



## Government and Politics in the Lone Star State (7th Edition)

By L. Tucker Gibson Jr., Clay Robison

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## **Editorial Review**

From the Back Cover

*“Tucker Gibson and Clay Robison’s Government and Politics in the Lone Star State is an extremely comprehensive approach to Texas government and politics. I recommend it because of its comprehensive approach and the historical and cultural framing that it gives to the problems of politics in Texas.”* - Jeffrey C. Herndon, Texas A&M University - Commerce

Written to be readable and accessible, *Politics and Government in the Lone Star State* takes both a journalistic and political science approach to its coverage of the economic, demographic, political, and social changes contributing to contemporary Texas politics. Using theory, scholarly research, first-hand observations, anecdotes, and humor, the authors examine the nuances of change in mass political behavior and decisions of political actors at the state and local levels.

New to the Seventh Edition

- **New Feature** “Questions to Guide Your Reading” appear at the beginning of every chapter to highlight and reinforce concepts that will be developed in the chapter
- **New Analysis** takes a look at recent economic developments and compares the circumstances of the economic downturn in Texas with other states across the country.
- **New Material** expands and updates the state’s policies on welfare, education, and global warming.
- **New Coverage** analyzes the impact of the George W. Bush presidency and early initiatives of the Obama administration on state-federal relationships.
- **Expanded Discussion** of immigration — both legal and illegal — looks at changes in Texas laws providing public services to new immigrants, and the impact of immigration on the state’s public education system.
- **New Projections** of future population increases in the Texas Urban Triangle have been developed using updated information on the urbanization of Texas.

About the Author

**L. TUCKER GIBSON, JR.**, is professor of political science at Trinity University, where he teaches introductory courses in American national and state governments as well as courses on U.S. legislatures, political parties, and interest groups. He has served on the Civil Service Commission of the city of San Antonio, assisted local governments across central and south Texas in redistricting their governmental bodies, and conducted public opinion research for political candidates, businesses, and corporations. Gibson is the coauthor of *Politics in America: Texas Edition*.

**CLAY ROBISON** covered state government and politics in Texas for almost 40 years as a journalist, first for the *San Antonio Light*, and then for the *Houston Chronicle* and the *San Antonio Express-News*. He covered many of the personalities and events that significantly impacted Texas government. Robison is the coauthor of *Politics in America: Texas Edition*.

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Americans tend to be ambivalent toward their governments. On one hand, there are high expectations that garbage will be picked up regularly, that street lights will work, restaurants will be regularly inspected, Social Security checks will be sent in a timely manner, roads will be paved, and so on. But taxpayers often want something for nothing. They believe that increased services should not cost any more. Taxes should not be raised. Services shouldn't be cut even if there is a financial crisis. And there are some who have open hostility toward their governments. Cut taxes, eliminate programs, deregulate, devolve power from the national government, and just get government off our backs.

This ambivalence is projected onto politicians as well. All those officeholders in city hall, the state Capitol, or Washington can't be trusted or are in politics for their own benefit. All of them, of course, except my city council member and congressman, who are doing a wonderful job.

Ambivalence toward government and politics is not a 21st century phenomenon. It is rooted in our historical experience and emerges from our political culture. But, to two longtime observers of politics, ambivalence or hostility toward government doesn't make much sense if those who express such attitudes have no knowledge or only limited knowledge of government, politics, and the policy making process. Criticism of the actions of policy makers is a legitimate exercise of one's rights and responsibilities in a democratic society. But if one's comments are based on ignorance, how does this contribute to holding those in office accountable or to the development of good public policy?

Perhaps we are excessively cranky, reflecting the many long hours we have spent observing, studying, and writing about government and politics in Texas. Perhaps we have more time to study the subject, and besides, we get paid for it. Perhaps we are part of that small group of policy wonks who get their grins from watching the good, the bad, and the ugly of politics.

