

# SAM HARLESS

State Representative District 126  
August 2020 Newsletter



*Texas House of Representatives*



**District 126**

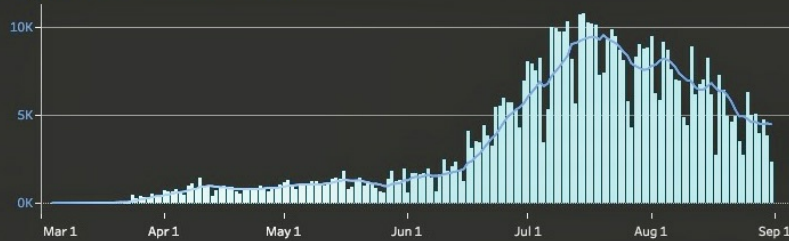
**News  
and  
Information**



**COVID's Continuing Impact On Texas**

**COVID STATS & INFO**

Daily New Confirmed Cases in Texas



Probable cases are not included in the total case numbers.

Note that a backlog of 241 confirmed cases were included in the statewide total but excluded from statewide and Dallas county new confirmed cases (119). Details can be found here: <https://www.dallascounty.org/covi19/>

Fatalities by Date of Death in Texas



Because DSHS is reporting fatalities by date of death, the number of fatalities for recent days will continue to grow as more death certificates are filed for those days.

August has shown us a slow but steady reduction in the number of positive cases and hospitalizations, providing us a glimmer of hope in our recovery from the effects of this pandemic. While Texas has surpassed the **600,000** mark in positive cases and **12,500** fatalities, the trend for daily positive cases reported has dropped from less than over **9,500** cases on August 1st to less **2,500** by the end of the month. On August 1st, **164** fatalities were reported. On August 31st only **26** fatalities were reported and we had days at the end of the month with no reported fatalities, marking a significant improvement in mortality. The steps we are taking are making a difference and we must continue to be vigilant. As schools and colleges reopen, they will likely be the next areas to watch for a surge in positive cases.

**In District 126**, we have now seen **70** reported deaths and **5,518** reported positive cases as of the end of July. We have also had **4,999** recovered cases in the District.

Many of you have expressed frustration with the family members who are in assisted living or nursing facilities and their long term isolation due to COVID restrictions. A number of us have reached out to the Governor to ask him to encourage Texas Health and Human Services to find ways to allow some type of visitation with your loved ones. The Governor has restricted staff workers from moving between facilities to slow the spread of the virus and recently the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has announced new testing guidelines for residents and staff. Even so, there has been very limited access provided for family members who feel the strain of isolation for their loved ones.

Earlier in August Health and Human Services announced limited visitation rules for these facilities:

### Nursing Facilities

For the health and safety of facility residents and staff, public visitation is limited to outdoor visits only. Physical contact between residents and visitors is not permitted. Additional conditions a facility must meet to conduct limited outdoor visitation include:

- No confirmed positive COVID-19 cases in staff in the last 14 days.
- No active positive cases in residents.
- Any facility previously experiencing an outbreak that has fully recovered must

be adequately staffed and following adequate infection control procedures.

- Facility staff are being tested for COVID-19 weekly.

Further guidance on limited nursing facility visitation rules, which include window visits and vehicle parades, will be posted on the HHSC COVID-19 provider web page.

### **Long-Term Care Facilities (except Nursing Facilities)**

Limited indoor and outdoor visitation procedures are allowed. Physical contact between residents and visitors is not permitted. Additional conditions a facility must meet to conduct limited visitation include:

- No confirmed COVID-19 positive staff in last 14 days.
- No active positive cases in residents.
- Adequate staffing to facilitate visitation in compliance with infection control requirements.
- Use of plexiglass as a safety barrier for indoor visitation to prevent spread of COVID-19.

Link to HHS Visitation Rules - [Texas HHS Visitation Rules](#)

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

[COVID Testing Locations](#)

### **THREAT LEVEL SYSTEM**

Harris County's Threat level System, which can be found here: [READY HARRIS THREAT LEVEL](#), provides the current threat status to the County. Judge Hidalgo's executive order remains in place requiring business to have 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).

The threat level currently is still set to **RED** signifying a severe and uncontrolled level of COVID-19. This indicates you should minimize individual contact with those outside your family whenever possible in the Harris County area.

### **Hurricane Season**

Just to ensure that the pandemic wasn't the only impact to face us recently, Mother Nature sent two hurricanes at once during the month of August. While Hurricane Marco moved off to the east and dissipated, Hurricane Laura continued to threaten the upper Texas coast. While the initial prediction placed the Houston Galveston area in the path of the storm, its landfall right at the Texas/Louisiana border along the coast took the brunt of the impact. This is just another reminder of how vulnerable we are when living this close to the Texas Gulf coast and why we should always be prepared.

