



# STATE LEGISLATURE ACCOUNTABILITY DATABASE

Kira Lowe



# Purpose



A 2013 Gallup poll found that only 35% percent of all respondents surveyed knew the name of one of their national congressional representatives



Reasonable to assume they do not know their state representatives or how their representatives are performing in office



Implications for election turnout and results

# Purpose

- Legislative accountability websites exist on the federal level through sites like govtrack.us
  - *User-friendly*
  - *Lots of information in one place*
  - *Multiple search methods*

# Data

- The data are public, but accessing information is difficult for the average casual user and statistics are siloed
- capitol.tx.gov is the most comprehensive resource but is not user-friendly
  - *Representative pages:*
    - List recent bills but not recent votes
    - No basic information like party affiliation
    - No/very limited downloadable data

# Proposal

- Use the data available on the existing Texas legislative website to create a database which will power a site with the usability and accessibility of govtrack for the Texas legislature



The screenshot shows the Texas House of Representatives website. At the top is the state seal and the text "Texas House of Representatives" with "86th Legislature" in a star. A navigation bar includes links for ABOUT, MEMBERS, COMMITTEES, NEWS, RESEARCH, RESOURCES, SCHEDULES, VIDEO/AUDIO, HELP, and SEARCH. Below this is a "Texas House Member" section with a search bar. The profile for Rep. Ramos, Ana-Maria, District 102, is displayed. It includes her photo, contact information, and a list of bills she has authored or sponsored. There are also links for district analyses and counties represented.

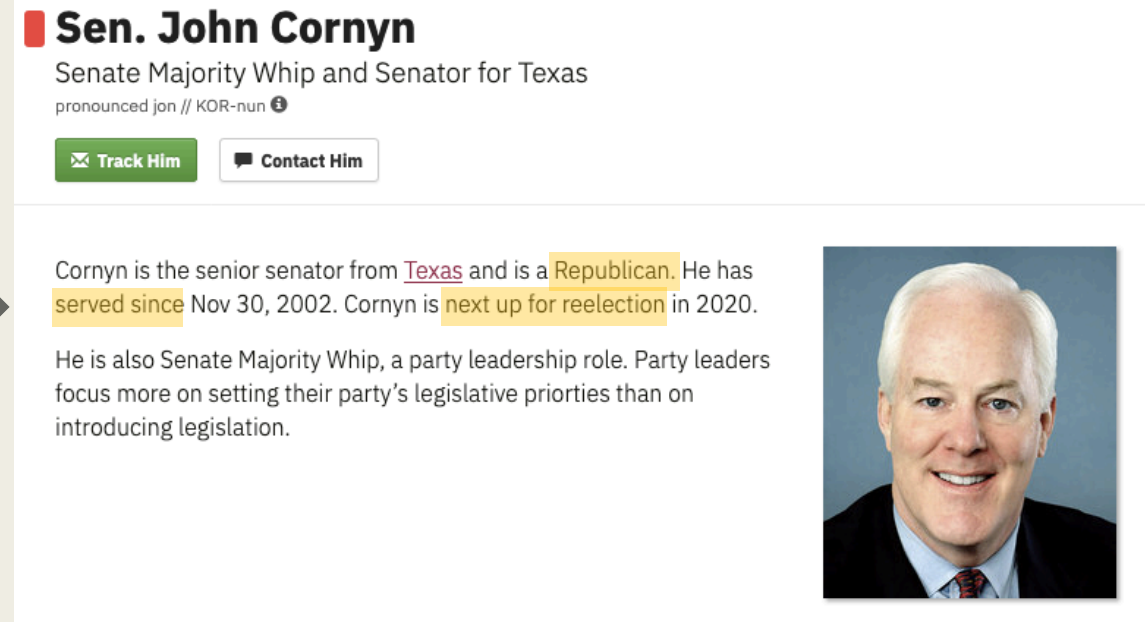
**Texas House Member** Browse by District: # Member: member select

**Rep. Ramos, Ana-Maria**  
**District 102**  
**Email**  
**Capitol Address:**  
Room E2.316  
P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
(512) 463-0454  
(512) 463-1121 Fax  
**District Address:**  
7920 Belt Line, Suite 770  
Dallas, Texas 75254  
(972) 239-5387

**Bills Authored/Sponsored 86th Legislature:**  
Authored (including Joint)  
Co-Authored  
Sponsored (including Joint)  
Co-Sponsored  
**Committees:**  
Defense & Veterans' Affairs  
Natural Resources

**District Analyses:**  
District Profile Reports  
Population Analysis  
School Districts  
Cities and CDPs  
Precincts within Districts  
Election Analysis  
ZIP Codes by District

**Counties Represented:**  
Dallas (part)  
**District:**  
District Map




The screenshot shows the profile page for Sen. John Cornyn. It includes his name, title as Senate Majority Whip and Senator for Texas, and a pronunciation guide. There are buttons for "Track Him" and "Contact Him". Below this is a paragraph of text about his tenure and party affiliation, with some words highlighted in yellow. To the right is a portrait photo of Sen. Cornyn.

