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STATE

Texas limits THC

Gov. Greg Abbott restricted THC sales to minors.

BY TAYLOR SANSON

The Shorthorn associate news editor

Gov. Greg Abbott recently signed an executive order banning hemp and hemp-derived product consumption for minors and regulating its sale, though critics question its impact.

On Sept. 10, Abbott directed the Department of State Health Services and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission to prohibit the sale of hemp-derived products to minors and require age verification upon purchasing for all customers; retailers who violate the order will have their permits revoked.

"Safety for kids, freedom for adults," Abbott said in a post on X.

Texas' growing hemp industry was left largely in the fate of consumers after Abbott vetoed Senate Bill 3 earlier this year.

Since the 2018 federal Farm Bill legalized industrial hemp nationwide, Texas has seen rapid expansion in the market. The product remains legal under current interpretations of the federal and state law, as long as they contain no more than 0.3% Delta-9 THC by dry weight.

"Protecting our kids and defending our freedoms do not need to be at odds."

Sid Miller

Texas Department of Agriculture commissioner

As the executive order does not ban the product itself, some lawmakers, including Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and state Sen. Charles Perry, remain dissatisfied.

In a statement issued Friday, Patrick argued that the order gives the current THC market a seal of approval.

"These are the same people who have been selling dangerous THC products to kids and teens for the last four years in thousands of locations across Texas," he said.

THC continues on page 4

WNBA

Community advocates for WNBA

Players, fans and stakeholders have been pushing to increase league salaries.

BY KALE IVIE

The Shorthorn sports editor

As fans eagerly lined College Park Center's entrance gates ahead of the Dallas Wings' final game of the 2025 season Thursday, some delivered a unique sentiment within the noise.

Spreading the message of equality in professional sports, North Texas labor leaders rallied in support of the Women's National Bas-

ketball Players Association, the first labor union for professional women athletes.

Their message: "Pay them what you owe them."

As the WNBA continues to grow and garner nationwide attention, so has the sentiment. Many players, fans and stakeholders have been pushing to lessen the gap in pay between the WNBA and the NBA, which is known for granting its star players substantially higher salaries.

Texas Rep. Chris Turner, D-Grand Prairie, said during the rally that the

Texas American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations were there supporting WNBA players across the league negotiating for a new contract to improve wages and working conditions.

These contracts, known as collective bargaining agreements, are negotiated between the WNBA and the WNBPA to establish terms of employment for players, including salaries and benefits, travel standards, career development and elements of free agency.

PAY INCREASE continues on page 3



The Shorthorn: Samarie Goffney

Texas Rep. Chris Turner, D-Grand Prairie, speaks during the "Pay Us What You Owe Us" campaign Sept. 11 at College Park Center. The campaign advocated for fair pay for WNBA players.

SPORTS

Volleyball returns home with win

The team recorded its eighth victory of the season



The Shorthorn: Samarie Goffney

Graduate libero Alondra Hernandez, left, hugs junior setter Mira Ledermueller during a game against the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on Sept. 13 at College Park Center. Ledermueller had three kills. See more **VOLLEYBALL** photos on page 7.

CAMPUS

New drone facility opens doors to research

The netted space will allow for testing of unmanned and autonomous drones.

BY ACADIA CLEMENTS

The Shorthorn staff

After about a year of construction, UTA held the grand opening of the Maverick Autonomous Vehicle Research Center on Tuesday at the UT Arlington Research Institute in Fort Worth.

The new facility is a 40-foot-tall, 150-by-120-foot outdoor netted building with a control building that can be used as a classroom, said Eileen Clements, director of research

at the research center.

While the institute already had a smaller indoor drone facility, the new facility will be able to improve research capabilities and provide a space to test in all weather conditions.

The center will be used to test unmanned and autonomous air systems, commonly referred to as drones. The space will allow researchers to conduct research without concerns for safety within FAA regulations, said Nicholas Gans, principal research scientist at the research institute.

There are 28 Vicon motion cap-

ture cameras to help researchers better understand the performance of the vehicles, develop control algorithms and provide accurate verification to the drones. The facility also has lighting that allows use at night.

The control building is a climate-controlled environment that houses computers used to monitor the drones, and the facility can also be used as a place of learning, Clements said.

Gans said that they want student groups and classes to use the space.

