



**BETO O'ROURKE**

**DEMOCRAT**

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**Residence:** El Paso, Texas

**Current Job/Profession:** Owner, Technology Company

**Education:** B.A., Columbia University

**Highlight of Current Civic Involvement/Accomplishments:**

I am a member of Congress, representing the 16th Congressional district. I serve on the House Veterans Affairs Committee and the House Armed Services Committee. I have worked on and passed legislation to improve services for veterans and service members, including expanding mental health care access.

I have always sought to work with colleagues on both sides of the aisle to ensure that I deliver for my constituents and for this country.

I hold public town hall meetings every month where any constituent can attend, ask me questions, offer ideas, criticize me and in doing so hold me accountable and ensure that I am responsive to those whom I represent and serve.

**Why are you running for office?**

After the 2016 Presidential election, my wife Amy and I asked ourselves how we were going to talk about the outcome of the race with our children and what we could do to ensure our country stayed true to its values and the values we are raising them to believe in. I am running for Senate because our state deserves an accountable, full-time, full-service Senator who will represent all 28 million Texans and work tirelessly for our state to ensure that every single one of us has the opportunity to live to our full potential.

I want Texas, the most uninsured state in the country, to lead the way in not only safeguarding protections for those with pre-existing conditions but guaranteeing universal high-quality healthcare for every man, woman, and child in this state. I want us to have the backs of our heroic public-school teachers by allowing them to teach to children and not standardized tests and ensuring that public tax dollars are not taken out of our classrooms and turned into vouchers. I want to make sure every Texan is able to work a job that pays a living wage. That means all Texans who are ready to work should be able to receive the education and training to be competitive. I want the most diverse state in the country to lead the way on not only stopping the walls and putting an end to family separation, but rewriting our immigration laws in our own image. I want Texas to help reform our criminal justice system by ending mandatory minimums, the war on drugs that has become a war on people, the private prison complex, the prohibition on marijuana, and the cash bail system. Ultimately, I want to make sure that everyone has a chance to succeed and that everyone is treated with respect and dignity.



**Do you expect the Supreme Court will revisit the gay marriage decision from 2015 if a case challenging gay marriage reaches its review? Should it?**

While our country finally has marriage equality, we know that LGBTQ rights continue to be under attack. First, we must elect a Senator who will support the Equality Act. I am an original cosponsor of this legislation in the House that would ensure Federal rights and protections for all LGBT individuals. This at a time where you can still be fired in Texas for who you love. We must also stop being the state that tries to scare parents about transgender children coming into their kids' bathrooms. At a time when there are 30,000 children in the Texas foster care system, we need to overturn the law that allows an LGBTQ couple in Texas to be denied an adoption. And we should ensure there is a Texas Senator who will be a check on Donald Trump's nominations to lifetime seats on the Federal bench.

**Positions on LGBT rights issues as stated on [www.betofortexas.com](http://www.betofortexas.com).**

**Equality:**

All Americans must be treated equally under the law. Steps we can take to achieve this goal include:

- Supporting measures like the Equality Act, proposed legislation that would provide the same nondiscrimination protections to LGBTQIA Americans as any other protected class under federal law.
- Guaranteeing that same-sex couples are entitled to access the same federal benefits as any other Texas family. Repealing the Defense of Marriage (DOMA) Act entirely and ensuring same sex couples equal access to benefits like social security, regardless of the state in which they live.
- Ensuring that all Americans are paid equally and treated fairly, regardless of their gender. It is critical that we support policies that end wage discrimination and close the gender pay gap.

**GALA CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Candidate did not respond.



**TED CRUZ**  
**REPUBLICAN**

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**Residence:** Houston, Texas

**Current Job/Profession:** U.S. Senator

**Education:** B.A., Princeton University; J.D., Harvard Law School

**Highlight of Current Civic Involvement/Accomplishments:**

U.S. Senator: Sen. Cruz has authored 32 legislative measures that have become law, including seven pieces of major legislation - five signed by President Trump and two by President Obama - and 23 amendments included in National Defense Authorization Acts.

