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RAPPIN'
Thomas Wyatt

READ THE LABEL

Progressives are not a monolith, and the Democratic Party's internal spectrum is far more textured than the labels often thrown around in national discourse. Three figures — James Talarico, Abdul El Sayed, and Jasmine Crockett — illustrate how varied the progressive lane truly is, even as they share a broad ideological home.

In Texas, Rep. James Talarico represents a values driven, coalition building progressivism rooted in public education, economic fairness, and ethical governance. His tone is calm, moral, and often faith inflected, which leads some observers to mistake him for a moderate. But his legislative record — from insulin price caps to aggressive ethics reforms — places him firmly in the progressive camp. He advances reform through persuasion rather than confrontation, making him a bridge builder within a polarized Legislature.

By contrast, this year's Michigan's Democratic Senate primary winner, Abdul El Sayed, embodies a policy forward, Sanders aligned progressivism. His advocacy for Medicare for All, campaign finance reform, and left leaning foreign policy critiques situates him on the party's left flank, though not in the socialist lane. El Sayed's politics reflect a public health lens and a structural critique of inequality, aligning him with the national progressive movement's most ambitious policy thinkers.

Then there's Texas's Rep. Jasmine Crockett, whose civil rights driven, confrontational progressivism has made her a national figure. Crockett's sharp pushback against GOP extremism, her unapologetic defense of marginalized communities, and her high visibility committee clashes define a style that is often mischaracterized as "radical." In substance, however, her agenda is mainstream progressive: voting rights, reproductive freedom, and criminal justice reform.

Together, these three leaders demonstrate that "progressive" is not a single ideological posture but a constellation of approaches — moral, structural, and confrontational — all aimed at expanding equity and protecting democratic rights. Their differences matter, but their shared commitments reveal a movement broader and more dynamic than any single label can capture.

AUSTIN FLAGGED AS “HIGH RISK”
FOR DISPLACEMENT IN NEW
FEDERAL HOUSING REPORT

By Thomas Wyatt | EIC, The Villager



Federal analysis places East Austin among the nation's most vulnerable neighborhoods as rents rise, affordability collapses, and redevelopment accelerates

(AUSTIN, TX) - Austin has been officially designated a “high risk displacement market” in a sweeping new federal housing report that warns the city is entering a critical period where long standing communities — particularly in East Austin — face escalating pressure from rising rents, shrinking affordable stock, and rapid redevelopment. The report, released this week by a federal housing agency, places Austin alongside cities like Miami, Denver, and Seattle as metros where displacement risk is accelerating faster than local policy responses.

For East Austin residents, the findings confirm what many have felt for years: that the neighborhoods built by Black and Brown families, shaped by decades of cultural resilience and community organizing, are now among the most endangered in the country. The report's mapping tool highlights census tracts east of I 35 as “severe risk zones,” citing a combination of rent spikes, investor driven acquisitions, and the erosion of legacy housing.

The federal analysis points to three forces driving Austin's vulnerability. First, rent growth continues to outpace wages, even after a brief cooling period in 2023–24. Second, affordable units are disappearing faster than they can be replaced, with older multifamily complexes being demolished or renovated into higher priced stock. Third, redevelopment pressure is intensifying, especially in areas where public land — including closed school campuses — is being eyed for private projects.

Local housing advocates say the report should serve as a wake up call. They argue that Austin's current policy tools, while improving, remain insufficient to counter displacement at the scale the federal government is now documenting. The report notes that Austin's affordable housing pipeline is growing, but not nearly fast enough to offset losses

in historically marginalized neighborhoods.

City officials responded cautiously, acknowledging the seriousness of the designation while emphasizing ongoing efforts to expand affordable housing, strengthen tenant protections, and preserve public land. But the report's findings arrive at a moment when Austin is already grappling with major land use decisions — including the future of ten closing AISD campuses, many located in neighborhoods flagged as high risk.

