

# Dan Patrick

.....

Texas Lieutenant Governor

**D**an Patrick (R) was elected to the Texas Senate in 2006 and became lieutenant governor in 2014, but he first made a name for himself on the airwaves as the host of a conservative talk radio show. Patrick is the author of a Christian best-seller and producer of the film "The Heart of Texas," voted the best movie made in Texas in 2009.

## How did you get into radio?

I still have my ninth-grade project on careers, when I said I wanted to be a disc jockey and a television reporter. I worked my way through college as a disc jockey on a country music station before country was cool. Later I moved to Houston, retired from television, went into private business and then bought a radio station in 1988. This was in the mid-'80s when Houston went bust. I loved this little old station, and a guy named Rush Limbaugh called one day. I can detect a good, conservative voice when I hear it, so I put Rush on the radio in '88. We were one of the first big cities that put him on the air and I still have that radio station today. Rush really helped us grow from a little station that was in bankruptcy to a successful radio station.

## Has talk radio helped shape policy?

Oh, it's had a dramatic impact. Before Rush, the talk hosts seldom talked about politics or God, or anything that was controversial. Rush smashed that mold. A lot of people, particularly conservative Republicans, heard a guy who was suddenly saying what they were thinking. And so many people got engaged in the political process. That grew 20 years later into the tea party movement. Today, voters are more sophisticated, more informed, more independent than they've ever been on the Republican side. And that's a good thing. The more people know about government, the better government we have.

## How did your radio experience help in getting elected?

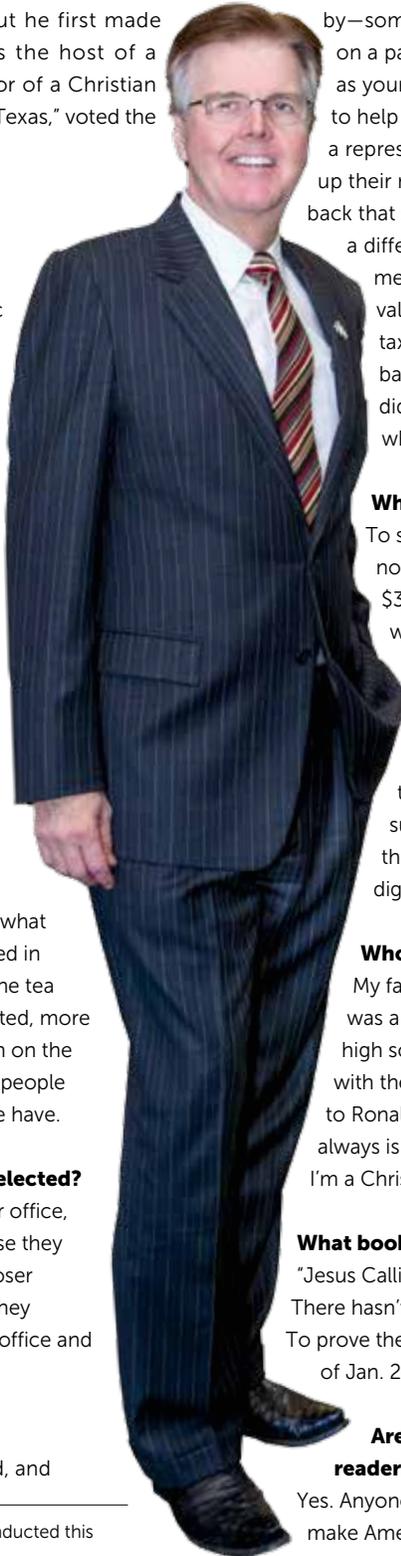
Doing political talk radio for 15 years before I ran for office, I knew what was on the minds of the people because they called every day. So when I ran for office, I had a closer relationship with the people—understanding what they wanted us to accomplish—than those who were in office and who were running against me.

## How would you describe a good leader?

Keep your campaign promises and keep your word, and

---

Kevin Frazzini, the assistant editor of State Legislatures, conducted this interview, which has been edited for length.



never compromise on your principles. Learn to work with others by—sometimes it takes some time—convincing them that voting on a particular issue is what their constituents want as much as your constituents. I learned early on to go out of my way to help other people be successful. Very often, a senator or a representative or a statewide official will have already made up their mind that they're going to support you, but they hold back that support for leverage to get something they want. I took a different position. I would listen to what was important to members and if it was consistent with my principles and values—didn't increase the size of government or raise taxes—I just told them: Count on my vote. I didn't hold back my support for leverage later. At the same time, if I didn't support their issue, I was a firm no and they knew where I stood. I didn't play games.

## What is your top legislative priority now?

To secure the border, because the federal government is not doing the job. We increased funding from a little over \$300 million a year to \$800 million in this budget. That was a campaign pledge I made. That is still the driving issue for the people of America and Texas. It is reflected in our presidential race and even more so today with the threat of terrorism. Washington must reform the legal immigration system because no one should have to come to America in the back of an 18-wheeler and suffocate, or drown in the river, or if they get here, live in the shadows. People need to come to this country with dignity and that means the border has to be secure.

## Who do you look up to?

My father—a hard-working, blue collar guy, drove a truck. He was a leader, typical World War II generation, dropped out of high school, went to the South Pacific, fought for freedom, and with the greatest generation helped build America. I also look up to Ronald Reagan, Thomas Jefferson. And leading and guiding me always is Jesus Christ. I always say at the beginning of a speech: I'm a Christian first, conservative second, Republican third.

## What book is on your night stand?

"Jesus Calling." It's scripture for every day, in layman's language. There hasn't been a day when there's not something that it applies to. To prove the point: Last Jan. 20 was my inauguration, and the first line of Jan. 20: "Approach this day with the awareness of who is boss."

## Are there any final words you'd like to leave with readers?

Yes. Anyone who is reading this article who wants to work hard and make America great, come on down to Texas. Because we're the America that all America used to be.