1. Cruz-Nelson NASA Transition Authorization Act, which reaffirms NASA's core mission, and ensures the Johnson Space Center remains the crown jewel of NASA's human spaceflight missions.
2. Cruz-Brady Bill to disapprove and nullify a drug-testing rule issued by the Obama Labor Department that undermined the ability of states to conduct drug testing in their unemployment programs.
3. Bill to designate North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism, which passed via the bipartisan Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. In November 2017 President Trump affirmatively designated North Korea as a state sponsor of terrorism.
4. Cruz-Cornyn-Rubio hurricane tax relief bill, which provides crucial and immediate tax relief to storm survivors along the Gulf Coast, in Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.
5. Cruz's Student Opportunity Amendment, the most far-reaching federal school choice legislation ever passed, was included in Congress' tax reform bill. This amendment expands 529 College Savings Plans to include K-12 elementary and secondary school tuition for public, private, and religious schools.
6. The U.S. Commercial Space Launch and Competitiveness Act (H.R. 2262), which promotes the development of the commercial space industry, in which Texas plays a major role.
7. Preventing Terrorists from Entering U.S. as U.N. Ambassadors. Sen. Cruz introduced the bill - signed by President Obama - when Iran attempted to name Hamid Aboutalebi and their ambassador to the United Nations. Aboutalebi was involved in the 1979 taking of Americans hostage in Tehran.

**Why are you running for office?**

We achieved an incredible victory in 2016, when Republicans took control of the White House and Congress, and we have incredible opportunities ahead of us to finally, to once and for all, follow through on the promises long made to the American people – specifically 28 million Texans – who greatly suffered under eight years of liberal, progressive leadership that chipped away at freedom, that squandered opportunity, that presided over job and wage stagnation. In the last year, we made great inroads toward reversing this damage - we've rolled back regulations, we've passed historic tax



reform to open the floodgates of economic investment back into this country, to provide relief to hardworking Americans, and to spark job opportunities, and we've taken important steps to strengthen our national security.

But there is much more that Texans have made clear they want to see completed: we need to finally fulfill our promise to repeal Obamacare - that was the first bill I filed upon arriving in the Senate and I am committed to seeing it through. We should continue pursuing tax reforms that will bring even more relief to working families, starting by making the middle-class tax cuts permanent. And we need to follow through on providing the funding necessary to secure our southern border with Mexico, including building the wall, which is critical to the safety and security of Texas communities.

My goal, my commitment to the people of Texas, is to continue building on the progress we've made, to keep fighting for working Texans, for their security and their opportunity, and to protect the liberties guaranteed them under the Constitution

**Do you expect the Supreme Court will revisit the gay marriage decision from 2015 if a case challenging gay marriage reaches its review? Should it?**

Courts do not make law. Only Congress has the authority to write law, and in that respect the 2015 Obergefell Supreme Court Opinion has had a corrosive effect on the Constitutional separation of powers. Not unlike Roe v Wade before it, the Obergefell opinion further empowered the Judicial branch in a way that the Founders never intended.

Ours is a Constitutional Republic, and not a judicial oligarchy. There is a significant difference between exercising judicial review as a check and balance, and assuming the authority of all three branches of government simultaneously.

The ongoing debate over the rights of competing groups and ideologies will continue as long as people are free to disagree, and that is a healthy thing. What we need to guard against is empowering the least accountable branch of government to become the most powerful. So, the response from Congress ought to be an ongoing effort to preserve liberty and justice for all, even if that occasionally involves asserting our authority as the directly elected representatives of the people over the objections of the judicial branch.

**Positions on LGBT rights issues as stated on [www.tedcruz.org](http://www.tedcruz.org).**

**Defending Texas Values:**

Defended Texas's marriage laws when a state court attempted to recognize a Vermont civil union.

