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**IN THE STARS**

**CROSBY-HUFFMAN BACK-2-SCHOOL Chamber Welcomes New Educators**

**Back2School Sales Tax Holiday Aug. 9 thru Aug. 11**

(AUSTIN) — Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar is reminding shoppers they can save money on clothes and school supplies during the state's sales tax holiday on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Aug. 9-11. This will be the 25th year of Texas' oldest sales tax holiday.

State law exempts sales tax on qualified items — such as clothing, footwear, school supplies and backpacks — priced below \$100, saving shoppers about \$8 on every \$100 they spend. The dates of the sales tax holiday and list of tax-exempt items are set by the Texas Legislature.

Continued. See SALES TAX HOLIDAY, Page 5

By David Taylor  
Managing Editor

The school bell will ring earlier this year for the start of school in both Huffman and Crosby ISDs this year than ever before. Huffman swings open its doors on Wednesday, Aug. 7 with Crosby following the next day, Aug. 8. Early starts also mean an early exit. Neither school calendar will spill over into June with both finishing the year on Friday, May 29.

Every year, the Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce hosts a back-to-school luncheon for new educators joining the district. It's a great opportunity for the business community to introduce themselves to new teachers who may be moving into the district or commuting and need their services.

The event was hosted by Crosby Church and their gymnasium was packed with educators and chamber members. It



Kay Sosa, Vasso Espinosa, Sue Fitzgerald, Trudi Griffith, Bella Dion, Traci Galyean, and Cheri Melcher welcome the new educators to the Crosby-Huffman Chamber Chamber of Commerce luncheon.



Chamber Executive Director Tom Richard and Pastor Keenan Smith of Crosby Church call out names for the more than 150 prizes given out to the new educators. Thanks to the generous chamber members, every new educator received a gift and some even two.



Superintendent Paula Patterson of Crosby ISD talks to the new educator's and chamber members at the luncheon, talking about new construction on the high school campus.



Superintendent of Huffman ISD Dr. Benny Soileau

was also a time for both superintendents to welcome their new staff members and give them the goals for the new year.

"This year, Crosby ISD's theme is committed to excellence," said Superintendent Paula Patterson. The district will enter its second year on a four-day schedule and anticipation for the STAAR testing results is high to see if there were advances or setbacks.

"From the classroom to the board room, we're committed to student success. Each of you will play a vital role in making that happen," Patterson told the teachers.

"I have a message for you that works for any educator, and really anyone who's in a work environment. Where you work, where you serve, is a reflection of you. What you put in, is what you get out. You are not in

Continued. See READY FOR START OF SCHOOL, Page 5

**Sylvester Turner, others plan to run for 18th Congressional seat**

HOUSTON — Today, former Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner announced his intention to run for the Democratic party nomination for Congress, in the historic 18th Congressional District in Texas. The district has been represented for the past 30 years by Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee,



Sylvester Turner  
Former Houston Mayor

who passed away on July 19, 2024.

The Democratic Party's nominee will be selected by the Democratic Executive Committee members serving the 18th Congressional District pursuant to Democratic party rules. The selection will be made in

Continued. See 18TH CONGRESSIONAL SEAT, Page 2

**Crosby ISD Board of Trustees approves non-deficit budget**

CROSBY — On Monday, June 24, 2024, the Crosby ISD Board of Trustees approved a non-deficit budget for the 2024-25 fiscal year. Non-deficit budgets are a growing rarity among school districts in Texas.

Throughout the budget workshop process this spring, the Board of Trustees heard from both Superintendent, Mrs. Paula

Patterson, and Chief Financial Officer, Ms. Yvonne Johnson, on how the administration is solidifying a bright financial future. Superintendent Patterson told the Board, "We did not adopt a deficit budget this current school year. This is not what you're hearing from many others."

We're only one of about 20% of districts that do not

have deficit budgets in the state of Texas."

During the budget workshop in February, CFO Johnson explained that the tax rate for Crosby ISD taxpayers has decreased by a total of 43 cents per \$100 valuation during the past six years. The budget workshop process followed a major up-

Continued. See CROSBY ISD BUDGET 2024-25, Page 2

**Dignitaries, public attend final services for Sheila Jackson Lee**

By Allan Jamail

Houston, TX. — Thursday, August 1, 2024 at the Fallbrook Church in North Houston over a thousand constituents, friends and congressional colleagues showed up to bid their farewell to Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee (SJJL).

Sheila Jackson Lee was born January 12, 1950 and passed away on July 19, 2024 and was the U.S. representative for Texas's 18th congressional district in Houston, from 1995 until her death. The district includes most of central Houston. She was a member of the Democratic Party and served as an at-large member of the Houston

Continued. See SHEILA JACKSON LEE FINAL FAREWELL, Page 2 and more photos, Page 7



ABOVE: Dignitaries on stage at the Jackson Lee's funeral. L - R: Democrat's Congressional Progressive Caucus Chairwoman Pramila Jayapal, Civil Rights Leader Rev. Jesse Jackson, Congressional Black Caucus Chairman Steven Horsford, 42nd President of the United States William Jefferson Clinton & 67th United States Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. (Allan Jamail photo)

AT RIGHT: Vice President Kamala Harris gives eulogy at Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee's funeral. Flowers in front grace the casket of Sheila Jackson Lee. (Allan Jamail photo)



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# 18th Congressional District,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mid-August. Mayor Turner also released a list of endorsements by prominent leaders, which can be found at the bottom of this release and at [www.SylvesterTurner.com](http://www.SylvesterTurner.com).

Mayor Turner made the following statement: "The historic 18th Congressional District in the heart of Houston is without representation today. Upon the passing of my dear friend, Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, we have a painful decision to make. We need to select who will fill her shoes, as we mourn her death.

"For more than 35 years, I've watched the Congresswoman serve our community with vigor and integrity. She followed in the footsteps of Barbara Jordan, Mickey Leland, and Craig Washington with dignity and helped preserve the legacy of this historic seat.

"Only Sheila's passing at this critical moment in the election cycle could bring me out of retirement. Given all the uncertainty at the national level, I believe the 18th District needs stability and continuity in leadership. "We must keep federal resources flowing into

the district to address challenges such as the cancer cluster in Fifth Ward and Kashmere Gardens, and continued funding for local organizations for health care, flood mitigation and education.

