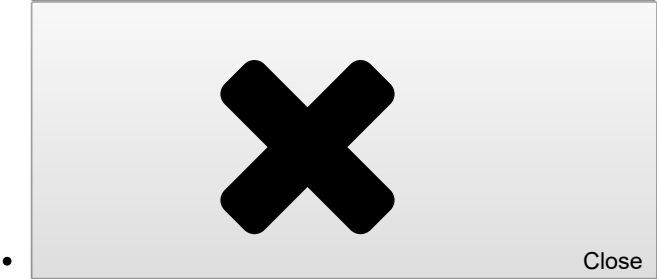


[Skip to main content](#)



- [Ten Years](#)
- [Data](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Newsletters](#)
- [Donate](#)



Search The Texas Tribune



Search The Texas Tribune

- [Ten Years](#)

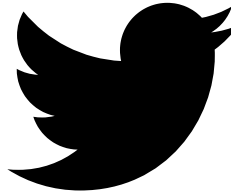
- [Data](#)
- [Events](#)
- [Newsletters](#)
- [Donate](#)

## [Coronavirus in Texas](#)

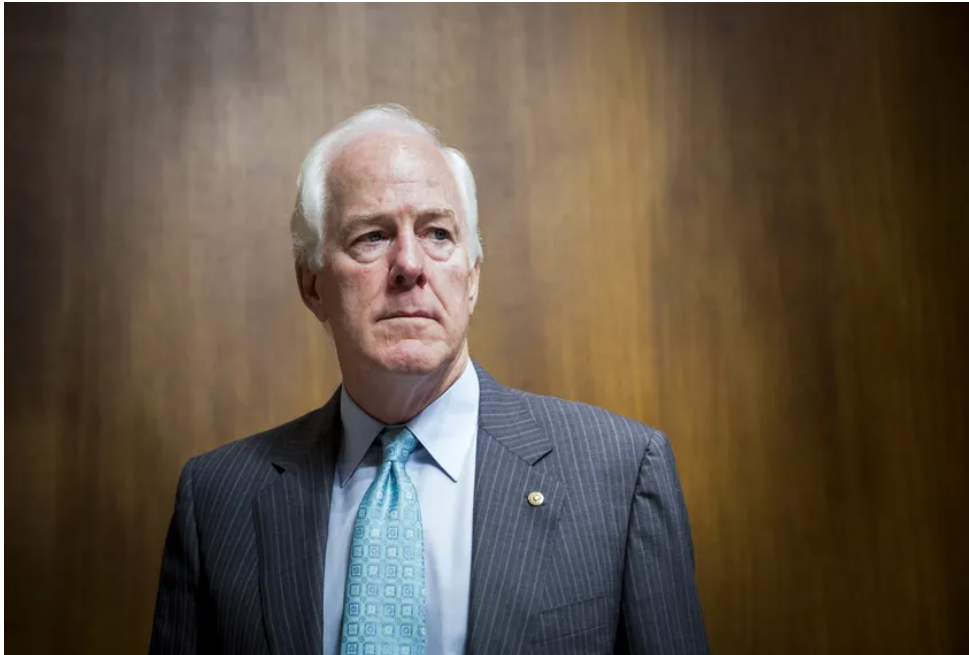
### U.S. Sen. John Cornyn draws rebuke for blaming coronavirus on China

The Republican Texas senator alluded to a now-debunked myth that the outbreak began after a woman ate bat soup. And he incorrectly cited China as the birthplace of two previous outbreaks.

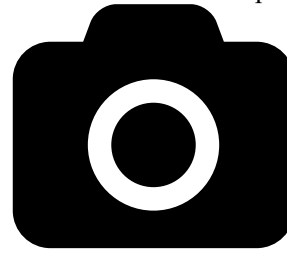
by [Alex Samuels](#) March 18, 2020 9 PM



[Republish](#)



U.S. Sen. John Cornyn's comments drew swift criticism from the two Democrats competing to challenge him in



November, MJ Hegar and Royce West. *Photo credit: for The Texas Tribune*

Allison Shelley

## Coronavirus in Texas

[Get the latest updates on coronavirus in Texas here.](#) At least 90 Texans' deaths have been linked to COVID-19, and at least 5,330 people have been diagnosed with the disease. [Hospitals are adding more beds](#), while medical professionals and state leaders [are urging Texans to socially distance themselves](#) from others. The state is testing thousands of people a day, but it is [often taking longer than a week for Texans to get those results](#). Learn more about [how to get tested here](#). Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of Texans are without work [as unemployment claims overload the state's systems](#). And schools across the state are [closed at least until May 4](#).



### More in this series

U.S. Sen. [John Cornyn](#) drew criticism Wednesday for comments he made about the new coronavirus.

On a conference call with reporters, he said that it's "no coincidence" that illnesses such as the novel coronavirus originate in China, putting the onus on "some of the cultural practices there."

He doubled down on his remarks during another [interview](#) later in the day and proceeded to incorrectly cite China as the birthplace of two previous outbreaks: the swine flu pandemic and Middle East respiratory syndrome, or MERS.

"People eat bats and snakes and dogs and things like that. These viruses are transmitted from the animal to the people, and that's why China has been the source of a lot of these viruses," Cornyn told a reporter Wednesday, according to a video [posted on Twitter by The Hill](#).