DRONE continues on page 2



Courtesy of UTA

The Maverick Autonomous Vehicle Research Center recently opened in Fort Worth.

Drone

continued from page 1

“We want to allow this to be used by anyone who has a strong use case for it,” he said.

The Maverick Autonomous Vehicle Research Center also opens up doors for collaboration, Gans said.

The facility could facilitate cooperation with first responders for training purposes. It could also be used for local schools and small businesses, allowing for teaching, training and outreach activity.

“We do want this to be a space that’s available and used a lot,” he said.

Gans joined the project in 2019, working with other faculty members such as electrical engineering professor Yan Wan to make the building happen.

He said the process of getting the drone facility built was difficult, but once the university reached tier one research status, a team worked with the president’s office at UTA, and they were able to receive funding and begin designing and constructing the almost \$2 million project.

“We had done our homework and looked at similar facilities in other universities, figured out how we wanted this to be,” Gans said.

The university hoped to break ground in February and complete the construction between May and early June, but the project was delayed due to the weather.

“We had a really wet spring, which caused a lot of delays, but we’re very excited that it’s been completed now,” Gans said. “We’re very excited and looking forward to using it.”

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Left: The Maverick Autonomous Vehicle Research Center is surrounded by a net, cameras and sensors Sept. 11 in Fort Worth. This facility will serve as a research center for UTA students and faculty, as well as area companies, local municipalities and the broader community.
The Shorthorn: Mabel Cruz



The Shorthorn: Mabel Cruz

Research engineer Cody Lundberg, left, points at the sky while electrical engineering student Jay Kaushik Mehta looks at the Maverick Autonomous Vehicle Research Center on Sept. 11 in Fort Worth. The facility will host educational programs, workshops and training sessions for students, researchers and industry professionals.

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8

Sanction

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4

3

8

2

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9

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7

1

SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, each row, column and box must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

							8	
	6		4	3				
			1			2		5
9		4		2				
	8							
6		5		7				
4				7		5	6	
5								8
7						1	3	

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THE SHORTHORN

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

CROSSWORD

Q	E	I	S	S	A	V	I	S	S	I	O	T
E	I	Y	W	E	A	T	V	S	R	Y	Q	Y
L	I	A	B	L	N	V	A	S	E	E	R	R
I	T	Y	N	Y	E	W	T	I	E	E	R	
R	E	N	N	I	R	S	E	I	S			
A	S	O	B	E	E	O	V	A	S			
E	O	V	A	S	E	O	V	A	S			
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Y	O	Y	S	A	V	I						
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E	S	E	N	Q	N	I	O					
R	O	O										
O	R	O										

SUDOKU

2	3	1	8	4	9	9	6	7
8	7	4	3	6	9	1	2	5
9	5	6	7	1	2	8	3	4
6	2	8	4	7	2	3	9	1
7	4	9	1	5	6	3	8	2
3	1	9	9	2	8	4	7	6
9	9	2	6	8	1	7	4	3
1	6	7	5	3	4	2	9	8
4	8	3	2	9	7	6	5	1

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The Shorthorn: Samarie Goffney

Pauline Mims, Texas American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations member, chants during the “Pay Us What You Owe Us” campaign Sept. 11 at College Park Center. Mims said that the campaign aims to help players receive a fair contract.

PAY INCREASE

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The WNBA voted to opt out of the current agreement in October 2024, according to the Associated Press. With the 2025 season wrapping up, attention now shifts toward negotiating a new deal before the existing contracts expire.

“They’re making all this wealth for a league that exploded in popularity and earnings,” said Tevita ‘Uhatafe, president of the Federation of North Texas Labor Unions, during the rally. “They’re making millions and millions of dollars, yet they’re stalling on contract negotiations with these workers.”

The WNBA’s surge in popularity has driven a 23% increase in television ratings in the past year, a 13% rise in game attendance and a 26% boost in total ticket sales, according to NPR. These gains build on momentum from the 2024 season, when the league recorded a 170% increase in viewership from 2023 ratings across ESPN platforms.

SURGE IN POPULARITY:

- 23% increase in television ratings in the past year
- 13% rise in game attendance
- 26% boost in total ticket sales

Rising viewership and attendance created an opening for players to



The Shorthorn: Samarie Goffney

Tevita ‘Uhatafe, president of the Federation of North Texas Labor Unions, speaks during the “Pay Us What You Owe Us” campaign Sept. 11 at College Park Center. The event was organized before a game against the Phoenix Mercury.

push for change.