"Our next representative must also meet the high bar of compassion, caring, and humanity that was the hallmark of Sheila's leadership and public service. Comforting families who have lost loved ones, spending quality time with seniors while offering a helping hand – for me, these commitments deserve equal attention as the Washington duties of a member of Congress.

"I have worked closely with the Congresswoman, U.S. Presidents, and federal departments at the highest levels during my time as mayor and 27 years in the Texas House. I am best positioned to ensure the ball is not dropped on servicing the needs of the entire 18th Congressional District."

Endorsements:  
Congresswoman Lizzie Fletcher  
State Representative Senfronia Thompson

State Representative Harold Dutton  
State Representative Garnet Coleman  
State Representative Alma Allen  
State Representative Ana Hernandez  
State Representative Armando Walle  
State Representative Ann Johnson  
State Representative Jolanda Jones  
County Judge Lina Hidalgo  
County Attorney Christian Menefee  
Commissioner Rodney Ellis  
Controller Chris Hollins  
Council Member Abbie Kamin  
Council Member Carolyn Evans-Shabazz  
Council Member Tiffany D. Thomas  
Texas Democratic Party Treasurer Odus Evbagnarhu  
Statewide Texas Coalition of Black Democrats Chair Dr. Candice Matthews  
Pastor Darrell Broussard  
Pastor Isaac Matthews  
Pastor Ralph West  
Gerald Womack  
Tanya Dubose  
Edna Griggs  
Maxine Seals  
SEIU-TX (partial list)

# Crosby 2024-25 Budget,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

date in December 2023, when CFO Johnson outlined a major fiscal achievement for Crosby ISD. The school district achieved its highest School FIRST (Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas) rating in more than five years, scoring a 96 or Superior Achievement for the 2021-22 fiscal year. (School FIRST ratings are given for the prior fiscal year, meaning 2021-22 ratings are issued during the 2023-24 school year.) CFO Johnson shared the School FIRST report during a public hearing at the Board of Trustees meeting on Monday, December 18, 2023.

Following the Board's approval of the 2024-25 budget, Superintendent Patterson added, "Crosby ISD went through financial, emotional, and community trauma during the 2018-2019 school year, when the Board declared financial exigency. More

than 100 staff members were laid off as part of the RIF (Reduction-In-Force). As this spring's budget process and December's School FIRST public hearing have shown, we are moving in the right direction. The rebound has been slower than anyone would have liked, but we have continued to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. Crosby ISD has a bright financial future. The headwinds we faced in 2017 are now what many other districts are starting to endure. We are proud to have helped to right the ship, and now we are better positioned to respond to the challenges and opportunities of student achievement, growing enrollment, and subdivision development.

I am proud of the fiscal path we have cemented in Crosby ISD." The 2024-25 fiscal year budget includes a 3% raise from midpoint for Crosby ISD employees.

The starting salary for teachers was increased by \$1,625 from \$63,025 to \$64,650. Starting pay for bus drivers and bus aides was increased as well. The 24-25 general fund budget is \$74.1 million. For the

2023-24 school year, Crosby ISD had approximately 6900 students enrolled. The district expects enrollment to surpass 7000 during the 2024-25 school year.

### Crosby ISD serves the needs of more than 6900 children in the communities of Crosby and Barrett Station in East Harris County,

Texas. Our mission is to produce literate, responsible citizens capable of learning and applying academic and social skills successfully in any life setting. For more information, visit [crosbyisd.org](http://crosbyisd.org)

## COMMUNITY WATCH

### Reward in Hit & Run Death in Barrett

Harris County, TX — Crime Stoppers and the Harris County Sheriff's Office Vehicular Crimes Division are requesting the public's assistance in identifying the suspect(s) responsible for a fatal hit and run incident.

On Saturday, September 30, 2023, at approximately 4:45 a.m., a tragic accident occurred in the 4600 block of Farm to Market Rd 1942 in Crosby, Texas. The victim, Richard Grubb,

was operating a motorized bicycle southbound on the improved shoulder when he was struck by a vehicle. The suspect fled the scene without stopping to render aid. As a result of the collision, the victim sustained major injuries and succumbed to them several days later.

Anyone with information is urged to contact Crime Stoppers. Your help is crucial in bringing the responsible party to

justice.

Crime Stoppers may pay up to \$5,000 for information leading to the arrest of the suspect in this case. Information may be reported by calling 713-222-TIPS (8477), submitted online at [www.crimestoppers.org](http://www.crimestoppers.org) or through the Crime Stoppers mobile app. Only tips and calls DIRECTLY TO Crime Stoppers are anonymous and eligible for a cash reward.

# Sales Tax Holiday,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

preparation for the back-to-school bell," said Hegar of the sales tax holiday weekend, an annual event since 1999. "As the father of three, I know firsthand how these expenses add up over the years, and this weekend is the perfect time for folks to save some of their hard-earned cash on items they need."

The Comptroller's office estimates that shoppers will save \$143.4 million in state and local sales tax during this year's sales tax holiday.

Apparel and school supplies that may be purchased tax free are listed on the Comptroller's website at [TexasTaxHoliday.org](http://TexasTaxHoliday.org).

During the annual sales tax holiday, qualifying items can be purchased tax free in person or by any other means including over the internet, by telephone, or by mail. Purchases are exempt when either:

— the item is both delivered to, and paid for by, the customer during the exemption period; or

— the customer orders and pays for the item, and the seller accepts the order during the exemption period for immediate shipment, even if delivery is made after the exemption period ends.

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# Barbers Hill Press

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THURSDAY, AUGUST 8, 2024

MONT BELVIEU, TEXAS 77580

### ON THE HILL

#### Thoughts From Hillside Church

##### Staying Connected

By Dr. Mark Trice

Hurricane Beryl recently left her mark here on the Texas Gulf Coast. She caused a lot of destruction, and it is going to take quite a while for many areas to recover. One of the most obvious and challenging indicators that she blew through is that the damage left millions without power, some for hours, but others for days and even weeks.

Did being without electricity stop most of us, at least those who weren't right there on the water? No, not for long. We found workarounds, fired up generators, or even sought shelter elsewhere temporarily. People started cleaning roads and yards. Linemen got to work on the electrical situation. Volunteers served those needing MREs and water. Restaurants reopened as fast as they could to help those who couldn't cook or simply didn't have time to go home.