The intersection of school closures and displacement risk is particularly stark. As campuses shutter, communities lose not only educational anchors but also stabilizing public spaces that have historically served as buffers against redevelopment. Without deliberate intervention, the report warns, such closures can accelerate displacement by removing neighborhood institutions and opening land to market rate development.

For families in East Austin, the federal designation is more than a policy label — it is a reflection of lived reality. Rising rents, shrinking options, and the steady march of redevelopment have reshaped daily life, forcing many to move farther from the city center or leave Austin altogether. The report's authors stress that without aggressive preservation strategies, cities like Austin risk losing the very communities that define their cultural identity.

The federal government's warning places Austin at a crossroads. The city can continue on its current trajectory, where market forces dictate neighborhood futures, or it can treat the report as a mandate to act — preserving affordability, protecting public land, and ensuring that East Austin's historic communities remain rooted where they have always belonged.

Carver Genealogy Center
Anniversary Celebration

(AUSTIN, TX) - Connecting the Carver community and beyond for 93 years!

Join us on Saturday, September 12 from 1pm-3pm, in celebrating the 93rd anniversary of the Carver Genealogy Center opening its doors to the public! Learn about the history of the building and how it has served as a library, a museum, and now a Genealogy Center to the Carver community and beyond. Free and open to the public.

George Washington Carver Museum,
Cultural and Genealogy Center
1163 Angelina St. - Austin, TX 78702



INSIDE

FOR the proposal: Kirk Watson, Velasquez, Jose "Chito" Vela, Zohair "Zo" Qadri, Marc Duche
PRESENT and not voting:
AGAINST the proposal:
ABSENT:

Visit Texas.Gov/PropertyTaxes

City of Austin set to propose tax hike next week.
See NOTICE
Page 2



Expect another bond proposal in November.
See BALLOT
Page 3



Hot rotisserie chicken may be on the menu for SNAP recipients.
See CONGRESS
Page 4

The Portal to Texas History
texashistory.unt.edu

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Austin Housing Authority Returns to Its Original Name as It Approaches 90 Years of Service

Agency’s new mobile-friendly website makes housing information, resources and services easier to access

The Austin Housing Authority
(AUSTIN, TX) - The Housing Authority of the City of Austin announced its return to its original name, **Austin Housing Authority (AHA)**, as the agency approaches its 90th anniversary and begins a new chapter in serving Austin residents.

Originally established as the Austin Housing Authority in 1937, the agency was the first public housing authority in the nation. For nearly nine decades, it has helped Austin families, seniors, people with disabilities and individuals experiencing homelessness access safe, stable and affordable housing.

Returning to the Austin Housing Authority name honors that history while creating a clearer and more recognizable identity for the residents, partners and communities the agency serves.

“As we approach our 90th anniversary, returning to the Austin Housing Authority name allows us to honor where we began while moving confidently toward the future,” said **Michael Gerber**, president and CEO of the Austin Housing Authority.

“The needs of Austin families - and the ways residents connect with us - have changed dramatically across generations. We are continually innovating to make our services easier to find, understand and use. Our new website is one important example of how we are pairing a proud history with a modern commitment to serving residents and building stronger communities.”

As part of this new chapter, the agency has launched austinha.org, a redesigned website created to make it easier for residents, applicants, landlords, partners and community members to find information and connect with services.

The website features simpler navigation, more helpful housing resources, clearer language, improved accessibility, expanded language access and more direct pathways to agency programs and assistance. It was also designed to provide a significantly better experience on smartphones and tablets - an increasingly important priority as more residents rely on mobile devices as their primary way to access information and services.

Residents and community members can also follow the AHA on social media at [@theaustinha](https://twitter.com/theaustinha).

Know Your Rights and Consumer Protections as the Texas Summer Heats Up

Public Utility Commission of Texas

(AUSTIN, TX) – With summer heat firmly in place across Texas, the **Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUCT)** is reminding Texans about consumer protections to help keep their electricity service connected during extreme heat. These protections include safeguards against disconnection due to financial hardship or extreme weather emergencies, as well as access to bill payment assistance.

