

Texas State Constitution

As Amended May 26th, 2021

Preamble

We the students, with aspirations of reaching a complete understanding of our governmental process, in effort to maintain a powerful interest in the opportunities of democracy as have existed and continue to exist within the realm of our elemental freedom, as powerful voices promoting a forum for the ideas and convictions held throughout the scope of our communities, local, and national government, those dedicated, educated, and enriched in the fervor of those fundamental rights and privileges inherent to all people, come together as the youth of today and pronounce in absolute declaration that we are the leaders of tomorrow and do hereby establish this constitution for the Texas Junior State of America.

Article I: Name

The name of the state to which this constitution applies shall be known as the Texas Junior State of America. It shall consist of the states of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas, and Oklahoma. It may also be referred to as the Texas Junior State.

Article II: Purpose

SECTION 1.

The Texas Junior State of America is founded on the following fundamental principles:

- a. The Texas Junior State shall remain non-profit, non-secret, non-partisan, and nonsectarian.
- b. It shall be the avowed policy of the Texas Junior State to oppose racial discrimination, prejudice, class hatred, religious intolerance, and social inequality.
- c. The objective of the Texas Junior State shall be to educate the youth of America as voters, citizens, and statesmen of the United States of America by heightening their political and cultural awareness, and increasing their moral standards in order to preserve, perpetuate, and develop American democracy.
- d. The Texas Junior State shall never be controlled by or allied with any political party. Nor shall it affiliate with any group supporting doctrines subversive to the democratic principles of the United States of America.
- e. Subject to the preceding paragraph, active membership in the Texas Junior State shall be open to any person enrolled in high school.
- f. The Texas Junior State shall discriminate against no person in any way.

- g. The conduct of the members of the Texas Junior State shall, at all meetings and social gatherings, conform to the policies of the students' schools and all governmental laws and regulations relating thereof.

SECTION 2.

Members of the Texas Junior State shall have:

- a. The right to be represented on all issues of the Texas Junior State through direct vote, chapter leadership, and the Legislature.
- b. The right to run for and/or hold an office within the individual chapter as well as an office within the governing bodies of the Texas Junior State.
- c. The right to be involved in all chapter activities.
- d. The right to be informed of and participate in all state and regional activities of the Texas Junior State.
- e. The rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution for every citizen of America.

Article III: The Chapter

Section 1.

A chapter of the Texas Junior State may be formed by a minimum of eight students who have paid their annual membership tax, as determined by the Council of Governors, and any other dues deemed necessary by the chapter or the Texas Junior State government.

SECTION 2.

A chapter will not defy the citizens thereof a republican form of government. A chapter will be chartered by the Texas Junior State Governor upon receipt and approval of the chapter's constitution.

Article IV: Regions

SECTION 1.

The Texas Junior State may be divided into various regions whose exact boundaries shall be defined by a geographical regional map of the Junior State submitted by the Governor and ratified by a two-thirds majority of the State Senate. The Governor may, at any time, submit a new map for the regional boundaries, and this new map must be ratified by the State Senate by a two-third majority to go into effect.

SECTION 2.

No person or chapter shall belong to more than one region or county, and the members of a region or county are to be the only voters in their elections.

SECTION 3.

The regional governments shall not deny the citizens of a republican form of government.

SECTION 4.

The Texas Junior State may be divided into various regions whose exact boundaries shall be defined by The Governor with a two thirds vote of the State Senate.

SECTION 5.

The law of the Texas Junior State supersedes regional law.

- a. Regional members must answer to the Texas Junior State Constitution.
- b. All regional activities having state relevance, including elections, must abide by and be held according to state law.

SECTION 6.

Regional officers shall be comprised of a Mayor and two Senators. Should a vacancy occur in the office of Mayor of a region, the new Mayor appointed by the Governor must be in consultation with the Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House, approved by at least 2/3rds of Chapter Presidents in the region, and approved by both Senators, in the region. The process above must occur by at most one month after the date of the vacancy. The Mayor will serve until either the next spring state regional election, if one is to occur, or for the duration of the rest of the term, whichever occurs sooner. While a new Mayor is being selected, the Governor may appoint an interim to act as a placeholder and to fulfill the duties of the position vacated.

SECTION 7.

Each region will be responsible for electing two senators to serve on the State Senate of the Texas Junior State.

