

In Texas politics:

# Campaigning as usual; law criticized

## Texas candidates speak as primary approaches

By The ASSOCIATED PRESS  
Texas Railroad Commission candidate Jon Newton says federal control of natural gas sold within Texas would be disastrous to the state's economy.

Newton, a Democratic hopeful, said such intrastate federal regulation would cause a loss of \$7 billion in personal income and 36,000 jobs over the next decade.

"Texas families, farms and busi-

nesses are suffering greatly from rising utility costs," Newton said Tuesday in Austin, "but we are only fooling ourselves if we think that the federal government will give us any kind of lasting relief by imposing new controls."

Newton said nationwide deregulation of natural gas is "our only real hope of fairness for the people of Texas."

Lane Denton, another Democratic candidate for the commission, said Tuesday in the Dallas-Fort Worth area that he had been endorsed by the Texas Association of

Community Organization for Reform Now. He told the political action committee of ACORN that he supports the lifeline utility rate structure and believes that "lifeline rates would be ordered for utilities by the Railroad Commission."

Denton said he opposed large user discounts for big corporations, banks and industries.

In campaigning for the U.S. Senate, U.S. Rep. Alan Steelman, a Republican candidate, told a Pampa audience Tuesday that he will continue to fight efforts to repeal the Hatch Act, concerning political activities of federal employees.

"It would open the door for political bossism," Steelman told a luncheon of area Republicans.

"Can you imagine an Internal Revenue Service auditor investigating tax fraud while running for elected office and asking for political contributions in the same community?" he said.

Steelman said he would vote to sustain President Ford's veto of the Federal Employees' Political Activities Act of 1975.

Sen. Lloyd Bentsen, D-Tex., seeking re-election, announced that Atty. Gen. John Hill had endorsed his favorite-son presidential candidacy.

"Sen. Bentsen has unmatched credentials to lead the Texas delegation to the Democratic National Convention in New York," Hill said. "A vote for Bentsen delegates May 1 is a vote to guarantee Texas an influential role at the convention."

## Wives campaign until husbands return

The names of Betty Ford and Nancy Reagan will not be on the Republican ballot in Texas' May 1 Republican primary, but they are carrying the bulk of campaign work for their husbands this week in Texas.

President Ford and former California Gov. Ronald Reagan, who have campaigned in Texas in recent weeks, will be back next week before the vote.

Mrs. Ford picked up a citizens band radio handle as "First Mamma." She has carried the Ford message to the Rio Grande Valley and Corpus Christi next. After spending the night in Corpus Christi, Mrs. Ford will campaign today in San Jacinto.

Mrs. Reagan arrived Tuesday afternoon in Denton, greeted campaign workers in Waco and proceeded to Odessa, where she spent the night. She planned appearances today in Odessa and Kerrville before going to San Antonio later this afternoon.

In Harlingen, Mrs. Ford was met Tuesday by a group of Mexican-American dancers. She clapped as she listened to the Mexican Hat

Dance. She also visited an elementary school where two children presented her a Bicentennial scrapbook. In Corpus Christi, she attended a private reception and campaigned at a shopping mall.

Mrs. Reagan told campaign workers in Waco that her husband's candidacy was "healthy for the Republican party." She said a victory for Reagan in the Texas primary would mean the GOP presidential nomination could "possibly go down to Kansas City undecided."

Mrs. Reagan will participate in the Fiesta Week ceremonies in San Antonio tonight.

## Carter says statute to aid Bentsen

HOUSTON — Democratic candidate Jimmy Carter says the Texas presidential primary statute is a "disgrace."

"The biggest challenge we had all year was getting a slate of delegates on the ballots in Texas. It required a major campaign, a lot of money, a lot of work."

"It obviously was designed to enhance the candidacy of Senator Bentsen when he was a viable candidate," he said.

Senator Lloyd Bentsen, D-Tex., now is running as a favorite son candidate in the May 1 presidential primary but has withdrawn as a candidate in other states.

"A presidential primary statute should be designed to encourage full participation by all candidates," Carter said. "Fortunately, the Texas Legislature had the good judgment to put a 'self-destruct' clause in the statute after this one primary."

Carter also said voters should be permitted to vote for a candidate by name instead of for a slate of convention delegates committed to his candidacy.

"It is a very difficult procedure for voting," he said. "It has been explained to me but I still don't understand it."

Carter left the Pennsylvania primary campaign to make the one-stop Texas trip. After a fund-raising breakfast, he returned to Pennsylvania for Tuesday's election.

## Judicial appointment made unknowingly

In Washington, President Ford insists it was just a coincidence that he made John Connally's law partner a federal judge a few weeks before the upcoming Texas primary.

In fact, the President said, he never met Ross Sterling and did not

even know Sterling was his law partner.

Both Ford and his law partner, Ronald Reagan, were primary rival, Ronald Reagan, who had been wooing Connally, the Texas governor, who had been neutral. The May 1 Texas primary considered crucial to the election.

"I didn't know that Sterling had been — was he John Connally's law partner?" Ford said.

"No. Law partner," Ford said.

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"That decision was a surprising ordinary course of a normal appointment," Ford said.

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