

NABIP-Dallas Vanguard Happy Hour Event

Thank you to our Happy Hour Sponsor!



NABIP-Dallas members and guests gathered at Yard House in Dallas for great food, drinks, and socializing with peers on Thursday, December 14.



NABIP-Dallas Upcoming Event



Education Revolution was postponed.

The NABIP-Dallas Education Revolution event originally scheduled for January was postponed to Wednesday February 21 at Vouv Meeting & Event Space.

NABIP-Dallas Upcoming Event



NABIP-Dallas hosted a virtual CE presentation on January 17. Spencer Smith led the engaging. presentation, "The Power of Self-Funding" (CE #137885).

This course built a foundation for a new audience and demonstrated the advantages that an employer can gain in transitioning to a self-funded arrangement for their health plan. The goal was to create interest in learning more about the possibilities of self-funding. The presentation covered the macro state of U.S. healthcare, how fully insured has contributed to the rise in family premiums, what self-funding is, the components that make up a self-funded plan, specific and aggregate stop loss, the limitations of level-funding, and a basic intro to captives.

Instructor Bio: Spencer has spent his entire 15-year career in the insurance industry, with the last decade focused on Self-Insurance. From various Financial Analyst roles to Stop Loss Sales, Selling RFP Software, and now joining ParetoHealth as SVP of Consultant Development, Spencer has a diverse perspective on all things Self-Funding. He has become known in the benefits industry for his Stop Loss Whiteboard series called "Stop Loss with Spencer", his video podcast called "Self-Funded with Spencer", and his active presence on LinkedIn. On a personal basis, he enjoys going to the gym, attending the occasional heavy metal concert, and spending most of his free time with his wife of 12 years, Courtney, and his two Children, Brooklyn - 6, and Sebastian - 3.

We greatly appreciate Spencer for pivoting once our Education Revolution event was postponed and accommodating for a virtual presentation on short notice!

The field is set for the Texas primary elections — making way for a dramatic few months ahead of the election on Tuesday, March 5th.

At the top of the ticket, Texans will vote on who they want as their party's presidential nominee — where Donald Trump has a landslide lead for Republicans and



President Joe Biden has no serious competition among Democrats. That means the most interesting action in Texas will be down-ballot.

With both Gov. Greg Abbott and Attorney General Ken Paxton out for revenge, Republican members of the Texas House are the top target on the ballot. But Democrats are also facing ample drama as political dominoes fall in Dallas and Houston, creating new opportunities for ambitious members of the party. The candidate filing deadline for the March primary was 6:00 PM Monday.

On the Republican side, much of the primary drama is being driven by Gov. Abbott and AG Paxton.

