

HOW TEXAS GOVERNMENT WORKS

The Powers of the Governor

Executive Role



Appointment power: As one part of the plural executive, the Texas governor has limited appointment powers; many posts are independently elected; the longer a governor is in office, the more impact this power has.

Patronage: Rewarding supporters with appointments; a longer-serving governor has more of this power.

Removal power: The governor must have two-thirds support from the Texas Senate to remove appointees.

Budget power: Twenty-seven states give the governor sole responsibility for drafting a budget; in Texas, the Legislative Budget Board dominates the process.

Legislative Role

State of the State address provides the governor with an opportunity to influence the legislative agenda.

Call a special session: Thirty-six states allow only legislators or the legislature's presiding officers to call a special session; Texas governors can use special sessions to force the legislature to address his or her proposals.

Veto power: The governor must sign or veto a bill within 10 days and has line-item veto authority; the legislature rarely musters the two-thirds vote needed to overturn a veto.



Judicial Role



Pardons: A 1936 constitutional amendment took pardon power away from the governor, who must now have the majority support from the Board of Pardons and Parole before granting clemency.

Military Role

Commander-in-chief of the Texas National Guard and Texas State Guard.



Ceremonial Roles

Crisis manager: How governors handle crises can correspond with their degree of constituent support.