SECTION 8.

In order to run for regional office, a regional candidate's home chapter must reside in the county or region they plan on representing. A candidate's home chapter shall be defined as the chapter they will attend the next school year.

Article V: Counties

SECTION 1.

Should the Governor decide that any region of the Texas Junior State is not in a condition deserving of regional status, the Governor may request that the State Legislature act to designate a region as a county.

SECTION 2.

After the Governor makes the request in writing, a region becomes a county when a bill is passed by a two-thirds majority of the State Legislature and signed by the Governor designating a region as a county with specific requirements for the county to meet for two consecutive years to become a region again.

SECTION 3.

In order for a county to become a region again for the following JSA year beginning on June 1, the Governor must sign a statement before the closing of the second state convention of the current year certifying that, in the two years prior to that date, the region has met or exceeded the minimum requirements originally set forth by the Governor and State Legislature for the county to regain regional status.

SECTION 4.

In order for a county to become a region again, it must also, during the two previous years:

- a. Have positive annual growth in the total number of tax paid members in the region.
- b. Have positive annual growth in the total number of tax paid chapters in the region.

SECTION 5.

The State Legislature may override a Governor's statement reinstating a county as a region by passing a resolution which outlines specific objections to the Governor's action supported by a two-thirds majority in both houses.

SECTION 6.

Should the State Legislature determine that a county should be restored as a region earlier than possible under the requirements established when the county was formed, it may pass a concurrent resolution supported by a four-fifths majority of both houses restoring the county as a region. This resolution may be vetoed by the Governor.

SECTION 7.

County leaders will be appointed by the Governor in consultation with the executive leadership as part of a new cabinet department focused (primarily) on expansion efforts.

SECTION 8.

Any current regional leaders in office when a region is redesignated as a county may remain in office until the end of their term.

SECTION 9.

Each county will be responsible for electing two senators to serve in the State Senate of the Texas Junior State.

Article VI: Leadership

SECTION 1.

The elected officers of the Texas Junior State shall be the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor, and the Speaker of the House.

SECTION 2.

The office positions for all officers of the Texas Junior State shall be elected at the last state convention of the school year by all tax-paid members of the state attending that convention.

SECTION 3.

The term of office for all officers of the Texas Junior State shall commence on the First day of June following their election and terminate on the following Thirty-first of May.

Article VII: The Governor

SECTION 1.

The Governor is the chief executive officer of the Texas Junior State.

SECTION 2.

The Governor may create or eliminate any cabinet position or department when he or she deems necessary, with written explanation and consultation with all other elected executive leaderships

SECTION 3.

The Governor shall maintain a productive line of communication with the Texas Junior State Legislature.

- a. The Governor may, within fifteen days of passage (excluding Sunday), veto any piece of legislation passed by the Legislature. Any veto must be accompanied with a brief, written explanation addressed to the Lieutenant Governor, Speaker of the House, and all sponsors of the vetoed legislation. The veto may be overridden by a two thirds vote of the state senate.
- b. If the Governor should fail to address legislation within the allotted fifteen days, the legislation shall be passed into law without the Governor's signature.

SECTION 4.

The Governor shall:

- a. Be responsible for the well being of the chapters and regions within the state.
- b. Address the members of the Texas Junior State regarding any problems or issues of importance that lie therein.
- c. See that the decisions of the Legislature are faithfully carried out.
- d. Call the Legislature to emergency session should he or she deem necessary.
- e. Attend and oversee all state-wide conferences.

SECTION 5.

In the event of a vacancy of the Governor's office, the Lieutenant Governor shall become Governor.

Article VIII: The Lieutenant Governor

SECTION 1.

The Lieutenant Governor is the secondary elected official of the Texas Junior State.

SECTION 2.

The Lieutenant Governor shall:

- a. Serve as the presiding officer of the Senate of the Texas Junior State, and have all the rights, privileges, and duties thereof.
- b. Affix their signature to all acts of the Senate as verification of due process.
- c. Have no vote on the Senate floor unless there is a tie, in which case he or she shall cast the deciding vote.
- d. Serve as the Chair of the Fair Elections Committee for the Texas Junior State and lead all business involved with the committee and issues that lie therein.
- e. Appoint a Lieutenant Governor Pro Tempore before the first state convention of the school year. A simple majority of the Senate at the beginning of the first legislative session shall approve the Lieutenant Governor Pro Tempore. The Lieutenant Governor Pro Tempore of the Senate holds the right to vote on the Senate floor.

