RE: An Open Letter to Texas Democratic Party Chair Kendall Scudder

April 17, 2026
Mr. Kendall Scudder
Chair, Texas Democratic Party

Dear Mr. Scudder,

We write to you as fellow Democrats – elected officials, candidates, county chairs, precinct chairs, political professionals, organizers, and voters – who are deeply concerned about what is happening to our Texas Democratic Party under your leadership.

Many of us have stood by you and your team with good faith and high hopes. However, after we watched in real time as thousands of Texas Democrats were stripped of their fundamental right to cast a ballot in our primary, we decided we must speak up.

A political party is, at its core, a contract between leadership and the people it serves. That contract has terms: preparation, accountability, transparency, and the basic competence to execute on the promises made to voters and candidates alike.

Our conversations following March 3 about what went wrong revealed a pattern of rapid decay running through our Texas Democratic Party under your leadership.

We have seen a Texas Democratic Party that makes bold promises to voters and candidates, yet cannot answer basic questions about strategy. A Party that speaks of urgency but fails to act on it. A Party that asks for trust and money it has not earned.

Mr. Scudder, the Texas Democratic Party cannot afford another four years of operational failure. We are fighting against a well-funded, well-organized Republican machine that is actively working to make voting harder for Texans.

The choices you and your leadership team made in the lead-up to the March 3 primary represent a significant squandering of resources at every level and resulted in a compounding waste of time, money, and organizational capacity that was entirely preventable. This has had a direct cost to the Party's long-term competitiveness in Texas.

It is with both urgency and deep frustration that we call on you to step aside and not seek re-election as Chair of the Texas Democratic Party.

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I. Trust That Took Years to Build was Broken, and May Take Even Longer to Rebuild, Especially with Working Class Voters

For first-time voters, elections are a new experience. They're defining moments. And for the millions of Texans who work hourly jobs, sometimes juggling two or three just to survive, Election Day may be the only realistic opportunity they have to participate in our democracy. When voting is unnecessarily hard, when the system lets them down, when they walk away confused, when they don't come back, we lose something that can't be counted: the belief that showing up matters.

What happened in Dallas and Williamson is unacceptable.

One navigator in Dallas said he was sending away every second or third person who approached, with some voters cursing at him in frustration. One voter in Dallas County walked 2.5 miles, was told she was at the wrong place, and stood outside with nowhere to go. Another went to four different locations, and others skipped voting altogether. Even Texas Democratic Party Executive Director Terri Burke said, "around one-third of the voters are having problems."

The Texas Democratic Party can blame Republicans for requesting the split primary and the Texas Secretary of State for voter file issues, which we will go into both later. However, we must stress that your team knew about the change for months, and we have never been able to rely on Republicans to make things easy for Texas voters.

We will never know the full count of voters who were misdirected, grew frustrated, and simply left. What we do know is that election navigators at the polls lost count of how many people they had redirected.

None of this was unexpected.

II. This was one of the Largest Disenfranchisements of Democratic Voters by Democrats in Decades

More than 2,300 votes cast in Dallas County will not be counted and more than 200 rejected ballots in Williamson County, not because those voters didn't try, but because a cascade of preventable failures left them without a fair chance.

Voters who did everything they could – who returned after being misdirected, who waited hours, who lost income because their paid time off ran out, who held their crying baby through the wait – won't have their votes counted.

Since at least the fall of 2025, the Party knew that the Dallas and Williamson County primaries would switch to precinct-based voting. For Dallas in particular, these changes occurred in the front yard of the newly relocated Texas Democratic Party headquarters.

The perfect moment for your leadership to prove it was ready: ready to defend voters' rights, ready to organize under pressure, ready to show that threats would be met head-on, and ready to blow Republican primary turnout numbers out of the water.

Voters should be able to trust their Party to fight back against this type of foul play.

Rather than maintaining voter outreach, candidate support, and Party-building programs, your leadership forced our Party into reactive damage control, emergency legal action, and disputes over provisional ballots. Resources poured into addressing the consequences of March 3 ultimately weakened the Party's long-term position in Texas.

After conversations about what we experienced in our home districts, it became apparent that the Party's programmatic failures extend beyond Dallas and Williamson counties.

III. Resources Previously Run by the Texas Democratic Party Were Not There When Voters & Candidates Needed Them

While Republicans implemented structural constraints through precinct-only voting and the Texas Secretary of State's delays in providing statewide data, a well-resourced and resilient Democratic Party apparatus should have had the capacity to adapt and overcome these electoral changes.

Our conversations tell the story of a leadership team that failed to maintain the programs that campaigns, county parties, and volunteers depend on. A leadership team that didn't build a contingency plan or stress test the system. A leadership team that fostered a working environment so toxic that critical staff left weeks before the primary.

When voter data is wrong or outdated, campaigns make flawed decisions about whom to call, mail, and knock for. For down-ballot campaigns with tight budgets and small teams, those real costs hurt even more. Wasted mailers, wasted calls, and voters – who never heard from us.

The state party has an obligation to deliver what candidates are paying for. At present, it is not meeting that obligation – and the candidates, campaigns, and voters of Texas are bearing the consequences.

IV. Where is the Urgency to Update VAN?

As of the writing of this letter, precinct maps are still out of date in VAN, the voter file for the majority of the state is from June of 2025, and a significant portion of Party infrastructure appears to be gone or a husk of its former self.

