

# Archives

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## EP lawmaker affirms, 'An Oath to El Paso'

**Author(s):** Norma Chávez / Guest columnist **Date:** August 18, 2007 **Section:** Columnists

Opinion

Earlier this year, as required by the Texas Constitution, all 150 members of the Texas House of Representatives took the following oath: "I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of House of Representatives of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this State, so help me God."

As mandated by the Texas Constitution, we signed the following:

"I, \_\_\_\_\_, do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I have not directly or indirectly paid, offered, promised to pay, contributed, or promised to contribute any money or thing of value, or promised any public office or employment for the giving or withholding of a vote at the election at which I was elected or as a reward to secure my appointment or confirmation, whichever the case may be, so help me God."

Our judges, college and school board trustees, justices of the peace, constables, county judge, mayor, county commissioners, and city representatives are all required to take similar oaths.

Recently, a press conference was held with a select group of elected officials signing "A Contract with El Paso." Unfortunately, a majority of elected officials in El Paso, including myself, were never invited or asked to participate. Fortunately, those of us not invited, do not need to sign a contract.

Our contract to you -- our Oath of Office -- is the most important contract. No press conference, committee or task force has the power or standing as an Oath of Office. It dictates how we must exercise our duties as public servants and requires us to be ethical. I stand with honor and I am committed to uphold my Oath of Office that I have sworn in God's name to abide by.

As an elected official, it is my duty to visit with any one of my constituents or any citizen or individual who asks, "What is happening to my government?" El Pasoans deserve the truth.

Unfortunately, the current public corruption investigation has blighted and spoiled the view of how the public sector conducts business with the private sector. Rumors and accusations permeate the business, political and social communities of El Paso.

However, the Constitution and laws that govern our great country presume that no person shall be considered guilty until convicted by a court of law. As such, together we must demand that a fair and just investigation take place so that the innocent can be exonerated and the guilty prosecuted. Through this process we must be patient and not accusatory; must be proactive and not reactive, must allow justice to be served not unjustly cast blame.

President John F. Kennedy once said, "Written in Chinese, the word "crisis" is composed of two characters. One represents danger and the other represents opportunity." Our danger is the corruption that has tainted our government. Our opportunity is how we respond and overcome. As a community we can learn from this crisis and together we can continue our journey to being the great Gateway of the Americas.

State Rep. Norma Chávez, D-El Paso, represents El Paso's 76th District in the Texas House of Representatives.

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