



Bay Area REPUBLICAN WOMEN

TFRW Region XVIII, Texas Senate District 11



President's Voice

Hello BARW!

I received an email recently from the Harris County Republican Party titled: **Have you ever thought about running for a position on the ballot? Come learn more!** (If you are not on their email distribution – here's the link – [SignUp](#) (scroll to bottom of page)).

It got me thinking about our upcoming BARW luncheon meeting on February 25th. We have witnessed and supported our guest speaker, Alex Mealer, and many others in their run for judicial and county seats here in Harris County only to come up short.

It made me think of their passion for issues in our county and communities by offering their solutions. Elections are high-stakes affairs filled with anticipation, hard work, and a high emotional investment for the candidate, their families and their supporters.

Most of the candidates aren't going to win. Many candidates have bounced back to realize a successful career as public servants, whether in or outside of politics.

If you are thinking of or know someone who is entertaining the thought of running for office – I encourage you to do so. I challenge you to find a qualified strong candidate that we can put our support behind.

Harris County is holding a Judicial Candidate Information Session on Saturday, February 22. Over 70 Judicial races are on the ballot in 2026. Here is the [sign up form](#).

On Saturday, March 1st, they are holding a Candidate Informational Session for those interested in running for local government positions like the School Board, City Council and Mayor. Some expected speakers are former candidates Cindy Siegel, Kyle Scott, and Alex Mealer. Here is the [sign up form](#).

Running in Harris County is no easy accomplishment as we all know. We NEED some amazing candidates to run for offices, especially the County Judge and Commissioners Court. Will that be you?

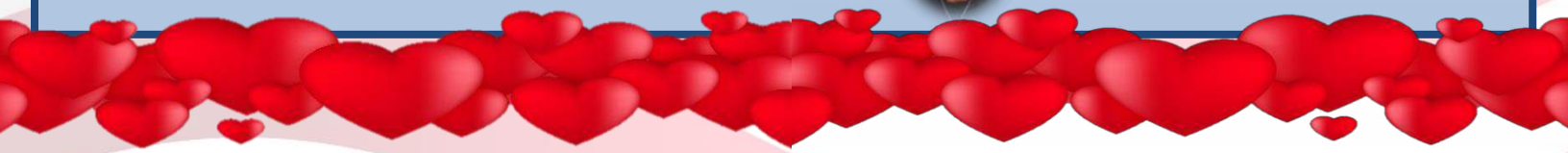


Let's Keep Texas RED!

Debra Risinger, BARW President

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Next Meeting - February 25, 2025

Alexandra (Alex) del Moral Mealer



Alexandra (Alex) del Moral Mealer is a wife and mother of two, a combat veteran, a Harvard JD / MBA and a former energy finance executive who is proud to be raising the next generation of Houstonians.

A graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Alex served as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal officer (bomb squad). Through her experience leading soldiers in combat and defusing bombs in Afghanistan, Alex proved she has the skills necessary to lead during times of crisis.

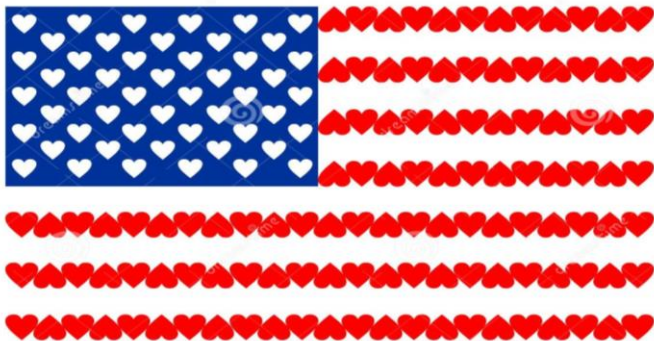
After her time in service, Alex graduated from Harvard Business School and Harvard Law School before moving to Houston to pursue a career in energy finance, where she worked on the execution of billion dollar transactions as a strategic advisor on mergers & acquisitions and capital markets financing for public and private companies.

While raising her young children and trying to navigate Harris County's COVID-19 response, Alex became increasingly focused on the strengths and weaknesses of local government and ultimately decided to run for Harris County Judge, securing the Republican nomination and building a broad coalition focused on good government during her closely contested general election.