The current state of VAN is unacceptable – it is foundational to Democratic electoral infrastructure. Every day VAN remains out of date, Democratic campaigns and infrastructure

risk significant deterioration. Candidates aren't just VAN users. They're paying customers. It's not a favor from the state party; it's a service campaigns pay for to make smart decisions about their two scarcest resources: time and money.

Every day VAN has been stuck in June of 2025 is another day we are unable to build relationships with first-time registrants and voters who have moved.

The Party knew on August 29, 2025 that voters may have new congressional districts due to redistricting, with courts locking in the new maps on December 4, 2025. Regardless of the challenges posed by incomplete precinct map shapefiles or voter data following redistricting, we are deeply concerned about the lack of meaningful effort by you and your team to address these gaps.

A fundraising email here and a press release there is not enough. There has been little evidence of sustained public pressure on the Texas Secretary of State or proactive collaboration with Democratic counties to ensure a smooth and functional transition to the new system.
Many of us are waiting on you and your team to do something that yields results.

V. The Downstream Effects

VAN being out of date represents only one layer of a deeper, interconnected breakdown. This includes centralized resources, coordinated messaging, and voter protection infrastructure that Texas Democrats have historically relied upon to compete in a state that does not make voting easy.

Some accounts indicate that, despite advance knowledge of the challenges facing Dallas and Williamson counties, neither you nor your executive director moved to staff a full voter protection team capable of managing the foreseeable risks.

This was also the first primary in a decade without a statewide polling place locator managed by the Texas Democratic Party. In past elections, the state Party operated centralized voter resources (MyTexasVotes.com) where Texans could quickly find accurate information on registration, polling places, deadlines, mail-in voting, and more. This resource was created precisely because the Republican-led Texas Secretary of State's office has consistently failed to provide voters with clear, accessible election information.

In addition, we have serious doubts about whether the Texas Democratic Party's voter protection team could even direct voters in Dallas and Williamson counties to the right polling locations.

Finally, there have been many reports of vote-by-mail applications going out way too late. Voters who did not receive their mail ballots because of issues with the application form provided by the Party. Republicans sent vote-by-mail applications on the Democratic Party's dime. It is

unclear to us whether campaigns and county parties had accurate vote-by-mail data to target mail-ballot voters.

After conversations with former Texas Democratic Party staff, we believe we know why programs have deteriorated.

V. Hostile Work Environment, Unionbusting, and Replacing Texas Staff with Consultants

Experienced staff members who knew how to run the systems our voters and campaigns rely on and the institutional knowledge to execute programming, found themselves laid off, demoted, or told to either move or lose their jobs.

These staff positions were designed to build a homegrown talent pool and have led many former Texas Democratic Party staff to manage statewide campaigns, run for office themselves, and lead national party programs.

We want to emphasize that what we are about to write is not to attack current staff, as we believe the issues mentioned relate directly to your leadership.

Former staff who spoke with us shared concerning employer practices that stand in direct violation of our Party's values. They speak of being exposed to racism and a hostile work environment, which stripped away core responsibilities from staffers, deliberate misreporting of debt, and being forced out and replaced by consultants, including your long-time business partner, Lillian Salerno, or out-of-state consultants. This is also a clear slap in the face to voters who were told at the beginning of your chairmanship that this was "no longer the party of consultants."

The union employees who were laid off due to "restructuring" or because your administration considered their positions no longer needed, and whose duties now exist under new titles, directly impacted staffers of color, constitute an attack on the Party's long-held belief in and support for Labor, and goes against our commitment to ensuring diverse voices are represented within the Party.

This pattern is not isolated to one county or region. It is becoming a statewide norm. Party leadership has demonstrated a willingness to consolidate power at all costs, actively working to exclude or replace those who offer alternative approaches.

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This is not responsible stewardship of our Party. It is mismanagement with consequences that will be felt well beyond a single election cycle.

Texas Democrats deserve a leader who anticipates threats, prepares exhaustively, and executes on program. Your leadership has not met that standard. For the sake of the voters we serve, for the candidates who depend on us, and for the future of a functioning Democratic Party in Texas, we are calling on you:

Do not seek re-election as Chair of the Texas Democratic Party.

Signed,

Koby Ahmed	Peter Mungiguerra
William Bass	Stevie Said
Darcy Caballero	Hon. Mark Stiles, Former State Rep.
Jenn Cervella	Brittany Switzer
Charlotte Clymer	Sissi Yado
Judy Kay Craft	Jordan Young
Amber Delaune	Former TDP Communications Staffer
Kyle Floyd	Former TDP Communications Staffer
Rachel Gonzales	Former TDP Communications Staffer
Frank Gonzales	Former TDP Convention Staffer
Rev. Frederick Douglass Haynes III, Ph.D.	Former TDP Data Staffer
Kiara Holloway	Former TDP Digital Staffer
Adrian Ibarra	Former TDP Political Staffer
Ari Kelo	Former TDP Political Staffer
Ceryta Lockett	Former TDP Political Staffer
Rebecca Marques	Former TDP Organizing Staffer
Pamela Meyer	Former TDP Organizing Staffer
John Mott	Political Professional, State House

For those reading who would like to sign on, please add your name here:
https://forms.gle/wEF8BcjdpHyc9UVQ8