

SAM HARLESS

State Representative District 126
January 2021 Newsletter



Texas House of Representatives



**Texas
House District
126**

**News
and
Information**



The 87th Texas Legislature

We convened the 87th Session of the Texas Legislature on January 12th and immediately set about to elect the next Speaker of the Texas House. As expected, Representative Dade Phelan was the dominant candidate and was all but unanimous with only two members of the 150 failing to support him. The next several days were mostly about changes to the rules under which the House operates and there were several challenges to change things like the

number of members necessary to call for a "Record Vote" or the creation of a "Priority Bill" for each member that would allow every member the chance to accelerate the process for one bill. In the end, the rules remained largely the same with some changes being made to accommodate operating under the COVID Virus.

We recessed several times during the following weeks to maintain separation of the members and reduce exposure at the Capitol while we were awaiting the assignment of members to the individual committees, at which time we will begin hearing bills and taking testimony.

Also a note on our Capitol office change. We have moved up one floor to E1-402 effective December 10th. Our Capitol phone number remains the same 512-463-0496. Also, please note our District Office will close to consolidate our personnel at the Capitol during the session.

Our Legislation This Session

Legislation for this session has begun to clear drafting in legislative council and we have started filing. So far, four of my bills have been filed with several more to come.

House Bill 759 - Relates to the creation of an electronic process to track school threat assessments created in the last session of the Texas Legislature. The student threat assessment database would take the by-product of the threat assessment teams and allow it to follow the students permanent school record electronically.

House Bill 766 - This is the same bill I filed and pursued last session. It creates a database that would contain any conditions of bond imposed on a defendant for violent offenses, like family violence. It is designed to protect the victims of family violence and responding police officers in the time between the initial arrest until a protective order is issued by a court. I worked with Senator Kolkhorst last session to pass a similar bill that was ultimately vetoed by the Governor due to a bad amendment that tainted the bill.

House Bill 1049 - This bill clarifies the peace officer authority of deputy sheriffs and constables in the time after the expiration of the term of the Sheriff or Constable at midnight December 31st, until the deputy can be issued a new oath of office for a new term of office or under new office holder.

House Bill 1417 - Relates to the development of a campus improvement plan that includes, violence and bullying prevention and intervention on campus for dropout deterrence, including providing a research-based teacher development program that provides teachers continuing education that includes creating a nurturing classroom environment; developing respectful and caring relationships with students; promoting student emotional health by providing strategies to help students feel valued; and providing

empathetic teaching techniques that may be used to discipline a student's behavior while showing respect and care for the student

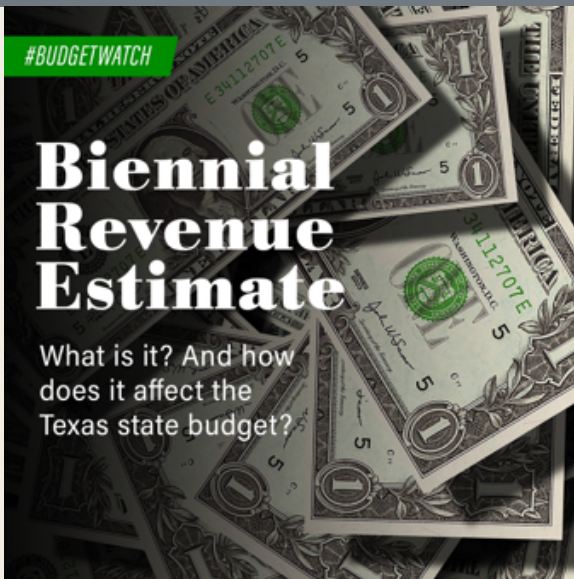
[House Resolution 23](#) - Relates to congratulating the Champions Golf Club on their hosting the 75th Annual US Women's Open the 10th through the 14th of December 2020. In spite of COVID and the unique challenges to hosting the tournament Jackie Burke and his Champions Golf Club team managed to emerge successful, highlighting the Champions area as a bright spot in both our community and our economy.

Other Bills I have asked to co-sponsor or joint author

[House Bill 1264](#) - Authored by Rep. Keith Bell - Relates to Improving Voter Registration Roll Integrity by reducing the amount of time for removal of a deceased person from the voter registration roll.

[House Bill 1246](#) - Authored by Rep. Gina Hinojosa - Hold Harmless amendment to the education code to change from attendance to enrollment based numbers for school funding.