Alex chairs METRO's public safety committee and is serving on the board of METRO as a representative of the 14 multi-cities in the METRO service areas and is committed to ensuring our region has a best-in-class transit system that is fiscally responsible, safe and efficient.

The next general meeting of the Bay Area Republican Women is Tuesday, February 25. **The deadline for reservation is Friday, February 21 at 5:00pm.** It is important to meet this deadline so BOCC can prepare for our club's luncheon. Please send the reservation to BARW.RSVP@gmail.com.

See you there, Chris Elguezabal



January Luncheon

Education Director for TX Right To Life

Michaela Vaughan



[Texas Right to Life | Builders of a Pro-Life Texas.](#)



DeepSeek: The Chinese AI app that has the world talking

Kelly Ng, Brandon Drenon, Tom Gerken and Marc Cieslak
BBC News



DeepSeek has stunned the world - what do we know about it?

DeepSeek, a Chinese artificial intelligence (AI) startup, made headlines worldwide after it topped app download charts and caused US tech stocks to sink.

In January, it released its latest model, DeepSeek R1, which it said rivalled technology developed by ChatGPT-maker OpenAI in its capabilities, while costing far less to create.

Its popularity and potential rattled investors, wiping billions of dollars off the market value of chip giant Nvidia - and called into question whether American firms would dominate the booming artificial intelligence (AI) market, as many assumed they would. President Donald Trump described it as a "wake-up call" for US companies.

What is artificial intelligence?

To understand why DeepSeek has made such a stir, it helps to start with AI and its capability to make a computer seem like a person. A machine uses the technology to learn and solve problems, typically by being trained on massive amounts of information and recognizing patterns.

The end result is software that can have conversations like a person or predict people's shopping habits.

In recent years, it has become best known as the tech behind chatbots such as ChatGPT - and DeepSeek - also known as generative AI.

These programs again learn from huge swathes of data, including online text and images, to be able to make new content.

But these tools can also create falsehoods and often repeat the biases contained within their training data.

Millions of people use tools such as ChatGPT to help them with everyday tasks like writing emails, summarizing text, and answering questions - and others even use them to help with basic coding and studying.

What is DeepSeek?

DeepSeek is the name of a free AI-powered chatbot, which looks, feels and works very much like ChatGPT.

That means it's used for many of the same tasks, though exactly how well it works compared to its rivals is up for debate.

It is reportedly as powerful as OpenAI's o1 model - released at the end of last year - in tasks including mathematics and coding.

Like o1, R1 is a "reasoning" model. These models produce responses incrementally, simulating how humans' reason through problems or ideas.

DeepSeek says it has been able to do this cheaply - researchers behind it claim it cost \$6m (£4.8m) to train, a fraction of the "over \$100m" alluded to by OpenAI boss Sam Altman when discussing GPT-4.

It has also seemingly been able to minimize the impact of US restrictions on the most powerful chips reaching China.

DeepSeek's founder reportedly built up a store of Nvidia A100 chips, which have been banned from export to China since September 2022. Some experts believe he paired these chips with cheaper, less sophisticated ones - ending up with a much more efficient process.

DeepSeek also uses less memory than its rivals, ultimately reducing the cost to perform tasks for users.

That combination of performance and lower cost helped DeepSeek's AI assistant become the most-downloaded free app on Apple's App Store when it was released in the US.

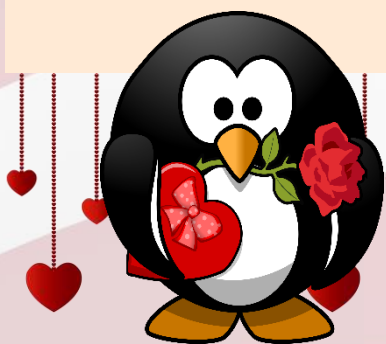
The same day, it was hit with "large-scale malicious attacks", the company said, causing the company to temporary limit registrations. Its website also experienced outages.

Like many other Chinese AI models - Baidu's Ernie or Doubao by ByteDance - DeepSeek is trained to avoid politically sensitive questions.

When the BBC asked the app what happened at Tiananmen Square on 4 June 1989, DeepSeek did not give any details about the massacre, a taboo topic in China, which is subject to government censorship.

Click the link for the complete article.

