



# My five cents...

A monthly column from Sen. Robert Nichols  
by Sen. Robert Nichols, Senate District 3

For immediate release  
September 26, 2019  
word count: 735

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Earlier this month, Southeast Texas was devastated by Tropical Depression Imelda. My staff and I have been working hard to ensure those in Senate District 3 are receiving the help and services they need. If you require assistance, please don't hesitate to contact any of my offices. Our thoughts and prayers are with all who were affected by this disaster.

Here are five things happening around your state this month:

## 1. **Proposition 4**

One of the many things Texans love about living in our state is that there is no state income tax. This past session, HJR 38 was passed, which prohibits the Texas Legislature from establishing a state income tax. This resolution will appear as Proposition 4 on your ballot during the November 5th election with the following language:

*"The constitutional amendment prohibiting the imposition of an individual income tax, including a tax on an individual's share of partnership and unincorporated association income."*

Supporters of this proposition believe it will help keep our state's economy strong by sending a message that Texas is committed to maintaining a business-friendly, low tax economy for all Texans. Critics believe this proposition is unnecessary as our Texas Constitution sets a relatively high bar already for imposing an income tax. If you want to ensure that an income tax is prohibited, you should vote yes for this proposition. If you want to ensure this option continues to be available, you should vote no.

## 2. **Executive Orders on Gun Violence**

In the wake of the mass shootings in El Paso and Odessa, Governor Abbott has issued a series of executive orders to address these acts of terror in our state. These orders include requiring the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to develop standard guidance and training to ensure cohesion for all law enforcement agencies across the state. Counties who receive grants from the governor's office, beginning in January 2020, must report at least 90 percent of criminal convictions within seven business days to the Criminal Justice Information System at DPS. This will shorten to a five day period beginning in 2021. DPS has also been directed to work and

collaborate with schools, local law enforcement, mental health experts, and at times, federal partners to create multidisciplinary threat assessment teams for each of its regions.

### **3. Digital License for Hunting and Fishing**

Hunting season, one of Texans favorite fall activities has begun, especially in East Texas, and it will continue through the upcoming new year. Texans now have the option to show a digital receipt or a photo of their hunting and fishing license to game wardens as proof of licensure rather than their actual paper license, which you can still carry. You can access your digital licenses on the *Texas Outdoor Annual* mobile app and the *My Texas Hunt Harvest* app on your smartphone. Visit the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department website for specific hunting season dates statewide as well as any updated hunting regulations by using the following link <https://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/hunting/>.

### **4. Get Appointed**

During a four-year term, the Governor of Texas makes approximately 3,000 appointments. These include appointments to state boards, commissions, and councils which advise the Governor on specific agencies and policies. Some of those include the Water Development Board and university boards.

During my time in the Senate, I have learned how much of an impact state boards have on Texas. Because of this, I want to encourage more Senate District 3 constituents to apply for these positions. Our communities in East Texas are blessed with many individuals whose expertise and backgrounds could benefit our state as a whole and I encourage you to get involved. For an application and more information, please visit [www.governor.state.tx.us/appointments](http://www.governor.state.tx.us/appointments).

### **5. NASA Aerospace Scholars**

NASA's Johnson Space Center has announced they are currently accepting applications for Texas High School Aerospace Scholars. Those selected will utilize their mathematics, science, technology and engineering skills by participating in interactive lessons on NASA activities related to space exploration, earth science, and aeronautics. Students who are successful in the program will have the opportunity for an onsite summer experience at NASA's Johnson Space Center to take part in briefings by NASA engineers and scientists, and a hands-on design challenge to plan a mission to Mars.

High school juniors who are U.S. citizens and Texas residents must submit their applications by the deadline of **October 23, 2019**. More information and applications for this exciting program are available at <http://HAS.aerospacescholars.org>.

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