

# *SAM HARLESS*

State Representative District 126  
March 2019 Newsletter



*Texas House of Representatives*



## District 126 News and Information



### 86th Session Action

**Budget / House Bill 1** - After a full night of very little tension and much debate, the budget was passed a little after midnight. We went through hundreds of attempts to change the budget in many ways but in the end , managed to make some really good progress in a few areas.

**Veterans:** We are honoring the sacrifice of Texas service members with millions more in funding towards veterans programs in the House budget. I was also proud to author HB 739 to make sure veterans and their families get in-state tuition when deployed out of state.

**Sexual Assault Victims:** Protecting victims of sexual assault is crucial to securing our communities. The House budget sends a clear message that we are united in helping them.

**Disaster Recovery:** When Harvey struck, Texans responded with unshakable resolve. The Legislature is budgeting more for response and recovery as Texas continues to rebuild.

**Mental health:** Access to mental healthcare in Texas is approaching a crisis. We are acting now to improve access and wait times within the Texas budget.  
Healthcare for Texas Women: We're strengthening three vital Texas women's health

programs to address under-served and rural areas while meeting caseload growth.

### **Public Education:**

House Bill 3 completely transforms Texas' school finance system and we're also prioritizing school safety and special education.



### **The Texas Plan - House Bill 3**

**House Bill 3** Co-Authored by Representative Harless addresses several of the issues that have plagued us for years. The legislation has been applauded by education groups across Texas. This bill also lowers school property taxes to give our communities some relief from ever growing property tax bills.

**Texas Parent Teacher Association (PTA):** "This legislation reinvests in Texas students. Texas PTA is excited to support House Bill 3. This legislation reinvests in Texas students -- increasing the Basic Allotment significantly, sending additional funding to schools with high concentrations of under-served students to help schools address the needs of those students. It also funds full-day pre-kindergarten for students who are economically disadvantaged." *(Texas PTA, Press Release, 3/5/19)*

**Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA) Executive Director Kevin Brown:** "Landmark legislation that takes advantage of a once-in-a-generation opportunity. HB 3, as currently filed, is landmark legislation that takes advantage of a once-in-a-generation-opportunity to dramatically improve funding for Texas public schools and transform the system. Thank you Speaker Bonnen and Chairman Huberty." *(Kevin Brown, Executive Director, TASA, Twitter, 3/5/19)*

**House Bill 9** - Representative Harless is proud to co-author this bill to address inequities in the Teacher Retirement System by increasing the allotments starting in 2020 by 7.7 percent and gradually rising until 2025 where it reaches 8.8%. Our retired teachers suffer under a host of growing concerns, including health insurance and cost of living adjustments that have not been made in years. While not a lot of people are aware, teachers in Texas do not participate in the Social Security System and we must provide them some relief.

### **Committee Action**

**State Affairs:** The action in State Affairs has been lively with a variety of bill topics coming before the committee. Late in February we heard the "Taxpayer Funded Lobbying Bill" with testimony that consumed most of a a day and into the evening. We've had a number of bills that relate to providing non-regulated electric companies the opportunity to use smart meters, attempts to regulate kid's lemonade stands, breast feeding in public, ethics and public information bills.

**License and Administrative Procedure.** The action in LAP has been less dramatic

with issues relating to bringing your own wine into restaurants, sale of wine, fees for towing and storage of vehicles, moving the regulation of the plumbing industry under the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, training and licensing of barbers and cosmetologists and other licensed occupations around the state.

## **District 126 Polls**

Issues we get calls or visits about

### **Results of February Poll Questions**

(We also asked these same questions on the District 126 Facebook Page and included are those responses separately)

Do you approve of additional Affordable Housing Projects in District 126?

**Newsletter Response - 85.1% Oppose more Affordable Housing Projects**

**Facebook Response - 94% Oppose more Affordable Housing Projects**

Do you approve of making Fantasy Sports Betting Legal?

