



Listen ★ Learn ★ Lead

July 28, 2020

EDITION - 19



---

Last week, several of my colleagues and I sent a letter to the Texas Health and Human Services Commissioner requesting immediate action for loosening certain visitation restrictions at nursing homes and assisted living facilities. I have heard from families who have loved ones in these facilities who are concerned about the quality of care their loved ones are receiving, worried if their family member with memory difficulties or mental deficiencies will feel abandoned or even remember them, or just spend whatever remaining time that is left giving and receiving companionship from those closest to them.

Specifically, we are asking to allow one primary family caregiver in-person access to the patient and to be recognized as a vital part of the residents' care team. With proper guidelines, these facilities could implement a plan to allow limited family visitations safely with proper socially-distancing and other precautions.

Fighting for human dignity is my top priority as a State Senator. The pandemic has been disruptive and challenging for everyone but especially our state's most vulnerable citizens who have been isolated from their families for the past several months. Isolation and loneliness are a major cause of depression and anxiety, and we must do all that we can to protect against this and protect these individual's physical, social, and emotional health.



## STATE OF TEXAS UPDATES

### [Early Voting Dates Extended for November 3 Election](#)

Governor Greg Abbott issued a proclamation extending the early voting period leading up to Election Day by nearly a week. In-person early voting will begin on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 and run through Friday, October 30, 2020. This proclamation also expands the period in which marked mail-in ballots may be delivered in person to the early voting clerk's office. This decision provides voters with greater flexibility and will alleviate some of the crowds at the polls to allow for greater physical distancing and less exposure to people outside of one's household.

### [STAAR Requirements for Grade Promotion Waived for 5<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Students](#)

Governor Abbott announced this week that he is waiving the grade promotion requirement related to the STAAR test for 5th and 8th grade students for the 2020-2021 school year. As a result of this proclamation, there will only be one administration of the mathematics and reading assessments of the STAAR test for students in grades 5 and 8 this school year, which means that 5th and 8th grade students who do not achieve grade level requirements will not have to re-take the test this school year. However, having one administration of the test still allows parents to track the progress of their students and determine what, if any, supplemental learning may be necessary to help their students attain appropriate grade-level knowledge.

### [Tax Free Holiday](#)

This year's sales tax holiday begins Friday, August 7 and ends at midnight Sunday, August 9. During this weekend, Texas shoppers can take advantage of saving money by making tax-free purchases on most clothing, shoes, school supplies, and back packs (sold for less than \$100). Purchases may be made at a retail establishment, online, or by phone from a seller that does business in Texas.

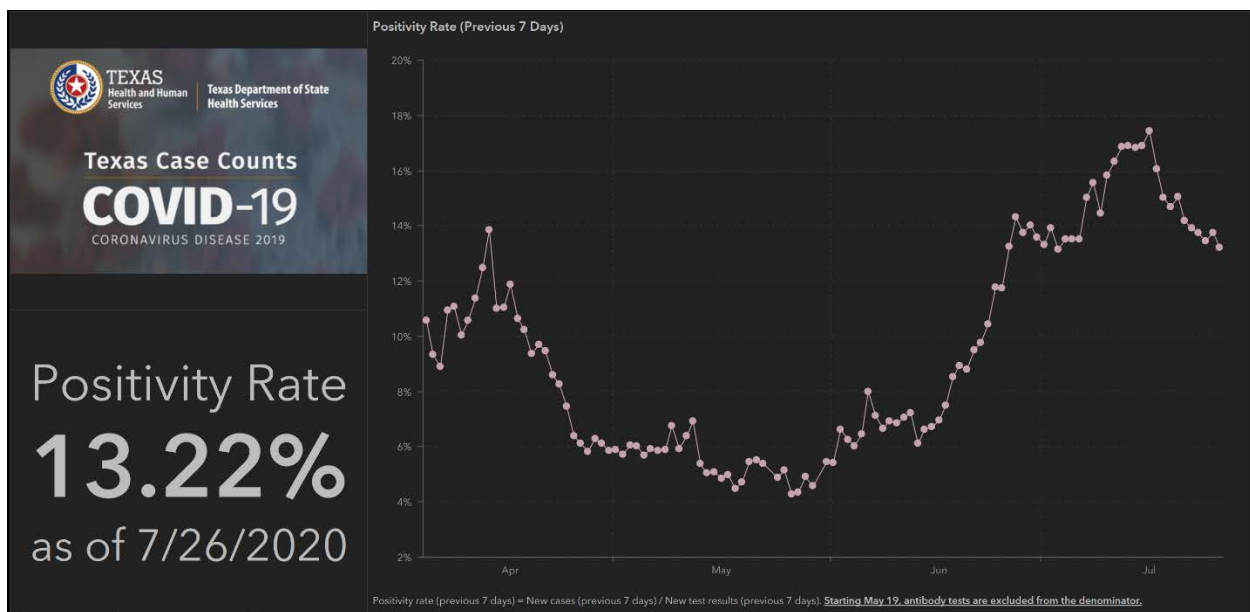
### **Texas Armed Service Scholarship**

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 commissioned 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 385,923 confirmed cases of COVID-19 out of 3,428,882 tests. An estimated 229,107 individuals have recovered.
- There are 5,789 confirmed cases of COVID-19 involving Collin County residents out of 74,463 tests.
- There are 46,813 confirmed cases of COVID-19 involving Dallas County residents out of 314,827 tests.

\*These numbers are as of July 27, 2020.

**To subscribe or unsubscribe from my State E-Newsletter List, please click this [HERE](#).**