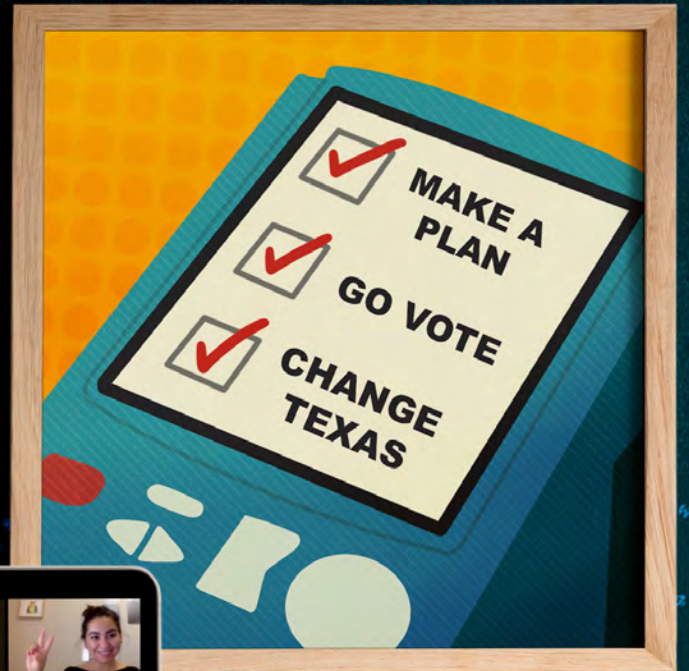




TEXAS  
FREEDOM  
NETWORK  
SINCE 1995

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



When I reflect back on the work of the Texas Freedom Network in 2020, this word repeatedly comes to mind: transition.

First, there was the transition here at TFN.

After 16 years at the helm and building TFN into the powerhouse that it is today, Kathy Miller stepped down from her role as president.

I am truly honored to follow in Kathy's footsteps as the new president of TFN. I am also honored to follow the other great women who have led this organization since its founding in 1995.

Yes, 1995! That means TFN turned 25 in 2020. I have been with TFN for 14 of those years. In that time, I have seen TFN transition from an organization with a loyal following and small but dedicated staff to what it is today, in no small part thanks to supporters like you. And our staff is now the largest it has ever been, allowing TFN to branch out to communities in all regions of the state and expand our issue advocacy portfolio to include matters of racial, economic and climate justice. That is in addition to our unwavering commitment to fight for full LGBTQ equality, access to reproductive health care – including abortion – and strong neighborhood public schools, and much more.

But Texas becoming a place where the progressive values I just mentioned – your values – are reflected isn't possible without lasting political change.

On the heels of a historic election, our state is in the middle of a transition that suggests a more progressive Texas that is inclusive and works for all is on its way.

As you can see in this message and in the pages of this report, we have accomplished much in this past year and the 24 before it.

It was also undeniably a difficult year, marked by a pandemic that caused so much pain for so many and will continue to impact Texas and the world well into 2021, and a long-overdue national reckoning on racial injustice. Nevertheless, I remain confident that the resiliency of our communities will carry Texas through these and future challenges.

I am excited and humbled to lead us at this challenging time – to be a partner, with you and our team, as we honor the mission of TFN and continue to build a reflective democracy in our state and nation.

In the fight,

*Val Benavidez*  
TFN President

# OUR FIGHT FOR A NEW TEXAS GOES ON



The counting in key states following the Nov. 3 General Election should serve as an important reminder: Every vote matters.

Now we know that change is coming for our nation after four long years of darkness and division.

To be clear, the election results weren't all that we hoped for in Texas. But the numbers here also tell a powerful story: the youth vote played a major role in making Texas – for the first time in decades – a battleground state at the national level.

The huge turnout helped shrink Republican majorities in the state Senate and the State Board of Education. And Democrats protected their gains from 2018 in other critical state races.

We have always known that changing Texas will take time and a lot of work. So the Texas Freedom Network and Texas Rising remain intensely focused on our long-term strategy stretching back well over a decade now – organizing the fast-growing and rising generation of young, diverse, progressive voters that is clearly the future of this state.



**And we are looking for bigger victories in Texas in 2022 and 2024.**

## TFN BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rabbi Neal Katz, Chair  
James Aldrete  
Margie Becker  
Rev. Dr. Larry Bethune  
Rabbi Neil Blumofe

Emma Brockway  
Dr. Mark Chancey  
Stephanie Chiarello  
Cary Clack  
Joni Cohan

Sally Drews  
Hon. Sarah Eckhardt  
Odus Evbharu  
Olac Fuentes  
Diane Ireson

Dr. Annie Linebarger  
Colleen Loper  
Katrina Mendiola  
Cecile Richards  
Ashley Thomas

# TEXAS RISING POWERS MASSIVE YOUTH VOTER MOBILIZATION



TFN's organizing program for young Texans, Texas Rising, overcame the challenges of a public health crisis to lead extensive voter registration and get-out-the-vote efforts, and helped propel Texas into battleground state status.

