

# Local News



## Congressman Al Green, in Collaboration with Fort Bend Area Elected Officials, Announces Millions in American Rescue Plan Coming to Fort Bend County



BY FORWARD TIMES STAFF

This past Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, U.S. Congressman Al Green (TX-9) held a press conference with elected officials and community leaders from the Fort Bend area to announce important provisions in the American Rescue Plan signed by President Joe Biden on March 11, 2021.

At the press conference, Congressman Green discussed these provisions and invited special guests to address the importance of the several billions in funding for states and municipalities, education, nutrition assistance, and health care this law provides.

“The American Rescue Plan includes \$350 billion in funding for states and municipalities that have been hard hit by the COVID-19 pandemic due to dwindling sales tax revenue, stated Congressman Green – who represents portions of both Fort Bend County and Harris County. “Localities within my congressional district will see millions in relief funding, including, \$157.42 million for Fort Bend County, \$7.4 million for the City of Missouri City, and \$3.79 million for the City of Stafford – which has also endured a lack of property tax revenue due to a pre-pandemic benefit Stafford residents enjoy. This influx of funding will help these municipalities work to recover from and continue fighting the coronavirus crisis.”

The newly enacted economic relief package also includes two provisions secured by Congressman Green - \$10 billion for small and very small businesses as well as \$20 million for emergency fair housing enforcement.

“The American Rescue Plan – which was signed into law by the President – includes two pieces of legislation I proposed at the request of House Financial Services Committee

Chairwoman Maxine Waters,” Congressman Green emphasized. “H.R. 1669 reauthorizes and funds at \$10 billion the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), which will unleash \$100 billion in low-cost capital to small businesses. H.R. 1674 provides grants for emergency fair housing enforcement for the Fair Housing Initiatives Program (FHIP).”

Congressman Green, who serves as Chairman of the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Oversight & Investigations, added, “The impact of this pandemic on small businesses has been devastating, with more than 160,000 closing their doors since April 2020. As Chairwoman Waters has recognized, H.R. 1669 ‘provides \$10 billion to support small businesses, including minority-owned businesses

that are closing their doors at historic rates.’ Black-owned businesses have been forced to close at more than twice the rate of businesses owned by White Americans, underscoring the exacerbated effects of this pandemic on minorities. The SSBCI lending program was a pivotal component of our national economic recovery from the Great Recession. Reauthorization during this time of severe financial hardship with emphasis on minority- and women-owned small and very small businesses, is economically the right thing to do.”

In conclusion, Congressman Green stated, “When the deadly novel coronavirus reached the United States more than a year ago, many of us would have never imagined the severe health and economic toll it would take on our nation. However, it has been and continues to be my priority to ensure all my constituents – including those who have suffered from contracting the virus themselves or losing a loved one to it, job loss, inadequate access to health care, hunger, risk of eviction or foreclosure, or business closure – receive the necessary relief to weather and recover from this storm. This is why I voted for the American Rescue Plan and am proud to announce its enactment. I will continue working with Chairwoman Waters, my colleagues in both chambers, and the Biden Administration to ensure that we meet many of the needs of suffering Americans.”

In attendance at the press conference, were Fort Bend County Judge KP George, State Representative Ron Reynolds, Missouri City Mayor Robin Elackatt, Missouri City Mayor Pro Tem Anthony Maroulis, Missouri City Councilmember Jeffrey L. Boney, Stafford Mayor Cecil Willis, Stafford City Councilmember Alice Chen, Stafford City Councilmember Xavier Herrera, and many more community leaders.

## A Snapshot of the Harris County Clerk’s First 100 Days

BY FORWARD TIMES STAFF

Last November, Harris County Clerk Teneshia Hudspeth made history by becoming the first African American woman elected to the office, and in her first 100 days and despite hurdles, she has already made much progress in her goal to improve services.

“It is hard to believe, but I recently made my 100th day in office as Harris County Clerk,” said Hudspeth. “The last few months have been challenging due to the ongoing pandemic and the unprecedented Texas Arctic weather event, but despite those challenges, our office has made many positive strides.”

The Harris County Clerk’s Office (HCCO) has been working to improve technology, office professionalism, and customer service. Although the State lifted COVID-19 restrictions earlier this week, the office continues to follow health and safety guidelines to protect both employees and the public.

Hudspeth is also very involved in community outreach and volunteer services. The following is a list of some of the things that have been accomplished during the Harris County Clerk’s first 100 days:

- Website and technology improvements
- Created and launched new social media accounts on all platforms
- Made customer service improvements according to health and safety guidance
- Held first annual toy drive benefitting the Children’s Assessment Center
- Enhanced hiring process to include posting job openings on social media
- Launched first ever public newsletter
- Initiated data and fact sharing to enhance transparency
- Successfully transitioned out of election management

Although the County Clerk is no longer the Chief Election Official in Harris County as a result of the creation of the Elections Administrator’s Office by the Harris County Commissioners Court, Hudspeth will continue to be involved in the election process as a member of the Harris County Elections Commission that oversees voter accessibility, accuracy, and security.

“I would like to thank my staff for all their efforts and want to assure you that I am working hard to enhance our administrative processes and do what is necessary to better serve our community,” added Hudspeth. “As always, I am humbled to serve the residents of Harris County and look forward to achieving many things.”

To stay updated about the services offered by the Harris County Clerk’s office, please go to their website at [www.cclerk.hctx.net](http://www.cclerk.hctx.net), sign up for their monthly newsletter, and follow them at @HarrisCoTXClerk on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.