“It’s hard to stay cool in the Texas summer heat, and that’s especially true for Texans facing financial challenges,” said PUCT Executive Director **Connie Corona**. “Our rules help ensure Texans have the power they need to stay safe during extreme summer heat while they work to pay their electric bills without risking disconnection.”

PUCT rules prohibit electric service disconnections for non-payment during extreme weather emergencies, including periods of extreme heat. **Retail electric providers (REPs)** also must offer deferred payment plans for bills that become due during an extreme weather emergency. The PUCT’s definition of an extreme weather emergency follows National Weather Service advisory criteria outlined in Chapter 25, Sections **25.29(i)** and **25.483**.

Consumers experiencing financial difficulties related to higher-than-normal energy bills should contact their electric provider to learn about available assistance options. Texans can also call 2-1-1 for information about programs available in their area.

The PUCT also provides additional protections for consumers who are ill or disabled and have documented that a service disconnection would cause illness or worsen an existing medical condition. More information is available on the PUCT’s **Know Your Rights** webpage.

In addition, the PUCT’s Consumer Protection Division works with Texans to help resolve utility service issues. Consumers should first contact their electric provider. If the issue cannot be resolved, they may contact the Consumer Protection Division by emailing consumer@puc.texas.gov or calling **1-888-782-8477**.

For energy-saving tips and to comparison shop for retail electric plans, visit the PUCT’s **Power to Choose** website.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING ON TAX INCREASE

Proposed Tax Rate	\$0.579948	per	\$100
No-New-Revenue Tax Rate	\$0.535466	per	\$100
Voter-Approval Tax Rate	\$0.579948	per	\$100

The no-new-revenue tax rate is the tax rate for the 2026 tax year that will raise the same amount of property tax revenue for the City of Austin from the same properties in both the 2025 tax year and the 2026 tax year.

The voter-approval rate is the highest rate that the City of Austin may adopt without holding an election to seek voter approval of that rate.

The proposed tax rate is greater than the no-new-revenue tax rate. This means that the City of Austin is proposing to increase property taxes for the 2026 tax year.

A public hearing on the proposed tax rate will be held on August 12, 2026 at 10 a.m. at Austin City Hall, 301 W. Second Street, Austin, Texas.

The proposed tax rate is not greater than the voter-approval tax rate. As a result, the City of Austin is not required to hold an election at which voters may accept or reject the proposed tax rate. However, you may express your support for or opposition to the proposed tax rate by contacting the members of the City Council of City of Austin at their offices or by attending the public hearing mentioned above.

Your taxes owed under any of the tax rates mentioned above can be calculated as follows:

Property tax amount = tax rate x taxable value of your property / 100

FOR the proposal: Kirk Watson, Natasha Harper-Madison, Vanessa Fuentes, Jose Velasquez, Jose "Chito" Vela, Ryan Alter, Krista Laine, Mike Siegel, Paige Ellis, Zohaib "Zo" Qadri, Marc Duchen
PRESENT and not voting:
AGAINST the proposal:
ABSENT:

Visit [Texas.Gov/PropertyTaxes](https://www.texas.gov/propertytaxes) to find a link to your local property tax database on which you can easily access information regarding your property taxes, including information about proposed tax rates and scheduled public hearings of each entity that taxes your property.

The 86th Legislature modified the manner in which the voter-approval tax rate is calculated to limit the rate of growth of property taxes in the state.

The following table compares taxes imposed on the average residence homestead by the City of Austin last year to the taxes proposed to be imposed on the average residence homestead by the City of Austin this year.

