

# SAM HARLESS

State Representative District 126  
June 2020 Newsletter



*Texas House of Representatives*



**District 126**

**News  
and  
Information**



## **Coronavirus Impact On Texas**

Well, June brought us some surprises with business re-opening and a new set of restrictions amid a surge in COVID cases across the state. Multiple counties and municipalities have issued mandatory mask orders for businesses across the state, with Governor Abbott eventually following suit on the 2nd of July with mandatory face coverings in public spaces and restrictions on public gatherings for counties with more than 20 COVID cases. The Governor also issued a proclamation giving mayors and county judges the ability to impose restrictions on some outdoor gatherings of over 10 people, and making it mandatory that, with certain exceptions, people cannot be in groups larger than ten and must maintain six feet of social distancing from others.

### **COVID STATS**

It seems wherever you turn the numbers seem to be different. Counties, hospitals, and the state sometimes seem to be slightly out of sync on reporting the number of cases and causes of deaths linked to COVID. In any case, we

are experiencing a sharp rise in the number of cases.

To help clarify how numbers are categorized, we reached out to the Department of State Health Services to explain how they get their numbers.

1. In the total test count given by DSHS on their COVID dashboard, is that a combination of viral tests and antibody tests? ***No, just viral. Antibody positives are reported separately and not included.***
2. When an antibody test is administered, if a person's test comes back positive showing they have COVID-19 antibodies does that person get added to the total number of reported cases? Or is the "Cases Reported" number collected only from viral tests? ***No, antibody positives are a separate count on our website. We added a notation on the dashboard to say that probable cases (antibody positives are a type of probable) are not included in our total case counts.***
3. In the total number of reported cases, does that include presumptive cases or only confirmed positive results? ***We do not include probable cases; confirmed cases would only be with a PCR positive test.***
4. Is there anyone that verifies that the data provided by local health departments is accurate, or is DSHS relying on those health departments to report their case numbers accurately? ***We rely on local health departments that are responsible for public health in their jurisdictions. Our data is preliminary until all case investigations can be completed, local health departments provide those case investigations to us as completed.***
5. On average, how many viral tests are being administered per day in Texas? ***For the most recent 7 days of data, our viral test average has been 45,209 (average new daily lab reports to DSHS).***

All of this at a time when testing numbers are also on the rise. According to the Department of State Health Services, over two million tests have been done as of June 28th. 148,723 positive cases have been reported with 2,393 deaths statewide.

Harris and Dallas counties continue to be the hot spots in the state, with nearly fifty thousand cases between them and their County Judge's have reacted with tighter restrictions. Here in Harris County we now have a new Threat level System, which can be found here: [READY HARRIS THREAT LEVEL](#). Judge Hidalgo issued an executive order requiring business to generate and implement health and safety policies and to have their employees, customers, and visitors wear masks or face coverings. Executive Orders and other COVID related news for Harris County as well as the COVID Dashboard can always be found at [www.readyharris.org](http://www.readyharris.org).

**In District 126** we have seen 26 reported deaths and 1,731 reported positive cases as of the end of June, which is a mortality rate of 1.5%

To find a testing site near you, follow this link:

[COVID Testing Locations](#)

#### **DPS**

The Department of Public Safety has begun a phased re-opening of Driver's License Offices, offered by appointment only. Appointments can be made here:

<https://www.dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/appointments.htm>

#### **DMV**

Tuesday, May 26, the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) is reopening most Regional Service Centers for in-person transactions by same-day or next-day

appointment only. Appointments may be scheduled at [www.TxDMV.gov/appointment](http://www.TxDMV.gov/appointment). The temporary waiver of vehicle title and registration requirements remains in effect. TxDMV will notify the public when normal services have resumed. Texans will then have 60 days to complete any overdue vehicle title and registration transactions.

