

Texas Speaker of the House

“The Speaker of the House of Representatives is one of the most powerful and influential political figures in the state, vested with the responsibility of overseeing the course of lawmaking in every area of possible interest to any Texan.” Texas Federal Court Judge, Lee Yeakel.

- Representative Joe Straus, a San Antonio Republican, is the current Speaker.
- The Speaker is elected by open, recorded vote by a majority of all 150 House members, every 2 years.
- “Election” takes place at the beginning of each regular Texas Legislative Session.

Duties & Responsibilities of the Texas Speaker of House

- Keeps Order on the House Floor: The Speaker is the official presiding officer of the House.

The Speaker keeps order during floor debate.

- Power of Recognition:

The Speaker recognizes House members asking to speak or asking questions.

The Speaker rules on procedural, parliamentary issues.

- The Right To Vote:

The Speaker retains the right to vote, but often does not.

- Committee Membership:

The Speaker decides which House members serve on House committees.

Exception: for standing Committees, ½ of membership is decided by seniority.

Speaker appoints all members for procedural committees.

The Speaker selects the chair and vice chair for all House committees.

(Committee chairs decide if bills get a hearing and/or vote).

- Bill Referral: The Speaker decides to which committee a House Bill will be assigned.

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