During the WNBA All-Star Game in July at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis, the league’s biggest stars gathered, and players used the spotlight to amplify their message.

Players from Team Clark and Team Collier wore black warm-up shirts that read, “Pay Us What You

Owe Us.” The message was the result of a behind-the-scenes meeting, as players aimed to deliver a concise but impactful statement to a global audience.

Since the received message, unions and fans have added their voices in solidarity to the players, doing so at every venue, no matter

what happens, ‘Utatafe said.

The agreement deadline extends past the regular season, with the final decisions being made before the start of November. Having opted out, WNBA players could potentially be out of professional play if a new deal with the league is not met, according to ESPN.

While awaiting a finalized agreement, Nneka Ogwumike, Seattle Storm forward and WNBPA president, said the league seeks a fixed percentage in contracts, while players want salary growth tied to the league’s business, according to ESPN.

Wings guard Paige Bueckers, the No. 1 draft pick and one of the biggest faces in the league, has helped propel the movement toward Wings fans, who have backed the players on and off the court.

“They’re making all this wealth for a league that exploded in popularity and earnings.”

Tevita ‘Uhatafe
president of the Federation of North Texas Labor Unions

It’s a future the WNBA is betting on, as the league plans to expand into new markets with teams in Cleveland, Detroit and Philadelphia — beginning with Cleveland in 2028 — which are subject to change.

Arlington resident Linda McQuay, a 50-year-old Wings fan, said it has been meaningful to have a WNBA team in her hometown. Noting the individuality of Bueckers, she said she’s happy to see cities have the opportunity to invest and have more teams introduced.

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File photo / Samarie Goffney

Paige Bueckers, Dallas Wings rookie guard, left, dribbles down the court as Minnesota Lynx guard Courtney Williams defends during a game against the Minnesota Lynx on May 16 at College Park Center.



File photo / Samarie Goffney

Dallas Wings center Li Yueru attempts a rebound during a game against the Atlanta Dream on June 24 at College Park Center.

THC

continued from page 1

Chase Whitworth, Artisan Vapor and CBD Collins district manager, said the governor's order represents a fair compromise.

"I personally think that it's a good thing that that's happening, cutting regulation on the use for minors to be attacked by the THC industry," Whitworth said.

According to a report from Whitney Economics, tetrahydrocannabinolic acid, delta-8 THC, delta-9 THC, delta-10 THC, CBD and cannabigerol are some of the most common hemp-derived products sold in Texas.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, cannabis affects brain development and functions, specifically the parts of the brain responsible for memory, learning, attention, decision-making, coordination, emotions and reaction time.

The center said usage before 18 may affect how the brain builds connections for functions like attention, memory and learning, and the effects could be permanent.

Patrick said the legislature never voted to legalize recreational marijuana or the THC products sold now, but due to the loophole in hemp laws, highly potent THC products are being sold, which is why Senate Bill 3 was passed in the Texas House and Senate during the regular session.

After the veto in late June, Abbott put the item on the agenda for two special sessions over the summer.

In a proclamation issued June 22, Abbott said SB 3, as written, would create legal uncertainty for Texas farmers, as the bill criminalizes the manufacturing, distribution and sale of all consumable hemp products, regardless of whether they comply with federal law's THC limits.

The governor's latest order requires the Department of State Health Services and the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission to immediately create an age limit, but does not prescribe when the restriction must take effect and calls for both agencies to work with the Department of Public Safety to increase enforcement on existing rules.

The Department of State Health Services is also required to begin reviewing the current rules

within 10 business days to possibly add stricter labeling and testing, improve recordkeeping to facilitate oversight and increase fees to support enforcement.

Sid Miller, Texas Department of Agriculture commissioner, said Abbott deserves praise for protecting minors from THC products while respecting the rights of adults.

"Protecting our kids and defending our freedoms do not need to be at odds," Miller said.

Although Whitworth supports increased protections for youth, he said he worries that ongoing debates and potential bans could hurt small businesses.

"Lots of these small mom-and-pop-shops won't survive as well based off of that," he said. "They won't be able to recover."

Perry said in a post on X that the age restriction does not fix the problem, and it gives the industry what it wants by leaving the product on shelves and ensuring the legislature will not close the loophole.