	2025	2026	Change
Total tax rate (per \$100 of value)	\$0.524017	\$0.579948	Increase of \$0.055931 per \$100, or 10.7%
Average homestead taxable value	\$505,159	\$489,991	Decrease of \$15,168, or 3.0%
Tax on average homestead	\$2,647.12	\$2,841.69	Increase of \$194.57, or 7.4%
Total tax levy on all properties	\$1,189,822,183	\$1,293,656,574	Increase of \$103,834,391, or 8.7%

For assistance with tax calculations, please contact the tax assessor for the City of Austin at 512-854-9473 or TaxOffice@TravisCountyTX.gov, or visit [Tax-Office.TravisCountyTX.Gov](https://www.Tax-Office.TravisCountyTX.Gov) for more information.

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While the name has returned to the agency’s roots, its mission remains focused on the future. The Austin Housing Authority will continue providing affordable housing while connecting residents with education, workforce development, health, financial empowerment and other resources that

support stability, opportunity and self-sufficiency. The name reflects where the agency began. Its continued innovation reflects where it is going: Building Stronger Communities throughout Austin. To explore the new website, find housing resources or connect with services, visit austinha.org.

HHSC Highlights Available Resources During National Breastfeeding Month

Texas Health and Human Services Commission

(AUSTIN, TX) – The **Texas Health and Human Services Commission** is observing **National Breastfeeding Month** in August by promoting resources for moms. This year’s theme, “Breastfeeding Support Anytime, Anywhere,” emphasizes services that help families get trusted guidance when and where they need it.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, popularly known as WIC, serves more than 760,000 women, infants and children each month throughout the state.

“Every family’s breastfeeding experience is different, and mothers deserve support that meets them where they are,” HHS Executive Commissioner **Stephanie Muth** said. “Through Texas WIC, families can feel encouraged, connected and empowered as they give their children a strong, healthy start in life.”

Texas WIC provides breastfeeding information to all moms at every stage of the breastfeeding journey through its website, **BreastmilkCounts.com**. HHSC also partners with the Texas Department of State Health Services Maternal and Child Health to offer free breastfeeding support, regardless of WIC enrollment, through the 24/7 Texas Lactation Support Hotline at 855-550-6667.

WIC clients can receive mom-to-mom support through breastfeeding peer counselors, certified lactation consultants and specially trained clinic staff. Eligible families can access personalized breastfeeding and nutrition counseling, as well as support groups, through **local WIC clinics**. Clients can also receive fruits and vegetables, milk, eggs, cheese and other healthy foods.

Women can apply for Texas WIC as soon as they learn they are pregnant. Caregivers with children under the age of 5, including dads, foster parents, guardians and grandparents, can apply for WIC.

HHSC administers WIC in Texas. For more information about benefits, eligibility, applying or finding a clinic, visit [TexasWIC.org](https://www.TexasWIC.org) or call **800-942-3678**.

WILDFIRE SEASON AWARENESS

By Villager staff

(TRAVIS CO.) - Officials across Travis County are urging residents to take immediate precautions as Central Texas enters the most dangerous stretch of the wildfire season. With August bringing triple digit temperatures, critically dry vegetation, and persistent low humidity, emergency managers warn that conditions are primed for fast moving fires that can ignite from even small sparks.

The Travis County Fire Marshal’s Office reports that thousands of homes—particularly those near greenbelts, wooded lots, and unmanaged fields—are at elevated risk. Officials say the combination of prolonged heat, drought stressed grasses, and gusty winds has created a volatile landscape where fires can spread rapidly before crews arrive on scene. Residents are being asked to treat this month as a “peak risk window” and to take protective steps now rather than waiting for an emergency.

Homeowners are encouraged to clear dry brush, trim low hanging branches, and remove debris within at least **30 feet** of their homes to create defensible space. Fire officials also recommend replacing wooden fencing near structures with non combustible materials, storing gasoline and outdoor equipment away from heat sources, and ensuring that gutters and yards are free of dead leaves. Even routine activities—mowing, welding, grilling, or towing trailers—can spark fires when conditions are this dry.