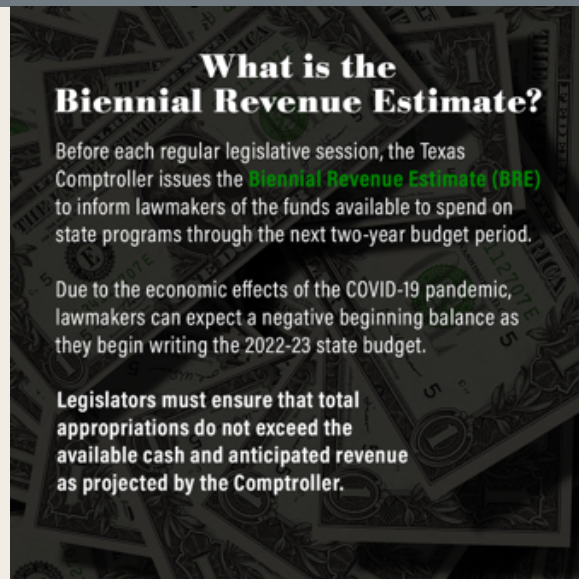
Texas Comptroller's Biennial Revenue Estimate



#BUDGETWATCH

Biennial Revenue Estimate

What is it? And how does it affect the Texas state budget?



What is the Biennial Revenue Estimate?

Before each regular legislative session, the Texas Comptroller issues the **Biennial Revenue Estimate (BRE)** to inform lawmakers of the funds available to spend on state programs through the next two-year budget period.

Due to the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, lawmakers can expect a negative beginning balance as they begin writing the 2022-23 state budget.

Legislators must ensure that total appropriations do not exceed the available cash and anticipated revenue as projected by the Comptroller.

What is the Biennial Revenue Estimate?

**\$119.58
BILLION**

This is the expected total revenue that will be generated from sales taxes, and other taxes collected from motor vehicle sales, oil & gas production, franchise taxes, and other state revenue.

What is the Biennial Revenue Estimate?

**\$946
MILLION**

Because of revenue shortfalls in the current budget cycle, legislators will need to **balance the deficit** with available general revenue funds.

**\$4.32
BILLION**

The Legislature is Constitutionally mandated to reserve a portion of GR funds for the **"Rainy Day Fund"** and the **State Highway Fund.**

**\$112.96
BILLION**

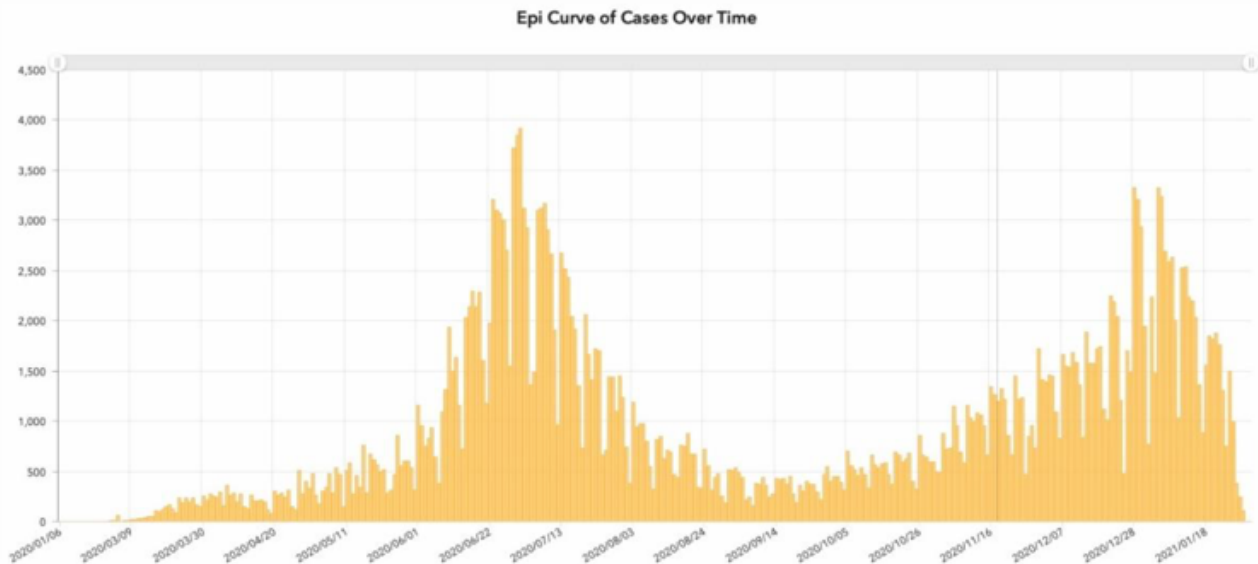
This is the total available general revenue funding remaining. *This does not account for federal funds in the budget.*

If you want to download a copy of the Texas Comptroller's Report on the Biennial Revenue Estimate, it can be downloaded [here](#).

