SCHOOL CHOICE & PUBLIC EDUCATION

- The push to use public funds to help pay for private school tuition took center stage. In 2023, the idea was repeatedly blocked by a coalition of Democrats and rural Republicans. Supporters of the proposal spent millions on political campaigns to help reshape the Legislature into a body that would be more likely to support the measure.
- Outlook: Those efforts succeeded, giving school choice/ESA supporters the votes they needed in 2025 to pass a comprehensive program for the first time in state history.



Julius Shieh/The Texas Tribune

## 2. BORDER SECURITY AND IMMIGRATION

- High numbers of illegal border crossings in early 2024 strained local resources along the border, created humanitarian challenges and generated major political backlash among Republican politicians in Texas and beyond. Texas fought legal battles with the Biden administration in court, deployed law enforcement and national guard to the border and spent billions on border wall construction. Crossings declined in the latter part of the year, but the issue was still a leading factor that supported President Donald Trump's victory in November 2024.
- Outlook: Aggressive federal tactics have dramatically reduced border crossings. The Texas government meanwhile has stopped funding state border wall construction efforts. But the story has shifted inward, as the Trump administration has stepped up immigration enforcement efforts targeting undocumented immigrants already inside the country.

# 2024 TEXAS POLITICAL ISSUES CONTINUED

## 3. MATERNAL HEALTH & REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

- Texas' near-total abortion ban remained in place, with legal and legislative battles over the restrictions shifting to the courts. Multiple lawsuits by women denied critical care continued, alongside new challenges over medication abortion and municipal travel bans. Meanwhile, maternal healthcare for women, especially those in rural areas, remains sparse with further investments in facilities needed.



Kaylee Greenlee Beal for The Texas Tribune

- Texas' near-total abortion ban remained in place, with legal and legislative battles over the restrictions shifting to the courts. Multiple lawsuits by women denied critical care continued, alongside new challenges over medication abortion and municipal travel bans. Meanwhile, maternal healthcare for women, especially those in rural areas, remains sparse with further investments in facilities needed.
- Outlook: The abortion ban is disrupting the OBGYN workforce by driving practitioners out of state. Advocates and lawmakers will address legal clarifications and health investments in 2025.

## 4. ELECTIONS

- Texas became a political mainstage in the 2024 elections. U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz's bid for reelection against U.S. Rep. Colin Allred became the most expensive Senate race in the country. In the March primaries, school voucher supporters defeated opponents in order to secure enough votes for the priority in the 2025 legislative session. Meanwhile, Democrats were hopeful that Kamala Harris would be competitive in Texas, but a historic shift from blue to red in the Rio Grande Valley pushed Donald Trump to victory and left them disappointed.
- Outlook: Republicans entered 2025 with a tight grip on state and federal government, eager to implement their policies during the state legislative session.

## 5. NATURAL DISASTERS

- Texas saw two major natural disasters: a tropical storm that caused extended power outages in the Houston region and the biggest wildfire in state history in the Panhandle region. Our journalists deployed to the sites to cover both disasters extensively, bringing attention to the needs and challenges of people in those communities and highlighting the state government's response, failures and lessons learned.
- Outlook: The events prompted strong conversations about disaster preparedness, accountability, infrastructure needs and our energy grid's resilience that lawmakers carried forward into the 2025 legislative session.

# 2024 TEXAS POLITICAL ISSUES CONTINUED

## 6. THE POWER GRID



Keaton Peters for Inside Climate News

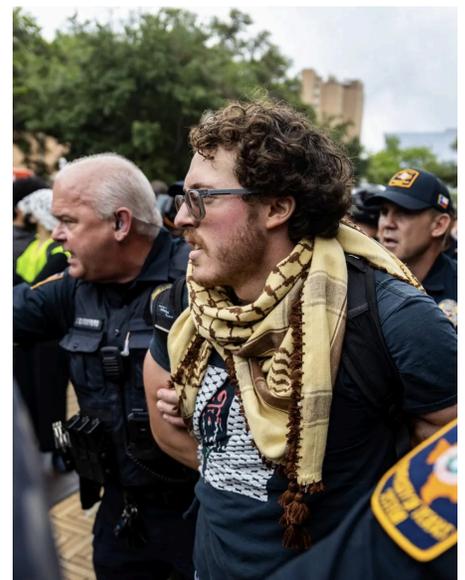
- With the catastrophe of the 2021 winter storm fresh on people’s memories, state regulators projected that demand for power on the state grid would grow massively in the coming decade. This was driven by population growth and the emergence of high energy-need industries like artificial intelligence and cryptocurrency mining. Meanwhile, debates raged in and around the Capitol about how much the state should rely on renewable energy to meet demands.
- Outlook: Lawmakers committed to pass major legislation on the topic in 2025. Ultimately, they invested \$5 billion in the state’s energy fund, and declined to pass bills that would have hobbled the growing renewable industry in the state.

