

# SAM HARLESS

State Representative District 126  
January 2020 Newsletter



*Texas House of Representatives*



**District 126**

**News  
and  
Information**



## Start Of A New Year

As we start a new year and a new decade, I look forward to the things that we can accomplish as a community by working together. **Sam Harless, State Representative**

## The Status of Fireworks in Harris County

January has come to a close and by this time of the year we have routinely received emails and phone calls complaining about fireworks. While fireworks can be a fun and exciting way to celebrate the holidays, they can also quickly become entertainment that creates a public nuisance and safety hazard to our community, and is extremely loud and frustrating.

This past legislative session there were a few bills introduced that sought to expand access to fireworks. One bill in particular, House Bill 2748, was introduced to the House of Representatives and would have allowed for the

sale of fireworks by wholesalers year round. I knew that this type of legislation would not only be a serious nuisance issue for my constituents in House District 126, but it would also pose many hazards across the state if these fireworks were to be sold and used in dry conditions. Knowing the serious implications that this bill would have if passed, I did something that is very uncommon of a Freshman legislator, I killed the bill on a Point Of Order. This parliamentary action highlights violations that a piece of legislation is committing against House rules. After discussion with the bill author and verification by the House Parliamentarian that my Point Of Order was upheld, and as a sign of respect for my colleague, I allowed the author to postpone the presentation of their bill to a later date that would effectively kill any chance for it to be passed during that session.

While we don't have to worry about the year round sale of fireworks right now, there were still many constituents that had questions about the rules around the legal use of fireworks, when & where they are legal to purchase, and their impact in the unincorporated section of Harris County. Thankfully the Harris County Fire Marshal's Office (HCFMO) provided us with some great information to share.

Fireworks can be sold from December 20 - January 1 and June 24 - July 4 in unincorporated Harris County. Fireworks may be sold by permitted and licensed stands/stores and these locations are not allowed to sell fireworks to anyone under the age of 16 or to any person who may be intoxicated or incompetent. These sellers are also banned from selling fireworks at any point during a burn ban and citizens are not allowed to set off fireworks during this period. Last year alone, the Harris County Fire Marshal conducted 946 stand inspections and 56 firework store inspections to ensure that these locations met all permit requirements and were not breaking any laws. Some of the most common fireworks rule violations by civilians have to do with the 600 and 100 feet rule. Fireworks cannot be used within 600 feet of churches, hospitals, asylums, licensed child care centers, or public/private primary or secondary schools. They also cannot be used within 100 feet of a place where flammable liquids or flammable compressed gasses are stored or dispensed and they cannot be used within 100 feet of any place where fireworks are sold or stored. Other violations often seen are igniting or discharging fireworks in or from a motor vehicle and placing ignited fireworks in, or throwing ignited fireworks at, a motor vehicle. Anyone caught violating these fireworks rules are subject to being charged with a Class B or Class C misdemeanor. As for the effect that improper fireworks use has on Harris County, HCFMO responded to 26 fireworks related fires which resulted in a property loss total of \$646,641. So when using fireworks be aware of your surroundings, be mindful of weather conditions and burn bans, and use common sense safety practices.

If you have any other questions about fireworks in Harris County the Fire Marshal's Office is a wealth of knowledge and you can visit their website at [www.hcfmo.net](http://www.hcfmo.net) or call (713) 274-1700. If you ever need to report complaints or concerns regarding the sale or illegal use of fireworks please contact (281) 999-2200 or email [fmosupport@fmo.hctx.net](mailto:fmosupport@fmo.hctx.net).

James Cook, District Director

## Around The District



### Texas Children's Hospital

On January 27th I got an invitation to tour the Legacy Tower at Texas Children's Hospital. I was able to see some amazing improvements they have made at the hospital and talked with various experts about the vital work being done at the hospital. They are working hard to expand their services within the state of Texas to better help children and their families. Pictured here is Dr. Deborah Hsu, Service Chief for Emergency Pediatric Medicare.

