



# Diane Trautman · Harris County Clerk

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT: Communications & Voter Outreach

county.clerk@cco.hctx.net

713-274-9550

## Harris County Implements Virtual Poll Worker for Language Assistance

***Early Voting Begins February 18 for the March 3 Primary Elections***

(Houston, TX) – The Harris County Clerk's Office is implementing a multilingual virtual poll worker (MVP) system for the upcoming Primary Elections to help voters who need language assistance. Powered by LanguageLine™ the MVP system utilizes an iPad-based connection to interpreters that can assist in dozens of languages, including American Sign Language. This innovative technology is currently being used by jurisdictions in Texas and California to help make the voting process accessible and inclusive to all county voters. The new system will not replace bilingual poll workers, but will be accessible to people who speak other languages, beside the four currently required by law in Harris County – English, Spanish, Vietnamese and Chinese.

"We are very excited to offer this new technology that will help both voters and poll workers," said Harris County Clerk Dr. Diane Trautman. "The system connects to interpreters in real time via a video screen. We will have the iPads at all of our Early Voting locations."

Early Voting for the March 3<sup>rd</sup> Primary Elections begins Tuesday, February 18 and ends Friday, February 28. A total of 52 polling locations will be open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. each day, except Sunday, February 23 when they will open from 1 to 6 p.m.

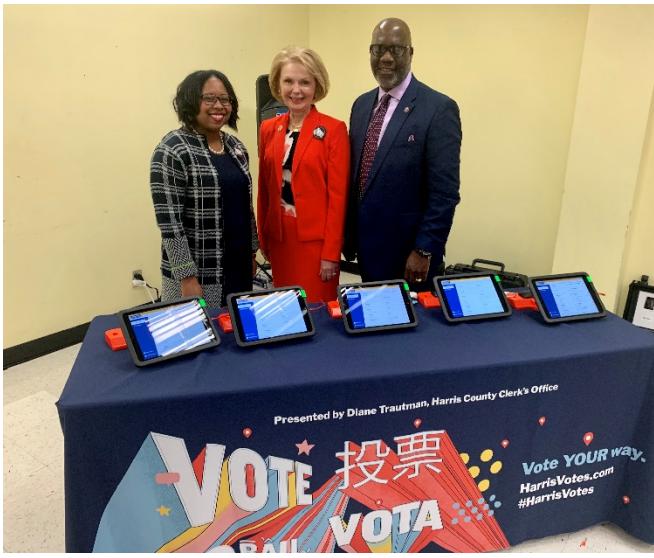
Texas is an open primary state, which means voters are not registered to a particular party and can choose whether to vote in the Republican or Democratic Primary Election, but they cannot vote in both primaries.

"I am pleased to announce that for the first time in Harris County, there will be Democratic and Republican polls at all voting sites," added Dr. Trautman. "No eligible voter will be turned away for being at the wrong location."

If no candidate receives a majority of the vote in the primary, the top two candidates with the most votes will compete in a primary runoff on May 26.

Individual sample ballots for both parties and a complete early voting schedule are available online at [HarrisVotes.com](http://HarrisVotes.com). The deadline to request a ballot by mail for these Primary Elections (received, not post marked) is Friday, February 21.

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(Photo L to R: Chief Deputy Teneshia Hudspeth,  
Harris County Clerk Diane Trautman,  
Harris County Administrator of Elections Michael Winn)



(Houston, TX) – The Harris County Clerk's Office is implementing multilingual virtual poll worker to provide language assistance during Early Voting for the Primary Elections. (Photo: Harris County Clerk Diane Trautman pictured here with Chinese Language Outreach Coordinator JoAnne Ray and Journalist Brenda Chen)