

TITUS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS' COURT

Public Participation Form

Instructions: Fill out all appropriate blanks. Please print or write legibly.

NAME: Leonard Rockwell

ADDRESS: _____

Do you represent any particular group or organization? No

If you do represent a group or organization, please state the name of such group or organization?

Which agenda item (or items) do you wish to address? 10

Do you wish to make an inquiry under Section 551.042 of the Open Meetings Act?

Signature: Leonard Rockwell Date: 11/8/13

Note: This Public Participation Form must be presented to the County Clerk prior to the time that the agenda item (or items) you wish to address are discussed before the Court.

Southwest

TEXAS CIVIC HEALTH INDEX

Texans not very engaged as citizens, study finds

State ranks 51st in voter turnout, 43rd in share who give to charities

By ROBERT T. GARRETT
Austin Bureau
rtgarrett@dallasnews.com

AUSTIN — Texans are not highly engaged voters and citizens — at least by some measures, not very active members of their communities, a nonpartisan study has found.

In 2010, the state ranked 51st among the states and the District of Columbia in voter turnout, 43rd in the share of its citizens who donated public officials, 41st in how many trust most of their neighbors and 43rd in the percentage who give to charities.

The study, released Monday, is the fifth from Texas Civic Health Index, a joint effort by the Annenberg Strauss Institute for Civic Life at the University of Texas at Austin and the National Center for Civic Engagement, a nonpartisan, non-profit organization that regularly chartered groups of citizens to evaluate civic participation.

Regina Lawrence, the UT journalism professor who runs the Strauss Institute, said the findings show that Texans are not very engaged. She noted that only 43 percent cast ballots in 2010.

"A good definition of democracy is not one in which

two-thirds of voters don't show up," Lawrence said. "What we saw was a very active minority of citizens really determining the future of the state in that election."

The institute said in a release that Hispanic Texans and immigrants are even less likely to participate in most forms of civic engagement, "highlighting the importance of efforts to more fully involve those groups in the state's civic life."

The study mostly relied on data compiled by the Census Bureau. Its authors recommend improving civic literacy through the schools; increasing the supply of nonpartisan information about public issues and elections; and boosting Texans' access to higher education.

People who have attended college show much higher levels of electoral and civic involvement than those who have not, Lawrence said.

State GOP Chairman Steve Munisteri chided the authors for overlooking important considerations such as the choice by nearly half the U.S. electorate not to vote in last year's presidential election and the lack of competitive statewide races in Texas.

"Texans are not a bunch of sloof folks that don't like their neighbors," he said. "People are

generally happy. We just haven't had some huge crisis in the state that would engage people."

Lawrence, the UT professor, said recent talk about how a bulging Hispanic demographic may turn Texas "blue" probably fails to consider how Texas Hispanics are much less engaged in politics and civic life than white and black Texans.

Democratic political communications consultant James Aldrete of Austin, though, said that is not a cultural trait but a reflection of the relative youth and low educational attainment levels among the fast-growing contingent of first- and second-generation Mexican-Americans in Texas.

Democrats have mobilized the Hispanic vote in Nevada, Colorado and New Mexico and can do it in Texas, he said. He cited a November poll showing that only half as many Texas Hispanics had been contacted and urged to vote as in those swing states.

"It will be a big challenge," Aldrete said.

But can it be done? In Nevada, for example, the Hispanic vote was more than half of the total vote in the 2010 gubernatorial election, but in Texas, it was only about a quarter.

By Robert T. Garrett
Reporter and Robert T. Garrett

BRIEFS

3 firefighters still hospitalized

HOUSTON — Three Houston firefighters injured in last week's five-alarm blaze that killed

one firefighter shows "a disturbing and aggressive scene," the ex-officer followed "textbook" procedures to help subdue a potentially dangerous suspect who might have been armed. *Dallas Morning News*

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Public Participation Form

Instructions: Fill out all appropriate blanks. Please print or write legibly.

NAME: Teresa A Young

ADDRESS: 1106 Bony

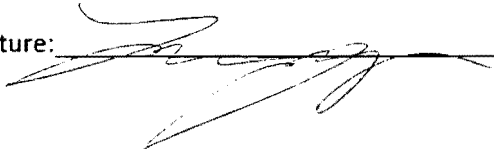
Do you represent any particular group or organization? NAAACP Organization

If you do represent a group or organization, please state the name of such group or organization?

Mt. Pleasant NAAACP

Which agenda item (or items) do you wish to address? the move of voting office

Do you wish to make an inquiry under Section 551.042 of the Open Meetings Act?

Signature:  Date: 7-8-13

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