## 7. PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING CUTS

- When lawmakers failed to pass a school voucher program in 2023, state leaders opted to withhold billions of dollars in new funding for public schools that were struggling to keep up with inflation and new expenses. This led schools to cut back staff, eliminate programs and adopt deficit budgets. Low teacher pay and a shrinking workforce drove districts to hire thousands of teachers who had no certification or formal training.
- Outlook: With school choice policies poised to pass, lawmakers ensured new funds would be available in 2025. But schools said it would be impossible to immediately make up for all that was lost in the cuts.

## 8. PROTESTS ON CAMPUS

- Protests on Texas college campuses over the war between Israel and Hamas drew a firm response from local and state authorities, leading to the arrest and expulsion of dozens of students. The events sparked heated debates on campus and among politicians about the safety of Jewish students on campus, whether protestors’ free speech rights were being violated and whether college campuses had become too liberal and closed off to conservative ideals. Meanwhile, the state implemented its bans on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at public universities, leading many people who lead programs catering to LGBTQ students and students of color to lose their jobs.
- Outlook: Many university leaders have departed their positions, and state leaders have pushed to hire new officials who share their concerns about the climate on campus.



Julius Shieh/The Texas Tribune



Joel Andrews for The Texas Tribune



Eddie Gaspar/The Texas Tribune

The Texas Tribune's photojournalism team captures the vivid stories and diverse faces that defined Texas this year. Through the lens, the Tribune's photographers chronicled a state in motion — spanning bustling cities, small towns, and the rugged landscapes that tie Texans together.

## VISUAL STORYTELLING HIGHLIGHTS

- **Communities in Transition:** From Diboll's quinceañera celebrations reflecting cultural vibrancy, to Kermit's city council grappling with public service challenges, the Tribune's images illustrate both the dynamism and struggles of everyday Texas life.
- **Political Drama Unfolding:** The year's turbulence is seen in the defiant resignation of Gunter's entire city council, passionate election events, and tense legislative battles.
- **Moments of Resilience:** Photos bring viewers close to families in Uvalde still seeking justice, residents rebuilding after the Panhandle's historic wildfires, and communities navigating drought, crime, and public health emergencies.
- **Iconic Events:** The coverage includes the awe of the April solar eclipse, student activism at UT Austin, and the evolving energy landscape as Texas faces climate and economic shifts.
- **Innovation and Hope:** The series spotlights local stories—like Texas churches pioneering mental health outreach, farmers facing new environmental realities, and programs aiming to turn lives around in reopened prisons.

# 2024: THE YEAR IN PHOTOS CONTINUED



Chris Stokes for The Texas Tribune



Eddie Gaspar/The Texas Tribune



Eli Hartman/The Texas Tribune



Eli Hartman/The Texas Tribune

## WHY IT MATTERS

These images are more than documentation — they give powerful context to policy debates, humanize statewide challenges, and ensure that the faces and places behind the headlines are seen and remembered. Each photo deepens Texans' understanding of their neighbors' hopes, hardships, and achievements.

To experience the full visual journey and discover the standout moments that shaped Texas in 2024, visit the full gallery:

<https://www.texastribune.org/2024/12/26/texas-tribune-2024-photos/>

# 2024 DATA VISUALS: BRINGING THE YEAR'S BIGGEST STORIES TO LIFE

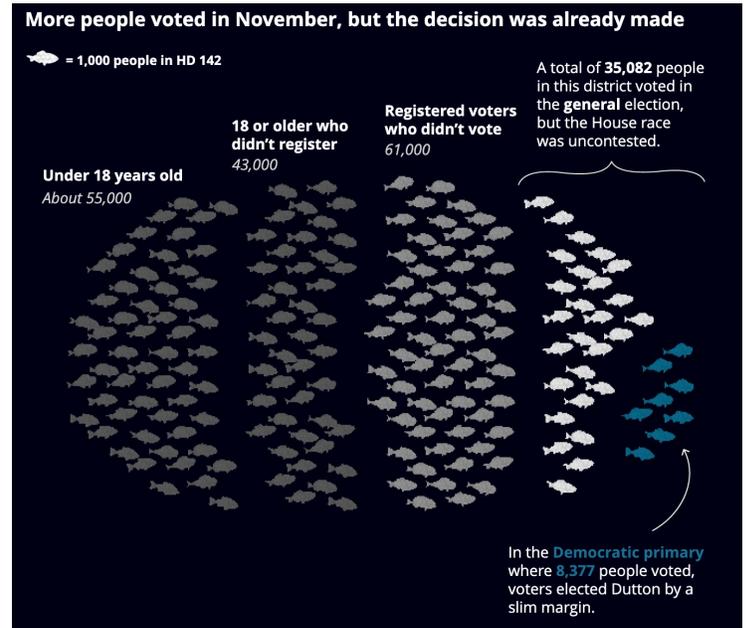
The Texas Tribune's data visuals team played a crucial role in deepening public understanding of Texas's most pressing stories in 2024. Through interactive graphics, comprehensive charts, and innovative mapping, they made data understandable — and actionable — across politics, policy, and daily life.

