

George joins others in asking state to extend eviction moratorium

By Chad Washington cwashington@fbherald.com - May 19, 2020

Fort Bend County Judge KP George joined in with others in the Houston area to ask the Texas Supreme Court to change its mind about letting the statewide eviction moratorium to expire.

In a letter to the state Supreme Court, George asked the court to reverse its decision to allow eviction proceedings and debt collections beginning on Tuesday. Orders to allow evictions would begin on May 26.

“In Fort Bend County, we are striving to educate landlords and tenants, provide basic needs assistance, and pass local protections when we can,” George wrote.

“However, this patchwork of services and orders varies from municipality to municipality and county to county. Unless every jurisdiction is on the same page and reading from the same playbook, confusion, inefficiency and misinformation will inevitable cause Texans in need to endure unnecessary hardship.”

George is asking for the moratorium to be extended to July 25, which is the same time frame the U.S. House passed a \$3 trillion relief package.

George joins with Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo in sharing disappointment with the end of the moratorium.

“Thousands of Harris County residents are already on the ropes, and becoming homeless will crush their chances for short-term recovery and long-term economic independence,” Hidalgo said.

“Evicting families is also a threat to public health — we’re working day and night to stop the spread of this virus and, at a time when we’re asking residents to stay or work from home to limit spread, we cannot afford to contribute to a surge in homelessness.”

The pains of dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic have left the state heading into a recession. According to the Texas Workforce Commission, over 1.9 million people in the state have filed for unemployment in the last two months.

Members of the Fort Bend Interfaith Community and The Metropolitan Organization of Houston plan to speak at Tuesday's commissioners' court special session to call on the court to allocate funding to address homelessness in the county.

The group claims that more than 200 families in Fort Bend County that have eviction cases pending.

"With new cases of COVID-19 reported every day, are we prepared to evict families from their homes during an economic downturn caused by an ongoing pandemic?" Dr. David Sincere with Sincere with Advocacy Now Institute and Transformation Church said.