

# Politics, the PAC and the Profession

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o doubt you know there is a presidential election this year. It is nearly impossible to escape the ads, the articles, the debates and the entertaining shenanigans of all the candidates. Even if you wanted to ignore the propaganda, it would almost be impossible to do so. You can't avoid it, so here's a little humor to help you through the next 10 months:

*"When I was a boy, I was told that anybody could become president; I'm beginning to believe it."*

—Clarence Darrow

*"We'd all like to vote for the best man/woman, but they are never a candidate."*

—Kin Hubbard

*"George Washington is the only president who didn't blame the previous administration for his troubles."*

—Author Unknown

*"The best thing about this group of candidates is that only one of them can win."*

—Will Rogers

But seriously now, don't let all the presidential monkey business distract you from paying attention to the statewide elections that we'll also have right here in Texas this fall. Sure, the campaigns will be less flashy and entertaining, but no less important. Candidates elected to the 150 Texas House seats and 16 Texas Senate seats will be weighing in on issues that affect CPAs, their clients and their valued profession.

The filing deadline for state elections was Dec. 14. One notable name missing is CPA and TSCPA member **Rep. John Otto** (HD18), current House Appropriations Committee chairman, who announced back in July he would not run for re-election in 2016. He has been an outstanding legislator throughout his career, including being recognized as one of the top 10 legislators for the 2015 session. He has also been a successful advocate for CPAs during his legislative tenure. TSCPA wishes him well in his new endeavors; he will be sorely missed.

CPA incumbents, **Angie Chen Button** (HD112) current Economic and Small Business Development Committee chair, **Phil Stephenson** (HD85), **John Frullo** (HD84) current Insurance Committee chair, **Scott Sanford** (HD70) and **Charles Perry** (SD28) current Water and Rural Affairs Committee chair, have all filed for re-election. As of this writing, we're combing the list of candidate filings to see if any other of your CPA brethren will be running for a statewide position in Texas. Who better understands Texas business and the profession than a CPA? Supporting these and other worthy candidates is essential to preserving your profession and the economic climate in which you operate.

Which brings me to the TSCPA CPA-PAC, your professional organization's Political Action Committee. I know the word "PAC" turns a lot of people off, but the fact is that political

## REGISTER to VOTE

REGISTER to VOTE by Feb 1, 2016. The TEXAS PRIMARY election is Tuesday, March 1, 2016.

campaigns cost money, lots of money. The best way to protect the profession from the consequences of unwanted regulatory and legislative decisions, is to financially support candidates and incumbents who understand the importance of a sound Texas economy and the critical role of the CPA in preserving the state's business climate.

A few facts about the CPA-PAC that might make the idea of contributing more palatable include:

- The CPA-PAC is directed by the TSCPA PAC committee, whose volunteer members are appointed by the TSCPA chair.
- The CPA-PAC is non-partisan and is registered with the Texas Ethics Commission.
- The PAC committee works closely with local chapters and their Public Affairs committees to determine which policymakers should receive CPA-PAC contributions.
- Of all the funds contributed to the CPA-PAC, **75 percent goes directly back to chapters for donation to their local lawmakers**, while the remaining 25 percent is donated to candidates in campaigns for statewide office.
- Administrative expenses involved in the CPA-PAC's day-to-day operations are underwritten by TSCPA.
- Contribution decisions are based upon each candidate's position on issues of importance to CPAs, the strength of their opposition, the level of the candidate's influence, their need for funds and incumbency.
- It's easy to contribute – online donations can be given at [txcpapac.org](http://txcpapac.org).

Remember, to ensure that the CPA profession continues to have a strong presence in Texas' legislative and regulatory activities, as many members as possible must be involved in the political process. And that process starts with the CPA-PAC and election of friendly office holders.

As Plato said: *One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics is that you end up being governed by your inferiors.* Let's not allow that to happen. Stay informed and participate in the process. ■

For those CPAs who might want to run for office at some point in the future, AICPA has developed a two-part video and brochure that provides CPAs with information on running for political office. These can be found on their website at <http://www.aicpa.org/Advocacy/State/Pages/CPA4Office.aspx>.