[What is DeepSeek - and why is everyone talking about it?](#)



Important Dates



February

- 12 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday
- 14 Valentine's Day
- 17 President's Day
- 19 **Galveston RW**, San Luis Resort, 5222 Seawall Blvd., Galveston, 11:30am
- 22 George Washington's Birthday
- 25 **Bay Area RW**, **Bay Oaks Country Club, 14545 Bay Oaks Blvd., Houston, LUNCH MEETING** 11am Social, 12 noon Speaker, Business Meeting. RSVP to barw.rsvp@gmail.com for Lunch. Lunch cost: \$30.00

March

- 5 Ash Wednesday
- 6 West Pearland RW, 518 Event Studio, 8201 Broadway, Ste. 171, Pearland, 6:30pm
- 7 **Clear Creek RW**, La Brisa Restaurant, 501 Wesley Dr., League City, 11:30 am
- 9 Daylight Savings Time Begins
- 17 St. Patrick's Day
- 19 **Galveston RW**, San Luis Resort, 5222 Seawall Blvd., Galveston, 11:30am
- 20 First Day of Spring
- 20 TFRW Executive Board Meeting, AT&T Hotel and Conference Center, Austin, TX
- 21 TFRW Legislative Day, AT&T Hotel and Conference Center, 8am
- 22 TFRW 2nd Quarter Board Meeting, AT&T Hotel and Conference Center, 9am
- 25 **Bay Area RW**, **Bay Oaks Country Club, 14545 Bay Oaks Blvd., Houston, LUNCH MEETING** 11am Social, 12 noon Speaker, Business Meeting. RSVP to barw.rsvp@gmail.com for Lunch. Lunch cost: \$30.00



Caring for America

Our donation to Bay Area Meals on Wheels in January was \$340.00. This is far better than the \$305 total for September and October combined. Our donations in 2024 were \$2,050 plus \$175 given in our speakers' names. Thank you to all who donated.

We had a letter from Bay Area Meals on Wheels thanking us for our past donations totaling \$33,1997.32 since 1994.

Since we only collect for Bay Area Meals on Wheels eight months of the year and they provide meals twelve months of the year with grocery prices continuing to rise, I hope we can do even better in 2025.

You can also write a check to Bay Area Meals on Wheels at 14045 Space Center Blvd, Houston, TX 77062.



Jean Raffetto, Parliamentarian and
Caring for America Chair

Campaign Activities

Hello BARW,

Joint Election Day is Saturday, May 3rd, 2025. Polls will be open 7am-7pm.

Early Voting is from April 22nd through April 29th polls are open every day 7am-7pm except for Sunday April 27th 12pm – 7pm.

Having given you all that information, if you live in Clear Lake only CCISD Elections are on the ballot and if Scott Bowen doesn't have someone file against him even they disappear. However, if you live in Pasadena there is lots to think about. They have school board elections and municipal elections.

That's all I have for now. I'll keep looking.

Debbie Guitian Roan
BARW Campaign Activities Chair



**Bay Area Republican Women's Club
General Meeting Minutes
January 28, 2025**

A General Meeting of the Bay Area Republican Women's Club was called to order by President Debra Risinger on January 28, 2025, at 11:59 AM at Bay Oaks Country Club, 14545 Bay Oaks Blvd., Houston. A quorum was established. Present were board members Debra Risinger, Karen Hall, Karen Plante, Marcella Erwin, Erin Boyd, Edie Holland, and Jean Raffetto.

Invocation: Given by Rebecca Martin - BARW Chaplain

U.S. Pledge: Led by Rex Teter Pct. Chair 302

Texas Pledge: Led by Dawn McDonald Pct. Chair 996 – SREC SD6 Committeewoman

Candidates and Representatives:

Faye Picard for	HD 24 Representative Dr. Greg Bonnen
Stephanie Tanner for	SD11 Senator Mayes Middleton
Dawn McDonald for	HD 129 Representative Dennis Paul
Ericka McCrutcheon	HCAD Board - Place 3
Karen Wheeler-Hall	Board of Trustees – LaPorte ISD
Dolan Dow	City Council Pasadena District F – Candidate
Susan Lindamood	Harris County Water Control & Improvement Dist. 156 (Ass't. Sec'y)
Rex Teter	Precinct Chair 0302 Harris County
Elizabeth Lauzon	Precinct Chair 0306 Harris County
Phyllis Tacquard	Precinct Chair 0174 Harris County
Karen Plante	Precinct Chair 0718 Harris County

Guests: Representative from Angleton Republican Women Velma Perry, Christian Dorsey, Cindy Haven, Melanie Varga, and Christine Dow.