In other words, once Beryl was gone, most of us pretty much got to work. We were back at our jobs even as we were cleaning, making repairs, and in general doing whatever was required to get back to living. But it was harder than any of us liked, more challenging than it would have been if we'd all been plugged into an operating power grid. What a picture, and what a reflection of our spiritual walk.

Christians who are not plugged into The Power Source also have it hard. Without the power of the Holy Spirit, we have to work harder, create workarounds, and do without. When we choose to walk without leaning on God, when we disconnect from Him, we handicap ourselves. We can do it on our own, attack whatever needs to be done, get to the next thing on our list... Correction: We can try. Anything we do in our own power will be harder than necessary, is more likely to leave us exhausted, and may not be done right. Honestly, we might even find ourselves working outside of the will of God and abruptly realize we're doing all the right things for all the wrong reasons.

We can't afford to ignore the Holy Spirit and the power He gives. What we do or don't do affects more people than we realize. There are others depending on us to have their backs spiritually, to set godly examples, and to help them grow in the Lord. We can't do any of that if we're not spending quality and quantity time with Him, staying in the Word, praying in tongues and being built up. Yes, we all live hectic lives. Yes, overflowing schedules are the norm today, especially if you're a parent. Even so, that never excuses spending less time with God. It actually demands that we spend even more time with Him.

There can be no backing down. Jesus is coming back sooner than we think. There is too much to be done and too little time left to do it in.

## Chambers County OEM Coordinates Multi-Agency Response to Large-Scale Tank Fire

CHAMBERS COUNTY, TEXAS – In the early hours of August 4, 2024, the Chambers County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) coordinated a multi-agency response to large scale tank fire just south of Anahuac.

It is suspected that lightning, spawned from a line of severe thunderstorms, struck the storage tanks at a small oil production lease at the corner of Eagle Road and Eagle Ferry Road in the community known as Double Bayou. The strike was so loud that residents of the City of Anahuac, located approximately seven miles north of the site, reported being awoken by the sound.

The storage tanks were quickly engulfed in flame. The contents of those tanks – crude oil – created an extremely hazardous environment making extinguishing the fire difficult.



While OEM coordinated the response, it took the collaborative effort of every volunteer fire department in Chambers County to douse the flames. Respond-

ing VFDs were Oak Island-Double Bayou, Anahuac, Smith Point, Hankamer, Wallisville, Cove, Beach City, Winnie and Mont Belvieu Volunteer Fire De-

partments.

"My office and Chambers County as a whole is grateful for the work of these volunteer fire departments," said Cham-

bers County Emergency Management Coordinator Ryan Holzaepfel. "Their professionalism and expertise minimized the impact of what could have been a deadly event."

The fire was officially extinguished at around 10 a.m., after burning for just a few short hours. Air quality was continuously monitored during the fire and no hazards were identified. No evacuations were necessary, and no injuries were reported.

OEM immediately notified both the Texas Railroad Commission and Texas General Land Office who dispatched agents to the site. The party responsible for the facility was also on scene.

"Today was an exercise in collaboration," continued Holzaepfel, "and I am proud of the way that our local VFDs, County Departments and State Agencies worked together."

## Senate Committee Exposes CenterPoint's Leadership Shortcomings and Mismanagement

On Monday, the Senate Special Committee on Hurricane and Tropical Storm Preparedness, Recovery, and Electricity met. After 11 hours of testimony it was clear:

CenterPoint and its leadership failed us.

The day the hurricane hit they claimed they were "ready." That couldn't be further from the truth. In a bombshell statement, the CEO of CenterPoint, Jason Wells, said he never bothered to call acting Governor Patrick or Texas Department of Emergency Management Director before the storm hit.

Customers were left in the dark without a working outage tracker and no estimated time of restoration. The \$800 million spent on "mobile" genera-



tion (that every ratepayer pays for monthly at a 9.5% profit to CenterPoint) was nowhere to be found, vegetation management was inadequate before the storm, and leadership failed in getting enough linemen out for emergency restoration. Even

though the actions and preparation of CenterPoint's management failed, they will continue to charge ratepayers even more for the cost of their mistakes. This is unacceptable.

You also have to ask what's the point of smart

meters if they can't alert us which meters are on and which critical facilities don't have power. Only 42% of customers receive power outage updates through CenterPoint's system. When I asked the CenterPoint CEO if they attempted to get customer

contact information for the other 58%, he lied and said he asked for the information and never received it.

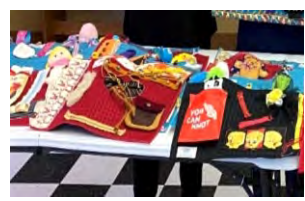
Finally, the CEO of CenterPoint was asked if they were too big of a company to adequately respond to customer needs, and he couldn't answer the question. If that's the case, then the answer is yes. Perhaps it is time to break up their monopoly to provide more reliable service to our community who expect, and pay for, the lights to be on. Even though it's CenterPoint today, it could be a different utility tomorrow. This is why changes must be made for every utility to incentivize performance over profit.

Sincerely,  
Mayes Middleton  
Texas State Senator

## Pilot Club of Baytown Hosts Weekly Workshops to Sew Fidget Mats for Alzheimer's Patients

Pilot Club of Baytown conducted "Weekly Wednesday Fidget Mat workshops" to sew each mat during October and November 2022 at the Pilot Room. Finished mats have been donated to Alzheimer's patients throughout the year to various nursing homes and recipients.