## ELECTIONS & VOTER TRENDS

- Developed interactive voter guides for both the primaries and general election, helping Texans navigate candidate choice and ballot questions.
- Visualized the “small fish in a big pond” effect, demonstrating how a fraction of voters hold disproportionate influence in state outcomes.
- Built the state's most comprehensive election results pages, tracking contest outcomes and trends in real time.
- Mapped campaign finance in high-profile races (e.g., Ted Cruz vs. Colin Allred) and charted turnout patterns before, during, and after major voting events.
- Used innovative graphics to compare 2024 performances of Donald Trump and Ted Cruz, and to document the sharp rise in Republican support in border counties.

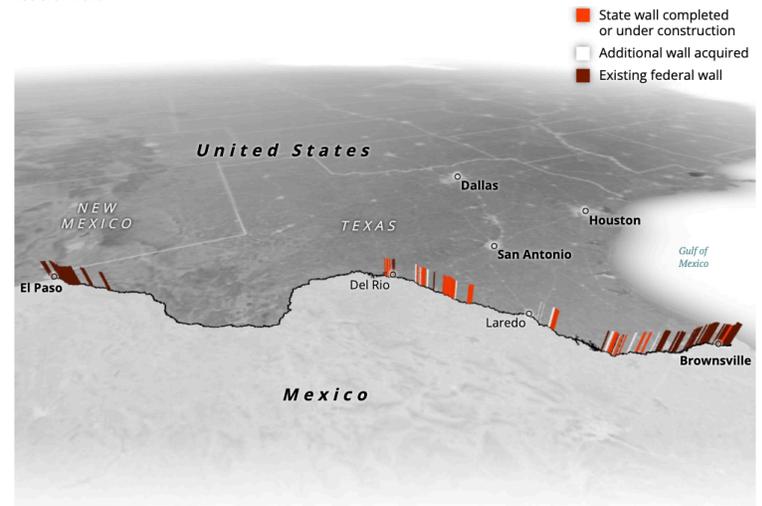
## BORDER WALL PROGRESS & COST

- Produced the first and only complete map of the Texas border wall as built so far.
- Brought transparency to the Texas government's efforts to continue building a border wall. The investigation detailed how Texas has spent billions since 2021 constructing a border barrier — revealing, with clear maps and expenditure visuals, that years and dollars invested have produced a wall that was built in low-traffic areas, had clear and obvious gaps and only covered tiny portion of the state's border with Mexico.
- Highlighted the legal and geographic challenges the state has faced in getting landowners to sell property along the border or to build on rugged landscapes.



## Texas has built 50 miles of fragmented wall

Along the Texas-Mexico border, the state has built 50 miles of wall and acquired land to build an additional 15 miles. Some of the border is naturally uncrossable or already covered with spans of federal wall.



*Credit: Yuriko Schumacher*

# 2024 DATA VISUALS: BRINGING THE YEAR'S BIGGEST STORIES TO LIFE

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

- Analyzed property tax reduction efforts and their impact on Texans' cost of living.
- Aggregated and charted zoning data from 11 major cities, spotlighting the dominance of single-family housing and contributing to statewide conversations on the housing crisis.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Uncovered campaign finance violations by school districts and visualized the growing influence of billionaire donors on pro-voucher legislation.
- Illustrated the influx of new pro-voucher legislators with easy-to-understand member charts.
- Mapped the post-pandemic rise in uncertified teachers and charted declining STAAR math and science scores.
- Broke ground on education budget transparency, with the first wave of new visuals set to help parents, educators, and taxpayers better understand public school spending.

## EXTREME WEATHER & CLIMATE IMPACT

- Tracked and visualized the flooding in East Texas and other weather extremes, giving clarity on scope and community impact.
- Documented power outages in Houston after Hurricane Beryl with daily outage maps.
- Used large-scale datasets to reveal likely undercounted heat-related deaths statewide — a critical public health insight.
- Charted the impact of tourism-driven water shortages in the Big Bend region, underscoring the intersection of economy, environment, and daily life.

