

Precinct 4 - Legislative Agenda

Commissioner Ken R. DeMerchant

Emergency Notification – Suggested Rep. Miller

ISSUE:

- Residents of Fort Bend County do not have a reliable method of receiving direct communication from the County during emergencies.

SOLUTION:

- A local bill for Fort Bend County allowing residents to register for emergency notifications when renewing licenses.
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Mental Health – Suggested Sen. Huffman

ISSUE:

- Fort Bend County residents do not have access to programs that provide short term inpatient treatment in a crisis stabilization unit that includes medical nursing services for persons with mental illness.

SOLUTION:

- Create a program modeled after Harris County's The Harris Center for Mental Health and IDD in Fort Bend County.
 - Currently Fort Bend County residents needing inpatient care are sent outside of the County. This makes it difficult for families to be involved in treatment. There is a three year wait for this treatment.
 - Creating our own inpatient treatment center will create jobs in Fort Bend County as well as invite new businesses.
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Mental Health, Jail Diversion – Suggested Rep. Zerwas, M.D.

ISSUE:

- Residents of Fort Bend County need broader access to a mental health jail diversion program and a crisis stabilization program when leaving jail.

SOLUTION:

- Create legislation similar to S.B. 105 and 107.
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Equal Pay for Equal Work – Suggested Sen. Kolkhorst

Issue:

- Currently in the state of Texas, Equal Work, Equal Pay only protects employees in the public sector. Texas Government Code Sec. 659.001
 - Women in Texas are paid 79 cents for every dollar paid to a man.

Solution:

- Reintroduce H.B. 950 relating to discrimination in payment of compensation. Ensure it includes that no employer shall discriminate between employees on the basis of sex by paying wages to employees at a rate less than the rate at which he pays wages to employees of the opposite sex.
 - Equal pay for equal work creates more buying power and more tax revenue.
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Support of Trap, Neuter and Return (TNR) – Suggested Rep. Stephenson

ISSUE:

- In Fort Bend County the Animal Services Department are forced to keep a large number of cats due to the difficulty of rehoming cats.
- In June 2018, Fort Bend County began participating a TNR pilot program grant funded by Petco. During this time 600 cats have been saved.
- Prior to adopting the TNR program feral cats were euthanized upon capture.

SOLUTION:

- Work with Texas Department of State Health Services to increase funding for the Trap Neuter and Return program.
 - Funding TNR programs saves tax payers money and is healthy for the environment.
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Puppy (Dogs & Cats) Mill 'Regulation' – Suggested Rep. Stephenson

ISSUE:

- The current state law in Texas House Bill 1451 does not do enough to protect the welfare of animal.
- Animal shelters in Fort Bend County are constantly at capacity, forcing the tax payer to incur the cost.

SOLUTION:

- Work with Texas State Department of Health Services to enact a law similar to the Californian assembly Bill No. 485.
 - Requiring stores that offer dogs and cats to sell animals from a shelter first.
 - Buying from shelters first saves tax payers money and protects the welfare of dogs and cats in Fort Bend County.
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