

# CITY|STATE

HOUSTON CHRONICLE • PAGE A3

## Texas church targets racism

### Episcopal Diocese launches \$13 million project for healing

By Robert Downen  
STAFF WRITER

More than 160 years after it elected a slave owner as its first bishop, the Episcopal Diocese of Texas is launching a \$13 million initiative aimed at healing individuals and communities "directly injured" by its history of racism.

The funding, which the diocese called unprecedented for a racial justice project, will go toward "racial reconciliation projects and scholarships" at a number of historically black colleges, seminaries and organizations in Texas. Some of it will underwrite work by the Equal Justice Initiative, a nonprofit that established a lynching memorial in Alabama.

"It's about mending the racial divide in our communities," said Bishop C. Andrew Doyle, head of the Texas diocese. "It's about naming the past but moving forward together."

Doyle, who met with 38 representatives of historic black churches to invite their collaboration and support, said in an in-

Racism continues on A8

## HISD delays metal detectors

By Jacob Carpenter  
STAFF WRITER

Houston ISD trustees shelved a request from administrators late Thursday to authorize up to \$3 million for metal detectors, arguing district officials need to provide more concrete recommendations and plans for school security before the board votes to allocate money for the machines.

The board's decision comes as Interim Superintendent Genita Lathan's administration continues to solicit feedback and analyze security protocols following last month's on-campus fatal shooting of Bellaire High School student Cesar Cortes, 19. Lathan said she has not yet decided whether to install metal detectors in some middle and high schools, but her administration wanted quick access to funds for the machines if district leaders decide to buy them.

Some trustees suggested they

Detectors continues on A9

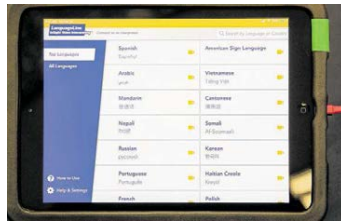
## Virtual translators to aid voters

### Harris County aims to clear up language barriers at the polls

By Zach Despart  
STAFF WRITER

Harris County residents who primarily speak Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese or 26 other languages now will have access to a virtual translator at the polls, County Clerk Diane Trautman announced Friday, part of a series of initiatives aimed at improving the county's voter participation rate.

In a nod to Harris County's diversity — more than a third of its 4.7 million residents are native



An iPad connects to interpreters who can assist in dozens of languages, including American Sign Language.

speakers of a language other than English — elected officials want to eliminate communication barriers at voting sites.

"With this innovative technology, interpreters can communicate with the voter and poll worker in real time via video chat to make the voting process easier and more accessible," Trautman said.

Flanked by county Elections Director Michael Winn, Trautman offered a demonstration of the machines at the West Gray Multi-Service Center. The tablet devices, which previously stored electronic poll books and were set to be discarded, allow a poll

Translators continues on A4

## All shook up for Valentine's Day



Irene Braxton dances to an Elvis Presley song on Friday at the Buckner Family Hope Center of Aldine in Houston. The 82-year-old said she was in her early 20s when she first danced to Elvis' music. "It makes me feel good," Braxton said. "You just forget about all your worries."

NATIVE TEXAN

## Author would lure historic Texans with chili

SAN FELIPE DE AUSTIN — If you could pick three people from the annals of Texas history and have them join you for dinner one night, who would they be?

That's the question I recently put to Stephen Harrigan, during an interview before a full house at the superb, still-new Texas history museum in this history-laden community just east of Sealy. A modest, soft-spoken man, the longtime novelist, essayist, screenwriter and Texas Monthly contributor



JOE HÖLLEY

prefers answering an interviewer's questions to pontificating before an audience or reading aloud from his new book.

If you've wandered into a Texas bookstore recently, you've seen the book. Chances are you encountered a blockbuster display of "Big Wonderful Thing: A History of Texas." The shape and heft of a small cement block, the 900-

plus-page book is Harrigan's magnum opus, a worthy successor to Ted Fehrenbach's "Lone Star," the standard general-interest Texas history for the past half century. "Big Wonderful Thing" has been out long enough for some readers to have finished it. What they no doubt discovered is what reluctant readers intimidated by the length would also discover: Harrigan has written a book that readers can dip into at almost any page and find vivid portraits and engaging

historical moments that are worth reading for themselves alone.

When I asked him toward the end of the evening about his three imaginary dinner companions, I suppose I expected him to name Sam Houston, maybe Jim Bowie or Davy Crockett, maybe LBJ. Instead, he picked three individuals a bit less well known. Chili, strangely enough, binds his fantasy guests across the centuries.

Chili continues on A4

## 2-vehicle collision kills both drivers



Officials say a spilled load of cement caused a driver to lose control of his car, jump the median and hit an SUV head-on Friday near Old Humble and Bender roads in Humble. Story on page A4.

## Bloomberg offers regret over stop-and-frisk policy

By Jeremy Wallace  
and Jasper Scherer  
AUSTIN BUREAU

Democratic presidential candidate Mike Bloomberg used a rally at Houston's Buffalo Soldiers National Museum to tell a predominantly black audience that he "deeply regrets" ever supporting the controversial stop-and-frisk policy he employed while mayor of New York City.

Bloomberg told the audience that he knows now he was wrong to defend the policy that targeted black and Hispanic residents for pat-downs to see if they had weapons. That program has become a major stumbling block for many Democratic voters as they weigh Bloomberg's run for the White House.

"I should have acted sooner and faster to stop it, and for that I apologize," said Bloomberg, who was mayor of New York City from 2002 to 2013.

Bloomberg, who turned 78 on

Friday, said he has learned from that time, and he vowed to be the biggest champion in the White House for black and Hispanic communities.

"I am committed to using the power of the presidency to right the wrongs of institutional racism," Bloomberg told the crowd.

It was Bloomberg's fifth trip to Texas since December and his third stop in Houston. Most of those visits in Houston have been focused on the black community. But Thursday's speech was his most detailed apology yet for his support of stop and frisk.

The program has come under intense criticism since a recording came to light in which Bloomberg can be heard defending the policy by saying "we put all the cops in the minority neighborhoods" because "that's where all the crime is."

"I defended it, looking back, for too long because I didn't understand then the unintended

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