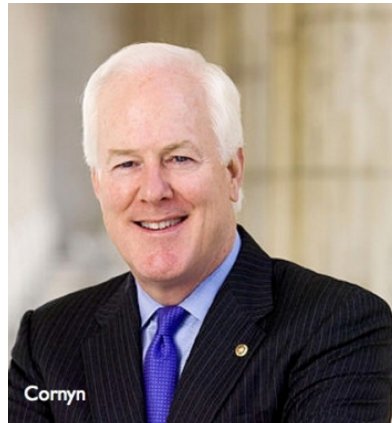




Written by [Thomas R. Eddlem](#) on December 23, 2013

Texas: Cornyn-Stockman U.S. Senate Race

Texas Senator and Republican Minority Whip John Cornyn will face a wild [four-way primary battle](#), featuring constitutionalist-minded Congressman Steve Stockman and two other primary opponents. “The struggle here is very clearly between big government crony capitalism from Cornyn and small government populism from Stockman,” former National Republican Liberty Caucus Chairman Dave Nalle told *The New American* of the [March 4 primary](#).



The Austin area-based Nalle added that “Cornyn also consistently supports the establishment against liberty or reform candidates and that’s important because he’s head of the NRSC [National Republican Senatorial Committee] and has a lot of campaign money to throw around.” Cornyn — the second-ranking Republican in the U.S. Senate — voted to give \$700 billion in taxpayer dollars in the 2008 TARP bailout to Wall Street crony capitalists, and once had among the more liberal voting records of Senate Republicans. But from the conservative or constitutionalist point of view, his voting record has improved. For his two U.S. Senate terms to date, [his cumulative rating](#) in *The New American’s* “Freedom Index: A Congressional Scorecard Based on the U.S. Constitution” is 69 percent; for 2013, his “Freedom Index” rating is 89 percent. Stockman put Cornyn’s voting record a different way on his [campaign website](#): “John Cornyn is a reliable vote for more spending right up until the vote before a Republican primary.”

Stockman, who was elected to Congress in 2012 (he had also served a congressional term in the 1990s), [scored 95 percent in the “Freedom Index” for 2013](#). Out of 20 key House votes considered by the index for this period, Stockman was rated unfavorably on one: his vote against eliminating the provision in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for indefinite detention without trial. However, Stockman has affirmatively opposed indefinite detention through [federal lawsuits](#).

And out of 20 key Senate votes considered by the “Freedom Index” for 2013, the index rated Cornyn unfavorably on two: his vote to table (kill) an amendment to prohibit foreign aid to Egypt until another “democratic” election occurs, and his vote against ending indefinite detention without trial through the NDAA.

Cornyn’s relatively liberal voting record clashes with some establishment measures of how congressmen are called “conservative,” and many expect Cornyn to tout his rating from the establishment *National Journal*. FactCheck.org [claims](#) that “The fact is, however, that Cornyn was rated the second most conservative of all incumbent U.S. senators by the nonpartisan *National Journal*, based on his voting record in the last Congress, which sat during 2011 and 2012.” Of course, the *National Journal* largely measures “conservative” in the context of those most likely to vote with the Republican Party, rather than strict support for constitutional liberties. So it would be more accurate to say that Cornyn was the second most likely to vote with his party, hardly a “conservative” credential in an era where the [GOP leadership just voted to increase spending, taxes, and the deficit](#) in a congressional budget vote with Democrats.



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But Cornyn's somewhat better voting record in recent years may fend off some of the potent outside groups that have stoked successful primary insurgencies.

Though Stockman became famous for defending the Second Amendment during his first stint in Congress back in 1995-97, the [National Rifle Association endorsed Cornyn](#) anyway.

And the Club for Growth may be sitting this race out. "While Congressman Stockman has a pro-economic growth record, so does Senator Cornyn, as witnessed by his 87 percent lifetime Club for Growth score," Chris Chocola, president of Club for Growth's political action committee, [told](#) Fox News December 14.

As for other Tea Party-affiliated groups, they've been generally supportive but non-committal, [according to](#) the December 17 *Dallas Morning News*: "So far, FreedomWorks and the Senate Conservatives Fund have offered praise for his decision to challenge Cornyn, the deputy Senate GOP leader, but have refrained from endorsing him or promising tangible help."

Fox News [noted](#) that Cornyn also has big money on his side, as he has been the [Chairman of the National Republican Senatorial Committee](#): "Cornyn, the No. 2 Republican in the Senate, also has nearly \$7 million in his campaign cash, compared to roughly \$32,000 for Stockman, further decreasing the odds of a Stockman upset."