"This debate isn't over, and I will not stop fighting until we secure real protections for our communities and prevent Texas from repeating the mistakes of other states," Perry said.



The Shorthorn: Mabel Cruz

Gov. Greg Abbott signed an executive order banning THC products for minors. Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick disagreed with Abbott's order.

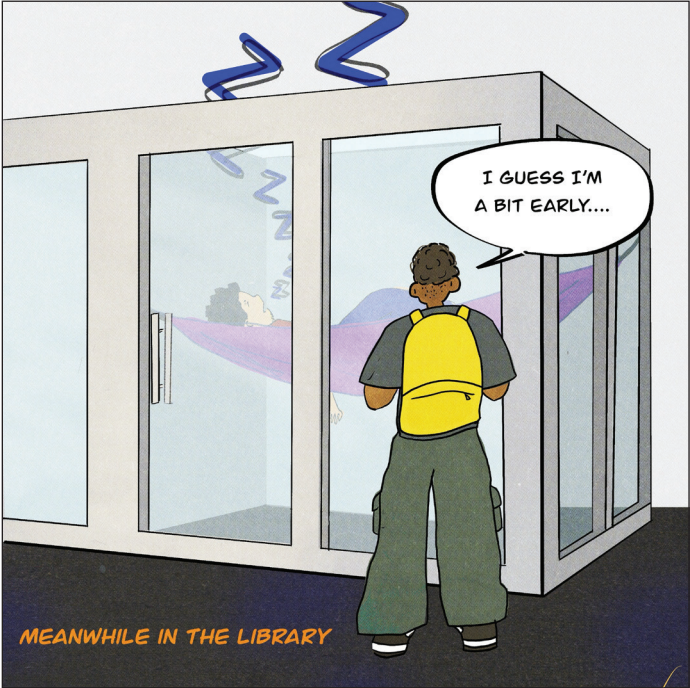
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The Shorthorn: Mabel Cruz

Artisan Vapor and CBD Collins vape shop sits on North Collins Street on Sept. 15 in Arlington. Gov. Greg Abbott's executive order was signed on Sept. 10 and does not ban sales of products containing delta-9 THC.

Arlington

A weekly comic illustrating
Arlington life by The
Shorthorn design desk.



The Shorthorn: Jordan Johnson

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The Shorthorn: Elvis Martinez-Cartagena

Arlington police officer Robert Bresser, 46, drips sweat during the second annual Steps of Valor on Sept. 11 at Maverick Stadium. Bresser said it's great that Kappa Sigmas' event honors fallen officers and firefighters.



The Shorthorn: Elvis Martinez-Cartagena

Accounting freshman Colton Mack ascends the stairs while junior Rafan Haider descends during the second annual Steps of Valor on Sept. 11 at Maverick Stadium. The event aimed to honor heroes through service, remembrance and community support.



The Shorthorn: Elvis Martinez-Cartagena

Mechanical engineering freshman Noah Vo jogs up stairs during the second annual Steps of Valor on Sept. 11 at Maverick Stadium. Wristbands and shirts commemorating 9/11 were available at the event.

MEMORIAL

Arlington, UTA climb to remember 9/11

At Maverick Stadium, Kappa Sigma and the community honored the fallen.

ELVIS MARTINEZ-CARTAGENA
The Shorthorn staff

The thud of sneakers against metal bleachers echoed through Maverick Stadium as rows of students, police officers and community members moved in unison. Sweat poured down foreheads, hands pressed against railings and breaths quickened, but step-by-step, participants climbed 110 stories. Kappa Sigma honored the first responders who scaled the towers of the World Trade Center on 9/11. The stadium transformed into a living memorial as participants retraced the

sacrifice of firefighters and officers who ascended into chaos 24 years ago.

Event organizer Brandon Spears said firefighters carried 100 pounds of gear up 2,000 stairs during 9/11 not knowing whether they would make it out alive.

“Imagine you’re a firefighter with the smoke, the chaos, the debris, the people running, the screaming,” Spears said.

He said there are people who were not alive when 9/11 happened, so it’s special to have an event that honors first responders.

“I don’t ever want what happened to get lost to history,” he said.

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The Shorthorn: Elvis Martinez-Cartagena

Above: Marketing junior Austin Mathews places his hand on economics junior Joaquin Evaro upon reaching the top of the stairs during the second annual Steps of Valor on Sept. 11 at Maverick Stadium. Mathews said he participated in the event for his grandfather, a World War II veteran, who passed a while ago.