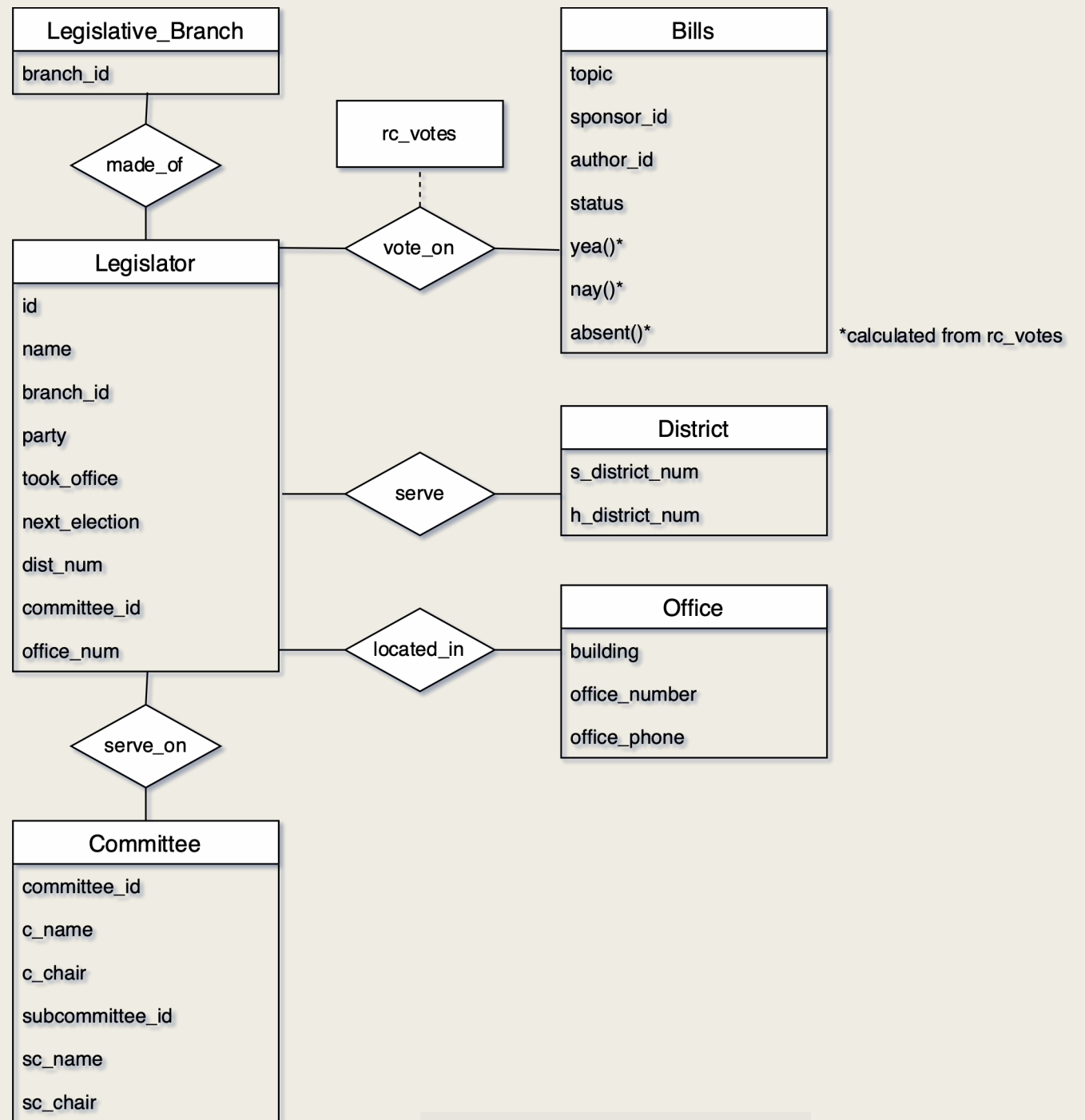
**Sen. John Cornyn**  
Senate Majority Whip and Senator for Texas  
pronounced jon // KOR-nun  
**Track Him** **Contact Him**

Cornyn is the senior senator from **Texas** and is a **Republican**. He has **served since** Nov 30, 2002. Cornyn is **next up for reelection** in 2020.