COVID's Continuing Impact On Texas

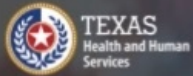
COVID STATS & INFO

COVID Cases Reported In Harris County



The chart above provides a reflection of COVID-19 cases reported for all of Harris County by the last day of the month. It should be noted there will be occasional time lags or delays in reporting that can affect total numbers. These charts can be found at the Harris County Dashboard www.readyharris.org

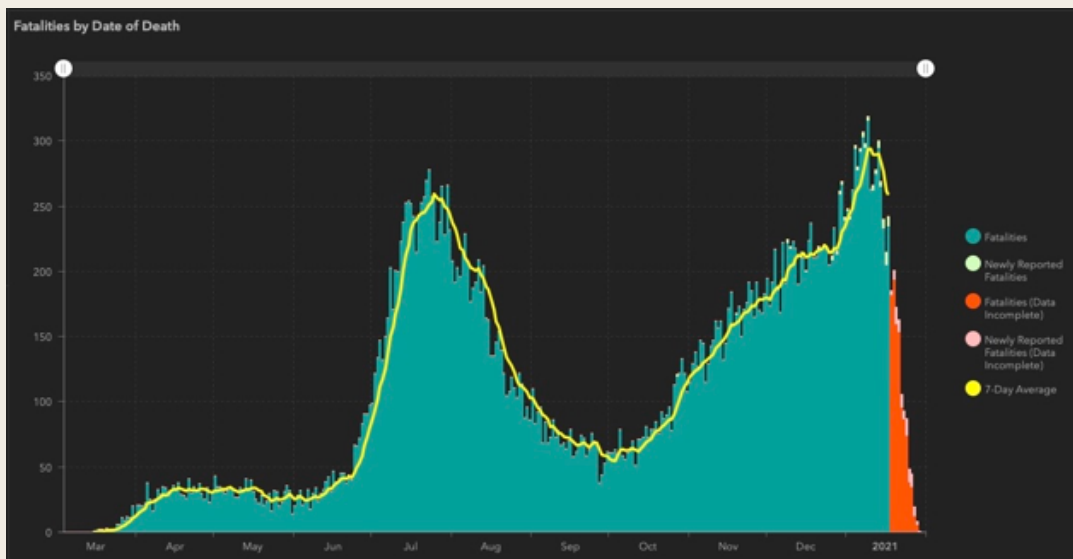
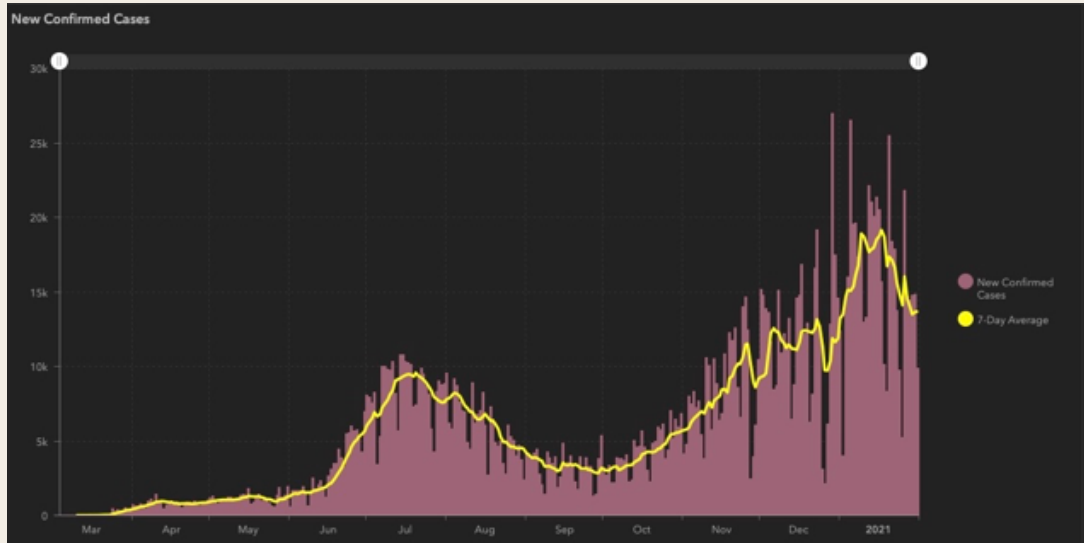
Texas COVID Cases Statewide



Texas Department of State Health Services

Texas Case Counts COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

The two charts below come from the [Texas Covid Dashboard](#) and reflect the recent information on daily reported cases statewide along with the trend in fatalities.



