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Why we miss Kay Bailey Hutchison

Things surely would look far different with Sen. Hutchison in office in the nation's capital

Does anyone else miss Sen. [Kay Bailey Hutchison](#)?

We're not sure how much difference one person could make in the toxic, chaotic, hyperpartisan atmosphere in Washington, but if we could choose just one it would be Hutchison, whose years of service in the Senate were marked by two things sorely lacking in her successor, [Ted Cruz](#).

For one thing, Hutchison had an unswerving commitment to the highest and best interests of Texas at all times. This revealed itself in a thousand different ways. Hereabouts, we miss her advocacy for NASA, the Port of Houston and the energy industry. And we know she worked just as hard for Dallas, San Antonio and a hundred smaller Texas cities and towns.

And dare we say it? We miss her extraordinary understanding of the importance of reaching across the aisle when necessary. Neither sitting Texas senator has displayed that useful skill, and both the state and the Congress are the poorer for it.

One reason we particularly believe that Hutchison would make a difference in these hectic days is that if she had kept her seat, Cruz would not be in the Senate.

When we endorsed Ted Cruz in last November's general election, we did so with many reservations and at least one specific recommendation - that he follow Hutchison's example in his conduct as a senator.

Obviously, he has not done so. Cruz has been part of the problem in specific situations where Hutchison would have been part of the solution.

We feel certain she would have worked shoulder to shoulder with Sen. [Susan Collins](#), R-Maine, in crafting a workable solution that likely would have avoided the government shutdown altogether. But we'll never know.

While we're on the topic, we'd like to think our first choice to succeed Hutchison in the Senate, Lt. Gov. [David Dewhurst](#), would have been more amenable to following Hutchison's example than Cruz has

been. But these days, we're not so sure. Dewhurst, long considered a moderate in the Texas GOP, clearly was rattled by his unexpected loss to Cruz for the Senate seat.

Since the defeat, the lieutenant governor has attempted a full-blown political makeover designed to make him the darling of the conservative wing of the Texas party.

Faced with the impossible task of outflanking three strong conservative challengers, the traditional moderate Dewhurst does not seem like a man comfortable in his own skin. It's painful to watch.