SECTION 3.

In the absence of the Lieutenant Governor, the Lieutenant Governor Pro Tempore shall serve in their place and assume all the duties and responsibilities of the office.

SECTION 4.

Should the office of the Lieutenant Governor be vacated, the Lieutenant Governor Pro Tempore shall become Lieutenant Governor, and a new Lieutenant Governor Pro Tempore shall be appointed.

Article IX: The Speaker of the House

SECTION 1.

The Speaker of the House is the tertiary elected official of the Texas Junior State.

SECTION 2.

The Speaker of the House shall:

- a. Serve as the presiding officer of the House of Representatives, and have all the rights, privileges, and duties thereof.
- b. Affix their signature to all acts of the House as verification of due process.
- c. Have no vote on the House floor unless there is a tie, in which case he or she shall break the tie.

- d. Appoint a Speaker Pro Tempore before the first state convention of the school year. A simple majority of the House at the beginning of the first legislative session shall approve the Speaker Pro Tempore. The Speaker Pro Tempore holds the right to vote on the House floor.
- e. Establish committees when he or she deems necessary. The Speaker of the House and Speaker Pro Tempore shall hold the right to be official members of all committees and may vote on all legislation thereof.

SECTION 3.

In the absence of the Speaker of the House, the Speaker Pro Tempore shall serve in their place and assume all the duties and responsibilities of the office.

SECTION 4.

Should the office of the Speaker of the House be vacated, the Speaker Pro Tempore shall become Speaker, and a new Speaker Pro Tempore shall be elected by the House.

Article X: The State Legislature

SECTION 1.

The legislative authority of the Texas Junior State shall be vested in the State Legislature, composed of the State Senate and House of Representatives.

SECTION 2.

The State Legislature shall have at least three sessions per school year; however, the House and the Senate do not have to meet concurrently.

SECTION 3.

The House and Senate shall have the right to adopt rules of procedure for themselves. Those rules approved by the body for which they govern at the time of ratification of this constitution shall remain in effect as masses unless amended.

SECTION 4.

The House of Representatives shall be composed of the Chapter President of every tax paid chapter of the Texas Junior State. In addition to being represented by the Chapter President, each chapter with more than fifteen tax paid members shall elect one additional representative, each chapter with more than thirty tax paid members shall elect two additional representatives, and each chapter with more than fifty tax paid members shall elect three additional representatives. Should the Chapter President or any of a chapter's representatives be unable to attend a House of Representatives meeting, the Chapter President shall appoint a proxy in their place.

SECTION 5.

The Senate shall be composed of two representatives per region elected by members of each region and county at the third convention of the school year. In this election, the top two finishers will become the two senators representing the county or region. There shall be one exception to this guideline. If the two

top finishers represent the same home chapter, and the highest placing candidate from another chapter obtains a vote total of at least $1 \div$ (the number of candidates), the second-place finisher will not become senator, and the highest placing candidate from another chapter that meets this threshold will become senator instead. If the election only consists of three total candidates, the highest placing candidate from another chapter only needs to obtain a total of at least 25% of the votes. A candidate's home chapter shall be defined as the chapter they will attend the next school year.

SECTION 6.

Should a vacancy occur in the office of a Senator of a region or county, a new Senator must be appointed by the Governor in consultation with the Lieutenant Governor and Speaker of the House and approved by the other region/county's senator and at least 2/3rds of Chapter Presidents in the region. The process above must occur by at most one month after the date of the vacancy. The Senator will serve until either the next spring state regional election, if one is to occur, or for the duration of the rest of the term, whichever occurs sooner. While a new Senator is being selected, the Governor may appoint an interim to act as a placeholder and to fulfill the duties of the vacated position.

SECTION 7.

The Senate shall have the power to confirm or reject all gubernatorial appointees by a simple majority vote of the entire body. If confirmation of a cabinet position and/or official is denied, then a brief, written explanation must accompany the decision of the Senate.

SECTION 8.

All bills and resolutions, unless otherwise stipulated in this constitution, will originate either in the House or Senate. Bills and resolutions may also be submitted for consideration by any tax-paid member of the Texas Junior State with consent of the Lieutenant Governor. Bills must be passed in identical form by a simple majority of at least a quorum of both the House and Senate before being considered by the Governor.