Authored legislation and a constitutional amendment in the Senate to prevent federal courts from further interfering with any state's authority to define marriage.

Introduced legislation to protect the right of states to define marriage, without intrusion by unelected federal judges.

**Defending the Constitution:**

Defended Americans' First Amendment rights against Democrats who sought to limit freedom of expression.

**GALA CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

Candidate did not respond.



**NEAL DIKEMAN**

**LIBERTARIAN**

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**Residence:** Houston

**Current Job/Profession:** Serial Entrepreneur and Venture Capitalist

**Education:** B.A. in Economics – Texas A&M

**Highlight of Current Civic Involvement/Accomplishments:**

Today I am an elder in Spring Branch Presbyterian Church in Houston, Texas where I live. And active in a variety of church missions, including our preschool. We each get to choose where to invest our time, I invest it in causes worth doing, and in my family, church, friends, and community.

At various times I've been on nonprofit boards, founded nonprofits in climate change, am an Eagle Scout and been active in Boy Scouts and other organizations.

**Why are you running for office?**

I have 3 and 5-year-old daughters. I am running for them, and your children and grandchildren. It is not ok for our elected officials to continue to kick the can down the road to them on Federal debts that now reach levels not seen since WWII, on healthcare that still remains tied to your job or your government with spiraling costs, on privacy, and immigration. It is not ok that they grow up never knowing a country not at war. They are just 3 and 5. They don't understand what the Senate is yet. But they deserve that their parent's generation leaves them a world better than it found it, without sending them the bill.

Someone needed to stand up, and offer a better choice, with good, sound policies, a track record of delivering, and dedicated to looking out for every generation, not just their own. Politics, like life, is a participatory sport. And the fault in Congress is not with Congress members, it's with us. Voters who do not vote, citizens who do not run, and voices that do not speak up.

**Do you expect the Supreme Court will revisit the gay marriage decision from 2015 if a case challenging gay marriage reaches its review? Should it?**

It is not practical for me to handicap what the Supreme Court might do, but Libertarians believe that the government should not be in the business of restricting marriage to only some of our citizens.



## **GALA CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE**

**“Religious Liberty” bills offer protection to businesses that deny services such as counseling, wedding planning, etc. to LGBT+ individuals when based on “sincerely held religious beliefs.” Would you support such legislation? Please explain your answer.**

I do not support legislation that uses the Federal government to infringe on the rights of others.

**A recent study by the National Center of Transgender Equality found that 82% of transgender youth feel unsafe at school and 44% report having been physically abused. “Bathroom Bills” which require transgender students to use the bathroom that matches their sex assigned at birth have been proposed in many states. Would you support guidance or regulation at the federal level to resolve this issue? Please explain your position.**

While, I consider this a state issue, I can only note the most of the world, and every home in America, has managed to figure out how to make a unisex bathroom work and keep it private.

**An Employment Non-Discrimination Act including sexual orientation and gender identity/expression has been introduced in the House several times. Would you support such legislation? Please explain your answer.**

I do not support discrimination against individuals on the basis of sexual orientation or gender. As a Libertarian I believe small government applies to both fiscal and social issues, and that what you do in your private life is not the business of government. As founder of 7 tech companies, and a long-time employer, I have always looked for great amazing employees overlooked by others, but I look forward to a time when that is no longer possible.

**GALA offers candidates the unique opportunity to address thousands of members of the North Texas LGBT community. What would you like LGBT constituents and our families and friends to know about you as a candidate? Why should this large voting community support your candidacy?**

For those of you who believe in both inclusive social values, strong defense while keeping us out of multi-decade foreign wars, fiscal responsibility and small government, I would like to earn your vote.

The Libertarian Party has been a leader in supporting rights for the LGBT community for nearly 5 decades, well before it was popular. I appreciate your support, but will continue to be a leader supporting your rights regardless of how you vote.