

*CBS Mornings*

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[ON-SCREEN HEADLINE: Texas Republican Primary Showdown]

GAYLE KING: Texas Republicans vote today in another big test at President Trump's power over the GOP. State Attorney General Ken Paxton is challenging Senator John Cornyn and, in spite of his controversial past, Paxton does have the President's support. Now, that is huge because several other Republican incumbents have lost this year to challengers endorsed by Donald Trump. Ed O'Keefe is in Austin, that's the state capitol, of course. He's got the latest for us. Ed, good morning. People on both sides of the aisle watching this race, hello to you.

ED O'KEEFE: They sure are, Gayle, good to see you. The lone person, however, who may have met at the most in this Lone Star State contest in recent days, lives about 1,500 miles away at the White House. The President jumping into the fray here, endorsing Ken Paxton over Senator John Cornyn now has Republicans concerned. They may need to spend tens if not hundreds of millions of dollars defending a reliably red Senate seat against the Democrat and so far, this holding his own.

O'KEEFE: Today's Texas Senate runoff looks like a runaway for challenger Ken Paxton.

TEXAS ATTORNEY GENERAL KEN PAXTON (R): I'm so honored to have President Trump's endorsement.

O'KEEFE: President Trump called the state's four-term senator — John Cornyn — “very disloyal.”

SENATOR JOHN CORNYN (R-TX): Well, I don't know how much more with him I could be than 99.3 percent of the time.

O'KEEFE: Despite Cornyn supporters outspending Paxton 17-to-1 in advertising, Cornyn likely can't overcome the President's endorsement.

PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP (on 05/20/26): Paxton, I think he'll win.

O'KEEFE: But some Republican senators disagree.

SENATOR BILL CASSIDY (R-LA): Paxson seems fairly flawed. I mean, his wife's calling him an adulterer all over the place.

O'KEEFE: Paxton has been plagued by years of personal scandals and an impeachment attempt over an alleged misuse of power, all which he denied.

PAXTON [on 03/03/26]: We are not going to go quietly. And we are not going to let you by the seat.

TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE JAMES TALARICO (D) [on 03/04/26]: We're about to take back Texas.

O'KEEFE: The Democrats are rallying around James Talarico, a state representative in seminarian who they believe is their best shot in decades.

TALARICO: We are going to win this race.

O'KEEFE: He's gained grassroots support and has focused on fighting billionaires, power. Republicans point to past statements like this.

TALARICO [on 04/20/21]: Modern science obviously recognizes that there are many more than two biological sexes. In fact, there are six. [SCREEN WIPE] [on 10/15/21] God is non-binary.

O'KEEFE: Still, Cornyn told us Paxton would cost Republicans more than just a Senate seat.

CORNYN [on 02/28/26]: If Ken Paxton is a nominee, I think all of that is at risk, and not just a Senate race, but these down-ballot races as well, so I don't know why we would want to take that risk.

O'KEEFE: Polls showed that, in a general election, Democrat Talarico was running ahead of or even with either Republican opponent, a good spot to be in right now, but it's only May. And Democrats have seen their hopes dashed in this state several times before.