You can sign up for safety alerts and find extremely helpful hurricane preparedness information at [www.readyharris.org](http://www.readyharris.org)

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

### **Sam Harless, State Representative**

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

or our Twitter Page at

<https://twitter.com/SamHarless126>

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 and 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 businesses and I hope it yields a continued improvement in the spread of the virus in the coming months.

## COVID-19 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 1,008 during the last thirty days.

#### DPS

The Department of Public Safety has continued 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 (Department of Motor Vehicles)

The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) is open for 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 (Texas Education Agency)

The Texas Education Agency 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>

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#### Texas Workforce Commission

## State Unemployment Benefits to Continue But \$600 Federal Payment Ends July 25

The Texas Workforce Commission reminds claimants that the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC) ended the week of July 25, 2020. FPUC provided an additional \$600 per week to claimants who lost work as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Texans will continue to receive state unemployment benefits for the remainder of their claim. For those on regular unemployment that is currently up to a potential 59 weeks and 46 weeks for those on Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA). The length of time benefits are available is subject to an individual's eligibility as well as state economic indicators.

Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation was passed as part of the CARES Act. The program provides federal reimbursement to states for an additional \$600 per week. A full benefit week begins on Sunday and ends on Saturday. The Act states that the program ends July 31, but benefits must be discontinued before the end of the month because by law TWC cannot pay partial week benefits. The last full benefit week for the extra \$600 is the week ending July 25<sup>th</sup>. As a result, only payment requests for weeks ending on or before July 25 can include the additional \$600. State unemployment benefits will continue to be paid after this date, they simply will not include the additional \$600 anymore.

Other provisions of the federal act do not expire until December 26, 2020. This includes Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation (PEUC), which provides an extra 13 weeks of benefits to persons who exhaust traditional benefits, and Pandemic Unemployment Assistance (PUA), which provides up to 46 weeks of benefits to persons who are self-employed or who would not otherwise qualify for state benefits.

After the expiration of the CARES Act, President Trump signed an executive order on August 8, taking action to provide additional resources to those whose jobs have been impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. The President used his authority through FEMA to fill the void left by the CARES Act expiration to make sure certain individuals could continue receiving additional jobless benefits while the U.S. Congress continues to work towards additional relief agreements.

On August 20, Governor Abbott directed TWC to apply for the Federal Lost Wage Assistance Funds available through President Trump's executive order. The following day, on August 21, Governor Abbott announced the federal government had approved nearly \$1.4 billion in initial assistance funds. This funding will provide an additional \$300 per week in benefits for qualifying Texans receiving unemployment benefits.

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](#)

TWC has a new Chat service on their website in the bottom right of the screen, called "Chat With Us". This new function will be able to answer most general questions from individual.