TEA now has a COVID-19 support page for student assessment for the STARR test with information about extensions. Here you can find guidance and resources organized by the following categories. Simply click on this link [TEA EXTENSION](#) to be taken directly to those resources below on the page. For questions, please email [disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov](mailto:disasterinfo@tea.texas.gov).

The complete guidelines for business re-opening, with protocols and reopening dates can be found at the Department of State Health Services:

<https://www.dshs.state.tx.us/coronavirus/opentexas.aspx>

As your State Representative, I continue to maintain contact with our county and state officials and provide you details and updates from those calls. I try to keep you posted on updates to news and announcements about local actions and state efforts to contain this virus. I try to provide the highlights so you aren't inundated and hope you find our information useful. Like many of you I am concerned about the growing restrictions on our lives and I hope it yields an improvement in the spread of the virus soon.

Please follow my Facebook page for daily updates and new information at:

[Facebook.com/samharless126](https://www.facebook.com/samharless126)

or our Twitter Page a

[twitter.com/SamHarless126](https://twitter.com/SamHarless126)

Even through these challenging times, it remains my honor and privilege to serve the residents of District 126.

**Sam Harless, State Representative**

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## COVID-19 News and Resources

### State of Texas Resources

#### Governor Abbott's Website for News

<https://gov.texas.gov/news>

#### Executive Orders (Proclamations)

<https://gov.texas.gov/news/category/proclamation>

#### Texas Unemployment Commission

District 126 has a population of 190,040 residents with an Unemployment Claim Count of 6,829 as of the end of June.

#### Unemployment Insurance Claimants Breakdown

Male: 3,247

Female: 3,577

***TWC has paused their work search requirement which was recently reinstated and will revisit it in late July. This determines whether or not you are required to prove***

*you are looking for a job to continue to receive unemployment benefits.*

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## **Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC)**

*(If you are working full time, disregard this.)*

### **General Information**

Under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act), you may be eligible for 13 weeks of additional benefits of Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC) if you are still totally or partially unemployed.

For more information and to add or update your information, go to this site:

<https://apps.twc.state.tx.us/UBS/peuc/peucPublic.do>

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*“The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) encourages individuals previously deemed monetarily ineligible for unemployment benefits to reapply online starting Sunday, April 5, 2020. This date marks the beginning of a new quarter and as such the base period for unemployment benefits and those previously ineligible may now qualify.”*

TWC Website to Apply for Benefits: [TWC Unemployment Benefits](#)

Texas Workforce TeleCenter - 800-939-6631

TWC has a new Chat service on their website in the bottom right of the screen.

<https://www.twc.texas.gov>

### **Texas Workforce Claims In June**

<u>Week</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Internet</u>	<u>Telephone</u>	<u>Other</u>
6/6	89,676*	105,500	23,000	33,700
6/13	93,895*	87,800	22,300	22,400
6.20	89,241*	107,300	19,800	19,700
6/27	96,141*	100,700	21,600	22,600

Unless indicated, numbers are estimates based on internal TWC data and are subject to revision.

\* Official Department of Labor Data when available and TWC Estimates.

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### **Harris County Resources**

Harris County and Harris Public Health has a lot of information available.

Harris County Public Health - [Harris Health Confirmed CoronaVirus Cases](#)

Harris Public Health Self Assessment Tool: [Self Assessment Tool](#)

Stay Home Order: <https://www.readyharris.org/stay-home>

### Testing Sites

In Houston and Harris County, there are currently 6 testing FEMA supported sites with a capacity of 1,400 tests per day with enough supplies to last 20 more days. There are many times more tests being done by private labs outside the public testing sites. Along with their two permanent and four mobile testing sites, Harris County has partnered with Walgreens to create two additional drive through testing sites. These sites are a partnership project and are managed by Walgreens and results are available within 24 hours.

**ReadyHarris Website:** <https://www.readyharris.org/#resources>

**Harris County Fire Marshal** hotline to report businesses who are in violation of the “Stay Home, Work Safe” - 832-839-6941

**Precinct 4 Commissioner Community Assistance** - [Pct 4 Community assistance](#)

People can sign up to receive emergency alerts from Harris County at: [Ready Harris Alert Signup](#).