COVID VACCINES IN TEXAS

In the past month and a half, over a million and a half Pfizer and Moderna vaccines have been distributed to Texas resident. As fast as they can get them to the state, they are being distributed to the hubs and providers. On the outside looking in, it seems to be a snails pace, but managing thousands of clinics, pharmacies, and hospitals across a very large state has to be a nightmare on its own.

As the COVID vaccines continue to be distributed, the ongoing challenge seems to be a combination of the general acceptance of the vaccine and

getting sufficient doses completed before expiration. The process remains confusing for so many on when, how, and where to get a vaccine.

Texas has surpassed the two million mark on total COVID-19 cases with over thirty six thousand fatalities attributed to the virus.

In District 126, we have now seen **150** reported deaths and 24,825 reported positive cases as of the end of November. We have also had **19,715** recovered cases in the District. While these are just statistics, remember these cases and fatalities are friends, neighbors, and loved ones.

To find a vaccine distribution site near you, the state has created this map:

[Covid Vaccine Provider Map](#)

If you are in the eligible tier, to find doses available in your area, check this link:

[Vaccine Dose Availability Map:](#)

If you need 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 businesses 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.

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.

Let me say again how proud I am to be chosen once again to represent the residents of House District 126. I will continue to work to make our business and communities better places to work and live.

Sam Harless, State Representative

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

www.Facebook.com/samharless126

or our Twitter Page at

COVID-19 Resources

Texas Workforce Commission

The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) continues to explore options to keep the 2021 tax rates as low as possible for Texas employers as Texas and the entire nation continue to deal with the economic disruptions of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Read more about 2021 tax rates in the press release.](#)

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, called "Chat With Us". This new function will be able to answer most general questions from individual. <https://www.twc.texas.gov>

Harris County COVID Resources

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

Our Schools and COVID

Fortunately, we haven't seen the dramatic spike in COVID cases associated with school reopening that was anticipated by some, largely as a result of the planning and preparation by each of our districts, their leadership, and superintendents. We should all be very thankful that they are monitoring the health and safety of our children.

Our School Districts are closely monitoring COVID cases in the staff and student population. You can see the COVID Campus Dashboards for each of our area districts here:

[Klein ISD COVID Dashboard](#)

[Cy-Fair ISD COVID Dashboard](#)

[Tomball ISD COVID Dashboard](#)

[Spring ISD COVID Dashboard](#)

In The District

New Museum Director

The Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts has acquired a new director in Courtney Gardner. She previously served as the Executive Director for the Peninsula Fine Arts Center in Newport News, Virginia.

Located in the heart of the Cypress Creek Cultural District at 6815 Cypresswood Drive, Spring, the Pearl Fincher MFA is a nonprofit organization that provides direct, first-hand access to original works of art in addition to a variety of educational and public programming at no cost.



The museum first opened in March 2008.

Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts's Current Exhibits



Expressions of the '70s: Dick Wray, Earl Staley, and Contemporaries

“At the onset of the 1970s, Houston was a city on the cusp of exploding growth and change. It was in this setting, during the boom years of the 1970s, that Houston’s art scene rose to such national prominence that art insiders spoke of the rise of a regional “Houston School” – uniquely different from the art meccas of New York City, Los Angeles, and Chicago

Peihong Endris: Orchestrated Dance of Ink & Water

Born in China in 1959, Peihong graduated from the Central Academy of Fine Arts in 1993 and served as an art editor for the Beijing Review. Her artwork has been

exhibited internationally in China, South Korea, Singapore, and Tokyo, as well as stateside in California and throughout Texas.



Holly Hunter Berry: The Illuminated Path

The Illuminated Path showcases abstract landscape paintings from Houston-area artist Holly Hunter Berry. Using acrylic paint and various styles of brushwork, the artist captures hopeful impressions of the natural world.

Precinct 4 Commissioner Capital Project Status Update

(Our thanks to Pct 4 Commissioner Cagle's Office and Pamela Rocchi)

(Any new changes will be highlighted in RED)

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: Study 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 – Project bid phase has been delayed to incorporate the design requirements for addressing the Atlas 14 drainage mitigation needs.**
- Construction Timeline: **TBD**
- 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.
- Status: Design Phase
- Construction Timeline: Goal to advertise for construction purposes in early 2021 (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: Goal to begin construction in first quarter of 2021 (barring any unforeseen circumstances).

- 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: **Materials (pedestrian poles) received 1/29/21; Contractor can now be given Notice to Proceed and begin installation of the ADA pedestrian ramps & associated ped signals.**
- Estimated Construction Cost: \$65,000

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

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 has been completed at all 13-intersections associated with Phase 2D**
- 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 has been completed at four of the 13-intersections associated with Phase 2E**
 - 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 has been completed at nine of the 10-intersections associated with Phase 2F**
- 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

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