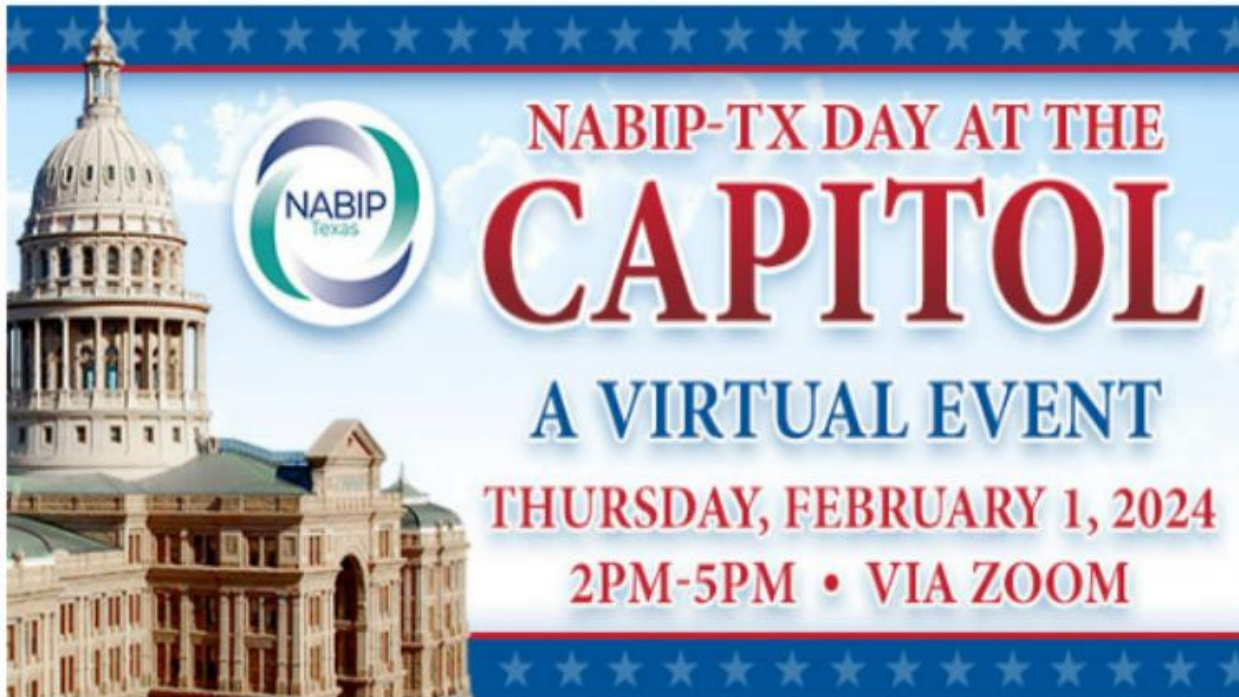
Paxton is working to unseat the dozens of House Republicans who voted to impeach him in May, while Abbott wants to defeat a smaller group of House Republicans who thwarted his yearlong push for education savings accounts, or school vouchers. That has created a rare dynamic where two of the most powerful Republicans in the state are backing primary challengers to House Republicans, sometimes aligning behind the same challenger and sometimes not.

It has led to a marked increase in primary challengers. After 43% of House Republicans faced opposition in 2022, at least 57% have primary challengers this time. The Texas GOP said Tuesday it had “a record-breaking 387 candidates file in Austin, plus many more in their local county offices, marking the second-highest candidate turnout in the history of the party”

The attorney general has endorsed nearly two dozen primary challengers to state House Republicans who voted to impeach him. Those candidates, like Paxton, have positioned themselves as further right than House leadership and could prove to be antagonistic toward Speaker Dade Phelan — should he win his own primary. The Texas Senate acquitted Paxton after a trial in September.

Paxton's endorsees include Republicans like Mitch Little, a Frisco lawyer who represented Paxton at the trial and is running against Rep. Kronda Thimesch (R-Lewisville). Paxton also backed Wes Virdell, a primary challenger to Rep. Andrew Murr — the Junction Republican who chaired the House board of impeachment managers — before Murr announced his retirement last month.

Abbott is targeting a narrower group of 16 House Republicans who are seeking reelection and voted last month to strip a voucher program out of a broader education bill that included increased spending for teacher pay raises. Abbott has endorsed six primary challengers to those members so far.



NABIP-Texas Legislative Update *Continued*

Vouchers, which would have allowed public dollars to fund private school education, were Abbott's top legislative priority. He campaigned for reelection on the promise of passing vouchers and threatened throughout the year to target Republican lawmakers who stood in his way. Making good on that threat, Abbott has gotten behind challengers like Hillary Hickland, an activist mother from Belton who has taken her kids out of public schools in recent years. She is running against Rep. Hugh Shine (R-Temple).

Other notable primary challengers have emerged in recent days. Shelley Luther, the Dallas salon owner who became famous to conservatives for defying COVID-19 shutdown orders, filed for a rematch against Rep. Reggie Smith (R-Sherman). And Katrina Pierson, the North Texas activist best known as a spokesperson for Trump's 2016 campaign, joined the primary against Rep. Justin Holland (R-Rockwall).