The comment echoes a [now-debunked myth](#) that the outbreak began after a woman ate bat soup. The misinformation emerged after a video went viral showing a woman eating bat soup for a travel show, however the video was filmed in 2016 and she was not in China.

USA Today [reported](#) that the National Council of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders replied to the remarks in a tweet, saying that "there are over 1M Asian Americans in your state. These are wildly irresponsible comments when anti asian hate crimes are on the rise."

Cornyn's comments also drew swift criticism from the two Democrats competing to challenge him in November, MJ Hegar and [Royce West](#). Hegar, the former Air Force helicopter pilot, tweeted that Texans "deserve better than racist dog whistles," and West, the Dallas state senator, tweeted at Cornyn that his "focus should be on how to solve this crisis, not rhetoric and scapegoating."

Still, when asked whether his comments could be seen as racist toward Asian Americans, Cornyn implied that he didn't see a correlation.

"We're not talking about Asians," he said. "We're talking about China, where these viruses emanate from, which ... created this pandemic."

"China has been the source of a lot of these viruses like SARS, like MERS and swine flu and now the coronavirus," he said. "So I think they have a fundamental problem, and I don't object to geographically identifying where it's coming from."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, swine flu was first [detected](#) in the United States in 2009. MERS, meanwhile, was [first identified](#) in Jordan in 2012.

Cornyn's comments come hours after President Donald Trump defended calling the novel coronavirus the "Chinese virus," ignoring increased criticism that the phrase is racist and anti-Chinese.


"It's not racist at all," Trump said, explaining his rationale to reporters. "It comes from China, that's why."

*Patrick Svitek contributed to this report.*

## Related News

- [What we know about coronavirus testing in Texas](#)

Updated: March 28, 2020

A doctor wearing protective clothing administers a test to patient at a drive-thru Covid19 testing facility at Baylor, Sco...


- [Collin County man's death marks third Texas fatality from new coronavirus](#)

March 18, 2020

Workers spray sanitiser at the Ilopango International Airport as a preventive measure against the coronavirus disease (COV...

- [Texas counties with coronavirus: Case updates and what we know](#)

Updated: March 14, 2020

Biology junior Morgan Hale researches viral proteins at the McLellan Lab at The University of Texas at Austin on March 11,...

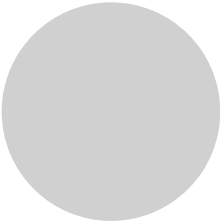
## Quality journalism doesn't come free

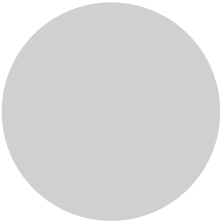
Perhaps it goes without saying — but producing quality journalism isn't cheap. At a time when newsroom resources and revenue across the country are declining, The Texas Tribune remains committed to sustaining our [mission](#): creating a more engaged and informed Texas with every story we cover, every event we convene and every newsletter we send. As a nonprofit newsroom, we rely on members to help keep our stories free and our events open to the public. Do you value our journalism? Show us with your support.

[Yes, I'll donate today](#)

## More Texas Tribune content

### Additional content

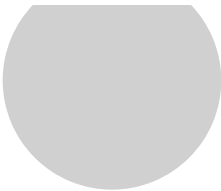




[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]





[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

**Latest from our reporters**

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

[Redacted text]

Category	Value
Category 1	100%
Category 2	85%
Category 3	70%
Category 4	100%
Category 5	80%
Category 6	60%
Category 7	100%
Category 8	85%
Category 9	70%
Category 10	100%
Category 11	85%
Category 12	70%



[Redacted text block containing multiple paragraphs of content]



- [Donate](#)
- [Contact Us](#)
- [Advertise](#)
- [© 2020 The Texas Tribune](#)

## **Other Topics We Cover**

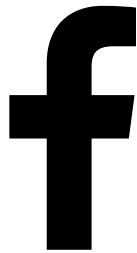
- [Congress](#)
- [Courts](#)
- [Criminal justice](#)
- [Demographics](#)
- [Economy](#)
- [Energy](#)
- [Environment](#)
- [Health care](#)
- [Higher education](#)
- [Immigration](#)
- [Politics](#)
- [Public education](#)

- [State government](#)

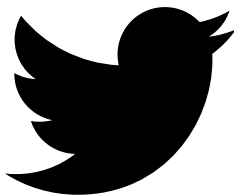
## Company Info

- [About Us](#)
- [Our Staff](#)
- [Jobs](#)
- [Who Funds Us?](#)
- [Strategic Plan](#)
- [Republishing Guidelines](#)
- [Code of Ethics](#)
- [Terms of Service](#)
- [Privacy Policy](#)
- [Send us a confidential tip](#)
- [Corrections](#)
- [Feeds](#)
- [Newsletters](#)
- [Podcasts](#)
- [Video](#)

## Social Media



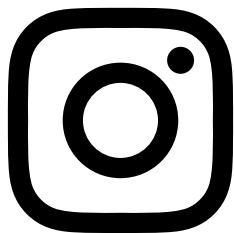
- [Facebook](#)



- [Twitter](#)



- [YouTube](#)



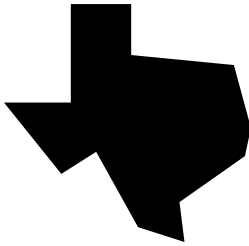
- [Instagram](#)



[LinkedIn](#)



[Reddit](#)



[Join our Facebook Group, This Is Your Texas.](#)