Local departments are increasing patrols in high risk corridors and reminding residents to report smoke or fire immediately. Emergency managers emphasize that early calls save lives, giving firefighters a chance to contain flames before they reach homes or roadways.

Officials say community awareness is critical. With wildfire danger expected to remain high through the end of the month, residents are urged to stay alert, follow burn ban restrictions, and take steps to protect their families, homes, and neighborhoods. Travis County leaders stress that preparation now can prevent devastation later—and that every household plays a role in keeping the region safe.

Erica Schwartz confirmed as new CDC leader after Senate vote on Wednesday

By Villager staff

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) - The Senate has confirmed **Dr. Erica Schwartz** as the new director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approving her appointment in a 51–44 vote that fell largely along party lines. Senator **Tim Kaine** was the only Democrat to support her nomination. Schwartz becomes the first Senate confirmed **CDC** director in nearly a year, following a period of interim leadership triggered by the firing of **Susan Monarez** after a clash with Health and Human Services Secretary **Robert F. Kennedy Jr.** over childhood vaccine policy.

Schwartz inherits an agency in deep turmoil. Since President Trump took office, CDC morale has plummeted and more than a quarter of its workforce has departed through layoffs and resignations. The agency is simultaneously confronting major public health threats, including an ongoing measles outbreak driven by misinformation among unvaccinated communities and the largest cyclosporiasis outbreak ever recorded in the United States.



Dr. Erica Schwartz

A former deputy surgeon general and senior Coast Guard health official, Schwartz has publicly supported childhood vaccination and was viewed by many as a stabilizing, mainstream choice for the role. Yet her confirmation hearing raised concerns among Democrats—and even among Republican committee chair **Bill Cassidy**—about her willingness to push back against Kennedy’s vaccine skeptical positions. Schwartz pledged to “never compromise on the science,” but Cassidy described her answers as insufficiently direct. He ultimately backed her nomination after the CDC modified a webpage on vaccines and autism to address his objections.

Senator **Bernie Sanders** opposed the nomination, arguing that the central question was whether administration officials would “stand up to people who are anti-science and into conspiracy theories”. Schwartz is the administration’s third attempt to fill the CDC leadership post; the first nominee, former Representative **Dave Weldon**, withdrew amid doubts about his preparedness and vaccine views.

New Bond Proposal Will Be On The Ballot In November

By Thomas Wyatt | EIC, The Villager

(AUSTIN, TX) - The City Council’s approval of a \$295 million bond package for parks and libraries is a referendum on whether the city is willing to reinvest in neighborhoods that have carried Austin’s cultural identity while absorbing decades of inequitable infrastructure decisions.

The bulk of the bond, \$260 million for parks, arrives at a moment when East Austin communities continue to experience the sharpest gaps in tree canopy, trail connectivity, and safe public gathering spaces. Long promised improvements to neighborhood parks — from Rosewood to Givens to Parque Zaragoza — have often been delayed or delivered in partial phases, even as West Austin facilities receive consistent upgrades. For families in East Austin, where parks double as cooling centers, youth hubs, and intergenerational gathering spaces, the bond represents a chance to correct long standing disparities in basic public amenities.

The \$35 million allocated for libraries carries similar weight. Branches serving East Austin have historically been smaller, older, and more strained by demand than their counterparts west of I 35. In



neighborhoods where digital access gaps persist and where libraries function as civic anchors — offering job resources, youth programming, and safe public spaces — investment is not simply about buildings but about maintaining the infrastructure of opportunity.

The political split on the Council reflects a familiar tension: affordability concerns versus the cost of continued underinvestment. But for East Austin residents, affordability is not only about tax bills. It is about whether public dollars return to the communities that have been asked to bear the brunt of displacement, rising land values, and the erosion of cultural space. Bond investments in parks and libraries are among the few tools the city can use to stabilize neighborhoods without accelerating gentrification.

