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Texas Voters: Meet the Candidates Running for Judge in July Primary Runoffs

Texas Lawyer is publishing Q&As with the judicial candidates who are competing in primary runoffs July 14. Early voting runs from June 29 to July 10.

By Angela Morris | July 14, 2020

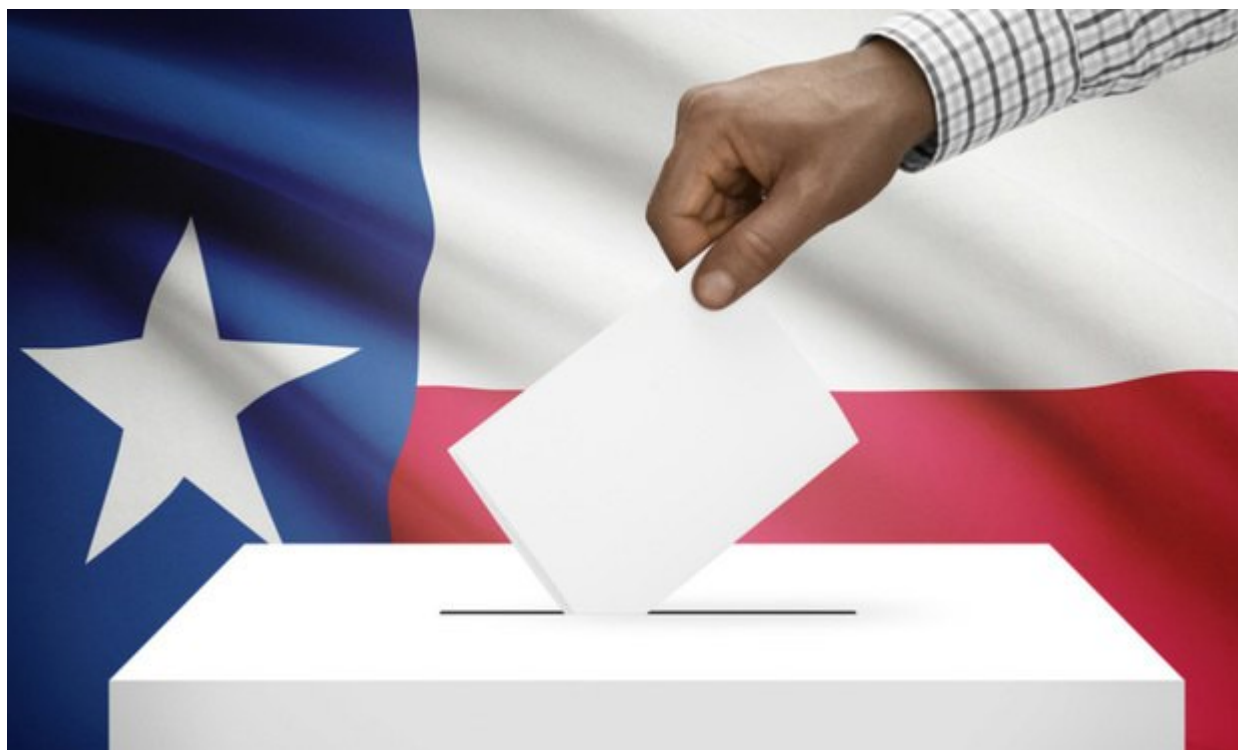


Photo: Shutterstock.com

Twenty-three judicial benches are still up for grabs in primary runoff elections, which were delayed from May to July because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The judicial runoff races include 15 Republican battles and eight Democratic contests.

Texas Lawyer is publishing Q&As with the judicial candidates who are competing in primary runoffs. Early voting runs from June 29 to July 10. Election day is July 14.

Here are the Q&As.