SECTION 9.

All bills, resolutions, and amendments involving the electoral matters of the Texas Junior State, including those pertaining to the Fair Elections Committee, shall originate in the Senate.

SECTION 10.

If the Senate and House pass a bill or resolution in different forms, a Conference Committee shall be specifically assembled for the legislation in question.

- a. The Committee shall compose of the Lieutenant Governor, Lieutenant Governor Pro Tempore of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Speaker Pro Tempore of the House, and the sponsors of the legislation in question.
- b. These members will adjust differences of the legislation before sending it and both forms of the original legislation to the Governor.
- c. Since the Committee is specially designed for the Legislative branch, it will not be recognized as an official state committee.

SECTION 11.

No proposals passed by the State Legislature shall be enacted without the approval of the Governor, unless the Governor's veto is overridden by two-thirds of at least a quorum of both the House and Senate by the next duly constituted session of the Legislature. If the Governor fails to take action in fifteen days, the proposal shall be passed into law without the Governor's signature.

SECTION 12.

A record of all legislation passed into law and the votes taken thereof shall be sent to each chapter of the Texas Junior State by the Lieutenant Governor. An updated constitution shall also be available on the Texas Junior State website.

SECTION 13.

Both houses of the State Legislature may compel the presence of any statewide elected official, regional elected official, or member of cabinet to testify.

Article XI: The Fair Elections Committee

SECTION 1.

The Fair Elections Committee, which may also be referred to as the FEC, holds the responsibility of establishing guidelines for the process of campaigning and electing all candidates running for state office of the Texas Junior State.

SECTION 2.

The Lieutenant Governor of the Texas Junior State shall serve as the Committee Chair of the FEC.

SECTION 3.

The FEC shall consist of the State Senators, the Speaker of the House, and the cabinet chief(s) of staff.

- a. Should any member of the FEC decide to run in an election, he or she resigns their position in the FEC.
- b. In the case of a resignation or otherwise vacancy of an FEC position, a replacement is to be nominated by the Lieutenant Governor and approved by the Governor.

SECTION 4.

All rules and regulations adopted by the FEC must be approved by a simple majority of all members of the committee.

SECTION 5.

Should a vote by the FEC result in a tie, the Lieutenant Governor, acting as the Committee Chair, shall cast the tie-breaking vote.

SECTION 6.

The FEC shall adopt a handbook, written by the Committee Chair, which shall comprise of all rules officially adopted, through vote, by the Fair Elections Committee.

SECTION 7.

The FEC handbook must be delivered to all candidates, those who announced their intention to run for a state office at the second Texas Junior State convention of the school year, by at least one month prior to the first date of the third State convention.

SECTION 8.

Any changes to the FEC handbook made after they have been constitutionally delivered to candidates must be adopted unanimously by every member of the FEC.

SECTION 9.

No changes or additions shall be made to the rules and regulations of the FEC handbook once the Spring State convention has begun.

Article XII: Removal of an Elected Official

In order to remove the Governor, Lieutenant Governor or Speaker of the House from office, ten percent of the current membership of the state must sign a recall petition. Then, the petition must be ratified in a concurrent resolution passed by a two-thirds vote of the entire House and entire Senate. In order to remove any other elected officials in the state, they must be impeached by a two-thirds majority of the Senate and then the House in a concurrent resolution containing the specific article(s) of impeachment. Any elected official removed from office is barred from ever again holding appointed or elected office in the Texas Junior State.

Article XIII: Ratification

This constitution shall be ratified immediately following a two-thirds affirmative vote of the State Senate and State House of Representatives and the signature of the Governor.

Article XIV: Amendments

Proposed amendments to this constitution must be introduced to either the House of Representatives or Senate at, or prior to, a duly constituted session of the Legislature. Upon a two-thirds vote of at least a quorum of both the House and Senate, the amendment shall be enacted.

Article XV: Oath of Office

Before any member of the Texas Junior State may assume any state office, they must take the following oath:

“I, (state your name), do adamantly swear to fulfill the duties of the Texas Junior State; to uphold the Constitution of the Texas Junior State; and to provide effective leadership for the constituents of the Texas Junior State to the best of my abilities.”