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

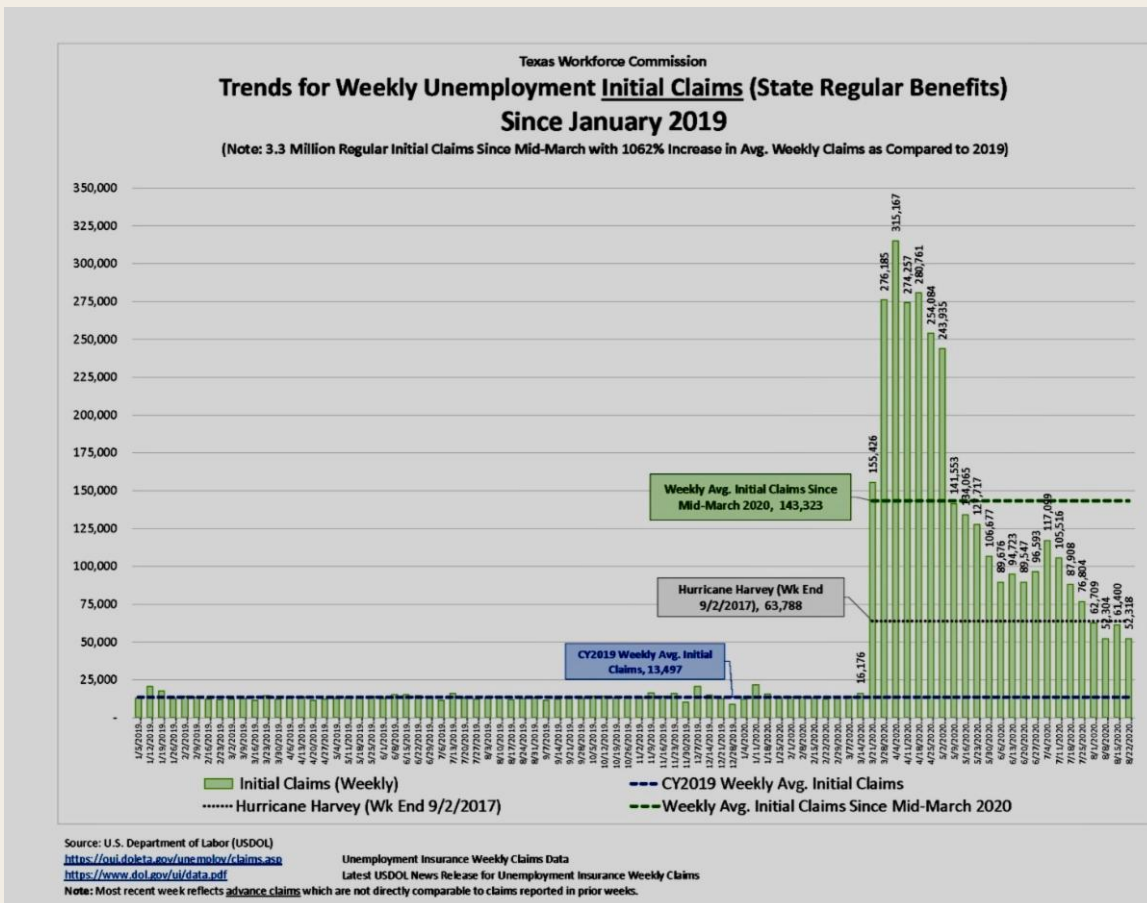
## Texas Workforce Claims For August

Week  
Starting Total Internet Telephone Other

<b>8/1</b>	<b>61,940*</b>	<b>62,000</b>	<b>17,800</b>	<b>35,600</b>
<b>8/8</b>	<b>51,476*</b>	<b>46,800</b>	<b>15,500</b>	<b>39,700</b>
<b>8/15</b>	<b>61,416*</b>	<b>61,700</b>	<b>18,700</b>	<b>38,500</b>
<b>8/22</b>	<b>52,318*</b>	<b>52,500</b>	<b>15,900</b>	<b>44,700</b>
<b>8/29</b>	<b>119,900</b>	<b>59,900</b>	<b>15,700</b>	<b>44,200</b>

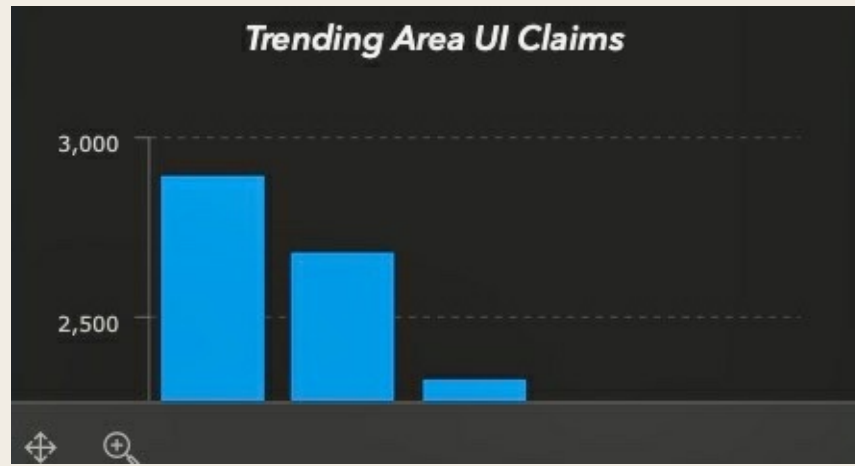
Unless indicated, numbers are estimates based on internal TWC data and are subject to revision.

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



District 126 has a population of 190,040 residents with an Unemployment Claim Count of 1,008 during the last thirty days. Unemployment claims for our area has

dropped by 2,000 and continues to trend downward.



## 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 currently are 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. To find a location near you go here:

[Harris County Testing Location Website](#)

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

**Harris County Fire Marshal** hotline to report businesses who are in violation of the County and State COVID-19 health and safety policies - 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.*

### School Reopening

Our school districts and their staff have been caught up in a maze of fluctuating regulatory controls while trying to achieve their goals of safely educating our children. I know they are all doing their best as they are preparing students for a new adjusted learning environment as the fall semesters begin.

I have joined other legislators and educators in asking the TEA and Governor Abbott to place a moratorium on STAAR Testing and class or grade placement dependencies on such testing. It is difficult enough to prepare our teachers and students under the new learning paradigm without the added pressure of STAAR Testing in a hybrid learning environment for the coming year, at a minimum.

