

Know Before You Go: TX-31 District Primer

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Recent polling has Democratic challenger M.J. Hegar ahead by 2%. That's too close! With your help, we're going to flip this seat for the Democrats in 2018.

About the Incumbent:

Introduction: Republican **John Carter**, a native of Houston, attended Texas Tech and The University of Texas Law School. He has represented the 31st since 2003, after working as a lawyer and for twenty years as a district court judge. He served as the Secretary of the House Republican conference for three terms. He is married with four children and six grandchildren.

Issues: Carter is a stalwart fiscal and social conservative voting with Trump's agenda 97.7% of the time. He supports expanding ICE and increasing the number of border patrol agents. He calls the Affordable Care Act as "disastrous" and has voted repeatedly to repeal it. Staunchly anti-choice, he voted to ban abortions after 20 weeks.

Committees: He serves on the House Committee on Appropriations: as Chair, Subcommittee on Military Construction, Veterans Affairs and Related Agencies; and the Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice, Science, and Related Agencies.

Recent Elections: Carter won the 2014 general election against Democrat Louie Minor by more than thirty percentage points. In 2016 Carter prevailed over Democrat Mike Clark by twenty points. In the 2018 primary, Carter beat his opponent by a thirty-point margin.

Strengths: A trusted member of Republican leadership, his long history in the community appeals to conservative voters. He demonstrated bipartisanship when Democrat Henry Cuellar attended a recent fundraiser.

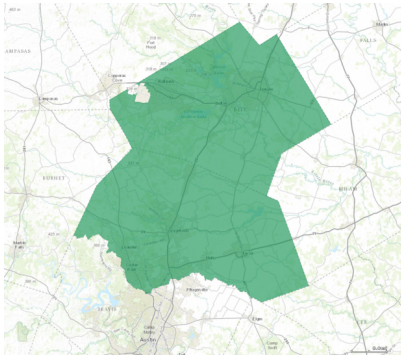
Potential Weaknesses: Carter is said to be out of touch, holding virtual town halls rather than meeting with constituents. Less than 2% of his war chest comes from small donors; he relies heavily on corporate and PAC donations. He opposes the ACA. Carter voted "yes" on legislation mandating hospitals report undocumented people seeking treatment, and endorsed proposals to end or amend birthright citizenship.

About the Challenger:

Introduction: Democrat **M.J. Hegar** grew up in TX-31. After receiving her BA at University of Texas in Austin, she joined the Air Force and served three tours of duty in Afghanistan as a search-and-rescue pilot. In 2009, her medevac helicopter was shot down by the Taliban. She received a Purple Heart and Distinguished Flying Cross With Valor in recognition of her courage. In 2012, she was one of the lead plaintiffs in a lawsuit that successfully challenged the constitutionality of the Combat Exclusion Policy, which prevented women from serving in combat. As a result of her efforts, the policy was repealed in January 2013. In 2016, Hegar received an Executive MBA at University of Texas in Austin. Married with children, she works as an executive coach and consultant.

Issues: As a wounded vet and consultant to a local hospital system, M.J. Hegar understands the importance of quality health care and has firsthand knowledge of how families must struggle to obtain it. Fighting for affordable health care, protecting people with pre-existing conditions, and lowering the cost of prescription drugs are central issues of her campaign. She stands for honoring veterans and supporting the military and their families by supporting strong national security policies, protecting paychecks for the military, and rejecting efforts to privatize the VA. She is committed to protecting Social Security and Medicare.

Strengths: TX-31 is home to one of the largest military bases in the country. Hegar's service should be a plus in this district as she understands issues of importance to military families. She is endorsed by VoteVets, Emily's List, End Citizens' United, the Texas AFL-CIO, and the League of Conservation Voters. Her compelling personal story will inspire voters who are eager to support a strong, principled, outspoken woman whose struggles and circumstances are similar to their own.



TX-31: Better Know the District

Geography

The district includes the portion of Austin located in Williamson County and most of the fast-growing northern suburbs of Austin, as well as a portion of the area surrounding Fort Hood.

Citizenry

The district's total population is 721,698. TX-31 is 77% white, 23.1% latinx, 11.5 black, and 4.4% Asian. Unemployment is 9.4%. The median household income is \$58,960.

Elections

The Cook Political Report's Partisan Voter Index rates TX-31 as 10 percentage points more Republican than the national average, and recent elections confirm that this district is a GOP stronghold. Since incumbent Rep. John Carter was elected to Congress in 2002, he has won his elections by margins ranging from 20-65 points. In 2016, he beat his Democratic opponent by 22 points.

Higher Education

The district is home to several colleges and universities. Central Texas College (39,000 undergraduates) and Texas A&M University—Central Texas (3470 students) are both located in Killeen. Temple College (5288 students) and Texas A&M College of Medicine (600 students) are both located in Temple. The state's flagship University of Texas at Austin (50,000 undergraduates) is located just south of the district.

Industries

Technology, health care, and the military are three major economic drivers for the district. Dell Computer Corporation is headquartered in Round Rock where the company employs 16,000 people. The district is also home to McLane Scott & White Children's Hospital, Olin E. Teague Veterans' Medical Center, and the Scott & White Medical Center, all in Temple. Scott & White, a large teaching hospital, employs 12,000 people. Although it is not located within the boundaries of the district, the University of Texas at Austin employs 30,000 people, a number of whom live in the district. Finally, the district's proximity to Fort Hood lends a strong military presence. The city of Killeen, directly adjacent to Fort Hood, is economically dependent on the presence of the military post, which includes many families. Military cutbacks have historically had a strongly negative impact on Killeen.

TX-31: Facts & Stats

Population Centers

- Temple, pop. 66,102
- Round Rock, pop. ~100,00
- Austin (partial), pop. 947,890
- Killeen (partial), pop. 127,921

2016 Presidential Results

- Clinton: 40%
- Trump: 53%

2016 House Results

- Clark (D): 104K (37%)
- Carter (R): 166K (58%)

2014 House Results

- Minor (D) : 46K (32%)
- Carter (R): 92K (64%)