He is also Senate Majority Whip, a party leadership role. Party leaders focus more on setting their party's legislative priorities than on introducing legislation.



# Entity Relationship Diagram



# Functions

- Learn more about my representatives

```
1 SELECT name, dist_id, party, took_office, next_election
2 FROM legislator l
3 WHERE l.id = 'TH067'
```

Data Output

Explain

Messages

Notifications

	<b>name</b> character varying (100)	<b>dist_id</b> character (4)	<b>party</b> character (1)	<b>took_office</b> numeric	<b>next_election</b> numeric
1	Jeff Leach	H067	R	2013	2020

# Functions

- See the name and district of any Republican legislator who is up for reelection this year

```
1 SELECT l.name, party, dist_id
2 FROM legislator l
3 WHERE l.next_election = '2020' AND l.party = 'R'
4 ORDER BY dist_id
5
```

	Data Output	Explain	Messages	Notifications
	<b>name</b> character varying (50)	<b>party</b> character (1)	<b>dist_id</b> character (4)	
1	Greg Bonnen	R	H024	
2	Matt Shaheen	R	H066	
3	Jeff Leach	R	H067	
4	Dustin Burrows	R	H083	
5	Giovanni Capriglione	R	H098	
6	Angie Button	R	H112	
7	Angela Paxton	R	S008	
8	Lois Kolkhorst	R	S018	



# Functions

- See the topic of bills a legislator has authored, co-authored, or sponsored, or see what legislators representing your county are writing bills about

```
1 SELECT topic, COUNT(b.topic)
2 FROM bills b
3 INNER JOIN legislator l ON b.author_id = l.id
4 WHERE b.author_id = 'TH067'
5 GROUP BY b.topic
6
```

Data Output Explain Messages Notifications

	topic character varying (50)	count bigint	
1	Abortion	1	
2	Transportation	1	

```
SELECT b.topic
FROM bills b
INNER JOIN legislator l ON l.id = b.author_id
INNER JOIN district d ON l.dist_id = d.dist_id
WHERE d.county = 'Collin'
ORDER BY topic
```

a Output Explain Messages Notifications

topic character varying (50)	
Abortion	
Education	
Education	
Healthcare	
Transportation	

# Functions

- See the status of a bill by topic

```
1 SELECT topic, bill_id, status
2 FROM bills b
3 WHERE b.topic = 'Abortion'
4
```

Data Output

Explain

Messages

Notifications

	<b>topic</b> character varying (50)	<b>bill_id</b> [PK] character (6)	<b>status</b> character (1)
1	Abortion	HB0016	E

# Functions

- See if your representative voted in favor of the bill

Query Editor

Query History

1 SELECT l.name, l.dist\_id

2 FROM legislator l

3 FULL JOIN rc\_vote v ON l.id = v.yea

4 WHERE v.bill\_id = 'HB0016'

5

6

Data Output

Explain

Messages

Notifications

name	dist_id
character varying (100)	character (4)
Angie Button	H112
Matt Shaheen	H066
Jeff Leach	H067

# Functions

- See the name and party of committee chairs

```
1 SELECT c.committee_id, c.c_name, l.name, l.party
2 FROM committee c
3 INNER JOIN legislator l ON l.id = c.c_chair_id
4
```