If voters approve the bond in November, the measure will test whether Austin can deliver improvements equitably. For East Austinites, the stakes are clear: this bond is an opportunity to restore public spaces that strengthen community resilience, preserve cultural identity, and ensure that the city’s growth includes the neighborhoods that shaped it.



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Congress Juggles Food Aid, Hemp Ban, and FCC Oversight in a Turbulent Day on Capitol Hill

By Villager staff

(VILLAGER) - Congress spent Wednesday navigating a cross section of policy fights that reveal how strained the machinery of federal governance has become. The Senate Agriculture Committee is preparing to vote on a proposal to let families using the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) buy hot rotisserie chicken — a change that would overturn a decades old prohibition on hot foods. Sen. Jim Justice argued that denying low income households access to a warm meal is “borderline inhumane”, and the amendment has drawn bipartisan support, mirroring a House provision that passed overwhelmingly earlier this year.

At the same time, Senate Republicans are struggling to manage a growing pileup of legislative business before recess. Majority Whip John Thune acknowledged that negotiations over a pre recess agreement were “starting to pick up”, even as members weigh whether to force votes on contentious provisions tied to the SAVE America Act.

The White House mounted the day’s most aggressive lobbying effort, urging Senate Republicans to delay a looming ban on intoxicating hemp products. President Donald Trump personally called Sen. Ted Budd after Budd filed an amendment to ensure the ban proceeds on schedule. The administration wants a four week delay to continue negotiations, a request that has divided Republicans and raised questions about why the White House waited until the last minute to intervene.

Institutional tensions surfaced during a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing, where Sen. John Kennedy warned that the Federal Communications Commission’s recent scrutiny of broadcast networks is “getting into the foothills of violating the First Amendment”. His comments reflect bipartisan unease with the agency’s direction, including inquiries into alleged political bias and the early renewal of Disney owned ABC station licenses.



Ethics controversies continued to ripple through the House. Rep. Max Miller faces domestic abuse allegations from his ex wife, drawing national attention and prompting the White House to privately urge him to withdraw from his reelection bid. His Democratic challenger, Brian Poindexter, has declined to center his campaign on the scandal, instead emphasizing economic struggles facing working families. Separately, Rep. Chuck Edwards ended his reelection campaign after the House Ethics Committee recommended censure for inappropriate conduct toward staffers.

Congress also advanced major policy initiatives. The Senate Commerce Committee unanimously approved the Kids Online Safety Act, a sweeping measure requiring platforms to prioritize children’s safety and allow users to opt out of algorithmic personalization. And Senate Majority Leader Thune initiated steps toward a vote on the Protect College Sports Act, which would overhaul athlete compensation rules and conference expansion policies after major athletic conferences dropped their opposition to the bill’s revised structure.

Steal The Vote!

By Villager staff

(FT. WORTH, TX) - Tarrant County commissioners postponed a decision on whether to cut polling locations for the November election, after dozens of residents testified against reducing sites. Most speakers urged the court to maintain or expand access, arguing that fewer locations would burden voters and suppress turnout.

The delay means the county will revisit the proposal later rather than approving changes immediately.



Taken together, the day’s developments show a Congress grappling with the full spectrum of governance — from the mundane but meaningful question of whether families can buy a warm meal to the profound challenges of safeguarding democratic institutions and restoring trust in public health leadership. The stakes extend far beyond Capitol Hill, shaping daily life across the country and testing whether federal leaders can meet the moment with clarity and accountability.

AISD 2026–2027 School Year Calendar

Austin ISD serves a large portion of students in the Austin area. For the 2026–2027 school year, the AISD calendar includes the following highlights:

- First Day of School: **August 18, 2026** (Tuesday)
- Fall Break / Thanksgiving Week: **November 23–27, 2026**
- Winter Break: **December 21, 2026 – January 5, 2027**
- Spring Break: **March 15–19, 2027**
- Last Day of School (Students): **May 27, 2027** (Thursday)

For the full calendar and official updates, visit the AISD Academic Calendar.

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