10 Pilots – 50 Recipients

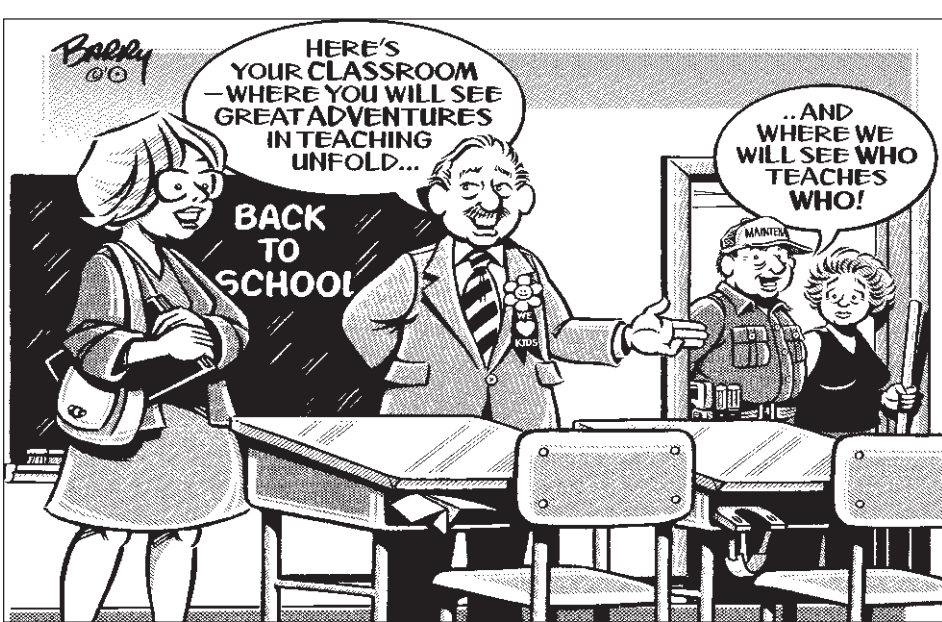


Pictured with completed fidget mats are Health & Safety Area Leader Carolyn Parrish, Judy Wheat, Susan Pitts and Carol Badillo



OPINION PAGE

**OPINION**  
 HC Pct. 2 Commissioner  
**Adrian Garcia**

**THE POSTSCRIPT**  
 By  
**Carrie Classon**

Stone Soup



One of my favorite stories as a child was "Stone Soup."

I don't know if you know it or not. It's an old European folktale, and there are a lot of variations, but in most of them two soldiers come into a town during a war. They ask for food, and everyone tells them they have nothing to eat. So the soldiers build a fire, and they ask an old woman if they can borrow a pot because they are going to make stone soup.

"Soup from a stone?" the old woman asks.

"Yes," they say. "We are going to make stone soup!"

So the old woman loans them a pot, and they fill it with water, and they start cooking a stone. "Soup from a stone!" the old woman exclaims. "Imagine that!"

Pretty soon, a small crowd gathers. No one had ever heard of making soup from a stone.

"Stone soup is wonderful," one soldier casually mentions. "But it's even better with a little onion."

"Oh! I have an onion," someone offers, and throws it in the pot.

"Carrots are also nice," the soldier adds. And, a few minutes later, someone throws some carrots in the pot.

Soon, a little beef is put in, and a few other ingredients are added as the crowd grows. Before long, there is a large pot of soup, and everyone in the village is fed, including the two soldiers. A village where everyone said they had no food eats a meal together—a meal that would not have existed if it were not for a stone.

I told my friend, Wally, this was a favorite story of mine.

"I see men coercing others to get what they couldn't get themselves!" Wally said. This astonished me.

"But everyone ate!" I told him. "No one even knew they had soup—and they didn't—without first believing it was possible."

Wally is not convinced that any good comes from telling a lie. But I never saw it as a lie. Because I believe in stone soup.

A couple of months ago, I went to a beautiful little theater in Mexico, in the town where I spend the winter, and I met with a producer there. Suddenly, I saw the possibility of doing a show in this space. The whole thing was completely real in my imagination before I'd written a word. So I worked on the script and I planned all the costumes and the music and everything needed for the show. The show became as real on the page as it was in my mind.

Yesterday, I learned it wouldn't be possible to do my show in the theater as planned. I was very disappointed—for about 12 hours. And then I realized I had a pot of stone soup.

The theater and the producer had never made it a show. The show was made of all the things I'd put into that simmering pot. It was the belief that I could make a show—if I just added enough ideas, if I stirred those ideas long enough, if I kept the fire going.

The soup was never about the stone. The stone was the excuse to make the soup.

I have no idea where this show will be performed, but I am absolutely certain it will be, because this soup is filled with good things, put together in a way I believe people will enjoy. I in the story, after everyone has eaten, the old woman shakes her head. "Soup from a stone," she says. "Imagine that!"

Imagine that.

Till next time,  
Carrie

Raid of Bail Bond fraud; A Watershed Moment for Public Safety

Massive raid of bail bond bad actors nabs dozens; advocacy from Precinct 2 Commissioner shined light on issues with industry that harm public safety

Harris County, TX — The recent multi-jurisdictional raid and indictment alleging massive fraud exposed "an illicit revolving door within the bond system" according to FBI investigators.

Long before the "24 month long" investigation began, Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Adrian Garcia led efforts to start holding the bail industry accountable for their practices that were hurting public safety. In February of 2022 (28 months ago), Garcia proposed a Resolution at Commissioners Court to call for the Bail Bond Board to require 10% down payment for bonds of people accused of certain violent crimes.

Reacting to the news that a bail industry alleged bad actor is being held accountable by the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District, Commissioner Adrian Garcia has issued the following statement:

"This is a watershed moment for public safety in Harris County. While many use the issue of a defendant's constitutional right to pretrial release to score political points, my office focuses on action. Make no mistake, had it not been for my office's work to expose unethical, and what turns out to be potentially illegal, activity by Bail Bond Companies, Wednesday's arrests don't happen. Over 2 years ago, after learning of what some of these companies were doing, I proposed a resolution to Harris County Commissioners Court to call for 10% minimum down payment for bonds for people accused of violent crime. The U.S. attorney and FBI say their investigation began 24 months ago. Do the math. I am grateful to all the law enforcement agencies and the US Attorney's Office for the Southern District for their work to put a stop to this public safety threat."

Commissioner Garcia first became aware of possible issues within the bond industry after meeting with Paul Castro, whose son was murdered in a road rage incident following an Astros game. While awaiting trial, the perpetrator was able to secure release with bail offered by local bonding company AABLE Bonds, the same company who had bonded out a man accused of ambushing and killing an HPD officer while out on bond (also the same company that was raided on Wednesday). Once that connection was made, Garcia began working on finding ways to hold Bail Bond companies accountable. That included his advocacy for the Harris County Bail Bond Board to begin requiring 10% down for suspects accused of certain violent crimes.

In response to the news from Wednesday's raid, Paul Castro issued the following statement of appreciation for Commissioner Garcia's involvement in this latest action.