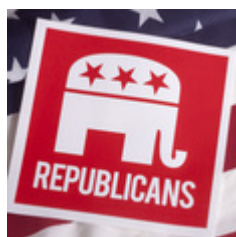
Appellate Courts

First Court of Appeals in Houston



L-R Terry Adams and James Lombardino

These Houston Candidates for Judge Want Your Vote in the Runoff for First Court of Appeals
 (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/02/these-houston-candidates-for-judge-want-your-vote-in-the-runoff-for-first-court-of-appeals/>)



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The Republican runoff candidates for the First Court of Appeals in Houston are dueling for the vote with competing claims of their experience in trial and appellate law and on the bench.

Terry Adams and James Lombardino are vying to become the Place 5 justice on the First Court in the July 14 runoff election.

Whoever wins will compete in November against Democratic candidate Amparo Monique Guerra.

Houston's 14th Court of Appeals



Photo: Shutterstock

Meet Tamika ‘Tami’ Craft and Cheri Thomas, Democratic Runoff Candidates for Judge of Texas’ 14th Court of Appeals (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/12/meet-tamika-tami-craft-and-cheri-thomas-democratic-runoff-candidates-for-judge-of-texas-14th-court-of-appeals/>)



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The two Democratic candidates in the primary runoff for Houston’s Fourteenth Court of Appeals are dueling about their experience—or lack thereof.

In election Q&As for Texas Lawyer, Tamika “Tami” Craft and Cheri Thomas, who both want the vote to become the Place 7 justice candidate, have given arguments about why they’re better than their opponent.

Whoever wins will compete against Republican incumbent Justice Ken Wise in November.

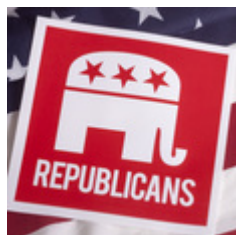
Second Court of Appeals in Fort Worth



L-R: Elizabeth Beach, and Brian Walker

Elizabeth Beach, Brian Walker Vie for Justice of Fort Worth's Second Court in Primary Runoff

(<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/03/elizabeth-beach-brian-walker-vie-for-justice-of-fort-worths-second-court-in-primary-runoff/>)



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In the runoff to become a justice on Fort Worth's Second Court of Appeals, Judge Elizabeth Beach claims her years as a trial judge better qualify her, but opponent Brian Walker argues that his appellate law experience is more extensive.

The pair is competing in the July 14 Republican Primary runoff to become the Second Court's justice for Place 7.

There's no Democrat candidate running in November, which means the runoff winner gets the bench.

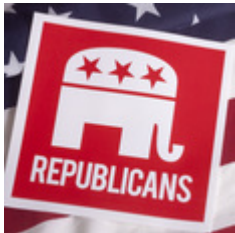
Seventh Court of Appeals in Amarillo



(L to R) Lawrence Doss and Steven Denny (Photo: Courtesy Photo)

These 2 Candidates Are Campaigning For Amarillo's Seventh Court of Appeals

(<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/04/attorney-steven-denny-and-justice-larry-doss-are-campaigning-for-amarillos-7th-court-of-appeals/>)



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Trial law experience versus judicial experience is the match-up in the Republican Primary race between two candidates competing for the Seventh Court of Appeals in Amarillo.

Steven Denny, an Amarillo criminal and appellate attorney, and incumbent Justice Larry Doss of Lubbock are in the race for the Place 4 seat on the court.

The runoff victor will win the bench, since there's no Democratic opponent in November.

Ninth Court of Appeals in Beaumont



Scott Golemon, left, and Jay Wright, right, are competing in the Republican primary runoff for chief justice of the 9th Court of Appeals in Beaumont, Texas.

Texas Lawyers Scott Golemon and Jay Wright Want Your Vote for Chief Justice of Beaumont Court of Appeals
 (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/10/texas-lawyers-scott-golemon-and-jay-wright-want-your-vote-for-chief-justice-of-beaumont-court-of-appeals/>)



The number of trials and appeals handled by the two candidates for chief justice of Beaumont’s Ninth Court of Appeals is becoming a campaign issue in the Republican primary runoff for the seat.