## 28th Annual Precinct 4 Constable Awards Banquet



The Precinct 4 Constable's Office has been an integral part of law enforcement in our community for decades and Constable Mark Herman continues the tradition of recognizing those members of the department who have performed above and beyond the ordinary.

They do awards and medals for Honor, Valor, and Life Saving. Rookie, Deputy and Investigator of the Year awards were given also. Several Unit Citations and Constable Commendations were awarded and it was a great time to see the men and women who run towards danger to protect us receive recognition they so richly deserve.



One of the really great parts is not only do they invite community leaders and supporters, but the deputy's families are a large part of the celebration. They get to be included in the festivities and it is a wonderful opportunity to see how close knit these families are.

### Klein Leadership Coalition Meeting

On January 30th, I attended a meeting of the Klein Leadership Coalition where I got

the chance to speak with a team of board members, parents, community leaders, as well as district leadership, all focused on the overall success of the Klein School District.

This group is a great example of engagement between the school district and all the components of the community working together to ensure the success of every student.

We are so fortunate to have such committed educators in our school districts.



## TEXAS HOUSE INTERIM CHARGES

Hearings On Interim Charges

### State Affairs

The State Affairs Committee held hearings on items listed in the Interim Charges on January 30th. The review and hearings for items on the Interim Charge list will be incremental with concentrations on testimony by subject matter. This first hearing will include invited testimony from several subject matter or industry experts. This hearing will

have testimony on the following areas.

**Senate Bill 14** - Regarding rural broadband service provided by electric co-ops.  
Testimony by Texas Electrical Cooperatives (TEC) - Mike Williams - President and CEO

**House Bill 1960** - Regarding creation of the Governor's Broadband Council. Testimony by Chairman Made Phelan

**House Bill 2422** - Relating to the coordination of certain broadband projects by the Texas Department of Transportation. Testimony by TxDOT- Kyle Madsen- Director of Right of Way Division

**Senate Bill 475** - Relating to an advisory body on the security of the electric grid.  
Testimony by PUC- Commissioner Arthur D'Andrea

**Senate Bill 936** - Relating to a cybersecurity monitor for certain electric utilities.  
Testimony by PUC- Commissioner Arthur D'Andrea

**Senate Bill 1497** - Relating to the registration and regulation of brokers by the Public Utility Commission of Texas. Testimony by PUC- JP Urban- Executive Director

## In The District



### Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce

#### Transportation and Mobility Committee

2nd Tuesday of each month  
Meeting Location:  
29201 Quinn Rd.  
Tomball, Texas 77375  
Upstairs Conference Room

Tomball Government Affairs  
Committee

### Cy-Fair Chamber of Commerce Transportation/Government Affairs Committee

The committee meets the 1st Thursday of each month to discuss governmental issues that confront their Cy-Fair area. They meet at the Chamber offices located at 8711 Highway 6 North, Ste. 120 Houston, TX 77095.



Cy-Fair Chamber Website



### Houston NW Chamber Public Safety Forum

Public Safety Forum Meeting:  
4th Thursday each month  
8:30 am - 9:30 am

Visit the Houston NW Chamber  
Website

Champions Emergency Services  
District  
12730 Champion Forest Dr.  
Houston, TX 77066

Visit our House of Representative Website:

## Contact Us

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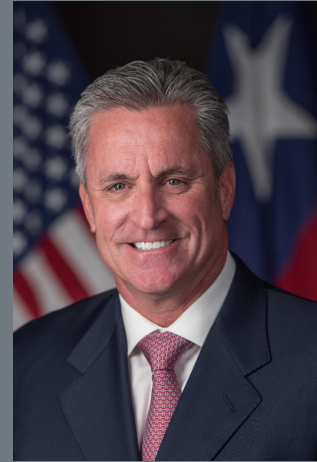
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