"I want to thank Commissioner Garcia for being the first local official to lead the charge for bail reform in Harris County. Not long after my son was killed, Commissioner Garcia asked what he could do to support me. When I shared with him what I learned about the inner working of the bail system in Harris County and how discount bail was being used for high-risk violent offenders, he was angry. He got to work to put a rule in front of the Bail Bond Board that would tighten regulations for violent offenders, then championed it from the floor. Though we lost the first round, through his work and the work of Representative Ann Johnson and then-State Senator John Whitmire, the measure passed. Our county is safer for this effort and I thank Commissioner Garcia for his leadership in making it happen."

STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS  
By Gary Borders



Expanded Passenger Rail Again on the Table

A huge pot of federal rail funding and chronic highway congestion are prompting some Texas officials to again consider expanding passenger rail in Texas, according to The Texas Standard.

Congress set aside \$66 billion three years ago in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for rail projects across the country, sparking some interest in increasing passenger rail service between the state's major cities.

"It's like the perfect storm forming, because 20 years ago if we talked about passenger rail in Texas, it would fall on deaf ears," said Peter LeCody of the Texas Rail Advocates.

The state's population is projected to increase from 30 million now to 47 million by 2050, sparking concerns of increased dependence on cars and more road congestion.

A plan to build a high-speed rail between Dallas and Houston with speeds of more than 200 miles per hour is back on the drawing board after Amtrak shelved it due to difficulty acquiring land and leadership issues, The Tribune reported.

The Texas Central route has acquired about 30% of the land needed to build the Dallas-Houston line, which is expected to require more than \$30 billion in financing from governmental and private sources. A number of private landowners remain steadfastly opposed to giving up their land for the proposed line.

UVALDE SCHOOL OFFICER PLEADS NOT GUILTY

A former Uvalde school police officer pleaded not guilty last week to charges of failing to protect children killed and wounded in the 2022 mass shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde.

Adrian Gonzales is one of two officers who have been indicted after the slow response to the shooter by nearly 400 law enforcement personnel, The Dallas Morning News reported.

Gonzales and former Uvalde schools police Chief Pete Arredondo were indicted by a Uvalde grand jury in June. Arredondo pleaded not guilty on July 10.

"Mr. Gonzales' position is he



STATE CAPITAL HIGHLIGHTS  
By Gary Borders

did not violate school district policy or state law," said Nico LaHood, the former district attorney for Bexar County. LaHood is representing Gonzales.

The May 22, 2022, attack was one of the worst school shootings in U.S. history. Gonzales, one of the first officers to arrive, was indicted on 29 charges of not confronting the shooter, even after hearing gunshots while standing in a school hallway.

INMATE PHONE FEES TO BE SLASHED ACROSS STATE

Fees that Texas inmates pay to make phone calls will be cut drastically under new federal regulations to take place next year, The Tribune reported.

The Federal Communications Commission voted last week to cap the price of inmate phone calls and video calls as low as 5 cents per minute. Right now, rates across Texas prisons and jails average 23 cents a minute.

Most of the revenue from these calls — 60% — goes to the contractor, with the rest going to the state.

"The FCC's order is a massive victory for incarcerated people, their families, and their allies who have spent decades fighting the exploitative prison telecom industry," the Prison Policy Initiative wrote in a statement.

CENTERPOINT CEO APOLOGIZES FOR BERYL OUTAGES

The head of CenterPoint Energy publicly apologized for failing to quickly respond to massive outages caused by Hurricane Beryl, The News reported.

Jason Wells told the Public

Utility Commission last week that he took "personal accountability" for the outages, which affected hundreds of thousands of customers throughout the coastal region.

At least 36 people died because of the hurricane. Many of the deaths were attributed to heat.

"While we cannot erase the frustrations or difficulties so many of our customers endured, I, and my entire leadership team, will not make excuses," Wells added. "We will improve and act with a sense of urgency."

At its peak, about 2.26 million CenterPoint customers were without power. Damage from the storm is estimated at \$4.6 billion. The company is seeking permission to harden its wire system, with the costs to be passed along to its ratepayers.

\$95 MILLION IN HOUSING CREDITS ANNOUNCED

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs has awarded more than \$95 million in housing tax credits to help finance the development or rehabilitation of more than 60 rental properties across the state. The awards will help developers build or repair more than 4,400 units offering affordable rents to qualified families.

"The Housing Tax Credit Program serves as a crucial factor in making affordable housing available to hard working families, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities," said TDHCA Executive Director Bobby Wilkinson.

A list of application awards can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/4jztsjp3>.

NATIVE BIGHORN SHEEP BEING RELEASED IN WEST TEXAS

Desert bighorn sheep are being reintroduced in Franklin Mountains State Park this fall by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department in hopes of restoring a population that was once extinct in Texas. The Austin American-Statesman reported repopulation of the herd at the park will be in October.

Currently, there are 11 free-ranging herds with approximately 1,500 desert bighorn sheep across Far West Texas, from Big Bend to El Paso. Overhunting and disease led to the sheep's decline in the 1960s. Competition from the aoudad, an African species introduced in Texas in the 1950s by private ranchers, also contributed to the bighorn sheep's decimation.

TEXAS STILL LEADS NATION IN JOB CREATION

Texas continues to outpace the nation and lead all states for jobs added over the past 12 months, according to the Texas Workforce Commission. The state's civilian workforce reached a new high of 15.311 million in June.

"Our civilian labor force of 15.3 million people in Texas continues to prosper and break records each month," said TWC Commissioner Alberto Treviño III.

Construction jobs grew by 4.4% last year, far outpacing the national growth rate and leading the state's job growth.

**top ten**

**MOST FOLLOWED X (TWITTER) ACCOUNTS**

1. Elon Musk: 177.5M
2. Barack Obama: 132M
3. Justin Bieber: 111.2M
4. Cristiano Ronaldo: 110.8M
5. Rihanna: 108M
6. Katy Perry: 106.7M
7. Narendra Modi: 96.4M
8. Taylor Swift: 95.4M
9. Donald J. Trump: 87.4M
10. Lady Gaga: 83.5M

Source: TweetBinder.Com

HIGHLANDS CROSBY

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USPS 244-500

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# Huffman, Crosby ISD ready for Start of School,

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

your organization, or your school district, or on your campus to receive from others. It is what you contribute," she said.