Scott Golemon and Jay Wright are competing for the bench in the runoff, and in a Q&A for Texas Lawyer, they each argued why they’re more qualified for the bench.

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Without a Democrat in the race in November, whoever wins the runoff will be the next chief justice.

Houston Area

Houston’s 164th Civil District Court



Photo: ALM

Indicted Houston Judge Battles Democratic Challenger in July Runoff Election

(<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/18/indicted-houston-judge-battles-democratic-challenger-in-july-runoff-election/>)



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An incumbent judge who is under indictment and is battling for her bench maintains that her 12 years of judicial experience better qualify her in the race. But her challenger claims that someone needs to restore integrity and ethics to Harris County's 164th Civil District Court.

Judge Alexandra Smoots-Thomas and Cheryl Elliott Thornton are the two candidates in the Democratic Primary runoff race for the Houston-based court.

Whoever wins will face Republican candidate Michael Landrum in the November election.

339th Criminal District Court in Houston



L-R:Candance White, Te'iva Bell. Courtesy photos.

Te'iva Bell and Candance White Seek The Vote For Houston's 339th District Court (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/18/teiva-bell-and-candance-white-seek-the-vote-for-judge-of-houstons-339th-district-court/>)



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In the Democratic race for the 339th Criminal District Court in Houston, candidate Te'iva Bell claims that her criminal law experience sets her apart, while opponent Candance White stresses her broad range of experience including work as a municipal court judge.

Bell and White seek the Democratic nomination for the Houston-based criminal court.

Whoever wins will face incumbent Judge Jesse McClure, a Republican, in the November election.

505th District Court in Richmond



Kali Morgan of Fresno, and Richmond trial and appellate litigator Surendran K. Pattel, competing in the race for the 505th District Court in Richmond. Courtesy photos.

Kali Morgan and Surendran K. Pattel Seek Democratic Nomination for Judge of Texas' 505th District Court (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/15/kali-morgan-and-surendran-k-pattel-see-democratic-nomination-for-judge-of-texas-505th-district-court/>)



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One Democratic candidate in the runoff for Fort Bend County's 505th District Court is running on her family law experience, while her opponent says his multicultural background will better serve the area's diverse population.

Kali Morgan and Surendran K. Pattel are candidates in the Democratic runoff for the Richmond-based family district court.

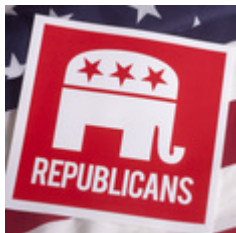
Whoever wins will run against Republican candidate David S. Perwin in November's general election.

457th District Court in Conroe



Photo: Andrew Cline/ Shutterstock

Meet Vince Santini and Eric Yollick, Republicans Running for Judge of Montgomery County's 457th District Court (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/18/meet-vince-santini-and-eric-yollick-republicans-running-for-judge-of-montgomery-countys-457th-district-court/>)



In the Republican runoff for Montgomery County's 457th District Court, Vince Santini argues he's more qualified because of his hunger to serve the community, his experience handling large dockets and his better temperament than opponent Eric Yollick.

Whoever wins the Republican runoff for the newly created district court will compete against Democratic candidate Marc M. Meyer in the November election.

Texas Lawyer is publishing Q&As with judicial candidates in primary runoff elections. Early voting runs from June 29 to July 10, and election day is July 14.

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Dallas Area

Dallas County Criminal District Court No. 3



Photo: Rob Crandall/Shutterstock.com

Teresa Jan Hawthorne, Audra Ladawn Riley Face Off for Judge of Dallas County Criminal District Court No. 3 (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/15/teresa-jan-hawthorne-audra-ladawn-riley-face-off-for-judge-of-dallas-county-criminal-district-court-no-3/>)



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The Democratic runoff for Dallas County's Criminal District Court No. 3 has become a competition of which candidate has the most relevant criminal law experience.

