

Textbook Review Questions

Collier, Galatas, Harrelson-Stephens, Lone Star Politics, 4th Edition, Sage (CQ Press), 2016. ISBN 978-1-4833-5277-0

Chapter 12: Local Government in Texas

1. Read the introductory section and try to restrain your sense of outrage against homeowner's associations (HOA). However, this reading illustrates the unholy alliance between those groups that seek to use the powers of government for what are often questionable practices.
2. What is the reason for the creation of so many specialized units of local government serving the same geographical area? (p. 371-373)
3. What is the common characteristics of all units of local government in Texas? (p. 373)
4. What is "Dillon's Rule" (p. 373)
5. Define each of the following terms: dual federalism, cooperative federalism, and fiscal federalism. How does these compare with fiscal federalism? (pp. 374-375)
6. Read the section on the history and function of counties in Texas on pages 376-378). What are the six key functions that counties perform for the state? (p. 378)
7. Review figure 12.1 on p. 380 to get a general sense of the structure and organization of Texas counties.
8. What is the commissioner's court in county government? How members selected and what are the basic functions of this body? What duties may individual commissioners perform? (pp. 379-380)
9. What are the duties and powers of the constitutional county judge? (p. 380-381)
10. What are the other constitutional county officials and what duties does each have? (p. 381-382)
11. Read the discussion of patronage versus civil service merit systems in county government. (p. 382). There are no specific questions to answer on this.
12. What are the primary sources of county revenue (money to spend)?
13. Define the terms privatization and out-sourcing. (p. 383)
14. What is the process by which a "city" (Municipal Corporation) may be created in Texas? (p. 385)
15. What are the two categories of cities created under the Texas Constitution? (p. 385) Read, but don't worry about the three types of general law cities outlined in the textbook on p. 386.
16. What are the advantages for a home-rule city over that of a general law city? (p. 386). What is the minimum population for a city to adopt a home-rule charter?
17. What are the three basic forms of city government? Understand the basic organization of each. What is the most common system of city government organization in Texas? (p. 388-392)
18. What are the four basic electoral systems that cities may use? Understand the basic principles of each. (pp. 329-394) What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?
19. What is zoning? Review the pros and cons of zoning? (p. 395-396) Read the section on the use of local ordinance power to go beyond state law.
20. What are the contrasts between cities and counties discussed on p. 399?
21. Read the section on HOA (Home Owner's Associations) No specific questions.
22. What are independent school districts? How are they governed? (p. 402)
23. What are specialized districts? Why are they generally created? How are they governed in most cases? (p. 403-404)
24. What are municipal utility districts? Why are they created and how are they financed? (p. 405)
25. Read the section on winners and loser. No specific questions.