The aggressive involvement of Gov. Abbott and AG Paxton means Speaker Phelan will have his hands full defending his GOP members. And Phelan has a primary of his own after running uncontested in 2022. This time he faces two challengers, led by David Covey, the former chair of the Orange County GOP. Abbott and Paxton are also playing in open seats where they believe they can replace retiring House Republicans with a better political ally. One example is House District 14, where anti-voucher Rep. John Raney (R-College Station) is not seeking reelection and Abbott has endorsed Bryan businessman Paul Dyson for the seat. Abbott said in his endorsement that he trusts Dyson to "expand school choice for all Texas families once and for all."

NABIP-Texas Legislative Update *Continued*

In House District 87, Abbott and Paxton have aligned behind Caroline Fairly, the daughter of an Amarillo businessman, Alex Fairly, who Texas conservatives are working to cultivate as a new megadonor. Fairly is among four Republicans running to replace retiring Rep. Four Price (R-Amarillo) who opposes school vouchers.

In the Texas Senate, Republicans are looking at only one competitive primary, to replace retiring Sen. Drew Springer (R-Muenster). Four Republicans have filed for that seat, though one of them, Denton County GOP Chairman Brent Hagenbuch, is the frontrunner after getting endorsed by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, the very powerful presiding officer of the Senate.

At the top of the ticket, Democrats have a primary for U.S. Senate that has drawn at least 10 candidates. U.S. Rep. Colin Allred (D-Dallas) has crushed the pack in fundraising, and his competitors include state Sen. Roland Gutierrez (D-San Antonio); state Rep. Carl Sherman (D-DeSoto); and Mark Gonzalez, former district attorney for Nueces County.

But Democrats' most spirited fights could be farther down the ballot, especially in Dallas and Houston. Democrats saw a major late development Monday, when state Rep. Victoria Neave Criado launched a primary challenge to state Sen. Nathan Johnson, an uncommon faceoff between two Dallas Democrats.

Become a Monthly TAHUPAC Contributor!



DONATE TO TAHUPAC

TAHUPAC formed to support candidates and members of the Texas Legislature who have philosophies that reflect common sense and an overall understanding of the dynamics of health insurance along with recognizing how NABIP-TX is working to bring more Texans more affordable health insurance plans.

Donate now using the QR code below!



NABIP Washington Update



* NABIP has identified a fundamental reporting issue with the Gag Clause Prohibition Compliance Attestation that all plan sponsors must file by December 31, 2023. NABIP does not anticipate any official guidance on the issue until after the reporting deadline; as such, plan sponsors should submit their attestations just as they otherwise would have – while retaining all documentation related to network agreements that may include a gag clause which is not being attested to. To learn more, please read this week’s lead article and watch yesterday’s Compliance Corner webinar.

* The House passed the Lower Costs, More Transparency Act (H.R. 5378) earlier this week. The package contains NABIP-supported provisions that would make significant strides in the areas of transparency and cost.

* CMS issued new guidance late yesterday regarding the Inflation Reduction Act’s Inflation Rebate Program for Medicare Parts B and D drugs and biologics. HHS also announced a new list of 48 Medicare Part B drugs that raised their prices faster than inflation and may be subject to inflation rebates in the first quarter of 2024.

* We are just one month away from the deadline for applications for the Legislative Achievement Award, Spirit of Freedom Award and Legislative Excellence Award. Each will be presented at Capitol Conference in February, where we will recognize individual members and state and local chapters for their accomplishments during 2023. The deadline for applications is January 15. Submit your application today.

NABIP Member Resources

- ❖ NABIP-Dallas meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month (with the exception of December) at Vouv Event Center (4445 Sigma Road, Dallas, TX 75244).
- ❖ New NABIP-Dallas members can register for their first lunch meeting at no cost. Email dahu.org@gmail.com to confirm your registration.
- ❖ [Lone Star \(Virtual\) Chapter](#) frequently offers online CE webinars at no cost for NABIP-Texas members.