

## ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

On Dec. 23, Dr. Hellerstedt, M.D. sent a letter to me concerning the open status of bars in Atascosa County. You see, several months ago our COVID 19 numbers in this county were low enough that we were able to opt (at my concurrence) to remove the mask rule and to re-open the bars according to the Governor's emergency declaration rules. I did so because we had so many clamoring to remove the mask rule. I filed the request to re-open the bars because I felt it would provide needed relief to local businesses and jobs. And there are many people who are hurting. The state ordered the mask law to be reinstated in effect about Nov. 17. We did so. I am not pro or anti bars—this is not my point. But with this letter from Dr. Hellerstedt of Texas Health and Human Services, I notified the county bars that they had to close because of the Governor's Declaration. I understand why, because of the spread of COVID-19, but I do not think this is fair when restaurants with bars are allowed to continue to serve alcohol and have entertainment and dancing. All the package stores are allowed open as well as private parties. I don't want any of these closed. I just think the fairness bar is not set the same for everybody. And it should be. But, I and my office will follow the law as we should regardless of how many of the "usual suspects" post nasty things on the county Facebook page.

The vaccine is here for dispensing in our county. It is for health personnel and now people 65 years of age and older and people 16 years of age and older with at least one chronic medical condition that puts them at increased risk for severe illness from the virus that causes COVID-19. Please get your shot. I understand you can go to neighboring counties. Go to [txdshs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=91ac7fb5e5fd47e7ada4acfe4a05920a](https://txdshs.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=91ac7fb5e5fd47e7ada4acfe4a05920a) to find a location. I have heard that clinics will often book first responders in for vaccination. The vaccine is free. The clinic can charge your insurance for administering the shot, but it should not cost you anything.

Be safe and hang on. The end of COVID is coming. Thanks for listening.