



Turning Texas Blue: What It Will Take to Break the GOP Grip on America's Reddest State

Mary Beth Rogers

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In the 2014 midterm election, Democrats in Texas did not receive even 40 percent of the statewide vote; Republicans swept the tables both in Texas and nationally. But even after two decades of democratic losses, there is a path to turn Texas blue, argues Mary Beth Rogers - if Democrats are smart enough to see and follow it.

Rogers is the last person to successfully campaign-manage a Democrat, Governor Ann Richards, to the statehouse in Austin. In a lively narrative, Rogers tells the story of how Texas moved so far to the right in such a short time and how Democrats might be able to move it back to the center. And, argues Rogers, that will mean a lot more of an effort than simply waiting for the state's demographics to shift even further towards Hispanics - a risky proposition at best. Rogers identifies a ten-point path for Texas Democrats to win at the statewide level and to build a base vote that would allow Texas to become a swing-vote player in national politics once again. One part of that shift starts with local Democratic candidates in local Republican communities making the connection between controversial local issues or problems and the statewide Republican policies that ignore or create them. For example, in a 2014 election in Denton-a Republican suburb-voters approved Texas's first ban on hydraulic fracking. The next day, though, a Republican Texas agency official announced that Texas would not honor the town's vote to ban. No democratic candidate picked up the issue.

Change won't come easily, argues Rogers. But if Texas shifts to even a pale shade of purple, it changes everything in American politics today.

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