The Shorthorn: Elvis Martinez-Cartagena

Left: Finance and psychology senior Lino Gandara climbs steps with worn in shoes during the second annual Steps of Valor on Sept. 11 at Maverick Stadium. Gandara said that he participated to pay respects to the lives of first responders and the families who were affected.

EDITORIAL

Cut voting barriers, not polling sites

Lawmakers should pivot their focus to increase turnout during off-year elections

Students, working citizens and individuals facing transportation challenges often have limited time and opportunities to vote. For some, removing a specific voting site may prohibit them from reaching the polls at all.

In August, the Tarrant County Commissioners Court voted along party lines to cut over 100 polling sites for the Nov. 4 election, decreasing voter accessibility. Officials said the cuts were cost-saving measures prompted by low voter turnout at certain sites and during less prominent elections.

The Shorthorn Editorial Board believes that cutting polling sites will only worsen already low voter turnout during off-year elections. Lawmakers should focus on increasing voter turnout instead of cost-saving measures that reduce polling sites.

November's ballot includes a special election in parts of Tarrant County for 17 proposed constitutional amendments and Texas Senate District 9. Elections like these, with less widely known figures or positions at play, tend to have a lower voter turnout than midterm or presidential elections.

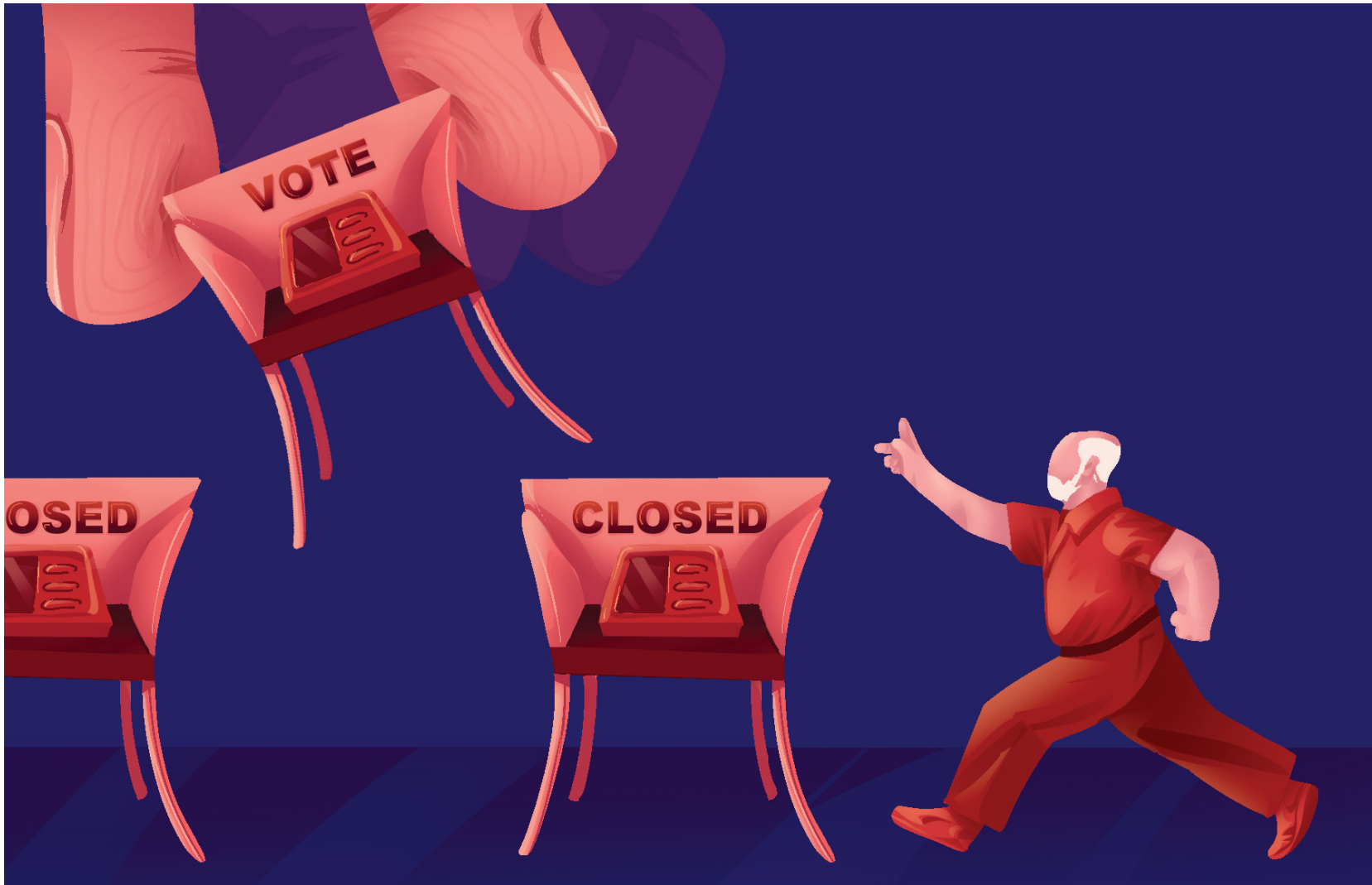
Under the November election's shortened list of polling sites, Election Day will have 215 locations — down from last year's 350. Early voting sites will decrease to 35, down from the 51 open during the 2024 presidential election. The list also cuts the Maverick Activities Center, UTA's usual polling location.

