



SAFE-D's Legislative Platform for the 89th Regular Session (2025)

SAFE-D's LEGISLATIVE VISION

- Emergency Services Districts are created by voters to provide more reliable funding for fire protection and emergency medical services. As a result, the primary mission of Emergency Services Districts is to protect the lives and property of their citizens when they are threatened by emergencies. In order to accomplish this critical and essential function, Emergency Services Districts must have a predictable, reliable and adequate level of revenue, and SAFE-D will support efforts to enhance this revenue and will oppose any efforts to diminish this revenue.
- SAFE-D will work for legislative outcomes that preserve or enhance the authority of Emergency Services Districts to provide the first line of defense for their communities in natural disasters and other emergencies recognizing that each ESD operates amidst its own unique set of traditions, expectations and requirements.

SAFE-D's LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

ESD Territorial Integrity

- SAFE-D will **propose** legislation that seeks to solidify Emergency Services District boundaries, so that any alteration to those boundaries requires voter approval.
- SAFE-D will **propose** legislation that reduces “service gaps” created by municipal annexation and ensures that such annexation will not negatively impact emergency service provision to residents of the proposed annexation area or residents remaining in the ESD.
- SAFE-D will **support** efforts to allow citizens the right to remove themselves from a municipality's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ), specifically those in Bexar County with property more than 5 miles from a federal military installation.
- SAFE-D will **oppose** legislation that allows a municipality to unilaterally remove its territory from an ESD.
- SAFE-D will **oppose** legislation that requires municipal consent for a municipality's citizens to petition and vote on their annexation into an ESD.

Sales Tax Authority

- SAFE-D will **propose** legislation to allow ESDs to collect sales tax on electric and gas sales to the same extent as other local governments. SAFE-D will monitor legislation affecting sales tax collection, including collection for online sales.
- SAFE-D will **support** legislation that allows Emergency Services Districts to engage in economic development via reinvestment incentives.
- SAFE-D will **oppose** any legislation that allows an entity to unilaterally remove an ESD's sales tax authority or force an ESD into a sales tax sharing process against its will.

Property Tax Authority

- SAFE-D will **propose** legislation that ensures entities with property receiving emergency services (such as Public Facilities Corporations) from the District are not inequitably exempted from the District's property tax levy.
- SAFE-D will **propose** a constitutional amendment to allow a separate Interest-and- Sinking Tax Rate, beyond the 10-cent-per-\$100 rate currently included in the State Constitution, for Emergency Services Districts, addressing the limitation imposed by a constitutional rate fixed in 1987.
- SAFE-D will **monitor** refinements to the tax law changes made by 2019's SB2 and **oppose** any legislation that eliminates the De Minimis Rate or lowers the percentage increase used to determine the Voter Approval Tax Rate.

Funding for Emergency Services

- SAFE-D will **support** efforts to preserve Emergency Services Districts' access to both property tax revenues and sales tax revenues to assure resources necessary for the safety of their citizens.
- SAFE-D will **support** efforts to increase funding to ESDs from allocation of existing insurance premium taxes. SAFE-D will support efforts to assure that funds collected from insurance company assessments for the Rural Fire Department Assistance Fund are fully distributed to address fire department needs.
- SAFE-D will **support** the recommendation from the House Investigative Committee on the Panhandle Wildfires that the Legislature appropriate funds to meet the backlog of \$172 million in 2604 requests.
- SAFE-D will **support** efforts to address the difficulty of providing ambulance service in Texas, specifically allocating funding to eliminate "ambulance deserts" in rural parts of the state.
- SAFE-D will **oppose** any efforts to "defund emergency services," such as raids on ESDs' tax bases by other governmental entities or reducing the funding available for Emergency Services Districts to provide services that their taxpayers expect.

ESD Governance Structure & Autonomy

- SAFE-D will work to preserve local control of taxpayer-provided resources, and **monitor** any attempts to alter the process for selecting individuals to serve on the governing body of Emergency Services Districts.
- SAFE-D will **support** decreasing or removal of the required amount of debt to qualify an Emergency Services District for exemption from a full audit.
- SAFE-D will **oppose** any efforts to remove or limit local control of funding and service decisions by Emergency Services Districts.

Service Provider Jurisdiction

- SAFE-D will **propose** legislation to clarify ESDs' exclusive ability to determine which services to provide and to designate the service providers necessary to accomplish the mission given to the districts by the voters who created them.
- SAFE-D will **propose** legislation to allow Emergency Services Districts to provide Mobile Integrated Healthcare/Community Paramedicine to improve the medical care provided to Texans and to reduce the taxpayers' cost of emergency medical services.
- SAFE-D will **oppose** any legislation that will impair the ability of Emergency Services Districts to provide services within their communities.

Fire Code Enforcement

- SAFE-D will **monitor** any legislation seeking to define or clarify an ESD's ability to adopt or enforce a fire code.

Local Government Advocacy

- SAFE-D will **oppose** any legislation that will impair the ability of Emergency Services Districts to communicate with their elected representatives and advocate for their Districts' constituents.

State Agency Coordination/Support

- SAFE-D will **support** necessary funding requests for the vital activities of the Texas Forest Service, the Texas Commission on Fire Protection, the Texas Engineering Extension Service, and the Texas AgriLife Extension Service.
- SAFE-D will **support** efforts to enhance funding for the Texas Intrastate Fire Mutual Aid System (TIFMAS).
- SAFE-D will **support** efforts to ensure that District personnel voluntarily deployed under TIFMAS are allowed to remain covered by the District's worker's compensation insurance with full reimbursement from the State for any worker's compensation costs to the District associated with that deployment.
- SAFE-D will **support** legislation to eliminate unnecessary and redundant reporting to state agencies.