Nathan Johnson
FOR TEXAS ATTORNEY GENERAL

"That's My Lawyer"

Rebuilding the Attorney General's Office to Reverse the Tide of Corruption

Nathan Johnson's plan to end the corruption at the Attorney General's office

The Attorney General is the one statewide official who can use the rule of law to stop the corrupt use of power. Whether it's corporations rigging markets and preying on consumers or government officers bending and breaking the law to favor themselves and their allies, the Office of Attorney General ("**OAG**") is there to put an end to it.

For more than a decade, a corrupted Texas OAG has done precisely the opposite. Ken Paxton has used the office, and Republican AG nominee Mayes Middleton has pledged to continue using the office, to promote the political agenda of a hostile faction along with the ever-increasing consolidation of corporate power, all at the expense of everyone else.

This failure is itself corruption in the American historical sense of the word: where the rot and deformation of political institutions allows public power to be used to promote private interests.

Nathan Johnson's anti-corruption plan reverses that.

Nathan Johnson would run the attorney general's office as it was intended: not as a political operation, but as the check and balance envisioned by the framers of the Texas constitution, **who trusted consolidated power in the hands of no one**. Johnson would:

- **Ensure honest public contracting.** That means no rigging bids. Consider that Elon Musk's company, Starlink, received 99% of the state awards in what was supposed to be a competitive bidding process for the provision of Low Earth Orbit satellite broadband service. Without drawing conclusions for the moment, the whole process may have involved coordinated corruption among the Trump administration, the illegally empowered DOGE czar Musk, private entities (Starlink), the governor's office and the broadband development office. The OAG, acting in concert with the Office of the State Comptroller, must ensure that public contracting is administered honestly and legally.
- **Investigate and prosecute public corruption regardless of who participates.** The test for OAG action is not party registration or rank on a donor list, but whether someone, public or private, Republican or Democrat, broke laws that protect people. The current AG not only failed to investigate and prosecute friends and allies, like the felon Nate Paul, but instead used the power of the office to facilitate their corruption and shield them from investigation. This was the subject of the Paxton impeachment trial in the Texas Senate, wherein, despite the evidence, Mayes Middleton, the Republican nominee for Attorney General, voted to acquit Paxton of abuse of office. (Johnson voted to convict.)
- **Protect whistleblowers instead of punishing them.** The people who report

wrongdoing inside the government should be respected and protected, not fired. Johnson would restore that protection to an office that made a national example of destroying it — full compliance with the Texas Whistleblower Act, a private internal reporting channel that runs outside the AG's front office.

- **Never bill taxpayers for legal defense of illegal actions.** The OAG's resources belong to the 32 million Texans it serves, not to the officeholder. Johnson would put it in writing: no staff time or agency funds will be spent on defending actions that fall outside the scope of the office.
- **Consumer protection and fair market enforcement.** Restore staffing and case volume in consumer protection and antitrust, two areas that have withered while the OAG devoted investigative and legal resources to fighting culture wars and waging disinformation campaigns.
- **Work with agencies to ensure honest industry oversight and to avoid regulatory capture by corporate interests.** Anti-corruption can take the form of establishing routine communication with agencies to steer them away from bad decisions.
- **Hire people who want to serve the public, not an agenda.** Paxton's corruption drove many good public servants out of civil service. Johnson will recruit and hire dedicated individuals who take pride in public service, not in the pursuit of political agendas.
- **Coordinate law enforcement with federal agencies, like the DOJ and FTC and CFPB, in investigations and prosecutions** – to the extent the Trump administration will allow it. Johnson has a record of working on a bipartisan basis on essential matters of public interest. Where the federal government abdicates its responsibilities to the public, Johnson will work independently of federal agencies that fail to fulfill responsibilities to protect consumers and enforce fair competition laws, as many attorneys general recently did in the Live Nation litigation.
- **Meet the legal challenges created by rapidly changing technology in a rapidly changing marketplace.** Emerging technologies and marketing innovations create opportunities for consumer abuse by the private sector. In areas like FinTech, AI-generated persuasion, consumer surveillance by data brokers and others, "personalized pricing", price-gouging and price-fixing, "dark patterns" (often used in subscriptions), hidden junk fees, leveraging market dominance to dominate parallel markets: these are all places where corrupted government allows abuse of commercial power, where a responsible OAG can protect people and promote free and fair competitive markets.
- **Advance laws that respond to technology-based marketing changes that enable companies to evade existing law.** Texas has a solid body of consumer protection and fair competition laws, but innovative corporations find innovative ways to circumvent those laws. As an attorney general serving the public interest, Johnson will not only apply existing law, but, where necessary, will also work closely and collaboratively with the Legislature to update the law to protect the public interest in previously unanticipated scenarios.
- **Routine review of agency regulation for conflicts of interest.** The OAG must be aware of actual and potential conflicts of interest within agencies, in order to ensure that the public trust is not violated.

