



Questions for Candidates for State Legislative Office from the Conservative Coalition of Harris County

Our questionnaire is for candidates to indicate their reasons and opinions concerning issues surrounding their races. This questionnaire will be posted onto the Conservative Coalition of Harris County website for public voter viewing.

Candidate Name	Position for which Candidate is Running
Mano DeAyala	State Representative, District 133

Please give your answer to each of the following questions and please include your rationale with each answer. Please be concise and clear.

1. Please describe the qualifications and experience that make you the best candidate in your political race.

Answer: Mano DeAyala is a senior partner of Buck Keenan LLP and serves as counsel to individuals and companies in various industries. His distinguished career involves the representation of clients in domestic and international matters regarding commercial contracts, energy, corporate governance, employment and non-compete, professional liability, real estate and construction.

Prior to joining Buck Keenan, Mano was a senior partner with Thompson & Knight LLP, where he served clients as a counselor and trial lawyer for 16 years. He received his law degree from the Dedman School of Law at Southern Methodist University in 1992 and a bachelor's degree in business from The University of Texas at Austin in 1988. He is licensed to practice in all Texas courts, the US Court of Claims and as a licensed Solicitor in England and Wales. Since 2002, he has been rated AV Preeminent by Martindale-Hubbell, a ranking at the highest level of professional excellence and ethics by his peers. He has been recognized in Best Lawyers® in America (Real Estate Litigation); Texas Super Lawyers® (Business Litigation); Best Lawyers in Houston. He is a Fellow of the Houston Bar Foundation and Texas Bar Foundation.

Along with his four brothers, Mano graduated from Spring Branch ISD schools, including Memorial High School. Mano's sons are products and graduates of SBISD schools.

In April 2017, Governor Greg Abbott appointed Mano to a six-year term on the board of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice also serving as Trustee of the Windham School District.

Mano is a member of the "C" Club of Houston having served on the executive committee since 2012 and as President in 2017. He is currently a Trustee of the Houston Region Business Coalition.

Mano has served on the Board of the Hispanic Leadership Alliance and the Hispanic Republicans of Texas since 2012 and as Chairman since 2017. Mano is fluent in Spanish.

In 2020, Mano was appointed by the U.S. Trade Representatives and the Trump Administration to serve as an arbitration panelist under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA).

Mano was the attorney who sued Harris County to stop firing our Republican election judges in the 2020 election.

Mano also led a statewide voter registration effort which registered 120,000 conservative voters in Texas for the 2020 election which helped hold the Texas House majorities.

A volunteer youth football coach with the Spring Branch-Memorial Sports Association (SBMSA) for 15 years, Mano has also been an SBMSA Board Member since 2011. SBMSA serves over 8,000 youth athletes annually. He is also a Board Member of Heritage Classical Academy, an aspiring northwest Houston K-8 charter school, since 2019. Mano is also a three-year Board Member of the Strake Foundation.

Mano and his wife, Melissa, have been married for 30 years and reside in Houston with their three sons. They are members of Memorial Drive Presbyterian Church.

2. Please explain what you believe are the most significant issues in this race, why you are running for this position and what differentiates you from the other candidate(s).

Answer: Border Security, crime, education, ballot integrity and defeating socialism and government overreach are the most important issues in the race. I am running for State Representative because I am uniquely qualified to lead in this capacity. What differentiates me from my opponents is my overall experience. See #1 above.

3. What will be your top 3 priorities during your upcoming term?
 Texas is a big place with several priorities and need. Here are a few I will work on if elected:
 Securing the Border – The Biden Administration has made a complete mess of the border. Leaving Texas to find ways to secure our border.
 Crime – Crime is up in Texas and especially in Houston. DA’s and judges must have the tools to ensure those accused of the most violent crimes (i.e., murder, aggravated assault, rape) are in jail pending a speedy trial.
 School Finance – Republicans made tremendous progress in 2019 reforming the school finance system. Now is the time to review those changes and identify ways to ensure schools are properly funded while finding additional ways to reduce property taxes.
 Infrastructure – Texas cities and counties have been flooded with federal dollars from Biden’s American Relief Plan. Working with our federal partners, Texas should partner with cities and counties to put these tax dollars into major infrastructure programs and avoid wasteful one-time spending programs and/or creating irresponsible budget increases.
4. What are your suggestions toward public education funding within Texas? What are the areas where wasteful spending can be reduced, areas of revenue enhancement, or ideas to increase efficiency in public education spending?
Answer: Consistent with the Texas Constitution, we must better work within our property and sales tax structure to fund K-12 in Texas. Recapture is not the solution. We should reduce dependency on property taxes to fund public education, especially beyond district lines. School choice is an option to empowering parents especially those whose only choice is failing public schools. Market based funding, like school choice, will result in better outcomes for the dollars spent. Recent examples of wasteful spending in ISDs, especially those who benefit from recapture, emphasize the disconnect between those ISDs and their funding sources.
5. Please describe your plan for balancing the Texas budget. What budget items need to be cut and what taxes and fees need to be increased?
Answer: Texas does not have a revenue problem; we have a spending problem. 2020 was concerning in that the forecast of sales tax revenues was uncertain due to the Covid outbreak. Governor Abbott sought spending cuts across the various agencies and had success. We should continue these efforts as good stewards of our neighbors’ tax dollars.
6. What initiatives will you propose to help the voters in your district?
Answer: I will work to provide any fixes necessary to SB1, the election integrity bill, as we learn from the bill in application this cycle. I want voters in my district to have safe and secure elections knowing their vote matters. Please see attached letter from Alan Vera sharing about my work in the 2020 election to know how important this issue is to me.

