



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on March 13, 2019

Democrats Hope To Make Texas Blue Again

Democratic presidential candidates from across the country descended on the annual South by Southwest (SXSW) conference in Austin, Texas, over the weekend of March 8-10 in what appeared to be an orchestrated effort to mobilize young people that sat out the 2018 midterm elections to turn out in 2020 and turn Texas “blue,” according to the *Wall Street Journal*.



South by Southwest is an annual conglomerate of film, media, festivals and conferences held in Austin, a uniquely liberal city in conservative Texas. As such, it provided 2020 Democratic presidential contenders with an opportunity not only to jumpstart their own political aspirations, but also to add their support to an ongoing effort among Democrats to transform Texas from a bastion of Republican strength to a state that has a chance to go Democrat in the next presidential election.

Texas Republicans got a scare in last November’s senatorial race, when Representative Robert Francis “Beto” O’Rourke lost to incumbent Senator Ted Cruz by just 2.6 points. That election served as a wake-up call for Republicans in Texas, especially since there is speculation that O’Rourke will run for president in 2020.

O’Rourke visited SXSW, but wasn’t part of the festival lineup. The former congressman and senatorial candidate attended a documentary about his long-shot U.S. Senate campaign that some observers think may become the first step toward a White House run. However, he still didn’t announce whether he will seek the Democratic presidential nomination next year.

Among Democrats seeking the 2020 presidential nomination who participated in a few of the first forums of the race that took place at SXSW were Senator Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.), Senator Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Governor Jay Inslee (D-Wash.), former Governor John Hickenlooper (D-Colo.), former San Antonio mayor and Obama administration secretary of housing and urban development Julián Castro, and entrepreneur Andrew Yang.

An AP report carried by the *Los Angeles Times* cited some of the statements made by the contenders. Warren repeated her new call to break up tech giants — a bold move in a city that is home to some of the largest tech companies outside the Silicon Valley and Seattle, such as Dell Computer and AT&T/SBC.

Klobuchar also promised to reign in tech companies, but wouldn’t go as far as Warren when asked whether Google or Facebook should be broken up.



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The top Democrat contenders appearing in Austin were not only stumping for their own aspirations, but for local Texas Democrats trying to transform Texas into a blue state. The political reality is that would be nearly impossible for a Republican presidential candidate to win the election without the 38 electoral votes of Texas. Therefore, anything these potential nominees can do to transform Texas blue would be like an insurance policy guaranteeing victory.

As we observed in [an article in January](#), Texas Republicans are aware of this reality, and are organizing their grassroots supporters in the Lone Star State.

“If Texas turns back to a Democratic state, which it used to be, then we’ll never elect another Republican [president] in my lifetime,” Senator John Cornyn (R-Texas) said in January.

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