Also, 2-1-1 is a resource hotline set up by Harris County. If someone is in need of resources fast they can call that number and they will be connected to resources in their community. They can also text CV19 to 888-777. This hotline is available 24/7.

### City of Houston

**Houston Public Health Dept** - <https://houstonemergency.org/covid19/>

## Federal Resources / Websites

CDC- Center for Disease Control: [CDC Coronavirus](#)

Small Business Administration: [SBA](#)

SBA Paycheck Protection Program - [Paycheck Protection Loans](#)

An SBA loan that helps businesses keep their workforce employed (during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis.)

FEMA Corona Response: [FEMA CoronaVirus](#)

## Around The District

*If you've heard of outstanding businesses in our community, please email us and let us know so we can properly recognize them.*

### Ahmadiyya Food Drive

Towards the end of June, I went to a food distribution event put on by the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community. It



was also amazing to watch the Ahmadiyya Community give back and support our community in this time of need. Today they distributed over 10,000 lbs of food which came out to 1,700 individual packages. They also distributed masks that were hand made by the amazing women of their community and they had a line over a mile long. I got the chance to jump in and help distribute face masks for a couple of hours.

This isn't the first food distribution event they've done and it won't be the last. The Ahmadiyya Muslim Community is a great example of Texans stepping up when the chips are down We are so thankful for what they're doing.



## Centrum Christmas Car Parade

The Centrum received extremely heavy damage due to Hurricane Harvey and has been closed since. This parade was an opportunity to celebrate the grand re-opening after much need repairs. Home to the Cypress Creek Foundation for Arts and Community Enrichment, (F.A.C.E.) The Centrum and its events have been sorely missed as the cultural counterpoint of our community. So glad to have them back.



Be sure to check their concert and event schedules.

[F.A.C.E.](#)

I was joined in the parade by Judge Lincoln Goodwin, always a local favorite and led in the procession by our own Harris County Precinct 4 Constable's Office as we went down Cypresswood from Hwy 249 to Kuykendahl..



## News For Harris County Precinct 4 Road And Capitol Project Update

Following are the capital improvement projects being pursued in our area.

Harris County Precinct 4 is planning to add a right turn lane on Hufsmith Road at Kuykendahl Road, according to Pamela Rocchi, director of the Capital Improvement Projects Division. As the project is in the design phase, a timeline for construction is not available for the project.

Part of the widening construction on FM 2978 is slated to be complete in the third quarter of 2020 while the next widening project on part of Hufsmith-Kohrville Road is slated to go out for construction bids in the third quarter.

### **FM 2978 widening**

Two Texas Department of Transportation projects will widen FM 2978 to four lanes from Hufsmith-Conroe Road to FM 1488. The segment from Hufsmith-Conroe Road to south of Dry Creek—near Hardin Store Road—is slated to finish in the third quarter of 2020. The segment from Hardin Store Road to FM 1488 is slated to finish in the second quarter of 2021, according to early June information from TxDOT.

Timeline: January 2018-third quarter 2020 (south segment),  
September 2018-second quarter 2021 (north segment)

## 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 Website](#)

### Houston NW Chamber Public Safety Forum

Public Safety Forum Meeting:  
4th Thursday each month  
8:30 am - 9:30 am  
Champions Emergency Services  
District  
12730 Champion Forest Dr.  
Houston, TX 77066

[Visit our House of Representative Website:](#)

## Contact Us

Capitol Office Phone - 512-463-0496

District Office Phone - 281-251-0194

District Office Address - 6630 Cypresswood Dr #150

Spring, Tx 77379



Ron Hickman  
Chief of Staff  
[Email Ron](#)

Ashley Hyten  
Legislative Director  
[Email Ashley](#)

James Cook  
District Director  
[Email James](#)



[Email Sam](#)