**Newsletter Response - 59% Oppose Fantasy Sports Betting**

**Facebook Response - 54% Approve of Fantasy Sports Betting**

### **New Survey Tool Developed**

**In the next couple of weeks we will send out a new legislative survey, using a new tool to make the survey easier to answer. The survey will be sent independently.**

### **Flood Bond Watch**

During the month we learned of concerns from the community regarding comments on prioritization for projects funded from last years flood bond package and directed a letter to Harris County Commissioner's Court. County Judge Lina Hidalgo responded quickly to assure the community that projects promised would be completed and Harris County Flood Control scheduled a community meeting. The response was so large the meeting had to be re-scheduled at a location that could accommodate it. In the interim, the Flood Control District has developed a website to explain the guidelines. I encourage you to review the interactive map on their site.

[HCFCD Equity Guidelines Website](#)



I was honored when representatives of the Texas League of Women

### **Abigail Rose Arias**

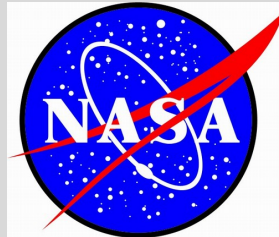
HR 377 honored this brave 6 year old from Angleton Texas as she fights a rare form of pediatric cancer. She celebrated the occasion by being inducted into the Texas Rangers as an Honorary Texas Ranger and wore her uniform as an honorary member of the Freeport Texas Police Department.



Voters came by the Capitol office. Their organization diligently works to provide information about candidates for public office and work to improve voter education.



## Focus On The Future - Opportunities for Students



### Texas High School Aerospace Scholars Program for Juniors

NASA wants today's students to become the engineers, scientists, researchers and innovators of tomorrow. High School Aerospace Scholars offers a one-of-a-kind experience for Texas high school students to explore the possibilities of a science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related major or career. The adventure starts this fall with an online course and culminates - for students who earn the opportunity - with an onsite summer experience at NASA's Johnson Space Center.

[NASA High School Aerospace Program](#)



## Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP)

The purpose of the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program is to encourage students to become members of the Texas Army National Guard, the Texas Air National Guard, the Texas State Guard, the United States Coast Guard, or the United States Merchant Marine, or to become commissioned officers in any branch of the armed services of the United States. Each year the governor and the lieutenant governor may each appoint two students, and each state senator and each state representative may appoint one student to receive an initial conditional scholarship award.

[\(TASSP\) Website](#)

## Our Bills In Motion

**HOA Board Membership - (HB 1396)** This bill would preclude membership on the board of a property owners association by more than one member in a given household. (Excludes the subdivision or community developer during declaratory period) **(Referred to Business & Industry)**

**Entry of Bond Conditions HB -738** In cases where a defendant is authorized to be out on bond is permitted bail that has specific conditions imposed by a judge or magistrate, those conditions have not previously been electronically distributed via the statewide law enforcement network. This bill would require judges to notify Sheriffs for computer entry

when bail bonds have conditions. (*Referred to Homeland Security & Public Safety*)

**Tuition and Fees For Military Spouses - HB 739** Currently military spouses and dependents who are Texas residents but are currently deployed out of state can be charged out of state tuition, even if they maintain residency in Texas. (*Referred to Higher Education*)

**Charterwood M.U.D. HB 1488** This bill realigns the percentage of expenditures in one category for this single MUD. It allows for a percentage increase in the expenditures for improvements to recreational facilities. It does not increase the amount of tax collected, just the single category expenditure percentage. (*Voted out of Land & Resource Management Committee*)

**Tainted Beer Bill HB 3271** This bill permits beer distributors to remove beer whose containers have been contaminated or tainted through natural disaster. (*Referred to Licensing & Administrative Procedures*)

**Fire Marshal Training Bill HB 3753** This bill authorizes the Fire Marshal to act as a fire-related training provider. (*Referred to County Affairs*)

**Flood Control Removal of Encroaching Property HB 3782** This bill will give the Flood Control Authority the right to remove property encroaching on areas owned or controlled by the Harris County Flood Control District. (*Referred to Natural Resources*)

**Cy-Champ Public Utility District - HB 4646** This bill provides road development authority to the Utility District and allows them to assist with building new roads within their area. (*Referred to County affairs*)

## **Co-Authored Bills**

**House Bill 3** - Public Education Reform Bill that increases school funding for our local school districts and lowers school property taxes.