7. Should Houston continue to enjoy extra-territorial jurisdiction, including levying taxes on persons and transactions not in the actual city limits?
Answer: No
8. Assuming you have read the 2020 Texas GOP Platform, what recent issues were not covered by the 2020-21 state legislative session and should be addressed in the future?
Answer: Several issues were not covered by the 2020-21 legislative session. School choice, and especially in communities where public schools are failing, should be addressed.
9. What changes or improvements in state agencies are needed to handle the wave of illegal immigration coming across the Texas border from Mexico?
 I have the qualifications and expertise to work on this, one of the toughest issues facing our state. In 2017, I was appointed by Governor Abbott to the Texas Board of Criminal Justice which plays a critical role in Operation Lone Star stopping Mexican Cartels and other smugglers from trafficking drugs and people into Texas. In 2020, I was appointed by the Trump Administration as one of ten arbitrators for the United States to resolve trade disputes and under Trump’s “new NAFTA”, the USMCA trade agreement. I am uniquely qualified to address and lead in the Legislature and Caucus on this matter. Human trafficking is a massive problem with illegal immigration and we must get control of this in Houston, the country’s number one city for human trafficking.
10. Please describe your plan for balancing the Texas budget. What budget items need to be cut and what taxes and fees need to be increased?
Answer: Duplicative question to #5
11. What changes, improvements or alterations need to be made to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission, or its associated programs with the advent of mask and vaccine mandates sweeping the nation?
Answer: We need to ensure there are not mask mandates or vaccine mandates in Texas. We need to ensure regulations are not being placed within bureaucracies behind the back of the Legislature.
12. Should the state of Texas finance and build the border wall with Mexico? Should the Federal government allow the remaining materials from the Trump administration to be used by the state of Texas?
Answer: Texas must exercise every tool to its advantage to finish the wall. All options should be vetted.
13. In your opinion, does the Federal government have the authority to issue mask and vaccine mandates in Texas? If not, should the state or local government have this authority? Should Texas implement such restrictions?
Answer: The Federal Government does not have the authority to issue a mask mandate or a vaccine mandate in Texas. Representatives at a state and local level are obligated to follow the will of their constituents. Texas should not implement a mask mandate or a vaccine mandate. I would support another Special Session to ban a mask mandate and/or a vaccine mandate.

BY RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE, THE CANDIDATE ASSUMES FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL ANSWERS TO THIS QUESTIONNAIRE. THE ANSWERS ON THE FOREGOING REFLECT THE CANDIDATE'S BEST EFFORTS TO ANSWER THIS QUESTIONNAIRE HONESTLY AND DIRECTLY.

PLEASE SAVE YOUR COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE TO YOUR LOCAL MACHINE IN THE EVENT THAT THERE ARE ANY TECHNICAL PROBLEMS WHEN YOU ATTEMPT TO EMAIL IT BACK.

Once this questionnaire has been completed, please email it to:

alex@cchc-pac.org

* **Please note:** You **must** return your questionnaire from the email address to which it was sent. Questionnaires returned from any other email address will be considered fraudulent and will **not** be recorded and no answers will be published in the voter's guide. CCHC-PAC deems a return from the proper email address as authentication of the correct respondent.

TO: Harris County Republican Primary Voters

FROM: Alan D. Vera

DATE: October 8, 2021

SUBJECT: Mano DeAyala

As Chairman of the Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee for the past 8 years, I avoid endorsing candidates in Republican Primary Elections. My primary mission is to secure the integrity of elections, not to influence the outcomes.

However, when appropriate, I am willing to share my experiences with various candidates in the arena of election integrity protection. This note summarizes my recent experience with Candidate Mano DeAyala.

The November 3, 2020 general election in Harris County was the most chaotic and problem-filled election I've ever experienced. The irregularities and deviations from Texas Election Code began even before the first day of early voting. In addressing the growing list of potentially serious infractions, I was assisted by a team of attorneys paid by the Republican Party of Texas or by other organizations dedicated to election integrity.

In no time at all, the range of problems in need of legal intervention exceeded the bandwidth of the lawyers paid to support my work. I reached out to the head of a conservative Texas PAC for help. That gentleman immediately patched in an attorney named Mano DeAyala. I explained the issues I was facing and how the latest problems could not be timely addressed by the current team of attorneys.

Mano DeAyala said he could help with these new developments, and the PAC leader said he would be happy to pay Mano for his work. Mano politely declined to accept any compensation, basically stating that "if Alan does this on a voluntary basis, then I will, too." I was stunned and grateful.

Over the course of the following weeks, Mano drafted legal challenges to actions by the interim county clerk, repeatedly took the time to personally file documents at various courts in Harris County, and worked untold hours to address the problems I was facing.

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He took the time to contribute to late-night conference calls with other attorneys and to make revisions to his prior filings, as the issues before the courts evolved.

He remained engaged throughout the early voting period, through election day and through the final canvass report on the election. As he reacted promptly and decisively to every new development, I frequently forgot that he was doing all this work pro bono. Election integrity matters were always at the top of his list of priorities.

On Election Day he was part of our “rapid response team” from before the polls opened until long after they closed. He was fully engaged.

As difficult as this election was, it could have been a lot worse, were it not for the prompt, professional intervention by Mano DeAyala. The Harris County Republican Party Ballot Security Committee and I will be forever in his debt.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alan D. Vera". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "A" and "V".

Alan D. Vera