While these may be partial explanations, the truth of the matter is that we have a passion for the democratic system in which we live. It's flawed. Public officials and other actors in the political arena often act outrageously and irresponsibly. We lament the failure of reforms that would benefit the "disconnected" or the powerless in our state. We have seen the enactment of legislation that clearly had the handprints of the special interest groups. We have watched legislative battles that were over before they even began because deals had been cut in the back rooms. We pity those citizens who had read the textbook, followed the prescription to visit, call, fax, or e-mail their legislator to express their policy concerns. Justice is often denied to those without a fat checkbook. Despite the fact that the laws and administrative procedures require payments of child support, hundreds of thousands of Texas children are impoverished, in part, because child support payments are not made. It just isn't fair.

A democratic society is not always a virtuous society. From the perspective of Thomas Hobbes, a 17th century political philosopher, people are capable of all kinds of bad things and need governments to place constraints on their excessive behaviors. We are among other commentators on political behavior who are somewhat optimistic about politics and government. We believe that individuals are capable of noble acts. They do the right things and are not solely pursuing their self-interests. The trick, then, for a democratic system is to constrain the excesses of self-interests and to encourage civic virtue.

In the chapters that follow, you will be exposed to a great deal of factual material pertaining to state and local governments. Facts are the building blocks, but they only make sense if they are organized or rooted in concepts or theories. The facts that are presented are the most recent we have been able to find. We have made a continued effort to confirm the veracity of the information that we present, but there is always the possibility that we have made some mistakes. The more important issues regarding facts is that they quickly become dated. Expenditures of governments will change from year to year. Population characteristics are always changing. And the specific political actors change.

But the theories around which we have organized facts and information are far less likely to change. We have used many of the accepted theories of political science to present and develop our analysis. We use realignment theory in the analysis of the state's party system. We use the concept of institutionalization in the chapter on the Texas legislature. These and the other concepts that we present will provide you an enduring framework through which you can assess government and politics.

Both of the authors have their biases, but we have attempted to suppress these as much as possible. Our job is not to convert you to a particular philosophical or ideological position. It is to encourage you to formulate your own views based on a careful assessment of the materials presented.

One author is trained as an academic in the theories and concepts of the discipline that apply to the analysis of state and local government. He tends to be the one who writes pedantically. Despite his academic orientation, he has been engaged in party politics for over thirty years. He has served as a consultant to more than 60 local governments. He has owned a market research firm, and he has served on the San Antonio Civil Service Commission.

The second author is a journalist. He brings to the subject a thirty-five year career in journalism. He has covered state and local politics during this time, and his long career as the Austin Bureau Chief of the *Houston Chronicle* has placed him in proximity to the state institutions and many of the political actors who have contributed to the political history of the state over the last three decades. His job is to "tell the story," crafting the analysis to engage and interest the reader. Parenthetically, he is the one who has rewritten most of the arcane words of the first author.

This is our fifth go at this book, and we hope we have gotten better with repetition. Just as athletes must practice and practice until they get it write loops, right), so must the student of politics and government.

There is updated information throughout. There are new stories as well as ones we just couldn't let go. There are new players and some old ones. There are new issues, but most of those we deal with are a continuation of an earlier sequel. The theories have remained the same.

It is our hope that this book assists you in your lifelong journey as a citizen. If it helps you understand the institutions and politics of the governments in Texas, we will feel that we have been successful.

A special thanks goes to two individuals. Bryan Henderson, who isn't even a Texan, served as our research assistant. Arleen Harrison handled many of the logistics required to complete the manuscript. Additionally, we'd like to thank Mary E. Barnes-Tilley, Blinn College, and Jimmie F. Strain, Mt. View College, for reviewing the fourth edition of this textbook while the fifth edition was under preparation for publishing. We continue to rely on the skills of the editorial staff of Prentice Hall, who bring direction and order to our work. We are appreciative of their humor, attention to details, and assistance when we have run into problems.

## **Users Review**

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