These data visuals transformed complex, contentious issues into accessible insights—enabling readers to explore, question, and act. The full collection, with interactive graphics and explanatory context, is available here 2024 - The Year in Visual Journalism: <https://www.texastribune.org/2024/12/27/texas-tribune-data-visuals-biggest-stories-2024/>

### Detached single-family homes are easier to build in Texas

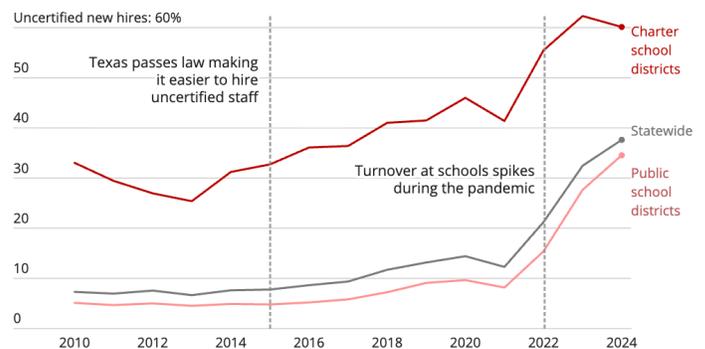
A **detached single-family home** is a standalone dwelling on its own lot, typically with front and back yards and a driveway. By contrast, **other kinds of housing** can accommodate separate households. Often in Texas, city rules make it more difficult for **other kinds of homes** to be built — and forbid them from being in the same neighborhoods as **detached single-family homes**.



Credit: Carla Astudillo

### Nearly 40% of new hires across Texas were uncertified

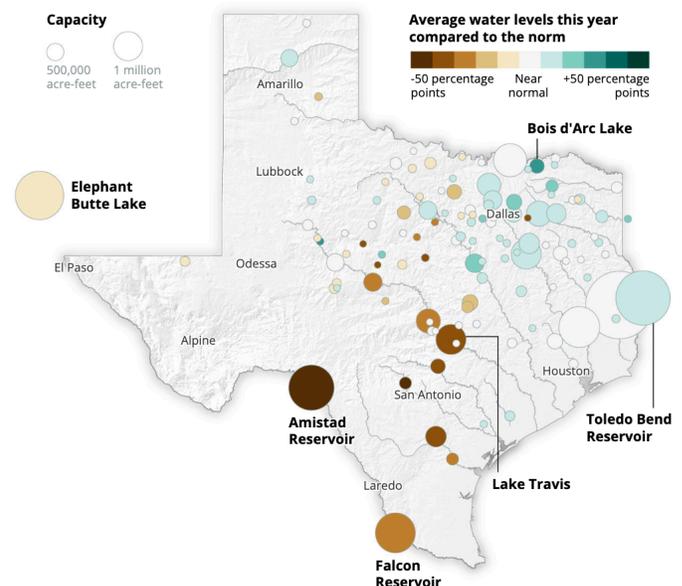
The percentage of uncertified new hires has increased sharply across Texas school districts in recent years, with charter schools leading the trend. In the 2023-2024 school year, most new hires — 60% — hired at charter schools were uncertified.



Credit: Elijah Nicholson-Messmer

### Reservoirs dropping on the border, brimming in East Texas

While most reservoirs in East Texas are 100% full or higher after torrential spring rains, the ongoing drought in West Texas has pushed the two major reservoirs along the Rio Grande to near historic lows.



Credit: Yuriko Schumacher

# 2024: BEST LONGFORM READS FROM THE TEXAS TRIBUNE

The Texas Tribune's annual collection of standout longform journalism for 2024 presents compelling, human-centered stories that go beyond the breaking news cycle. These deeply reported stories and essays dive into the impact of politics, policy, and change on communities and individuals across Texas — a testament to the Tribune's commitment to holding power to account and highlighting the everyday experiences of Texans.

## DEMOCRACY AND DISCORD IN GUNTER

- Chronicled the implosion of Gunter's city government after a controversial railroad development triggered community outrage, power struggles, and mass resignations. This story mirrored many of the frictions facing both local and national politics.

## BEHIND SCHOOL CULTURE WARS

- Followed Granbury ISD trustee Courtney Gore as she navigated backlash from the political right after finding the education "indoctrination" she feared didn't exist, ultimately choosing transparency over party loyalty and divisive rhetoric.

## PERSONAL HEALTH CARE CRISIS IN THE PANHANDLE

- The Tribune's Lubbock-based reporter for our South Plains bureau, Jayme Lozano Carver, shared her own personal account of experience a health care emergency while reporting on the dearth of reproductive health care facilities in rural Texas.

