



Physicians Caring for Texans

June 30, 2020

James Dickey, State Chairman  
Alma Jackson, State Vice-Chairman  
Kyle Whatley, Executive Director  
Republican Party of Texas  
P.O. Box 2206  
Austin, TX 78768

Dear Mr. Dickey, Ms. Jackson, and Mr. Whatley:

On behalf of the more than 53,000 physician and medical student members of the Texas Medical Association, I am writing to recommend that Republican Party of Texas (RPT) reconsider its decision to conduct your state convention as an in-person function in Houston on July 16-18. This is just not the time to bring thousands of the party faithful from around the state to an indoor meeting in a county that, as I write, reports more than 18,000 active COVID-19 cases.

While much of our state has so far been spared the brunt of the coronavirus attack, our metropolitan areas in general – and Houston in particular – are now among the national epicenters of current COVID-19 outbreaks. The daily chart of active cases in Harris County has been nearly a straight line upward for the past two weeks. As an emergency physician in Houston treating patients with COVID-19, I speak from firsthand experience: It would be best for the health of your conventiongoers and the residents of Houston for the RPT not to hold its biennial convention there as planned.

I personally understand quite well the need for an organization such as the RPT to conduct regular meetings in-person. It goes beyond the business that needs to be conducted and the celebrations that need to occur. The strength of all grassroots organizations, including the Texas Medical Association, lies in the personal relationships of our members, and those relationships need consistent opportunities to grow and develop.

The loss of those opportunities this summer, however, are small sacrifices compared to the health and safety of our organization's members. Like the RPT, a sizeable fraction of the TMA annual convention consists of longtime activists and leaders – men and women who are now at that age where they are particularly susceptible to the worst that a case of COVID-19 can deliver. That is among the reasons TMA canceled our in-person convention in May.

In conclusion, for the safety of your delegates, officers, staff, vendors, the convention workers, and the people of Houston, we urge the RPT to reconsider holding its 2020 state convention as an in-person event in Houston this summer.

Stay safe.

Sincerely,

Diana L. Fite, MD  
President