**House Bill 5** - This bill addresses debris management after a disaster. It creates a procedural planning group in cooperation with the Texas Engineering Extension Service and develops standardized contracts for debris removal to expedite cleanup contracting.

**House Bill 16** - This bill relates to enforcement of the rights of a living child born after an abortion; creating a civil cause of action.

**House Bill 39** - Relating to the repeal of certain time limitations on the award of grants by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas Oversight Committee.

**House Bill 41** - This bill authorizes paid leave for a state employee who is a search and rescue volunteer.

**House Bill 539** - This bill relates to the automatic admission to general academic teaching institutions and eligibility for certain scholarships of a student who is the valedictorian of the student's high school graduating class.

**House Bill 1214** - The bill relates to the allocation to and use by the Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas Historical Commission of certain proceeds from the imposition of state sales and use taxes on sporting goods.

**House Bill 1397** - This bill relates to the establishment of rates for certain non-ERCOT utilities.

**House Bill 1500** - This bill relates to prohibiting abortions after detection of an unborn child's heartbeat and to requirements for performing or inducing an abortion; authorizing an administrative penalty; creating a criminal offense.

**House Bill 1576** - This bill relates to the delivery of certain transportation services under Medicaid and certain other health and human services programs.

[House Bill 1631](#) - This bill relates to prohibiting the use of photographic traffic signal enforcement systems.

[House Bill 1821](#) - This bill relates to the designation of a portion of State Loop 111 in Travis County as the Richard Overton Memorial Highway.

[House Bill 1929](#) - This bill relates to the prohibition of certain transactions between a governmental entity and an abortion provider or affiliate of the provider.

[House Bill 2945](#) - This bill relates to credit card skimmers on motor fuel dispensers; imposing a civil penalty; creating criminal offenses.

[House Joint Resolution 13](#) - Proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to allocate a portion of oil and gas production tax revenue to the counties from which the oil and gas originated.

[House Joint Resolution 12](#) - This bill relates to proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to increase the maximum bond amount authorized for the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas

[House Joint Resolution 39](#)- proposing a constitutional amendment relating to the appropriation of the net revenue received from the imposition of state sales and use taxes on sporting goods.

## News Articles

[Community Impact News - Feb 12th](#) - Local leaders, school districts outline legislative agendas in Spring, Klein

[Community Impact news - February 11th](#) - Revitalization efforts along FM 1960 ramp up despite funding challenges

[Feb 14th Texas Tribune Interview](#) - Interview with Evan Smith

## In The District



### Houston NW Chamber Public Safety Forum

If you're interested in public safety issues for the 1960 area, you should check out the Public Safety Forum moderated by Larry Lipton on behalf of the Houston NW Chamber. They meet on the 3rd Thursday at the Champions Emergency Services District at 12730 Champion Forest Dr. Great Speakers!!

Visit the Houston NW Chamber  
Website

[D Bradley McWilliams YMCA](#)

The YMCA at Cypresswood and Hwy 249 re-opened March 13th. Hurricane Harvey inundated the facility a complete renovation has provided an updated new facility featuring three fitness areas, four designated group exercise studios—including a yoga and cycle studio—an indoor pool, rock wall, indoor track and a children's area.



## Tomball Government Affairs Committee Meeting

Government Affairs meets the first Tuesday of each month from 8:00 am - 9:00 am at the Chamber Board Room 29201 Quinn Road Tomball, TX 77377

Tomball Government Affairs Committee

Visit our House of Representative Website:

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