An AG who upholds the rule of law through these and other measures, who stays out of Texans' personal lives, who keeps the branches of government in their lanes, and reserves the power of the office for the people it belongs to, reverses what has been a corrupt course, in

fulfillment of the responsibilities of the OAG.

Corruption is firing the people who try to stop corruption.

In 2020, eight of Ken Paxton's most senior deputies reported his corruption to the FBI. These were not partisans. They were hard ideological conservatives who worked closely with Paxton, who shared his ideological views. They concluded that he was abusing the office to help a single man: Austin real estate developer and campaign donor, Nate Paul.

Every one of the eight quit or was fired. Four sued Paxton and won; a Texas court found they had been improperly fired and awarded them $6.6 million. Paxton's response reveals how he saw the office. Rather than pay the judgment himself, Paxton formally requested the Legislature to pay $3.3 million in taxpayer money to settle it. That led the Texas House to investigate, and then to impeach him – only the third impeachment in Texas history.

The Republican-controlled Senate acquitted Paxton despite the clear evidence. But eventually the whistleblowers were vindicated in federal court. Nate Paul pleaded guilty to a federal felony in January 2025. It is relevant to the race to succeed Ken Paxton as Texas Attorney General that Republican AG nominee Mayes Middleton voted to acquit Paxton, despite the clear evidence presented at trial; Middleton voted to condone abuse of the office he now seeks.

Corruption follows consolidation.

Concentrated commercial power does two things at once: it places market control in the hands of a few individuals who can raise prices and manipulate markets almost at will, while it captures the government offices whose job it is to regulate market behavior. Concentrated political power, fueled by money from concentrated commercial interests, saps the power of democracy. Politicians and corporations eventually talk only to each other, with the public shut out of the conversation. Prices rise, quality falls, choices dwindle, innovation retreats, employees lose options. And, as democracy erodes, consumers lose their last line of defense. Concentrated power sows corruption, which concentrates power further. It is a cycle, and Texans pay for it in lost money and civic faith.

This is where the OAG matters most. The AG is the chief consumer-protection and antitrust enforcer in the state. If the OAG is run as a political shop, price gougers and fraudsters and market manipulators operate with near impunity. Run honestly and true to its purpose, the OAG can break the cycle of political and commercial consolidation of power that corrupts the rule of law at the expense of the public interest.

The AG's power to uphold the rule of law to combat corruption has never mattered more. Federal enforcement of consumer protection and antitrust law has largely ceased under Donald Trump. And relying on the courts and agencies won't meet the need anymore.

On June 29, 2026, the Supreme Court ruled that the President may fire commissioners of the Federal Trade Commission at will, overturning the 91-year precedent that kept the nation's top antitrust and consumer-protection enforcers insulated from politics. The decision reaches well past the FTC, to roughly two dozen independent agencies that police unsafe products, workplace discrimination, and corporate abuse. The federal regulators on whom Texans have relied to keep big companies honest now serve at the pleasure of a president who is manifestly

not interested in either consumer protection or free and fair markets. When federal regulators can be fired for enforcing the law, Texans need someone who only they hire and fire to protect their interests, someone who will uphold the rule of law to reverse the tide of corruption.

The Texas Attorney General is now the most durable check Texans have left against monopolistic power and undue influence over policy and enforcement. The choice of who holds the office of Attorney General is now a question of whether the check will work at all.

The path ahead: two visions for the Attorney General.

Mayes Middleton has pledged to continue the Paxton model. His political support comes from the same fringe faction that produced the status quo, and in the Paxton impeachment trial, Middleton voted to protect it.

Nathan Johnson offers the alternative on the merits. A commercial litigator and Dallas state senator since 2019, Johnson has put 135 bills into law across four sessions – strengthening the electricity grid, regulating data brokers, blocking AI fraudsters, and even passing laws to make the OAG itself more effective and efficient, while opposing myriad unconstitutional laws on legal grounds.

It is telling that in the Republican primary, not a single one of the major Texas metro dailies endorsed Mayes Middleton. In the Democratic primary, every one of them endorsed Nathan Johnson.

The contrast is competence and independence and concern for the public interest, versus grift and disinformation and fealty to DC puppet masters. One candidate would restore the AG's office to public service. The other would maintain it as a political tool and corruption facilitator. That is the choice, and that is why the Attorney General’s race will determine whether the government in Texas can be made to work for the 32 million people it is supposed to serve.