Teresa Jan Hawthorne and Audra Ladawn Riley are competing for the Democratic nomination for the criminal court bench in Dallas.

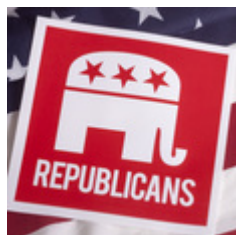
The runoff victor will win the bench, as there's no Republican opponent running in November.

401st District Court in McKinney



Sarah Fox,left, and George Flint,right. Courtesy photos

Meet George Flint and Sarah Fox, Republican Candidates for Judge of Texas' 401st District Court in McKinney (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/09/meet-george-flint-and-sarah-fox-republican-candidates-for-judge-of-texas-401st-district-court-in-mckinney/>)



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The two judicial candidates in the runoff Collin County's 401st District Court have different ideas of the court's caseload and different arguments about how their experience makes them the better pick.

George Flint, a partner in Scheef & Stone, and McKinney criminal-defense lawyer Sarah Fox are competing for the Republican nomination for the vacant bench in Collin County.

Whoever wins will go on to compete against Democratic candidate Tonya Holt in November.

431st District Court in Denton



Denton County solo practitioners Jim Johnson, left, and Derbha Jones, right.

Meet the Candidates Seeking Republican Nomination for Judge of Texas' 431st District Court in Denton: Jim Johnson, Derbha Jones (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/11/meet-the-candidates-seeking-republican-nomination-for-judge-of-texas-431st-district-court-in-denton-jim-johnson-derbha-jones/>)



Two candidates in the Republican Primary runoff for Denton County's 431st District Court are both arguing that their legal experience better qualifies them for the seat.

Jim Johnson and Derbha Jones are competing for the Republican nomination for the Denton-based bench.

The winner will face off against Democratic candidate Diana Weitzel in November.

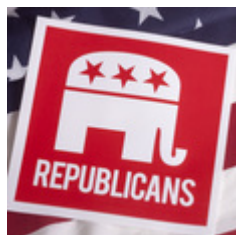
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422nd District Court in Kaufman



Shelton Gibbs IV, left, and Chad Johnson, right. Courtesy photos

2 Republicans Compete for Judge of Kaufman’s 422nd District Court: Shelton Gibbs IV and Chad Johnson
 (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/16/2-republicans-compete-for-judge-of-kaufmans-422nd-district-court-shelton-gibbs-iv-and-chad-johnson/>)



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Civil law versus criminal law experience—and which is more important for Kaufman County’s 422nd District Court—has become a campaign issue in the Republican runoff race.

Shelton Gibbs IV and Chad Johnson are the two candidates in the race.

No one is running on the Democratic side in November, which means that the runoff victor will win the bench.

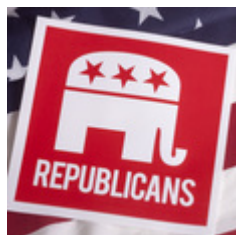
North Texas

99th District Court in Lubbock



Former County Court-at-Law Judge Phillip Hays and Associate Judge Kara L. Darnell.

Ex-Colleagues Kara L. Darnell and Phillip Hays Face Off in Republican Runoff for Judge of Texas’ 99th District Court
 (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/04/ex-colleagues-kara-l-darnell-and-phillip-hays-face-off-in-republican-runoff-for-judge-of-texas-99th-district-court/>)



Two former colleagues of the same law firm are facing off in the Republican Primary runoff for Lubbock County’s 99th District Court.

Both Kara L. Darnell and Phillip Hays have judicial experience, and they’re using it to argue why they are more qualified than their opponent. Texas Lawyer is publishing Q&As with the judicial candidates in primary runoffs. Early voting runs from June 29 to July 10, and election day is July 14.

