

Were you surprised when Gov. Abbott appointed you to fill the rest of the term as comptroller after Hancock's departure?

I have a great working relationship with Governor Abbott. He has provided bold, conservative leadership that has made Texas the nation's economic engine, with record job creation, a thriving economy, and unmatched opportunity. I am grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside him as we continue building an even brighter future for our state.

What have you been doing over the past few weeks to prepare for this role?

My entire career in business and my service in the Texas Senate has prepared me for this role. I've always fought for less government and lower taxes because that results in more economic freedom. I built a successful business and have a track record of managing people and finances effectively. In the state senate, I uncovered a massive corruption scheme at a Dallas-area government agency with a \$100 million annual budget, led the effort to abolish the agency, and triggered a federal bribery investigation that resulted in multiple convictions and prison sentences. Rooting out waste, fraud, and abuse will be a central focus of my work as Comptroller.

What are the first concrete actions you expect to take in your first days as comptroller?

The first official act I took as Comptroller was to refuse a state salary. I did not come here for a paycheck. I'm here because I love Texas, and I want to serve the people who make this state the greatest in America.

You'll be serving as Comptroller while also running for a full term in November. How do you plan to balance the responsibilities of the office with the demands of the campaign?

I'm confident we will be successful in the campaign because the people of Texas will see a Comptroller who is a strong advocate and an alert watchdog looking out for their interests and safeguarding their tax dollars.

Throughout your campaign, you've talked about reforming the comptroller's office and "DOGEing Texas." Now that you'll have the authority to implement those ideas, what specific changes should Texans expect that will distinguish your administration from previous comptrollers?

We will aggressively audit to ensure tax dollars are spent responsibly. Stopping fraud and corruption will top the list of priorities. But we can't stop there. If any government agency, whether it is the state of Texas or a local entity like a city, county or school district are wasting money on frivolous purchases or boondoggle projects, they need to be held accountable. Citizens need to know how their money is being spent.

I also believe we need to focus on meaningful property tax relief to make homeownership more affordable, strengthen financial security for families, and help ensure that Texas remains the best place in America to live, work, and raise a family.

Governor Abbott, Lt. Governor Patrick and Speaker Burrows have all said lowering property taxes will be a top priority in the next legislative session. I will do everything I can to help make that happen.

But relief must also come from the local level. Cities and counties across Texas are seeing strong sales tax collections and growing revenues. As they prepare their budgets, they should look for every opportunity to return those dollars to taxpayers through lower property taxes.

Just as local governments are uniquely positioned to provide tax relief, the Comptroller is uniquely positioned to shine a bright light on local government spending. If they don't like the kind of transparency that I intend to champion, they should get their house in order now because get Texans deserve transparency, accountability, and confidence that every public dollar is being used responsibly.

Looking back, what do you think your journey to the office says about the direction of the Texas Republican Party?

I won the Republican Primary election in a landslide despite running against two well-known and well-funded opponents. It is clear the voters responded positively to my message of implementing a business approach to government, safeguarding our tax dollars and reducing taxes so Texans can keep more of what they earn. Republicans want leaders who aren't afraid to take bold steps to make government leaner, less expensive and more focused on its core mission. I do believe Republicans are tired of candidates who say one thing on the campaign trail but do the opposite once they get to Washington or Austin. I've been fighting for smaller government and individual liberty my entire life. Voter knew my message was based on deeply held core conservative beliefs and that authenticity was rewarded.