



SAFE-D's 2023 Legislative Platform

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 GOALS

Propose

- 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 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 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.

Support

- SAFE-D will strive 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 work to preserve local control of taxpayer-provided resources, including the process for selection of individuals to serve on the governing body of emergency services districts.
- 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 decreasing or removal of the required amount of debt to qualify an emergency services district for exemption from a full audit.

- SAFE-D will support legislation to eliminate unnecessary and redundant reporting to state agencies.

Oppose

- SAFE-D will oppose any efforts to remove or limit local control of funding and service decisions by emergency services districts.
- 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.
- SAFE-D will oppose any legislation that will impair the ability of emergency services districts to provide services within their communities.
- SAFE-D will oppose any legislation that will impair the ability of emergency services districts to communicate with their elected representatives.

Monitor

SAFE-D will monitor refinements to the tax law changes made by 2019’s SB2.