

Slew of new state laws take effect today

Changes affect ivermectin access, STAAR tests, bathrooms and more

BY ELEANOR DEARMAN
Fort Worth Star-Telegram

More than a dozen laws passed during a special legislative session earlier this year take effect on Dec. 4, governing things such as the STAAR test and access to medications.

Here's what to know.

Texas congressional redistricting

Texas' new congressional map (House Bill 4) of-

ficially takes effect on Dec. 4, though whether it was drawn in a way that's racially discriminatory and whether it can be used for the 2026 midterm elections is under court review.

The U.S. Supreme Court is weighing whether the new congressional boundaries or old ones should be used for the election after the state appealed a lower court ruling that blocked the 2025 map from taking effect for 2026 elections. Justice Samuel Alito is temporarily allowing the

new map to be used as the litigation continues.

Texans, the rest of the country and 2026 congressional prospects are watching to see which boundaries are ultimately in place for the midterms, especially since candidate filing for the March Democratic and Republican primaries closes Dec. 8.

Stay tuned!

On a related note: Most House Democrats broke quorum to try and block mid-decade congressional

redistricting. Another new law, House Bill 18, limits the ability of lawmakers who break quorum to accept political contributions.

Abortion medication access

House Bill 7 allows a person to sue someone who manufactures, prescribes or distributes "abortion-inducing" drugs in a state where abortion access is al-

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Ivermectin, an anti-parasitic drug commonly used for livestock but gaining in popularity for human ailments, is now available from Texas pharmacies without a prescription under legislation passed earlier this year. (Dreamstime/TNS)

THE CHRISTMAS STORY

Churches across East Texas plan live Nativity events open to public



Actors are seen in December 2020 during Forest Home Baptist Church's drive-thru Nativity in Kilgore. This year's event is Dec. 11-13. (Michael Cavazos/Longview News-Journal File Photo)

Marshall News Messenger Staff

Churches throughout East Texas will celebrate the birth of Christ by hosting live Nativity events in December.

From Marshall, Longview, Tyler, Carthage and everywhere in between, here's what you need to know about the churches reenacting the birth of Christ this Christmas.

Events are open to the public.

Marshall Cumberland Presbyterian, Marshall

Marshall Cumberland Presbyterian Church will hold the "Walk to Bethlehem" from 6 to 8 p.m. Dec. 13 and 14.

The "progressive, live Nativity" takes visitors on a tour by lantern light. Visitors will have a guided walk through five scenes

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Marshall man faces federal drug, gun charges

News Messenger Staff

A Marshall man has been arrested on federal warrants related to drug and gun crimes, according to the Harrison County Sheriff's Office.

Lawrence Siford, 63, was arrested Tuesday after an investigation by the Joint Harrison Violent Crimes and Narcotics Task Force and the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

He was held Wednesday in the Harrison County Jail on a U.S. Marshals Service detainer.

Law enforcement executed a search warrant Tuesday at Siford's residence on FM 2625 in Marshall.

Siford was wanted on three federal warrants: conspiracy to distribute and possess with intent to distribute methamphetamine; felon in possession of a firearm; and use, carrying, and possession of a firearm during, in relation to and in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime.

"During the execution of the federal arrest warrants task force investigators developed probable cause for a search warrant for the residence, which yielded a large quantity of methamphetamine and multiple firearms," the sheriff's office said.

The arrest led to the seizure of 280 grams of methamphetamine and 29 firearms, many of which had been reported stolen.

"The case is being prosecuted by the United States Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Texas," the sheriff's office said.