You can see Klein ISD's Roadmap to re-opening at this link:  
[Klein ISD Re-Opening Update 12](#)

Cy-Fair ISD's website details their approach to school reopening in the "Lead Safely" plan available here: [Cy-Fair ISD Re-Opening Plan](#)

Tomball ISD calls their plan "Return to Excellence 2020-2021" and it is available at this link: [Tomball ISD Return to Excellence 2020-2021](#)

## In The District

### Precinct 4 Commissioner Capital Project Status Update

#### **Boudreaux Road 3 between Old Boudreaux Lane and Gleannloch Forest Drive at SH 99**

- Summary: Proposed improvements include widening Boudreaux Road to a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installation/modification as warranted.
- Status: Pre-Planning Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD



- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Bourgeois Road between Cutten Road and West Richey Road**

- Summary: Proposed improvements include upgrading Bourgeois Road as a 2-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installation/modification as warranted.
- Status: Study Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Cutten Road between Bavaria Drive and Cossey Road**

- Summary: Proposed improvements include the extension of Cutten Road as a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installation/modification as warranted.
- Status: Pre-Planning Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Cypress North Houston Road between Jones Road and FM 1960**

- Summary: Planned improvements include widening and extending Cypress North Houston Road (formerly Lou Edd Road) as a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installations at Misty Moss Drive, Autumn Mills Drive, and FM 1960.
- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: Goal to advertise for construction purposes in 2020 (barring any unforeseen circumstances).
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Hollister Street 4 between Log Hollow Drive and Breen Drive**

- Summary: Proposed improvements include extending Hollister Street as a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installation/modification as warranted.
- Status: Pre-Planning Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Hufsmith-Kohrville Road 2 between Hollow Glen Lane and Ezekiel Road**

- Summary: Planned improvements include widening Hufsmith-Kohrville Road as a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installations at Lacey Road and Ezekiel Road.
- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: Goal to advertise for construction purposes in 2020 (barring any unforeseen circumstances).
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Hufsmith-Kohrville Road 3 between Ezekiel Road and Holderrieth Road**

- Summary: Planned improvements include widening Hufsmith-Kohrville Road as a 4-lane concrete pavement section with improved drainage accommodations and traffic signal installation at Woodland Shore Drive.
- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD

- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Fairbanks North Houston Road at Terrace Brook Drive**

- Summary: Planned traffic signalization of intersection as warranted.
- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: TBD
- Construction Cost: TBD

#### **Stuebner Airline Road at Oakwood Glen Boulevard**

- Summary: Modernize existing traffic signal with pedestrian push button components and ADA-accessible ramps.
- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: Goal to begin construction in **fourth** quarter 2020 (barring any unforeseen circumstances).
- Estimated Construction Cost: \$40,000

#### **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality 4 joint participation project with Texas Department of Transportation**

##### **Phase 4-1C – North Eldridge Parkway corridor between Clay Road and FM 1960, and between Grant Road and Spring Cypress Road**

- Summary: Planned improvements include installation of new traffic signal systems, battery back-up installation for existing traffic signal systems, extension and installation of turn lanes, and installation of fiber optic interconnection system along the North Eldridge Parkway corridor.
- Status: Construction Phase
- Construction Timeline: April 8, 2019 – **September 2020**
- Construction Cost: \$4,532,472

##### **Phase 4-2D – SH 249 corridor between Antoine Drive and Spring Cypress Road, and FM 529 corridor between Greenhouse Road and North Eldridge Parkway**

- Summary: Planned improvements include installation of additional turn lanes, turn lane extensions, and median modifications along the SH 249 and FM 529 corridors.
- Status: Construction Phase
- Construction Timeline: August 2019 – March 2022
- Construction Cost: \$3,618,458

##### **Phase 4-2E – Beltway 8 corridor between West Gulf Bank Road and T.C. Jester Boulevard**

- Summary: Planned improvements include installation of additional turn lanes, turn lane extensions, and median modifications along the Beltway 8 corridor.
- Status: Construction Phase
- Construction Timeline: August 2019 – March 2022
- Construction Cost: \$3,000,244

##### **Phase 4-2F – SH 6 corridor between West Little York Road and West Road, and FM 1960 corridor between Fallbrook Drive and Kenswick Drive**

- Summary: Planned improvements include installation of additional turn lanes, turn lane extensions, and median modifications along the SH 6 and FM 1960 corridors.
- Status: Construction Phase

- Construction Timeline: August 2019 – March 2022
- Construction Cost: \$2,000,868



## 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

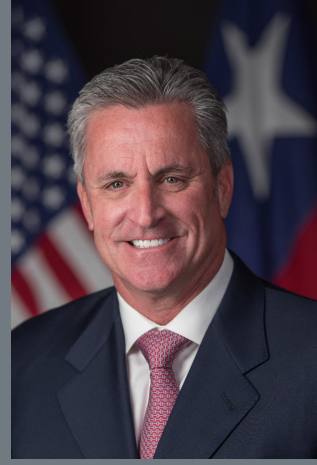
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