The district will also have to contend with growth across all campuses. Overall district enrollment on the last day of the 2023-24 school year was 6,895 students at Crosby. Enrollment is anticipated to be 7,050 students at the start of the 2024-25 school year, an increase of approximately 155 students. That sounds small, but it's an additional seven to eight classrooms, several more bus routes, and a changing landscape zoning students to different campuses where there's space.

"Part of this year's commitment to excellence is focused on the future. It's a year of construction in Crosby ISD. Just last night, the board of trustees and I broke ground on the new expansion of Crosby High School. In late fall of next year, we'll open the doors to a new academic wing and an expanded CTE space. We'll instantly increase the classroom and lab space by 50 percent and room for 900 additional students," she said.

They are also underway replacing the turf at Cougar Stadium.

"The new playing surface will be sturdier, and more shock absorbent for our student athletes, which will equate to a safer place for them to play. Once the football season concludes, we'll begin the process of replacing the track," she added.

Patterson also said they would continue with the partnership with the YMCA to offer after school and all-day Friday childcare at a discounted rate for Crosby families.

"Thanks to a huge community donation, students in our after-school programs will also enjoy exciting instructional field trips on Fridays. We'll continue our weekly food drives in the CMS parking lot in partnership with the Houston Food Bank," she said.

Huffman ISD passed their bond and has sold the first half of those bonds, some \$45 million approximately.

The district is finishing up plans on the new CTE building that will cost \$30 million-plus. The design is nearly finished.

"Our enrollment continues to be flat for now," said Superintendent Dr. Benny Soileau.

He blames the delayed construction on FM 2100 as slowing the growth spurt they can see is coming.

"The economy is another issue. It's coming, but it's slow growth for now," he said.

Last year, they were staffed for the anticipated growth, but it didn't come and now they seem to be overstaffed.

"We've eliminated 20-25 positions in the last six months through attrition. We scrutinize every position that comes along," he said, including a growing special education population.

Soileau said they've lost \$7 million in buying power on a \$38 million budget because of inflation.

Despite the problems, Soileau remains optimistic, especially with his new educators this fall.

"Teaching is not just a profession, but a calling. Your presence here signifies your commitment to shaping the future of our society," he told them at



Crosby High School



Crosby Middle School



Drew Elementary School



Crosby Elementary School



Barrett Elementary School



Crosby Kindergarten School



Newport Elementary School



Falcon Ridge Elementary School



Huffman Elementary School



Huffman Middle School



Huffman High School



Pastors and their wives praying for the teachers at the Crosby-Huffman Chamber of Commerce new educator's luncheon last Tuesday.

the luncheon.

Soileau emphasized and thanked the chamber of commerce who, he said, plays a crucial role in supporting public schools and educators.

"The collaboration between our schools and local businesses is a vital

relationship supporting economic development in our community. That partnership helps ensure that our educational programs are enriched with real world experiences and opportunities that prepare our students for success beyond the classroom," he said emphatically.



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STATE OF TENNESSEE, DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

v. BUSTER DARLISON SMITH

Docket No. V-23-033

The State of Tennessee, Department of Children's Services, has filed a petition in Bradley County Circuit Court, seeking to terminate the parental rights of Buster Darlison Smith to the child, Jakob Austan Riehl, b. 7/01/2016.

A trial in this case is set for October 25, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. Buster Darlison Smith must appear before this Court on that date to determine whether his parental rights to the subject child should be terminated and forever ended. The Court is located at 155 N. Ocoee Street, Cleveland, TN 37311.

**If Buster Darlison Smith does not come to the trial, the State will ask the Court to allow it to proceed without contest.** That means that the State will ask the Court to let it present proof without having any lawyer appear and defend Buster Darlison Smith's rights in Court.

Any appeal of this Court's final disposition of the complaint or petition for termination of parental rights will be governed by the provisions of Rule 8A, TRAP, which imposes special time limitations for the filing of the transcript or statement of evidence, the completion and transmission of the record on appeal, and the filing of briefs in the appellate court, as well as other special provisions for expediting the appeal.

You may obtain a copy of the Petition and any subsequently filed legal documents or hearing dates in the Circuit Court Clerk's Office located at 155 N. Ocoee Street, Cleveland, TN 37311. This will constitute appropriate service on him for all future filings in this case.

28-4t

## Screenings to Identify Disabilities

CISD Special Education department provides screenings for children with suspected disabilities in an effort to identify every student with a disability who lives within the district's boundaries. Crosby ISD is committed to providing excellence in education to all students, and the screenings are designed to help identify children who may qualify for the district's special education programs. Eligible students with disabilities between the ages of 3 and 21 can be provided with services to ensure their successful participation in school. These services and supports may be provided through Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act. Special education services are also available starting at birth for eligible children who have a visual and/or auditory impairment.

If you know a child who may be challenged with a disability, please contact the Crosby ISD Special Education office at 281-328-9200, Extension 1108. If the child is already a student in Crosby ISD, please contact the counselor at the child's school. The counselor will be happy to assist you.

The special education personnel will coordinate efforts to evaluate the student and, if eligible, ensure that the student is provided with supports and services needed to benefit from instruction.

28-3t

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### REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL NOTICE - RFP #25-002

The Barbers Hill Independent School District is accepting proposals for a multiple award bid for:

### Restaurant Branded Personal Pizza for Resale

Proposals will be accepted on or before: **2:00 p.m., Friday August 16, 2024**

The RFP can be obtained by visiting <https://www.bhisd.net/departments/financetax-office/purchasing> or contact Amy Presley at 281-576-2221 ext. 1268 to obtain a copy of the RFP.

The school district reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, waive any formalities and/or technicalities in the proposal and award the contract to the best proposal that serves the interests of the district. The district may negotiate with vendors that submit viable proposals.

29-2t

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30-2T

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281-216-8084.

27-4T

### NOTICE TO CREDITORS

Notice is hereby given that Original Letters of Administration for Docket No. 525446; Estate of JENNIFER LYNN GRIFFITH Deceased; In Probate Court No. 2 of Harris County, Texas, were issued on AUGUST 1, 2024 to:

**BRUCE GRIFFITH, JR.**

The residence address of the administrator is in Harris County, Texas. The mailing address is:

c/o Weston Cotten  
1500 E. Wallisville Road  
Highlands, TX 77562

All persons having claims against this Estate which is currently being administered are required to present them within the time and in the manner prescribed by law.

