

Get Out and Vote

Bobby Lieb

On August 8th early voting begins for the Harris County Flood Control bond election and continues through until election day, Saturday, August 25. We cannot stress enough the importance for all registered voters in Harris County to get out and vote for this bond. The obvious reason being it will expedite much needed and long overdue capital for flood mitigation infrastructure to the 23 watersheds of Harris County. The Harris County Flood Control District and County Judge Ed Emmett publicly acknowledge this \$2.5 billion bond is not enough to adequately address all of Harris County's flooding challenges. This is precisely why this bond must not only pass, but it must pass by a very significant margin.

An overwhelming victory sends a very strong signal to the legislators and decisionmakers of larger funding sources at the State and Federal level that the citizens of the greater Houston area are committed to solving their flooding challenges by putting their own money on the table to make it happen. It's true that Houstonians possess an independent "Get it done" attitude when it comes to solving its own problems, and that attitude has and continues to serve itself well. Yet, the storms of recent years have proven our existing infrastructure is woefully inadequate, and our own self-reliance is not enough this time to finish the job. To draw in the level of funding necessary to create system-wide resilience, we need to ask for help, and ask for help we shall.

The sources of this external funding will come in the form of grants, and government grants are competitive, very competitive. Grants almost always require a percentage match of local dollars. Generally, for every dollar of local money invested, three dollars of grant money comes back into the community to support local projects. This is a 300% return on investment. With this kind of return, I would take that bet every single day. However, in order to compete with conflicting political interests and/or other communities clamoring for these dollars, we must demonstrate without a shadow of doubt, Harris County wants and deserves this funding. A powerful way of doing so, is to pass a self-taxing measure in spades. If this bond simply just passes, or worse fails, we give other interests a reason to say, "No." Conversely, a strong win at the ballot box arms our elected representatives and delegates with the ammunition they need to march up to the capitol without giving anyone any other choice but to say, "Yes."

To find an early voting location near you, go to www.HarrisVotes.com.