



June 2, 2020

SPECIAL EDITION - 12



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This week, the nation mourns the horrific and wrongful death of George Floyd. As a state and a nation, we must combat injustice, particularly when it is the result of actions by law enforcement officials who are trusted to uphold the law. The right to peacefully protest is a constitutionally protected form of speech and has been effectively employed to right institutional wrongs throughout our history.

I join in advocating for changes to policies that promote equal treatment under the law and liberty and justice for all. Violence, rioting, and looting, however, are perversions of our precious and protected right to peacefully assemble. Such actions drown out rather than amplify the voices of peaceful protesters, as we have witnessed in cities across our nation this past week. This behavior is not constitutionally protected and cannot be tolerated.

I will continue to work with local law enforcement and with my colleagues next legislative session to review current criminal justice policies and take necessary legislative actions to ensure that the state law enforcement has the resources necessary to protect and serve communities, to hold perpetrators of violence and destruction accountable, and to assure accountability for officers who take action that exceeds what is necessary given the situation.

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## STATE OF TEXAS UPDATES

### **Contact Tracing**

I have received numerous inquiries and concerns about the MTX contact tracing contract signed by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). At a minimum, I have concerns about the Agency's vendor selection process for this contract. Performance review is a routine and critical part of vetting vendors who bid for state contracts. The legislature expects DSHS, like any state agency, to have explored the vendor's ability to meet contractual obligations by conducting a rigorous performance review during the vetting process. Whether they did or did not, and if their findings support the vendor's ability to perform such large scale services for the State of Texas, are questions that deserve straightforward answers.

Additionally, I have serious reservations about the contact tracing itself, from its actual efficacy for public health purposes at this point in the pandemic timeline to its scope and potential infringement on constitutionally guaranteed civil liberties. I am committed to ensuring what you deserve:

- Transparency in spending taxpayer dollars,
- Integrity and effectiveness in government contracting, and
- Protection of your civil liberties and constitutional rights at all times, even when emergency powers have been invoked.

### **Higher Education Roundtable**

This week, I hosted a virtual roundtable event with the presidents of the colleges and universities in Senate District 8, including the University of Texas at Dallas, University of North Texas at Frisco, Dallas Baptist University, Collin College, Paul Quinn College, and Richland College. The purpose of this call was to understand the unique and common challenges of our institutions of higher learning, their expectations and contingency plans for the 2020-2021 school year, and determine support structures that are needed for the long and short term.

I continue to be impressed with the innovation and leadership coming out of our local colleges and universities. I am also grateful for their contributions to help with the donations and distribution of supplies and other resources to help our first responders as they continue to combat COVID-19.

I look forward to ongoing conversations with leaders of various sectors as I begin preparing for the next legislative session, which begins January 2021. I welcome your comments, concerns, and feedback as part of this process as well.

### **Texas Education Agency At-Home End of Year Assessment for Families**

The Texas Education Agency is offering a free, at-home academic checkup for families to assess end-of-year student progress to determine what, if any, additional learning students may need to prepare for the next school year after disruptions caused by COVID-19. These assessments are optional tools to measure student progress and understanding of curriculum used statewide.

The data from these assessments will not be used for accountability purposes, and no results will be published by districts or campuses. Data will only be used to better understand the statewide educational impact of the pandemic to better prepare for the 2020-2021 school year.

Registration ends June 5, 2020. To register or to learn more, [click here](#).

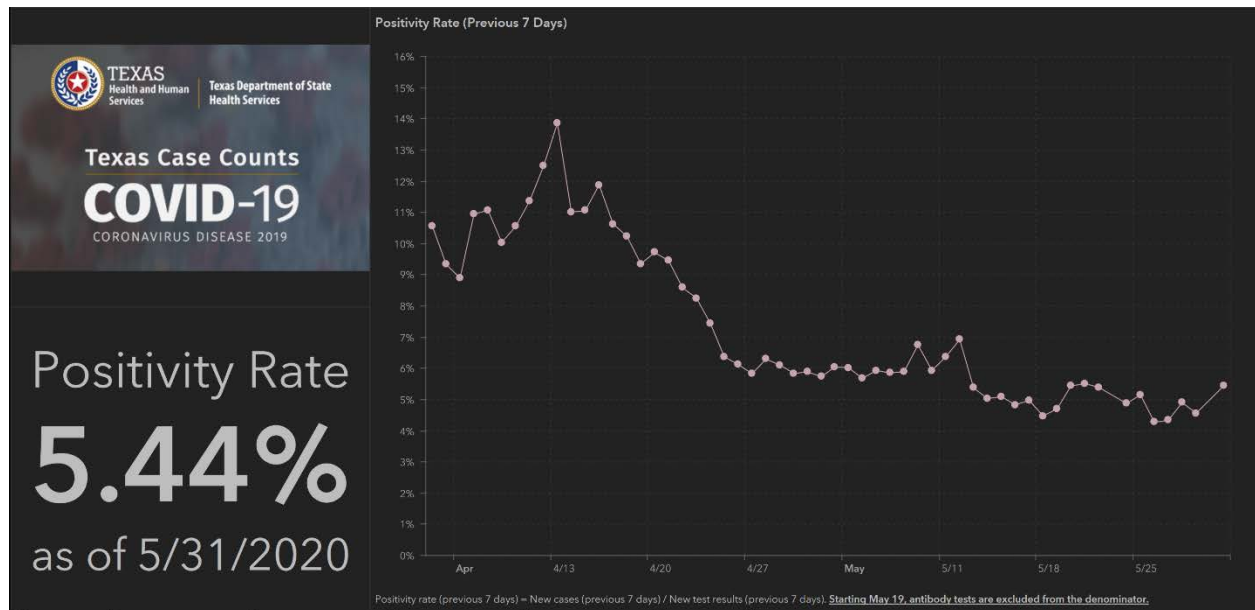
### **Texas Armed Service Scholarship**

My office is currently accepting applications for the [Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program \(TASSP\)](#). Interested applicants should be constituents of Senate District 8 and send a completed application, resume, and a letter outlining future goals to my district office (604 S. Watters Road, Suite 100; Allen, Texas 75013) or by email ([Angela.Paxton@senate.texas.gov](mailto:Angela.Paxton@senate.texas.gov)) on or before July 31, 2020.

TASSP is a program created by the Legislature in 2009 to encourage students to complete a baccalaureate degree and become a commissioned member of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, U.S. Coast Guard, or U.S. Merchant Marine or become a commissioner officer in any branch of the U.S. armed services. Each legislative office has the opportunity to award a single scholarship each year for a college student who is in an ROTC program and meets the academic performance requirement.

To apply, please visit my Senate webpage and [click here](#) for a copy of the application and instructions.

## COVID-19 STATS



The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is [tracking COVID-19 cases](#) and updates its site with the latest information each day.

- Texas has 64,880 confirmed cases of COVID-19 out of 1,093,676 tests (5.9% of those tested). An estimated 43,338 individuals have recovered.
- There are 1,312 confirmed cases of COVID-19 involving Collin County residents out of 23,618 tests (5.6% of those tested). An estimated 922 individuals have recovered.
- There are 10,234 confirmed cases of COVID-19 involving Dallas County residents out of 87,712 tests (11.7% of those tested). An estimated 6,293 individuals have recovered.

\*These numbers are as of 4 PM on June 1, 2020.