## BORDER AND MIGRATION NARRATIVES

- Collaborated with the Associated Press and FRONTLINE for deeper stories that balanced the heated political rhetoric about the Texas-Mexico border with accounts of the lived reality, including personal stories of deportation and life-changing consequences in the immigration system.

## CITIZENSHIP AND VOTING RIGHTS

- Detailed the confusion and frustration faced by a retired federal agent whose voter registration was wrongly suspended due to citizenship doubts, underscoring the complexities and pitfalls of voter roll purges.

## AGRICULTURAL IMPACTS FROM PFAS

- Investigated the silent devastation wrought by a widely promoted fertilizer containing PFAS, or "forever chemicals" that caused livestock deaths and financial ruin for Texas ranchers, revealing a major oversight in environmental and agricultural oversight.

## BORDER WALL TRANSPARENCY

- Used public records, interviews, and on-the-ground reporting to reveal that the billions spent on the Texas border wall yielded only sporadic, disconnected segments — far short of political promises.

## HIGHER ED BATTLES OVER IDEOLOGY

- Profiled West Texas A&M University president Walter Wendler and his crusade for "Panhandle values" in public academia — a microcosm of the intensifying statewide and national debate over the mission and politics of universities.

## WATER SCARCITY IN TERLINGUA

- Followed the Bradbury family, who deliver water across the desert to Terlingua residents, spotlighting the stark contrast between the area's booming tourism and the fragility of its basic resources.

# 2024: BEST LONGFORM READS FROM THE TEXAS TRIBUNE



*A photo from "The most hated people in Gunter": How the government of this North Texas town broke apart.  
Photo by Shelby Tauber for The Texas Tribune*

## WHY THESE READS MATTER

### THESE LONGFORM STORIES:

- They reveal the complex, human side of policy and politics — from civic breakdowns and health care obstacles to the personal impacts of immigration and voting laws.
- They illuminate underreported issues and experiences that define the Texas reality for lawmakers, advocates, and residents alike.
- They set the agenda for statewide conversations on democracy, education, health, environment, community, and resilience.

To explore the full selection and dive deeper into the reporting that shaped the year, visit the complete feature, Best Texas Tribune Reads of 2024

<https://www.texastribune.org/2024/12/24/texas-tribune-longreads-2024/>

# 2024 TEXAS TRIBUNE FESTIVAL

The 2024 Texas Tribune Festival brought Texas and national politics front and center, convening more than 300 speakers and over 100 sessions for thousands of attendees in downtown Austin. Over three days, the festival fostered lively, substantive debates and broke national headlines—all designed to connect the public more closely with policymakers, thought leaders, and each other.



Festival attendees on Congress at Texas Tribune Festival on Sept. 6, 2024 in Austin, TX.

# 2024 TEXAS TRIBUNE FESTIVAL: HIGHLIGHTS

## BREAKING NEWS ON THE BIG STAGE:

- Liz Cheney made national headlines by revealing that not only would she vote for Kamala Harris in the presidential election, but her father, former Vice President Dick Cheney, would as well. Cheney described Donald Trump as an unprecedented threat to democracy, framing the gravity of the 2024 election for attendees.
- Cheney also endorsed Colin Allred, the Democratic nominee seeking to unseat Sen. Ted Cruz, adding bipartisan intrigue to Texas's high-profile Senate race.

## PROGNOSIS FOR THE GOP:

- U.S. Rep. Tony Gonzales, a Republican, predicted that his party would lose its majority in the House, candidly blaming his own party's internal failures and warning of the consequences of missed opportunities for connection with ordinary voters.

## HOT TOPICS IN GOVERNANCE AND POLICY:

- U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas publicly criticized Texas' aggressive immigration and border enforcement measures, calling them directly contrary to national interests.
- Texas House Speaker Dade Phelan faced a united challenge on stage from fellow GOP Reps. Tom Oliverson and Shelby Slawson, signaling a turbulent session ahead for state leadership.
- Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin forecast that inflation would determine the presidential race, while Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi delivered impassioned calls for political civility and voter engagement.

## JUMPSTARTING THE CONVERSATION:

- Open Congress, a free street festival, brought together Texans of all stripes for panels on border policy, youth voter engagement, and civic participation — ensuring the exchange extended beyond traditional halls of power.



Liz Cheney speaks with Mark Leibovich on Sept. 6, 2024. Photo by Lorianne Willett/The Texas Tribune.

