



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on September 3, 2018

## Texas Senate Race Pits Liberal Robert “Beto” O’Rourke vs. Ted Cruz

When a sign reading simply “Beto” appeared on a neighbor’s lawn here in Cleburne, Texas, several months back I scratched my head in wonderment. “Beto?” I thought. “Beto who?” A little online research revealed that the cryptic campaign sign referred to U.S. Representative Robert “Beto” O’Rourke (shown), a Democrat who represents most of El Paso County in the U.S. House and who is running against incumbent Ted Cruz for the U.S. Senate. (O’Rourke scored 40 percent on *The New American’s* latest Freedom Index but his cumulative score for this Congress is only 27 percent. Cruz scored 70 percent and 63 percent, respectively, on Senate votes for the same period.)



A visit to O’Rourke’s [campaign website](#) reveals that he is for stricter gun-control laws, “Improving the Affordable Care Act” (Obamacare), opposed to the Trump administration’s strict immigration law enforcement, favors passage of the DREAM Act, and is for “Ensuring that a woman’s right to choose is not compromised by limited access to safe and legal abortion services or family planning help.”

O’Rourke is a fourth-generation Irish American but received the nickname “Beto” (for Robert) growing up in heavily Hispanic El Paso. The use of his nickname only on his signs is obviously pure ethnic politics, target marketing Hispanic voters.

By challenging Cruz, who is known nationally after participating in the 2016 Republican presidential debates, O’Rourke is part of the Democrats’ effort to take back in the Senate. This seems particularly ambitious in a state such as Texas, which has in recent years been a Republican stronghold.

A *New York Times* reporter observed that “many Democrats in Washington remain skeptical of O’Rourke’s chances, even as they marvel at his fundraising totals — over \$10 million last quarter, more than double Cruz’s haul.”

Ken Webster, Jr. of KPRC talk radio in Houston wrote last December that the “[George] Soros-funded group MoveOn.Org announced last night via email that Beto is their officially endorsed candidate to try and take down Ted Cruz next year.” While federal election laws limited Soros’ personal contributions to O’Rourke to a single \$2,700 contribution last December, Moveon.org has actively solicited contributions to help the Democrat. This may explain O’Rourke’s very successful fundraising efforts.

Though Cruz is considered the favorite, his leadership margin in the polls is not as large as one might expect, so Republicans are not taking his reelection for granted, nor should they.

*Photo of Rep. Robert “Beto” O’Rourke: AP Images*

*Warren Mass writes from Cleburne, Texas.*



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