Legally, Tarrant County is required to have at least 212 Election Day voting sites. Clinton Ludwig, Tarrant County elections administrator, said in a meeting that the number of sites that the commissioners passed is the "bare minimum."

In order to make voting as accessible as possible, commissioners should provide more polling sites than the minimum. On paper, cutting a polling location, especially one that is already close to another site, wouldn't make a big impact. However, that's not always the case.

The Tarrant County Subcortthouse in Arlington, which will be a polling site during the upcoming election, is often perceived as an alternative to the Maverick Activities Center, but the additional distance may significantly inconvenience voters.

The subcourthouse is around 0.8



The Shorthorn: Haley Walton

miles away from the University Center, an 18-minute walk, according to Google Maps. That means walking to and from the subcourthouse would take around 36 minutes, which isn't including the time actually spent at the polling site.

THE ISSUE:

Lawmakers are not considering voter accessibility enough when determining polling sites.

WE THINK:

Cutting polling sites will only worsen already low voter turnout during odd year elections.

TAKE ACTION:

Lawmakers should focus on increasing voter turnout, not cost-saving measures that reduce polling sites.

Due to packed schedules, some students, faculty, staff and residents may not have that time available.

"UTA to the Arlington subcourt-

house is a hike when you're walking," said Alisa Simmons, Tarrant County Precinct 2 commissioner, during a meeting. "We should be encouraging participation in our democracy, not putting up barriers."

Tarrant County has not announced any plans for free election transportation services, which it has provided in past elections, to make up for the increased distance between polling sites. It is still possible for transportation services to offer free Election Day rides without collaboration from the county.

Even with access to transportation, staying on campus and voting at the Maverick Activities Center is a noticeable convenience for students, faculty or citizens who may reside or work close to the site.

In terms of finance, Ludwig said cutting polling sites could save more than \$1 million. Commissioners did not clarify where that money would go, and prioritizing funds over voter accessibility does not reflect the good of citizens.

The county is not facing any clear fiscal concerns, so cutting sites

under the guise of saving money appears unnecessary. The county has the same amount of money to run voting centers that it had in 2023 and 2024 without impacting residents, Simmons said in an interview with The Shorthorn.

"The cost is not the real issue here. It's voter suppression," she said.

The effort being made to cut polling sites should be put toward creating awareness campaigns to help increase elections with low voter turnouts. Simmons said Dallas County, which runs TV, radio and streaming advertisements educating residents before elections, sets a good example.

In a meeting last year, Tarrant County Judge Tim O'Hare said he "doesn't believe it is the county government's responsibility" to help more people reach polling sites. The National Association of Counties stated in a document explaining the roles of county commissioners that the most important thing for incumbents to do is remain in touch with constituents.

Based on community response, the commissioners court has not succeeded in that. In the August meeting

where the new list of sites was passed, an overwhelming majority of residents present voiced concerns with the list before the vote, but commissioners still voted the list in on the same day.

While budgeting is important, when it comes to determining polling locations, county officials should prioritize voter accessibility above all else and look beyond turnout statistics. Even if not many people use a polling site, commissioners should be more intentional before cutting it down.