Dated this AUGUST 5, 2024

by WESTON COTTEN  
Attorney for the Estate

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# Dignitaries, public attend final services for Sheila Jackson Lee

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

City Council before being elected to the House. She was also co-dean of Texas's congressional delegation.

Sheila was born in Queens, New York, her father, Ezra Clyde Jackson, who was born in Brooklyn, was a comic book artist and the son of Jamaican immigrants. Her mother, Ivalita Bennett Jackson, was a nurse, and came to New York at an early age from her birthplace of St. Petersburg, Florida.

Jackson Lee graduated from Jamaica High School in Queens. She earned a scholarship for Black students at New York University before transferring to graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in political science from Yale University in 1972 and a Juris Doctor from the University of Virginia School of Law in 1975. In 1987, after she had moved to Houston, she was appointed as a municipal judge for the city by Kathy Whitmire. In 1989, Jackson Lee was elected to the Houston City Council. She served in the office until 1994 when she began a campaign for a seat in the U.S. Congress. In the Democratic primary, she defeated incumbent Craig Washington and went on to easily win the general election.

Because Kamala Harris the Vice President of the United States would be attending the Secret Service required a pre-registration application in order to be vetted so they'd know whose attending and who'll be inside the building.

Attendees had to undergo being checked by SS bomb sniffing dogs and metal detection walk-thru portals plus then another SS agent performed a more sensitive full body scan to detect small metal objects on a person.

As a member of the News Media Pool photographers each of us had our entire camera bags checked and even the photo lens were taken out of their protective cases and examined to make sure they hadn't been altered into a weapon. We were then given a special identification badge, and then escorted by a SS agent to a reserved area for the media only.

The media location was about 400 feet from the podium and only photographers who had strong enough telephoto lenses could photograph the stage participants. There was over 50 media representatives, I was there representing the North Channel Star and their other news affiliates (Crosby Star Courier / North East News).

## US VICE PRESIDENT KAMALA HARRIS EULOGY:

Vice President Harris received a standing ovation upon entering the stage. And while delivering the eulogy, said, "She had such an impact on me and my life," Harris said. "To know Sheila, she could be tough, but, oh my goodness, she was so loving and so encouraging. She always encouraged me, so I called shortly before she passed away to thank her for that."

"Jackson Lee was a change maker. She worked with all her heart to lift up the people of her city, of her state, and of our nation.

Harris, who also worked with Jackson Lee while a member of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), described the Texas congresswoman as a "force of nature."

She was "one of the smartest and most strategic legislators in Washington, D.C.," said Harris, the former California senator. "She was also one of the most unrelenting never yielding legislators while seeking her goals."

Harris said, to know her was to know a true champion, a fierce champion for justice," Harris said. "Sheila Jackson Lee was a woman of deep faith and deep compassion. She was a beloved member of our Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, and she was a dear, dear friend to my husband Doug and me."

"When it came to crafting policy, there was no detail too minor, or point of order too obscure," Harris said. "If it needed to be understood, the congresswoman would make sure everyone understood it and understood it well, and used it to the benefit of the



Program Cover - Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee, January 12, 1950 - July 19, 2024



United States Armed Forces takes Congresswoman Lee's casket to hearse for cemetery and burial services. (Allan Jamail photo)



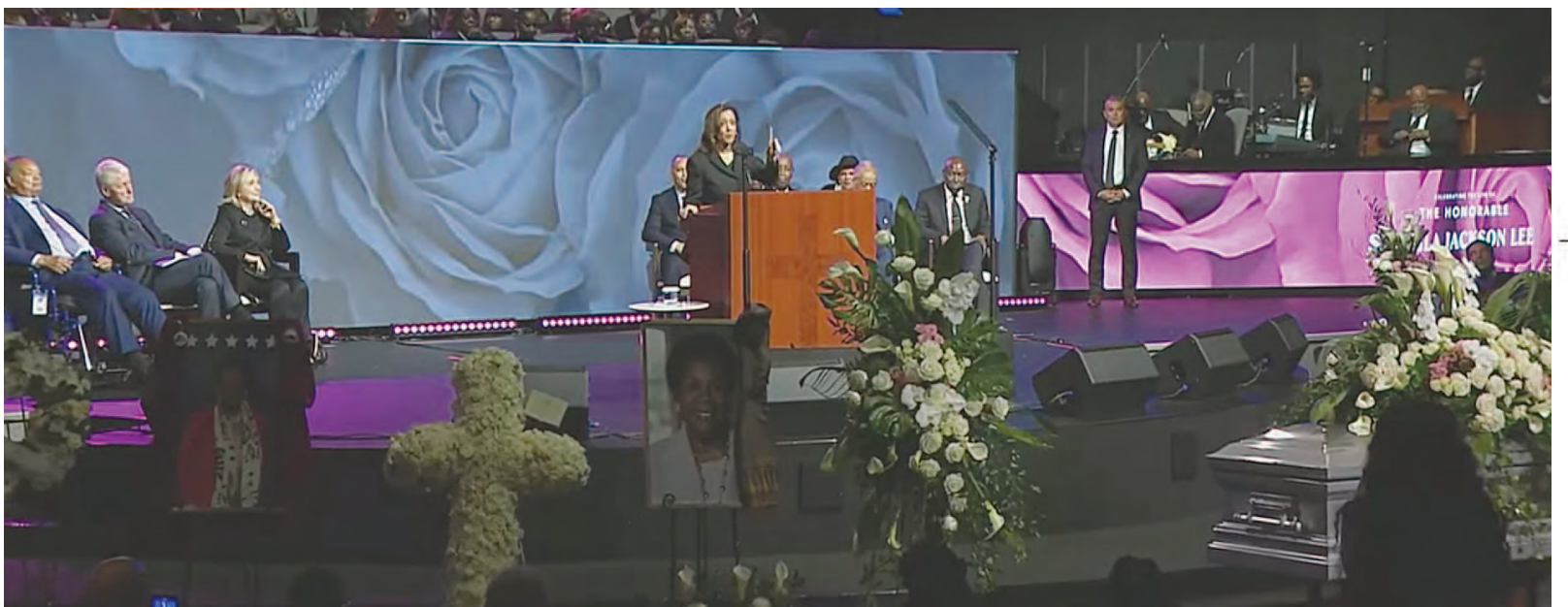
Vice President Kamala Harris delivers the Eulogy. (Contributed Photo)



Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton acknowledges the long standing ovation received and asks to help elect VP Kamala Harris as the nation's first female president. (Allan Jamail photo)



Former President Bill Clinton praises the late Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and thanked her husband Dr. Elwyn Lee, Erica Lee Carter, daughter and Jason Lee, son for their sharing Sheila to do her congressional duties to make a better fairer nation. (Allan Jamail photo)



Vice President Kamala Harris delivers the Eulogy for Sheila Jackson Lee, whose casket covered with flowers is at right in photo. At left, Jesse Jackson, and former President Bill Clinton and former First Lady Hillary Clinton. (Contributed Photo).

people she served."

Harris drew laughs from the audience when she admitted "There were times ... if I saw her walking down the hall, I would almost want to hide." "Because I knew," she continued, "whatever else may be on my mind, Sheila Jackson Lee would require a very serious and specific conversation with you about what she had on her mind."

Harris said Jackson Lee wasn't afraid to do what she needed for residents in Houston.

"Sheila Jackson Lee would always find a way to help, even if she needed to get a little creative. As some of you may remember, a number of years ago, the city of Houston faced a budget shortfall, and to save money, decided to close a number of public pools," Harris said. "Well, Sheila Jackson Lee wasn't having that. And so she called around, as the story goes, to business leaders across Houston and convinced them to donate more than \$350,000. And those pools then stayed open all summer long."

## FORMER PRESIDENT BILL CLINTON:

Former President Bill Clinton recalled adding Jackson Lee to his "just say yes list" during her first term in the House. The list normally was reserved for more senior members of Congress, but Jackson Lee's persistence on her priorities made her the most junior addition to the "short list," he said.

"I knew, whatever she wanted, it was good," Clinton said. "It was good for somebody; it was trying to help

somebody."

Clinton said Sheila led several presidents into doing the correct thing to make justice fairer to everyone. Emphasizing, "We are the longest lasting democracy in human history because we had enough people like Sheila Jackson Lee."

## FORMER U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE HILLARY CLINTON:

Former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton when going to the podium received a long standing ovation. She chose Jackson Lee to be a co-chair of her 2008 campaign for president, said the greatest way the attendees could honor her would be by organizing to help VP Kamala Harris win the presidential election in November.

"Come next January, when our first woman president takes the oath of office, I'll be thinking of Sheila, wondering what up in heaven she's wearing, what magnificent long scarf she has wrapped around herself, what hairdo she has managed to achieve for this special occasion," Clinton said. "I'll be thinking of her ... and all the generations of women who helped to make that day possible because they never stopped believing."

## FORMER MAYOR SYLVESTER TURNER:

Former Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner recalled her many small acts of service to the city while in office, including paying for the restoration of a church in Acres Home. And her efforts just this past May distributing food and water aid while she was battling cancer.

"Sheila, I want to thank you on behalf of the local community for bringing the world to the 18th Congressional District," Turner said. Sheila is credited with bringing billions of grant dollars to Houston and Harris County to improve living conditions.

## YUROBA HARRIS, CHIEF DISTRICT DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS:

The Congresswoman was more than a boss to me. She was my mentor and a close family friend. I've known her all my life from when she worked with my mother on political and community matters.

When the opportunity arose and she asked me to join her staff she told me "we are finally together." It was a privilege and an honor to work with her to provide services to the citizens and communities of the 18th Congressional district. I thank God for the wonderful precious moments. Her legacy lives on and we will truly miss her. Forever our Champion for the people. Much love and respect to my "Madam Queen Congresswoman"

Some who are called to service to our nation must accept the responsibility of sustained excellence. This is what Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee required. The Congresswoman was not only a representative of the 18th Congressional District, she considered herself the congresswoman for all Texas.

As a member of her staff, I was required to believe that through strategic strategy and God's will, all things were

possible. What people didn't understand about her was her commitment to the people and those less fortunate. That commitment was shared by both of us. Yes, I was under pressure weekly to perform at the highest level. However, I accepted the task. Anyone on her staff who was not willing to work and put in long hours never lasted long.

Most had no idea the drive and determination Congresswoman Lee possessed. I accepted the challenge day in and day out with the complete understanding that we were making a difference in people's lives. Together, we initiated service that literally saved lives. There are too many instances where I felt overwhelmed, but at the end of it all, this past week, it really hit me, with the outpouring of love and gratitude from so many people, I know we made a difference. I am so honored and blessed to have worked for Congresswoman Sheila Jackson Lee and the citizens of our great city, a city that we both loved passionately, Houston Texas. She would say I am about the people of the United States of America and the people of Houston, Texas. I loved her as a friend and considered her family. In my heart, she is simply irreplaceable.

In closing, I will share a quote she shared with me "You don't make progress by standing on the sidelines, whimpering and complaining. You make progress by implementing ideas." Shirley Chisholm

## SHEILA'S DAUGHTER ERICA & SON JASON COMMENTS:

Erica Lee Carter, Sheila's daughter said, who wore pieces of her mother's famed outfits to the service. "Today I wore her cape, I wore her cloth, but I will never wear her crown,"

Jason Lee "Her son said that despite her legacy as a public official, her first priority was to her family. He recalled her passing at the hospital in Houston, where he told Jackson Lee "you were a good mom" right before she died.

"Her greatness, for everything else that it was, it was in her love for her family," Lee said. "Hearing she had completed that mission, she knew she could go."

## NC STAR WRITER ALLAN JAMAIL:

"As I write this article as a reporter I'd like to also say from a personal observation from working with her on several news stories that I think SJL was always burning her candle from both ends. She was like a candle in the wind, that blew out way too soon."

Many praise her as a great leader; I say no, she was a great leader of leaders.

She was so goal orientated she never took the time to take care of her own health. She cared so much about others health and well being she neglected her own. Sheila had so much life left in her before she died. She was 74 when she died on July 19 after being treated for pancreatic cancer."

There's been many times she said I wasn't a friend but I was a family member to her.





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