After the COVID-19 pandemic cancelled or curtailed in-person organizing, Texas Rising activists across the state took their efforts online, using digital organizing tools to reach out to millions of young Texans with the information they needed to register and cast their votes, while remaining safe.

The efforts resulted in tens of thousands additional young Texans registering to vote as our state set a new record for registered voters.

As the Nov. 3 General Election approached, Texas Rising also led one of the largest get-out-the-vote operations in Texas focused on mobilizing young voters.

In total, Texas Rising reached out to approximately 2 million young voters, including more than 1 million young voters of color, to get them to the polls. The figures mean that just about every young voter of color in the state with a known cell phone received at least one get-out-the-vote message from Texas Rising by Election Day.

## TEXAS RISING BY THE NUMBERS

**3,135,760**  
TEXTS SENT

**156,102**  
CALLS MADE

**263,000**  
PIECES OF MAIL  
SENT

**825**  
YOUNG LEADERS  
TRAINED

These efforts helped boost overall youth voter turnout and positioned Texas Rising as an organizing force at the Texas Legislature and in coming election years.

# AT THE SBOE, A NEW AFRICAN AMERICAN STUDIES COURSE, AND SOME PROGRESS ON SEX ED AND CLIMATE SCIENCE

TFN's year of advocacy at the Texas State Board of Education featured a positive development for ethnic studies and some mixed results on sex education and climate science.

In the first part of the year, the board took the positive step of unanimously voting to adopt an African American Studies course for the state's public schools.

It joined a Mexican American Studies course the board approved in 2018, and made Texas the first state to adopt both.

On sex education, the board took a few positive steps after more than two decades of stubbornly adhering to a failed approach. The board in November voted to approve a new set of health curriculum standards, which cover sex education. The standards improved by including information about contraception. But unsurprisingly, the board refused to even acknowledge the existence of LGBTQ people in the standards.

On climate science, in an extraordinary move, the board rushed a new set of standards in only a few months. The board did the bare minimum on addressing the global emergency of climate change, and ignored calls to put the process on pause and get the standards right.

**TFN will be back at the board in 2021 as board members consider next health textbooks and an additional set of climate science curriculum standards.**



# FOR A MORE JUST TEXAS

Just Texas, the TFN's program that works to elevate the voices of progressive clergy and progressive people of faith, has continued its mission to promote equality and social justice, including reproductive freedom and LGBTQ equality.

In preparation to bring together progressive faith voices to the Capitol in 2021, Just Texas in 2020 welcomed more Reproductive Freedom Congregations – faith communities who support access to reproductive health care services – bringing the total to 25.

2020 was also the year when Just Texas debuted a new podcast, *At the Edge of the Lege: Where Abortion, Faith & Politics Collide*, adding a progressive voice to the discussions about faith and politics in Texas.

And Just Texas also engaged in the nationwide demand for racial justice following the murder of George Floyd, hosting an online panel discussion that featured members of the faith community and on-the-ground organizers and activists.