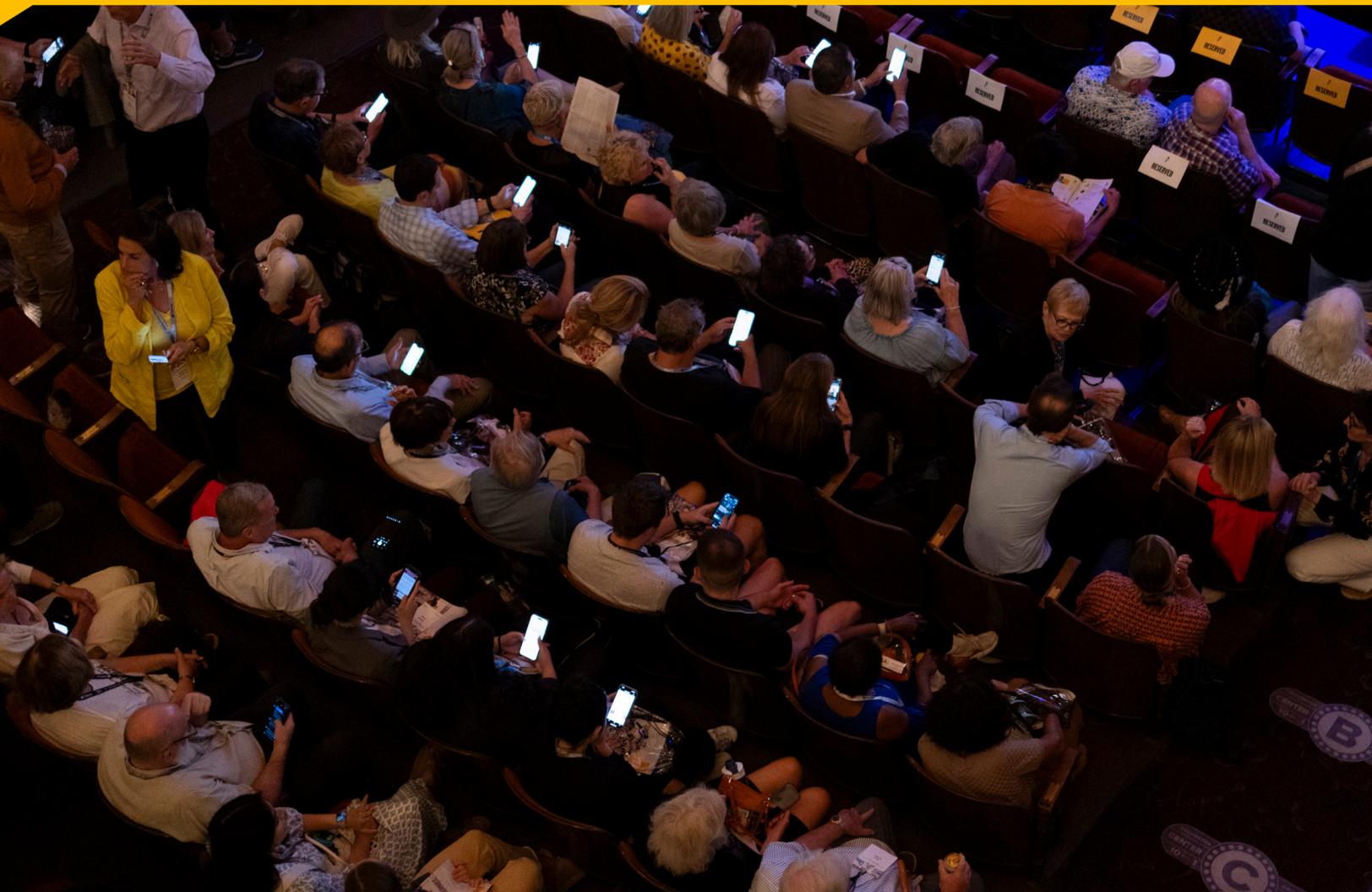


U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas at his book signing Sept. 5, 2024. Photo by Laura Skelding for The Texas Tribune.



Open Congress during the Texas Tribune Festival Saturday, Sept. 7, 2024, in Austin. Photo by Eli Hartman for The Texas Tribune.

# 2024 TEXAS TRIBUNE FESTIVAL: HIGHLIGHTS



*Festivalgoers await former Wyoming congresswoman Liz Cheney's conversation with Mark Leibovich, staff writer at The Atlantic, at The Texas Tribune Festival in Austin, TX on Sept. 6, 2024. Photo by Lorianne Willett/The Texas Tribune.*

## CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY IMPACT

- Festival programming went well beyond politics to include conversations on education, energy, health care, technology, arts and the future of cities.
- The event drew a cross-section of leaders, students, activists, journalists and everyday Texans, making politics and policy accessible to the broader community.

## PANELS AND INTERVIEWS REMAIN AVAILABLE TO WATCH ON DEMAND, INCLUDING:

- Engaging conversations with progressive leaders like U.S. Reps. Greg Casar and Pramila Jayapal, and Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison.
- In-depth sessions with figures like Maryland Gov. Wes Moore, the staff of The Bulwark, and many more.