President's Minute: President Debra Risinger remembered the anniversary of the Space Shuttle *Challenger* STS-51L crew: Francis R. Scobee, Michael J. Smith, Judith A. Resnik, Ronald E. McNair, Ellison S. Onizuka, Gregory B. Jarvis, and Christa McAuliffe. The *Challenger* was the second Space Shuttle orbiter mission to fly following the ill-fated *Columbia*. However, during its tenth launch on January 28, 1986, and just seventy-three seconds after liftoff, the *Challenger* exploded. All seven crew members tragically lost their lives. From then on, NASA's space program began to implement many changes.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Minutes: President Debra Risinger reminded the group that the October General Meeting Minutes are in the BARW January newsletter. A copy may be found on the main table. With no additions or corrections, the Minutes stand approved as submitted.

Treasurer Report: Marcella Erwin presented her report:

Balance 01/22/2025	\$42, 839.47
Deposits	3,550.00
Expenditures	(- 2,880.12)
Ending Balance	\$43,509.35

There were no corrections presented. The report was submitted for review.

Membership: Debra Risinger presented Karen Hall's update on the BARW current membership: forty-one total members, including thirty-six full members and five associate members. If you need to renew your membership, please find an application on the BARW website "Become a Member," or see Karen Hall at the check-in table for a membership form. Full annual membership is \$35. Associate Membership/Associate Men is \$20. Debra also announced the passing of long-time BARW member Olga Wittington on January 25.

Corresponding Secretary: Erin Boyd reported receiving a thank you card from State Representative 129 Dennis Paul for the support of BARW.

Newsletter: Debra Risinger informed the group that Pat Adams would like to know if anyone has not received the newsletter.

Campaign Activities: Debra Risinger presented Debbie Roan's report. The Greater Houston Area Council of Federated Republican Women (GHCFRW) "Nuts and Bolts" event is scheduled for February 18 at the Mendenhall Center in Houston. Any member may attend. Reservations are required. The cost of \$30 per person is for the entire day including lunch and materials.

Debra also mentioned that the Texas 89th Legislative Session began on January 14 in Austin. Some points of interest include Senate Bill 2 (SB2) regarding school choice which was passed by the Senate and will proceed to the House for review and voting. Also noted was the House Bill 3 (HB3) regarding adoption of the Housekeeping Resolution for the House of Representatives of the 89th Legislature.

Chaplain: Rebecca Martin invited anyone who had a prayer request to find envelopes and cards on the tables. Please add your request and return it to Rebecca at the address provided. All requests are kept confidential.

Caring for America (Parliamentarian): Jean Raffetto read a letter from the Meals on Wheels program thanking BARW for being a long-time donor. During the period from 1994 through 2024, BARW donated \$33,197.32. Last year, there was an additional \$175. on behalf of BARW speakers.

Awards/Volunteer Hours: Edie Holland reminded everyone that the deadline to submit volunteer hours towards Texas Federation of Republican Women (TFRW) is April 15. The goal is to achieve an award from TFRW for the club with the most hours submitted.

Program: Karen Plante provided the introduction for the guest speaker Michella Vaughn representing the *Texas Right to Life* organization. As the Texas Legislature is underway, Ms. Vaughn brings to the podium updates on legislative priorities and other matters relating to the issue of right to life. *Texas Right to Life* is the largest pro-life organization in Texas and across the southern United States. It is comprised of three related entities: *Texas Right to Life Educational Foundation*, *Texas Right to Life Committee, Inc.*, and *Texas Right to Life PAC*. Michella works as the Director of Education for *Texas Right to Life*, including managing the Dr. Joseph Graham Fellowship, *Team LIFE Camp*, *Convention for Life*, other pro-life community efforts and youth leadership programs.

New Business and Announcements:

Debra Risinger announced that the next General Meeting is scheduled for February 25.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 PM.