## 2020 TRIBUTE GIFTS

### IN MEMORY OF

**Serena Simmons Connelly**  
By Tom Connelly

**Phil Durst**  
By Michael Churgin  
Nina Cortell & Dr. Bob Fine  
Andrew Ingram

**Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg**  
By Craig Buxton  
Jennifer Cha

**Derek Howard**  
By Diane Ireson & Rowland Cook

**Audrey & Norman Kaplan**  
By Cynthia Reynolds

**Congressman John Lewis**  
By Cheryl Cook

**Scott Rogers**  
By Renee & David Rogers

**Ethyl & Manny Rosenblatt**  
By Diane Ireson & Rowland Cook

**Ethyl Rosenblatt**  
By Meryl Neuren  
Janice Pierce

**Patricia Vaughan**  
By Marty Vaughan

**Nora Esmeria Grimaldo Walters**  
By Darcy Grigsby

### IN HONOR OF

**Danny Altman**  
By Leslie Schlessinger

**Jane & Henry Baker**  
By Heather Baker-Sullivan

**Jeannette & Leon Berger**  
By Judy Berger

**Rev. Dr. Larry Bethune**  
By The Neighborhood

**Joe & Kathy Boden**  
By Cece Bechelli

**COVID-19 Victims**  
By Owen Wolkowitz

**Margaret DeWyngaert**  
By Margaret Keon

**Gerry Eiselman**  
By Jennifer Berezan

**Anna Forward**  
By Catharine Deely  
Kate Zentall

**Nancy Genn**  
By Helen Marcus

**Jan & Bob Ginsberg**  
By Beno Michel

**Istiharoh Glasgow**  
By Livia Glasgow

**Jane & Henry Baker**  
By Heather Baker-Sullivan

**Adam Goldberg**  
By John Tibbetts  
**Lorrie Goldin**  
By Vita Wallace

**Ron E. Grant**  
By Benida Solow

**Hard Working Capitol Staffers**  
By Monty Exter

**Ann Payne Haslanger**  
By Elisabeth Rosen

**Dr. & Mrs. Harold C. Heintz**  
By Andrew Heintz

**Lizzy Hersey**  
By Terry Maphis

**Muffy Hersey**  
By Mark Burton

**Richard Hersey**  
By Elizabeth Hersey

**Berniece Holt**  
By Juan Acevedo

**Nita Hornbeck**  
By Anita Knight

**Patty Houff**  
By Margaret McTigue

**Marc Houdeschel**  
By Frances Halperin

**Sam Smoot**  
By Dr. Scherry Johnson

**Tara Kott**  
By Karen Rivo  
**Polina Krass**  
By Bella Powers

**Renee Linde**  
By Mark Browning  
Michaela Gray

**Margery Loeb**  
By Nina Di Leo

**Andrea Lum**  
By Colette Fujimoto

**Palmer and Lucas McLean**  
By Mary McLean

**Kathleen McTigue & Nick Nyhart**  
By David Miller

**Kathy Miller**  
By Dr. Mark Chancey  
Danna Half  
Carol & Gary Miller  
Pastors For Texas Children

**Marion Moses**  
By Betty Jennings

**Beth O'Leary**  
By Dorothy O'Leary

**Deedee Ostfeld**  
By Rhonda Glick  
Sandy Harris  
Marlene Matzner  
Jody Sweed

**Kay Richarson**  
By Jeffrey Anderson

**Ralph Rogers**  
By Peter Rosenthal

**Osmara Santana**  
By Diane Ireson & Rowland Cook

**Gigi Sohn**  
By Jessica Almond

**The Amazing TFN Staff**  
By Rosann Mariappuram

**Patrick Thornton**  
By Robert Thornton

**Barbara & Mike Weiner**  
By Neal Daragh Powers

**Ted Whatley**  
By Diane Ireson & Rowland Cook

“As many of us wake up to the work that communities and organizations have done for years to stop and prevent police brutality, it is time for us to learn how to step in and work alongside these courageous activists,”

– Sonja Miller  
TFN OUTREACH AND FAITH DIRECTOR



## 2020 FREEDOM COUNCIL

*Thank you to all the donors whose generosity and vision supports our commitment to boldly meet the challenges of today and to fight for a better tomorrow.*

Naomi Aberly  
Airlift  
Elma Cantú Aldrete &  
James Aldrete  
The Stanford &  
Joan Alexander Foundation  
All In for Voting  
Tracy Anne Allred &  
Dr. Mark Chancey  
America Votes  
Paula S. Arnold &  
Theo Pinson  
Maida & Paul Asofsky  
Atchley & Associates  
Auburn Seminary  
Bonnie Bain  
Carol Barger &  
William Elliott  
Beacon Fund  
Margie Becker &  
Glenn Smith  
Maggie & David Bettner  
Dorianna Blitt  
Blueprint Voter Fund  
Mary Brandt & Stacey Berg  
Susan Brodsky &  
Kimberly Allen  
Kaki & Larry Buck  
Mary Kay &  
Dr. Gene Buinger  
Marily Cantú Burbes &  
Craig Burbes  
Annette Carozzi &  
Dan Bullock  
Colleen Casey &  
Tim Maloney  
Catena Foundation  
Lisa & Ky Cauble  
Joni & Bob Cohan  
Collaborative for Gender +  
Reproductive Equity  
Connecticut Street  
Foundation  
Tom Connelly  
Amy & William Conway

Cooperative Impact Lab  
Mary Jo Culver  
Kathleen Curry &  
Scott Sawtelle  
CWA-COPE  
Susan &  
Richard DeWyngaert  
Libby & Hon. Lloyd Doggett  
Sally & Tom Dunning  
Ebrahimi Family Foundation  
Robbie Edwards &  
Bob Kendrick  
The Jeff Eller Group  
Energy Foundation  
Amy & Lee Fikes  
Mary Flanagan &  
Michael Lichtenstein  
Marion T. Flores  
Ford Foundation  
Victoria Ford &  
Hon. Scott Hochberg  
David O. Frederick  
Karen & Buster Freedman  
Friedel Family Foundation  
Future Forward USA Action  
Donna & Michael Gagarin  
Rachel E. Gelman  
Cheryl & Jim George  
Rhonda &  
Dr. Paul Gerson  
Al Giles  
Picce & Bob Glast  
Rachel Glast  
Molly Gochman  
Melanie Gray & Mark Wawro  
Greater Houston  
Community Foundation  
Green Advocacy Project  
Richard Hartgrove &  
Gary Cooper  
Janet Hebert  
Heising-Simons Foundation  
Paul Heller  
Maria Cantú Hexsel &  
Ricardo Hexsel