But the race may not be quite as lopsided as Fox News has implied. The *Dallas Morning News* [reported](#) December 17 that Stockman has \$2 million in his campaign account, though [his filings with the Federal Election Commission](#) do not account for more than about a quarter of a million in receipts through the third quarter of 2013. Stockman can raise funds from supporters of the Second Amendment nationally, and from Texans locally, as [he did in 2012](#). Cornyn [received some local Texas oil money, but also funds from Wall Street](#), such as [Goldman Sachs the Blackstone Group and JPMorgan-Chase](#) (perhaps as a thank-you for his [vote in favor of the TARP bailout in 2008](#)).

The race will come down to whether the three opponents can hold Cornyn to less than 50 percent of the vote. "The big factor in winning this election is Texas' runoff voting system," Nalle — executive director at Texas Liberty Foundation and South Central Regional Director of Republican Liberty Caucus — told *The New American*. "It's all about knocking Cornyn down to less than 50 percent in the primary election. If that happens, then the second place candidate gets to go against him one-on-one in the runoff."

There are two other primary candidates: Dwayne Stovall and Linda Vega. [Stovall](#) is a libertarian-leaning businessman who quotes Frederick Bastiat and the 10th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution in his campaign literature, and pledges strict adherence to the U.S. Constitution. He diverges from strict libertarianism, however, on the issue of illegal immigration and amnesty, where he holds a nuanced position in favor of legal immigration and opposition to blanket amnesty.

Houston area immigration attorney [Linda Vega](#) is the Founder of Latinos Ready To Vote!, an organization that engages in outreach to Hispanics on behalf of the GOP, and she is also a former employee of the U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division. She opposes amnesty, but is silent on civil liberties issues such as the NSA and is for a [more aggressive foreign policy](#) than her primary opponents: "Our military must keep strong and act unilaterally when we see the need to protect our allies and American interests around the world," she has declared.

Nalle told *The New American*, "Dwayne is very popular with liberty Republicans; he's probably to the right of Stockman. Linda is a moderate Republican with some libertarian leanings who is pro-



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immigration and has strong Latino backing. But I would expect all of their followers to switch to Stockman in the final runoff vote.” Nalle noted that Cornyn could very well lose the race. “As for winning the election,” he said, “the strategy is to do what Ted Cruz did, which is to get to a runoff and win on anti-incumbent votes — and the ‘anyone but Cornyn’ sentiment is strong.” Cornyn recently [polled](#) only 50 percent in a poll by Republican firm Wilson Perkins Allen Opinion Research.

Nalle added, “It’s going to be a lot closer than the Cruz race was. If Stockman makes the runoff, it will be by just a couple of points — but if he does make the runoff, enough money will come in to give him a boost when he goes solo against Cornyn.”

Politico has already [declared](#) Cornyn the winner, observing, “Nobody in Texas thinks Stockman has a snowball’s chance of winning against Cornyn, and they’re probably right.” *Politico*, however, also hedged its bet: “Whatever Stockman’s up to, a look back at his political career makes one thing clear: You don’t want to run in a Republican primary against Steve Stockman, even if the outcome is predetermined. Running against Steve Stockman is not fun. Steve Stockman doesn’t just burn bridges—he’ll burn your house down. Also, sometimes Steve Stockman wins.”

The race promises to be both entertaining and nasty. *Politico* terms Stockman — and in particular his Twitter feed — “bombastic,” “outrageous,” and even “legendary.”

Here’s a sampling of some of Stockman’s more recent [hard-hitting tweets](#):

- “John Cornyn killed the Republican filibuster and voted to fully fund Obamacare.”
- “John Cornyn voted to play the Knockout Game with your health insurance. #obamacarefunding”
- “Liberals love diversity. That’s why they punish anyone who doesn’t think, act, eat, drive and speak exactly like them.”
- “That “Shady” PAC attacker? It’s funded by an amnesty supporter and run by John Cornyn’s close lobbyist pal who backs liberal Democrats #tcot”

Nalle acknowledged that “Stockman is a polarizing figure. You either love him or hate him. I think a lot more love than hate, but he has made some enemies along the way and there are establishment folks who really hate him for thumbing his nose at them consistently and aggressively.” And Cornyn supporters over at “Texans for a Conservative Majority” have already [created a “Shady Stockman” website](#).



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