Minutes by Karen Plante, Recording Secretary



Continue Learning

LIST: 'Insane priorities' of USAID spending during Biden Administration

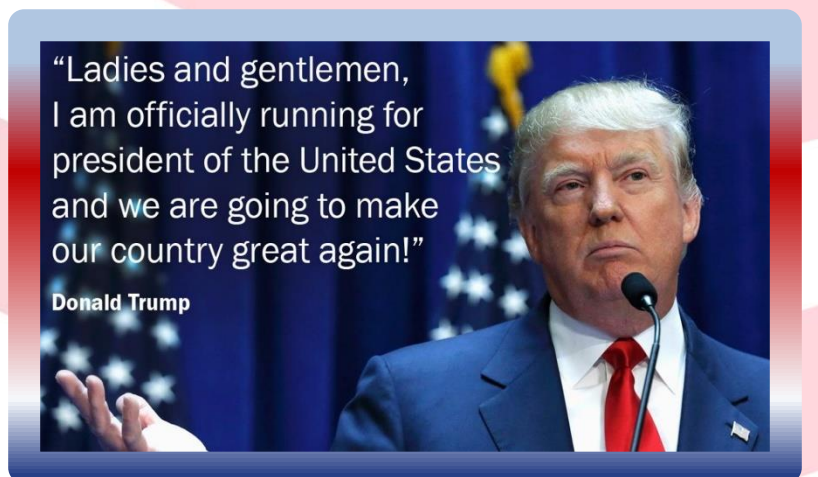
[LIST: 'Insane priorities' of USAID spending during Biden Administration](#)

"If you take a look at the waste and abuse that has run through USAID over the past several years, these are some of the insane priorities that that organization has been spending money on," she said.

USAID is facing this scrutiny after the presidential advisory committee, DOGE, led by Elon Musk discovered and halted several wasteful payments from the agency, according to the White House.

Here is the list of USAID expenses:

- \$50 million to [fund condoms in Gaza](#)
- \$1.5 million to advance DEI in Serbia's workplaces
- \$70,000 for the production of a DEI musical in Ireland
- \$47,000 on a transgender opera in Colombia
- \$32,000 for a transgender comic in Peru
- \$37 million to the World Health Organization
- \$16 million in funding for [institutional contractors in gender development offices](#)
- \$4 million of funding for the [Center for Climate-Positive Development](#)
- \$12 million in support services to the [Bureau for Resilience, Environment, and Food Security](#)
- \$6 million in non-emergency funding for redundant administrative supports for the [Center of Excellence](#)
- \$3 million in non-emergency funding to provide [evaluation services](#) for planning and learning programs
- \$600,000 to fund technical assistance for [family planning in Latin America](#)





BARW 2025 Officers



President

Debra Risinger
rcubedmdr@gmail.com



**1st Vice
President**

Karen Wheeler Hall
khall@rothe.com



**2nd Vice
President**

Ann Arnett
annarnette1989@gmail.com



**Recording
Secretary**

Karen Plante
kplante@sbcglobal.net



**Corresponding
Secretary**

Erin Boyd
oian24@yahoo.com



PAC Treasurer

Marcella Erwin
marcella.erwin@att.net



**Immediate
Past President**

Debbie Roan
dgroan@comcast.net

Other Area Republican Women Groups

Baytown RW

[Conservative Principles - Baytown Republican Women](#)

Clear Creek RW

[About – Clear Creek Republican Women \(clearcreekrw.org\)](#)

Galveston RW

[Galveston Republican Women](#)

Texas Gulf Coast RW

[\(20+\) Texas Gulf Coast Republican Women | Facebook](#)

West Pearland RW

[West Pearland Republican Women \(wprw.republican\)](#)



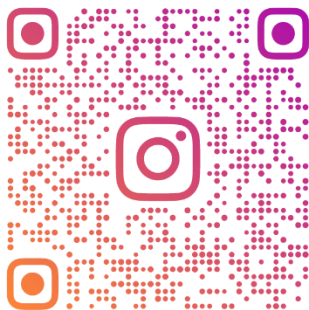
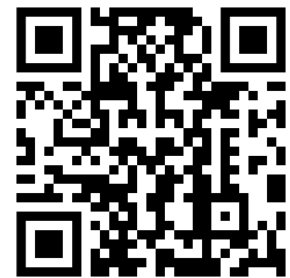
Stay Connected

Bay Area Republican Women

- <https://barw.org/>

BARW Facebook

- <https://www.facebook.com/Bayarearepublicanwoman/>



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Instagram

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Debra Risinger
Social Media

Local, State, Federal, & Other Informational Web Page Links

- <https://barw.org/links/>