For some voters, a polling site may not just be a random location they can replace — it could be their only door to participating in the Democratic process, and county commissioners may have just locked it.

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ABOUT SPORTS

Kale Ivie, editor
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Wednesday, September 17, 2025

SPORTS

THE SHORTHORN

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The Shorthorn: Samarie Goffney

UTA volleyball players Mav Up before a game against the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on Sept. 13 at College Park Center. The team won eight consecutive games.

SPORTS

Mavericks secure first win at home

UTA volleyball co-hosted the invitational with the University of North Texas



The Shorthorn: Samarie Goffney

Graduate libero Alondra Hernandez cheers with her teammates after scoring against the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on Sept. 13 at College Park Center. UTA won the game 3-1.



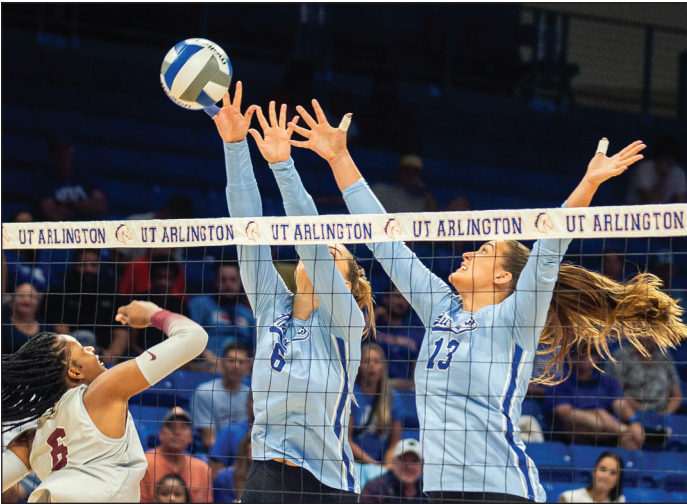
The Shorthorn: Samarie Goffney

Alexis Bull, redshirt sophomore middle blocker, sets the ball during a game against the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on Sept. 13 at College Park Center. Bull had two kills.



The Shorthorn: Samarie Goffney

Head coach Tania Schatow cheers on the team during a game against the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on Sept. 13 at College Park Center. Schatow is the new head coach of the UTA volleyball team.



The Shorthorn: Samarie Goffney

Sophie Ocampo, redshirt junior outside hitter, middle, and Alexis Bull, redshirt sophomore middle blocker, attempt to block the ball during a game against the University of Arkansas at Little Rock on Sept. 13 at College Park Center. Ocampo had six kills.



PAIGE BUECKERS

The remarkable rookie season

BY KALE IVIE
The Shorthorn sports editor

Paige Bueckers has wrapped up her rookie season with the Dallas Wings, leaving a mark on the booming industry of women's sports. Bueckers had an impressive basketball career at the University of Connecticut, having won a national championship and multiple national player of the year awards. She joined the Wings as the No.1 pick of the WNBA 2025 draft and broke records along the way to the season finale. As a rookie, she recorded the highest points scored by a newcomer in a single

game (44), became the fastest first-year in WNBA history to secure 500 points and 100 assists, won three Rookie of the Month awards and earned a starting position on the All-Star team. Throughout her college career and professional debut, Bueckers has consistently showcased her potential. Known for her humility and team-first mentality, she has already made a significant impact on the Wings franchise and women's professional basketball. After her final game for the Wings in her rookie season, Bueckers reflected on storied memories, from both the locker room and moments on the court. She

credited the people she trained with, including fellow rookies, for getting her where she is today. "To get these reps, for us as rookies especially, to just be with this group, I wouldn't trade this rookie year for anything," Bueckers said. Bueckers acknowledged critics who might question her optimism, saying, "People can look at the results and say, 'How can you be so happy with a 10-win season?'" Still, she said she'll look back on her rookie year with gratitude for the foundation it helped build. Her impact extends beyond the court. Her connections with teammates, fans and

those around her inspired many. WNBA fans cherish her as a role model, and she brought increased attention to the league upon graduating from the University of Connecticut. "I've been through a lot of adversity at UConn," Bueckers said. "You see the progression and the strength that it continues to build for you as an individual, but as a collective as well, and how much that does for you in the long run." *Tracy Sansom contributed to this article.*

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