

Vernon's Texas Statutes and Codes Annotated
Constitution of the State of Texas 1876 (Refs & Annos)
Article XVI. General Provisions

Vernon's Ann.Texas Const. Art. 16, § 1

§ 1. Official Oath

Effective: November 26, 2001

Currentness

Sec. 1. (a) All elected and appointed officers, before they enter upon the duties of their offices, shall take the following Oath or Affirmation:

“I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of _____ 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.”

(b) All elected or appointed officers, before taking the Oath or Affirmation of office prescribed by this section and entering upon the duties of office, shall subscribe to the following statement:

“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.”

(c) Members of the Legislature, the Secretary of State, and all other elected and appointed state officers shall file the signed statement required by Subsection (b) of this section with the Secretary of State before taking the Oath or Affirmation of office prescribed by Subsection (a) of this section. All other officers shall retain the signed statement required by Subsection (b) of this section with the official records of the office.

Credits

Amended Nov. 8, 1938; Nov. 6, 1956; Nov. 7, 1989; Nov. 6, 2001, eff. Nov. 26, 2001.

Editors' Notes

INTERPRETIVE COMMENTARY

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This section provides that members of the legislature and all state officials before taking office must subscribe to an oath of office exacting their support of the state and federal constitutions. It also provides that these officials must further swear that in their election they abstained from bribery of voters either directly or indirectly by offering or promising money or any valuable consideration for votes.

The oath of office first appeared in the [Constitution of 1845 \(Art. 7, § 1\)](#), and contained a statement that the official had never participated in a duel. Dueling had been considered in need of some legislative curbing which it was thought that the oath supplied. While dueling was generally accepted, it was felt that holders of public office should be above dueling for the practice of challenging to a duel tended to interfere with candor of speech in legislative gatherings. In all succeeding constitutions, including the present constitution, this declaration on dueling appeared. The impossibility for a duelist to hold office in the state did much to render the “code of honor” an extinct custom, and this portion of the oath of office became outworn and useless and was thus abandoned in 1938 when the present oath of office was adopted.

The clause requiring a denial of bribery first appeared in the present constitution and was the direct outcome of the official corruption which had reached alarming proportions during the reconstruction period. It has been seriously questioned whether such a provision in an oath of office is of much effect, for it has been pointed out that men who bribe will have little hesitancy about falsification.

There was a time when oaths embarrassed falsehood. They may still be of some use in courts, when the judge can caution witnesses, and the perils of perjury can be emphasized. But taken upon entering office, oaths now accomplish little else than to lend dignity to the entrance upon public service and to honorable men bring home the seriousness of their responsibilities.

[Notes of Decisions \(66\)](#)

Vernon's Ann. Texas Const. Art. 16, § 1, TX CONST Art. 16, § 1

Current through the end of the 2021 Regular and Called Sessions of the 87th Legislature.

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