The 2024 Texas Tribune Festival's real legacy is bringing decision-makers closer to communities, sparking informed debate, and raising public awareness at a pivotal moment for Texas and the nation. For further details and to catch up on the most important talks and moments, visit:

<https://www.texastribune.org/2024/09/08/texas-tribune-festival-highlights/>



Photo by Lorianne Willett/The Texas Tribune

As an industry leader, The Texas Tribune understands all too well the impacts that social media, technology and the prevalence of mis- and dis-information are having on the news industry. Fewer people are reading the news, and trust in the media is rapidly eroding. In 2024, we took steps to find better ways to build trust with communities and ensure we can better meet Texans where they are.

## TRIBCAST RELAUNCH

The TribCast is a weekly political podcast, produced in-house and hosted by Matthew Watkins and Eleanor Klibanoff, and featuring a rotating cast of editors, reporters and other guests. The TribCast is returning ahead of the 2025 legislative session and has featured guests for conversations on the issues and topics most important to Texans – including water, the measles outbreak, education funding policies, and more.

## WHATSAPP LAUNCH

The Texas Tribune has launched a WhatsApp channel – a messaging app – for community members who are not regular or current readers to easily get and share important news about the 2025 legislative session. Over 2,000 people have already begun following the channel.

## EXPANDING INTO SHORT-FORM VIDEO

In late 2024, we created a new Audience Producer role tasked with guiding the Texas Tribune’s strategies on social media channels centered around short-form video. At the end of 2024, new hire Laura Duclos, helped launch the Tribune’s TikTok account which now has over 7,000 followers. She has also published dozens of videos featuring herself and other Tribune journalists on Instagram and YouTube Shorts.

## NEWS AVOIDANCE RESEARCH

With funding from the Google News Initiative, the Texas Tribune engaged with the Alliance for Trust in Media and researcher Ben Toff at the University of Minnesota to conduct various experiments to see how the Tribune could think differently about engaging “news avoiders” and be more responsive in addressing their needs and gaining their trust. We identified three opportunities of experimentation: engaging with younger audiences through short-form video, direct engagement with lower-than-average consumers of news and surveying events attendees about how to drive in-person engagement. These experiments began ahead of the November 2024 election and will continue into 2025. This work helped inform the Tribune’s decision to expand our audience team and begin producing content on new platforms.

# THE TEXAS TRIBUNE'S LOCAL NEWS INITIATIVE



## A BOLD VISION FOR LOCAL NEWS

In September 2024, the Tribune announced its vision to launch a network of local newsrooms to inform, empower and engage Texans at the community level.

The Tribune will create, partner or merge with local, community-based newsrooms that inform residents more deeply about their communities. This effort will kick off in Waco with the launch of a new local newsroom, The Waco Bridge, in early 2025, followed by an Austin newsroom later in the year. Through shared services, the business operations of both outlets — finance, HR and marketing — will be powered by The Texas Tribune. This will allow them to focus on telling community stories.

The models for these newsrooms won't be the same, because the needs of different communities aren't the same. In some places, the Tribune will create new newsrooms. In others, the Tribune will build newsrooms based on strategic partnerships with other outlets to leverage existing resources that can provide a broader and stronger news product. If there's an opportunity to acquire a news outlet and build on its work in support of a community, the Tribune will do that. Our plan is to grow a network of local newsrooms that will lead to stronger news ecosystems across the state, empowering and building trust with more Texans.