Darlene Hicks  
Anita & Stanley Hirsh Trust  
Hive Fund for Climate &  
Gender Justice  
Hixon Family Foundation  
Karen & Leonard Huber  
Diane Ireson &  
Rowland Cook  
Rachel & Jonah Jackson  
Julie Jacobson  
Susan Jacobson  
Philanthropic Fund  
Rusty & John Jagers  
Rabbis Nancy Kasten &  
David Stern  
Jennifer & Rabbi Neal Katz  
Tom Kearns  
Harris & Eliza Kempner Fund  
Lisa & Peter Kraus  
Carole & Ronald Krist  
Michael & Alice Kuhn  
Foundation  
Janey & Melvin Lack  
Peggy Leff & Bruce Smith  
Linde-Sands Family Fund  
Dr. Annie Linebarger &  
Jason Jones  
Libby & Dale Linebarger  
Margery & Robert Loeb  
Susan & Collin Loewen  
Sheila &  
Norman Loewenstern  
Amy Lowrey & Jason Sugg  
Judy & Bruce MacKenzie  
Nancy & Neal Manne  
Marchelle Ltd. Fund of the  
Dallas Jewish Community  
Foundation  
Elena & Kenneth Marks  
Debbie Martin &  
Robert Sullivan  
Rosanna Martinez  
Janie & Cappy McGarr  
Sally McIntosh  
Ann & Jim McMullan

Sherry & Gerald Merfish  
Marjorie Meyer  
MFI Foundation  
Cynthia &  
George Mitchell  
Foundation  
Ginni & Richard Mithoff  
Susan Moffat & Nick Barbaro  
Susan Mooberry &  
Gregory Patterson  
Marie & Ronald Moore  
Amber A. Mostyn  
Movement Voter Project  
The Neavel Family  
New American  
Majority Fund  
Normandie Foundation  
Linda Steen Norris &  
H. Lee Norris  
Bettye Nowlin  
Open Philanthropy  
Deedee Ostfeld  
Panta Rhea Foundation  
Margaret Payne  
Penney Family Fund  
Janis & Joe Pinnelli  
Preston-Werner Ventures  
Ann-Marie & Bob Price  
Timothy Price  
Susan Pritzker  
Qinti Fund  
Bonnie Reed &  
Stuart Schlossberg  
William Resnick  
Alice Kleberg Reynolds  
Foundation  
Chula Reynolds &  
Sophia Collier  
Hon. Alec Rhodes  
Cecile Richards &  
Kirk Adams  
Renee & David Rogers  
Marci Rosenberg &  
Benjamin Samuels

Joyce &  
Amb. Arthur Schechter  
Service Employees  
International Union  
Susan &  
David Sheppard  
Judith Shure &  
James Mattingly  
Lisa Simmons  
Barbara & Louis Sklar  
Andrea & Chad Smith  
Pat & Bud Smothers  
Sally & Bob Sohn  
Nancy & John Solana  
Dale & Stephen Sonnenberg  
Lynn & Rabbi Sam Stahl  
Stardust Fund  
Tracy & Gary Stein  
Phyllis & Ron Steinhart  
Norma & Donald Stone  
SXSW Community Fund  
Texas AFL-CIO  
Texas State Teachers  
Association  
John Thomason  
Peter Thorne  
Tides Foundation  
Martha Claire Tompkins  
Dani Uribe & Andrew Fink  
Tanya Washburn &  
Katherine Elsley  
Way To Rise  
Way to Win  
WE LEAD Fund  
Rebecca Webber &  
Shahin Amini  
Ede & Bruce Weiner  
Pamela & Rom Welborn  
Melba & Ted Whatley  
Peggy & Matt Winkler  
Women Donors Network  
Women Donors  
Network Action  
Megan & Brady Wood  
Youth Engagement Fund



P.O. BOX 1624  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78767

Return Service Requested

Nonprofit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Austin, Texas  
Permit No. 1943



# Call to Action: 2021 Legislative Session

[TFN.ORG/  
RAPIDRESPONSE](https://TFN.ORG/RAPIDRESPONSE)

[TFN.ORG](https://TFN.ORG)



[TEXASFREEDOMNETWORK](https://www.facebook.com/TEXASFREEDOMNETWORK)



[@TFN](https://twitter.com/TFN)



[@TFNFREEDOMNETWORK](https://www.instagram.com/TFNFREEDOMNETWORK)