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Lubbock County’s 140th District Court in Lubbock



Left to right: Douglas Freitag and Tom Brummett. Courtesy photos

Tom Brummett, Douglas Freitag Want Your Vote for Judge of Lubbock's 140th District Court (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/08/tom-brummett-douglas-freitag-want-your-vote-for-judge-of-lubbocks-140th-district-court/>)



Two longtime prosecutors are vying for the Republican nomination for Lubbock County's 140th District Court.

Both prosecutor Tom Brummett and criminal-defense attorney Douglas Freitag spent most of their careers in district attorneys offices. But now, Freitag argues that he's also spent time in private criminal-defense practice, which better qualifies him for the bench.

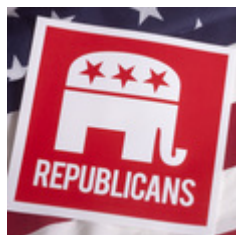
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104th District Court in Abilene



Kevin Willhelm, left, and Jeff Propst, right. Courtesy photos

Jeff Propst, Kevin Willhelm Compete in Runoff for Judge of 104th District Court in Abilene
 (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/16/jeff-propst-kevin-willhelm-compete-in-runoff-for-judge-of-104th-district-court-in-abilene/>)



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While one candidate for Taylor County's 104th District Court argues he has more expertise in criminal law that makes him the better pick, his opponent claims to have represented more criminal law clients and handled more criminal jury trials.

Jeff Propst and Kevin Willhelm are dueling in the Republican runoff for the 104th District Court in Abilene.

Whoever wins will get the bench since there's no Democratic candidate in November.

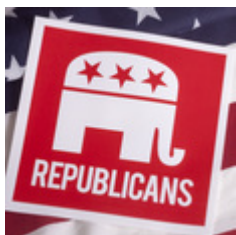
Central Texas

19th District Court in Waco



L-R Kristi DeCluitt and Thomas West. Courtesy photos.

Kristi DeCluitt, Thomas West Seek Votes in Republican Primary Runoff for Judge of the 19th District Court in Waco
 (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/05/kristi-decluitt-thomas-west-seek-votes-in-republican-primary-runoff-for-judge-of-the-19th-district-court-in-waco/>)



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The two candidates who are running off for McLennan County's 19th District Court both have some experience on the bench, but they are making a campaign issue about just what that experience is, and when it occurred.

In the Republican runoff election, Kristi DeCluitt and Thomas West are competing for the vote.

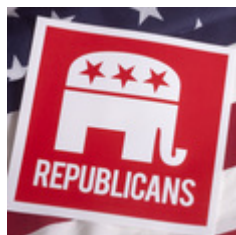
The winner will take the bench, as there's no Democratic opponent in November.

426th District Court in Belton



Jeff Parker and Steve Duskie. Courtesy photos

Republican Lawyers Steve Duskie and Jeff Parker Are Running for Judge of Texas' 426th District Court
 (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/09/republican-lawyers-steve-duskie-and-jeff-parker-are-running-for-judge-of-texas-426th-district-court/>)



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It's a competition between legal experience versus deep roots in the community for the two candidates in a runoff for Bell County's 426th District Court.

Steve Duskie and Jeff Parker are in the Republican Primary runoff for the bench in Belton.

Whoever wins will run uncontested in November, as there's no Democratic candidate in the race.

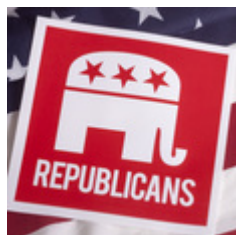
East Texas

114th District Court in Tyler



Austin Reeve Jackson, left, and Jarad Kent, right.

Meet the Candidates for Judge in the Run Off Election for Tyler’s 114th District Court
 (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/05/meet-the-candidates-for-judge-in-the-run-off-election-for-tylers-114th-district-court/>)



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Touting their careers as trial lawyers, Austin Reeve Jackson and Jarad Kent are both arguing they are more qualified for Smith County’s 114th District Court.