Data Output

Explain

Messages

Notifications

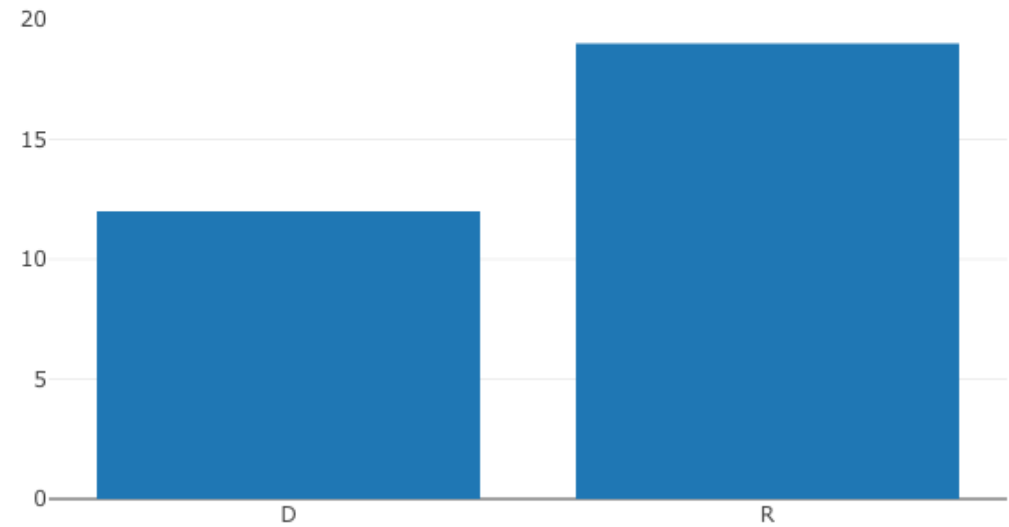
	<b>committee_id</b> character (5) 🔒	<b>c_name</b> character varying 🔒	<b>name</b> character varying (50) 🔒	<b>party</b> character (1) 🔒
1	HC003	County Affairs	Garnet Coleman	D
2	HC028	Urban Affairs	Angie Button	R
3	HC013	International Relations ...	Rafael Anchia	D
4	HC002	Appropriations	Giovanni Capriglione	R
5	HC026	Texas Privacy Protecti...	Giovanni Capriglione	R
6	HC029	Ways & Means	Dustin Burrows	R
7	HC014	Judiciary & Civil Jurisp...	Jeff Leach	R
8	HC027	Transportation	Terry Canales	D

# Functions

- Use queries in Falcon to create useful tables and graphs

```
1 SELECT party, count(party)
2 FROM legislator
3 WHERE branch_id = 'S'
4 GROUP BY party
5
```

Republicans Control the TX State Senate



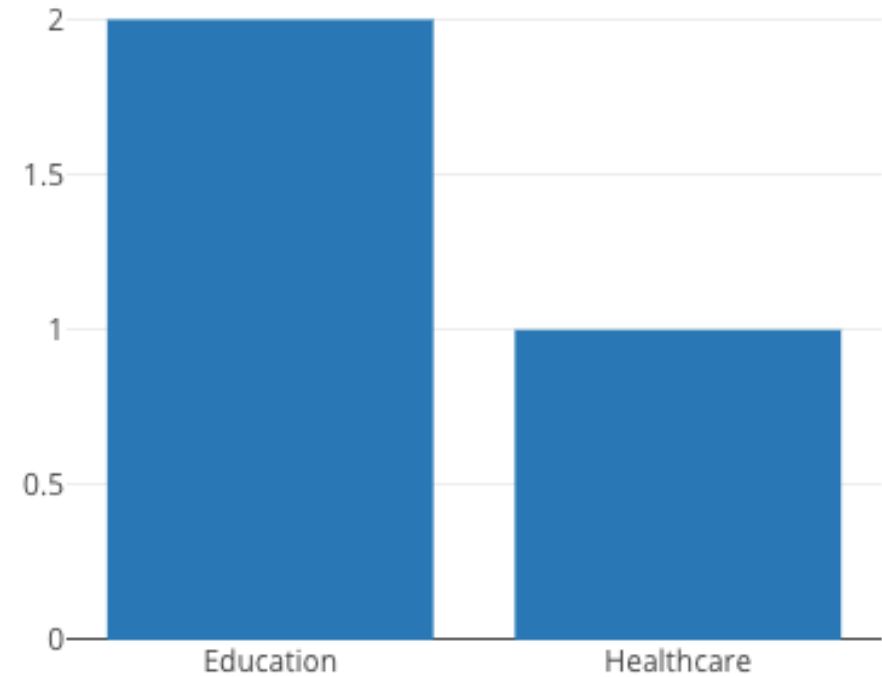
party	count
D	12
R	19

# Functions

- Use queries in Falcon to create useful tables and graphs

```
1 SELECT topic, count(topic)
2 FROM bills b
3 INNER JOIN legislator l ON b.author_id=l.id
4 WHERE b.author_id = 'TS008'
5 GROUP BY b.topic
```

Authored Topic Areas: Angela Paxton



Education	2
Healthcare	1

# Functions

- Input data using Django

Django administration

Home › Catalog › Legislators › Add legislator

Add legislator

<b>Id:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Name:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Branch id:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Party:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Took office:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Left office:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Next election:</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>Dist id:</b>	<input type="text"/>