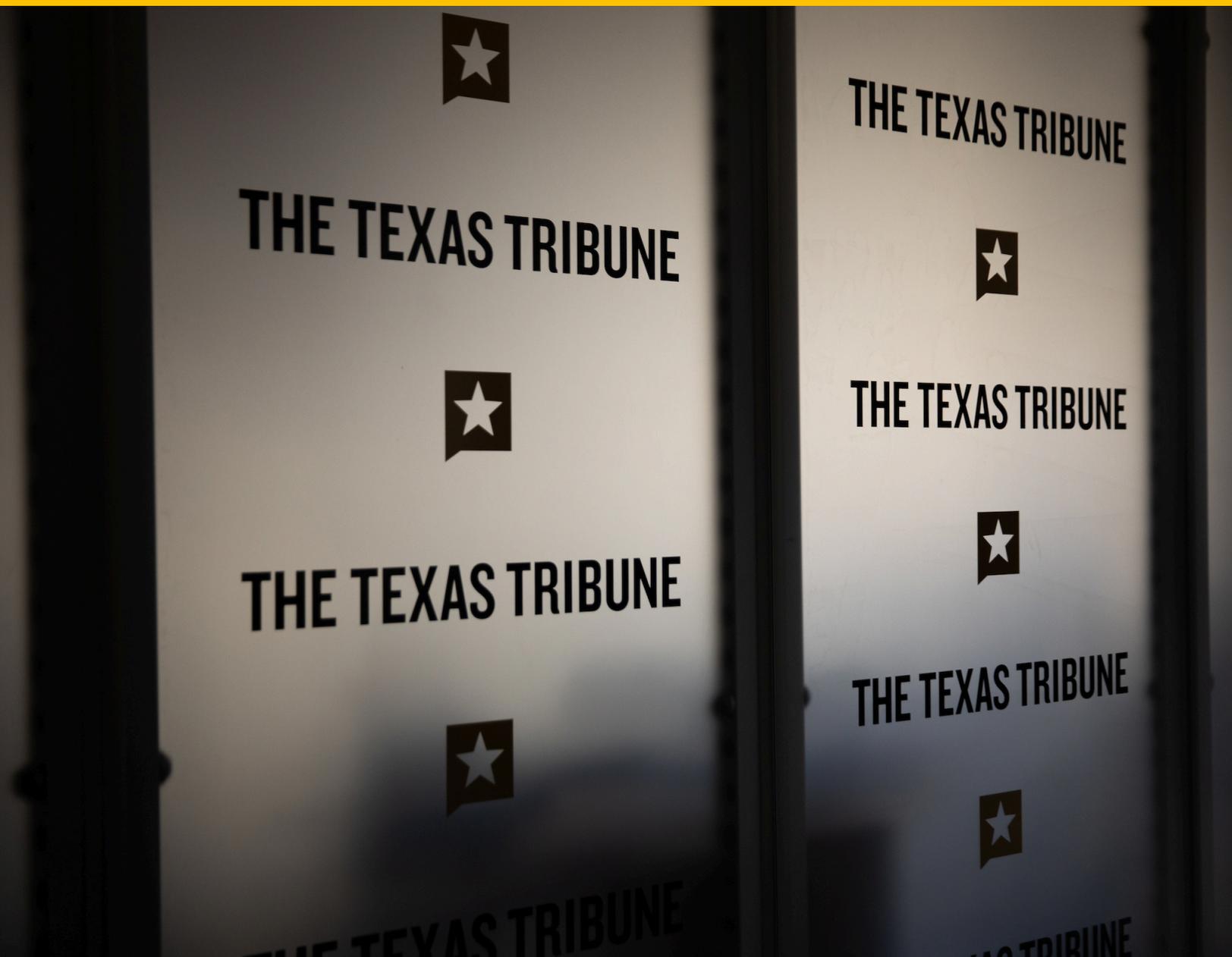
## THE WACO BRIDGE

The Waco Bridge's mission is to connect Wacoans, foster civic engagement and bring solutions to pressing challenges. The vision for the Bridge is a result of research conducted by the American Journalism Project, funded by the Waco Foundation, and through more than 100 listening sessions with the community, including faith leaders, business owners, educators, artists, activists and community members.

The Waco Bridge will be a digital-first newsroom with coverage centered on solutions and key community issues. The Waco Bridge will be free to read and republish, rooted in community and additive to local news offered by area outlets. All Waco Bridge staff will live and work in the Waco area to be locally engaged.

Generous grants from the Waco Foundation, Bernard & Audre Rapoport Foundation and the Cooper Foundation, along with major gifts and donations from local community members are making the planning, hiring, and launch possible.





## 2025 EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

Sonal Shah, CEO  
Matthew Watkins, Editor-in-Chief  
Evan Lambert, Chief Financial Officer  
Darla Cameron, Chief Product Officer  
Carrie Bair-Norwood, Chief Development & Growth Officer

(as of July 2025)

## 2025 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jane Borochoff	Anna Mateja
Glenn Brown	Tracy LaQuey Parker
Trei Brundrett	Jim Schachter
John Chao	Matt Thompson
Kyle Deaver	Frank P. Ward III
Antonio Garza	Sonya Medina Williams
Larry Irving	
Val LaMantia	
Elena Marks	

(as of July 2025)

# STAYING CONNECTED IN 2025

[WWW.TEXASTRIBUNE.ORG](http://WWW.TEXASTRIBUNE.ORG)

TUNE IN FOR [TRIBCAST](#)

**SIGN UP FOR OUR NEWSLETTERS:**

[www.texastribune.org/newsletters](http://www.texastribune.org/newsletters)

**FOLLOW THE TEXAS TRIBUNE ON  
SOCIAL PLATFORMS:**

Facebook, Instagram,  
TikTok, YouTube,  
What's App, LinkedIn,  
Reddit

Keep News Accessible To All: Become a Member Today!