In a race that pits criminal law experience against civil, Jackson and Kent are competing in the Republican Primary runoff for the bench in Tyler. Texas Lawyer is publishing Q&As with the judicial candidates in runoff elections. Early voting runs from June 29 to July 10, and election day is July 14.

No Democrat is running in November, which means that the runoff victor will take the bench in 2021.

West Texas

El Paso County’s 383rd District Court



Lucila Flores, and Lyda Ness Garcia. Courtesy photos

Meet the Lawyers Campaigning for Judge of Texas' 383rd District Court: Democrats Lucila Flores and Lyda Ness Garcia (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/11/meet-the-lawyers-campaigning-for-judge-of-texas-383rd-district-court-democrats-lucila-flores-and-lyda-ness-garcia/>)



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Which candidate has the most family law experience is a campaign issue in the runoff for the 383rd District Court.

Seeking the Democratic party's nomination, candidates Lucila Flores and Lyda Ness Garcia are preparing for the runoff election in July.

Whoever wins the runoff will compete in November against Republican candidate Phyllis Martinez Gonzalez.

El Paso County's 388th District Court



Marlene Gonzalez, left, and judge Laura Strathmann, right. Courtesy photos

‘She Lacks the Judicial Temperament’: Incumbent Judge Battles Challenger in Democratic Race for Texas’ 388th District Court (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/11/she-lacks-the-judicial-temperament-incumbent-judge-battles-challenger-in-democratic-race-for-texas-388th-district-court/>)



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Allegations of dirty campaigning have arisen in the Democratic runoff for the 388th District Court in El Paso.

Incumbent Judge Laura Strathmann is defending her seat against challenger Marlene Gonzalez, who has raised campaign issues centered on the alleged inefficiency of Strathmann’s court. But Strathmann fired back, alleging in an election questionnaire that Gonzalez has called her racist, and told voters that Strathmann isn’t Hispanic and can’t understand El Paso’s Hispanic majority.

Gonzalez denied it.

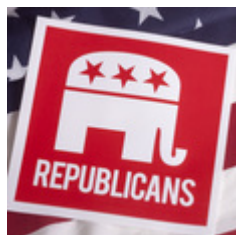
Whoever wins the runoff will win the seat, since there’s no Republican candidate running in November.

Midland County’s 142nd District Court in Midland



Photo: Diego M. Radzinski/ALM

Lawyers Mary Baker and David G. Rogers Are in the Runoff Election for Judge of Midland’s 142nd District Court (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/08/lawyers-mary-baker-and-david-g-rogers-are-in-the-runoff-election-for-judge-of-midlands-142nd-district-court/>)



Midland County suffered from the COVID-19 shutdown and the oil and gas crash that followed. Now the two Republican candidates for Midland’s 142nd District Court are arguing that their respective experience is what the county needs.

Mary Baker and David G. Rogers are competing in the Republican Primary runoff election for the bench.

Without a Democratic candidate in November, the winner of the Republican runoff will win the bench.

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South Texas

138th District Court in Brownsville



Photo: Rob Crandall/Shutterstock.com

Meet the Candidates for Judge of Brownsville’s 138th District Court: Helen Delgadillo and Gabriel Gabby Garcia (<https://www.law.com/texaslawyer/2020/06/18/meet-the-candidates-for-judge-of-brownsvilles-138th-district-court-helen-delgadillo-and-gabriel-gabby-garcia/>)



Democratic candidate Helen Delgadillo argues she’s better qualified for Cameron County’s 138th District Court because she’s gained the experience and honed the temperament she needs during her years as a public school teacher, lawyer and municipal court judge.

Delgadillo and Gabriel Gabby Garcia are the two Democrats competing in the primary runoff for the 138th District Court of Cameron County.

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There is no Republican candidate in November, which means the runoff winner will take the bench.

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