

# LONE STAR PROJECT

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## Republican Harper-Brown Barely Hanging On

Craddick foot soldier may not survive a fair ballot recount

A Dallas County Ballot Review Board has now examined, opened and counted the qualified provisional ballots cast in the squeaky tight race in Irving-based House District 105. Consideration of the provisional ballots went as most would predict – Democrats argued that every legal ballot should be counted, while Republicans worked desperately to disqualify as many ballots as possible. Currently, Republican incumbent and Tom Craddick legislative foot soldier, Linda Harper-Brown, is clinging to a razor thin 20 vote lead. As with almost any election this close, a recount will be needed to determine the final result.



Linda Harper-Brown

### What's next?

Final resolution of the HD105 contest may take some time. Here's what we can expect over the next several days:

- The Dallas County Commissioners Court will certify the results as reported by election officials.
- Bob Romano must file a request for a recount no later than two days following the certification of the ballot by the Commissioners Court.
- A Recount Committee will be appointed by the Dallas Elections Administrator. The Committee will then examine each ballot to determine the intent of each voter.

### Quirk in electronic voting machines could determine outcome

In Dallas County, ES&S electronic voting machines are used during early voting, while paper ballots are used on Election Day. One of the notable flaws in ES&S machines is that voters who cast a straight ticket ballot but then also attempt to "emphasis" vote by marking the box next to a particular candidate inadvertently deselect that candidate thereby canceling their vote.

When the voting screens are reviewed during a recount, these errors should be caught and corrected (Source: TX Election Code Section 65.007). In HD105, Democrats cast more straight ticket ballots than Republicans. As the under vote flaw caused by "emphasis" voting is caught and corrected, more Romano votes are likely to be restored than Harper-Brown votes.

Obviously, we don't know if the ES&S flaw will reveal enough previously uncounted votes for Romano to overcome Harper-Brown's narrow 20-vote lead. Clearly, though, a recount of the early votes in HD105 is justified. Further, this race points to the need that the electronic voting machine flaw should be corrected.

## Who is Linda Harper-Brown?

Harper-Brown is among the handful of Republican Members who remain unquestioning loyalists to embattled Speaker Tom Craddick. She is a backbencher with limited influence. Her harsh partisanship, intolerant ideology and overall combative style don't win many friendships among colleagues, but does make her a handy bomb thrower for Tom Craddick.

Despite her partisan and combative reputation in Austin, she attracts little attention outside the Capitol, even in House District 105. To help fill the gaps, here's a quick rundown of some of Linda Harper-Brown's activities as a Legislator that fairly portray her as **just plain mean**.

- **Picking Elderly Pockets** – Harper-Brown voted against an effort to restore cuts made to the small allowance elderly and disabled residents of nursing homes are allowed to keep in order to purchase personal items such as soap, a hair brush or deodorant. The measure would have increased the amount to only \$60 per month. In opposing the effort Harper-Brown said, "I've got to tell you that I don't spend that much money a month on my deodorant, my toothpaste and my toothbrush and those things," she said. "Isn't this a case of giving them pocket money that's probably more than they need for basic expenditures on a monthly basis?" Of course this so-called "pocket" money is a stipend that each resident is allowed to keep each month from their own income before applying all the rest of it to help pay for their care. ([Source: Dallas Morning News, May 27, 2005](#))
- **Denying Healthcare to Children** – On March 29, 2007, Harper-Brown offered an amendment to kick children of "legal immigrants" off of the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Harper-Brown's amendment was viewed as so mean and outrageous that it was defeated by a 136-5 margin. (Source: Texas Weekly, Lubbock Online April 2, 2007)
- **Denying Healthcare to Children (again)** – Still determined to keep kids off CHIP, Linda Harper-Brown later voted against a CHIP restoration bill (HB 109) on third reading (128-17; 4/04/2007) and also on adoption of the conference committee report (134-14; 5/27/07).
- **Vouchers for you, but not for me** – Linda Harper-Brown fought hard for a private school voucher pilot program that would have taken money from selected public school districts to make them available to exclusive private schools. Harper-Brown's support for the measure suddenly disappeared when fellow Republican Charlie Geren shrewdly attached an amendment to extend the program to Harper-Brown's own district. (Source: Austin Chronicle, May 27, 2005)

## Other Linda Harper-Brown Facts

- [“Dishonorable Mention” by Texas Monthly 2007](#)
- [Texas Eagle Forum gave her a 96% rating for 2007](#)
- [Heritage Alliance gave her a 94% rating for 2007](#)

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