



September 2014



Commissioner Grady Prestage's
PRECINCT 2 COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

"Commissioner's Corner" (September Edition)



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U.S. Department of Justice Continues Fight To Repeal Texas Voter I.D. Law



The U.S. Department of Justice has not given up the fight to repeal Texas' controversial Voter I.D. Law. In a trial that started earlier this month in Corpus Christi, Texas, U.S. Department of Justice attorney Richard Dellheim repeated plaintiffs' claims made throughout this three-week trial that the Texas law, also known as Senate Bill 14, was a "serious solution in search of a problem" and did little if anything to correct voter fraud in the state. Only one attorney argued for the state of Texas, Adam Aston, the principal deputy solicitor general with the attorney general's office. He argued that the plaintiffs failed to

September is National Preparedness Month



If an emergency occurred tomorrow, would you be ready?

September is National Preparedness Month. Sponsored by FEMA, National Preparedness Month aims to educate and empower Americans to prepare for and respond to all types of emergencies, including natural disasters and potential terrorist attacks.

Fort Bend County Judge Bob Hebert proclaimed the month of September as Emergency Preparedness Month in Fort Bend County. Emergency Preparedness Month underscores the important responsibility Fort Bend County citizens

...he argued that the plaintiffs failed to prove there was evidence of "intentional discrimination."

Now that both sides have concluded their arguments, the fate of the Texas Voter I.D. Law is in the hands of U.S. District Judge Nelva Gonzales Ramos. Her decision could potentially impact this year's November 4th election. All eyes will be on Texas to see how her ruling will play out.

The voter ID law was created in 2011 during the 82nd Texas Legislative Session. Texas lawmakers passed Senate Bill 14 (SB 14) creating a new requirement for voters to show photo identification when voting in person. The measure also makes voter fraud a second-degree felony punishable by as much as twenty years in prison and a possible fine of as much as \$10,000.

Soon after the new voter ID law was passed in 2011, the State of Texas was required to receive preclearance by the Justice Department to fully implement the law. The requirement of the Justice Department stems from Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 which freezes election practices or procedures in certain states that had a history of voter discrimination and were subject to review by the United States Attorney General, or file suit before the United States District Court for the District of Columbia.

Upon initial review, a federal court blocked the Texas voter ID law, saying the law would discriminate against low-income and minority voters. The State of Texas then made an appeal to the U.S.

have to be ready for emergencies in our homes, businesses and communities.

Judge Hebert and the Fort Bend Office of Emergency Management urge all citizens of this County to recognize the importance of preparing for potential emergencies beforehand and to engage in appropriate preparedness activities, events, and training to enhance our overall disaster preparedness.

National Preparedness Month is a time to prepare yourself and those in your care for emergencies and disasters, both large scale and smaller local events.

We know that emergencies can happen unexpectedly in communities just like yours, to people like you.

We've seen tornado outbreaks, river floods and flash floods, historic earthquakes, tsunamis, and even water main breaks and power outages that impact communities for days at a time.

As commendable as they may be in their profession of assisting those in need, police, fire and rescue may not always be able to reach you quickly in an emergency or disaster. The most important step you can take in helping your local responders is being able to take care of yourself and those in your care for at least a short period of time following an incident; the more people who are prepared, the quicker the community will recover.

You are not helpless in the face of an emergency. With just a few simple steps, you can Be a Force of Nature by knowing

Texas then made an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court.

On June 25, 2013, The U.S. Supreme Court found that the Voting Rights Act of 1965 formula (Section 4) that decided which jurisdictions should be subject to preclearance was unconstitutional.

Requests by Texas and Mississippi for preclearance in their voter ID laws were pending with the federal government when the high court struck down the constitutionality of the Act's Section 4 which subsequently nullified Section 5, therefore giving Texas the green light to enforce the new voter ID law immediately.

Currently, the following documents will be accepted as a form of photo ID in the State of Texas when voting:

- Texas driver license (unexpired or expired less than 60 days)
- Texas ID (unexpired or expired less than 60 days)
- U.S. passport book/card (unexpired or expired less than 60 days)
- Texas concealed handgun license (unexpired or expired less than 60 days)
- U.S. Military ID with photo (unexpired or expired less than 60 days)
- U.S. Citizenship Certificate or Certificate of Naturalization with photo

On June 26, 2013, Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) began issuing Electronic Identification Certificates (EIC) to individuals who do not already have an

your risk, taking action and being an example in your community.

Know your Risk

Emergencies can happen anywhere, at any time. It is important to understand potential risks where you live.

What you can do:

1. Bookmark weather.gov to stay informed on severe weather.
2. Learn about Wireless Emergency Alerts, messages that will be sent to your phone during an emergency.
3. Get practical tips on preparing for disaster at ready.gov.

FEMA's Ready.gov website provides detailed information on what may be most important to you and your family. You can find specific information tailored to specific needs such as people with disabilities, seniors, assisting children, business readiness, and even information for you pets. For more information, see Ready.gov

NOAA is working with FEMA and other agencies to help improve disaster readiness through campaigns such as National Preparedness Month. Through efforts such as the Weather-Ready Nation initiative, NOAA seeks to build community resilience in the face of increasing vulnerability to extreme weather events.

For more information on emergency

acceptable form of photo identification to present when voting. Applications for the EIC will be accepted at DPS Driver License Offices in the State of Texas. To qualify for an EIC, you must be:

- U.S. citizen
- Texas resident
- Eligible to vote in Texas (show a valid voter registration card or submit a voter registration application when applying for the EIC)
- 17 years and 10 months or older.

For more information, contact the Texas Department of Public Safety at 512.424.2000.

Source on current Voter I.D. trial: The Texas Tribune

preparedness, visit www.fbcoem.org or www.ready.gov.

Do You Have A Story? We'd Like to Hear from You!



This is your space! We want to hear from you, so send us your news. We may even publish your article in a future newsletter (although we reserve the right to edit for length and content). Try to keep your submissions to 150-200 words.

Submit articles to:

commpct2@fortbendcountytx.gov

Write away!

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