



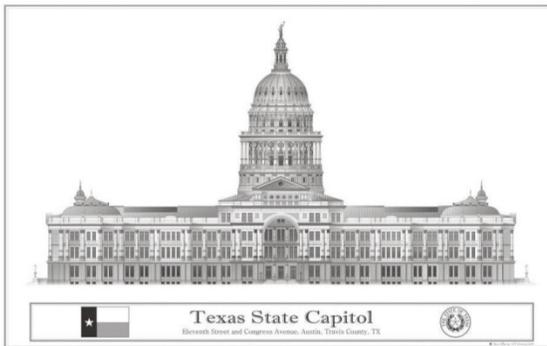
GARY

VanDeaver

STATE REPRESENTATIVE



**House District 1 - Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties**  
**District & Capitol Report - 85th Legislature**  
*September 2017*



session at NASA next summer. Interested students should go online to apply for the 2017-18 project at <http://HAS.aerospacescholars.org>.



Applications should be submitted as soon as possible since the online course begins in November. NASA has also reached out to schools and communities making them aware of this once-in-a lifetime opportunity.

***Around the District. Congratulations to Clarksville & Red River County.*** The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) have recently awarded the city of Clarksville and Red River County an airport improvement grant of \$55,000 for several repair and upgrade projects at J.D. Trissell Field.

***United States Senate Youth Program (USSYP).*** Texas will select two student leaders and two alternates to participate in an intensive week-long educational program with other students from across the nation in March 2018. Students chosen for the USSYP will be immersed in leadership activities with policy makers and elected officials in Washington, D.C., as well as receive a \$10,000 college scholarship to pursue careers in public service. For more information, see the Texas Education Agency USSYP webpage at: [www.tea.texas.gov/USSYP/](http://www.tea.texas.gov/USSYP/).

***Opportunity for HD 1 high school juniors.*** The National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA) recently reached out to my office with information about its Texas Aerospace Scholars Program for high school juniors. The program, in its 18th year, is a combined online science-technology-engineering-math (STEM) intensive program that culminates with a week-long onsite, expenses paid

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**Prescribed burns.** The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) will be conducting prescribed burns in the Pat Mayse Wildlife Management Area between October 20, 2017 and January 18, 2018. The TPWD announcement cautions that residents and visitors to the area may see smoke in neighborhoods and on roads so it urges caution when driving and reminds drivers to use their headlights and to slow down when smoke is present. If you have any questions, please contact Eric Clewis, with TPWD, at 903-905-2207 or [eric.clewis@tpwd.texas.gov](mailto:eric.clewis@tpwd.texas.gov). You can also sign up to receive text messages in advance of the burns by texting 81010 and including the message "@pmburn."

**Longview Education Summit.** Longview ISD hosted an education summit on September 14th, so area school administrators could hear directly from state legislators about the recent regular and special legislative sessions. I was pleased to attend along with my House colleagues Reps. Ashby (Lufkin) and Dean (Longview), as well as Senator Hughes (Mineola). Some of the issues discussed included the relationship between local property tax rates and flaws in our school finance system. As Rep. Dean said: "We can't really begin to talk about true tax reform. . . until we get this public education funding fixed." Another issue discussed by the superintendents was the importance of increasing voter turnout.

**Around the Capitol. October voter registration deadline & November constitutional amendment election.** As stated in the August E-newsletter, October 10, is the deadline to register to vote in this fall's general election when Texans will decide on the latest proposed seven constitutional amendments.



Here is a link to the Texas Secretary of State's website for more information about registering to

vote: <https://www.votetexas.gov/>.

Last month, I provided information about Propositions 1, 2 & 3, so here is a brief summary of Props 4 & 5:

**Proposition 4 (SJR 6)** - authorizing the legislature to require a court to provide notice to the attorney general of a challenge to the constitutionality of a state statute and authorizing the legislature to prescribe a waiting period before the court may enter a judgment holding the statute unconstitutional.

**Proposition 5 (HJR 100)** - allowing professional sports team to conduct charitable raffles.

The October E-newsletter will include information about the remaining two propositions (Prop 6 & Prop 7). Also, here is a link to the House Research Organization's (HRO) analysis of the amendments: <http://www.hro.house.state.tx.us/pdf/focus/amend85.pdf>.

**Speaker issues Hurricane Harvey-related interim charges.** Texas House Speaker Joe Straus (San Antonio) has issued five interim charges to House Committees to begin studying the immediate and long-range impacts of Hurricane Harvey:

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(Image from space by NASA.)

- **Committee on Appropriations:** Examine the use of federal funds by state agencies responding to the effects of Harvey and identify opportunities to

maximize the use of federal funds to reduce the impact of future natural disasters. Also identify the need for state resources to respond to Hurricane Harvey relief and recovery efforts, as well as opportunities for state investment in infrastructure projects that will reduce the impact of future natural disasters.

- **Committee on Natural Resources:** Examine the following issues within the committee's jurisdiction regarding Harvey and flooding in general: the role of regional entities in developing projects to control flooding, both through new infrastructure and enhancing existing infrastructure; mitigation efforts that would reduce the impact of future flood events, and strategies to fund those efforts; and the response of public entities that own or operate dams to large-scale rain events, including how such entities make decisions regarding dam and reservoir operations during such events, coordinate with state and local emergency management officials, and communicate with the public.

- **Committee on Public Education:**
  - Determine, to the extent possible, the scope of financial losses, including facilities that resulted from Harvey. Recommend possible state actions, such as changes to student counts or property valuation, to mitigate any negative impact on districts and ensure

governance structures and parameters allow for effective responses.

- Recommend any measures needed at the state level to prevent unintended punitive consequences to both students and districts in the state accountability system as a result of Harvey and its aftermath.
- Examine the educational opportunities offered to students displaced by Harvey throughout the state and the process by which districts enroll and serve those students. Recommend any changes that could improve the process for students or help districts serving a disproportionate number of displaced students.

I am privileged to serve on both the House Committee on Appropriations and the House Committee on Public Education, and I look forward to listening and learning about what the state can do to not only help our fellow Texans recover from the current crisis and devastation from Hurricane Harvey, but to also prepare for the state's next major disaster. Meetings will begin in early October, and I will be sure to keep my constituents informed about our meetings. As always, you can keep up with legislative activities and committee meetings through the Texas Legislature Online link at <http://www.capitol.texas.gov/>. Additionally, here is a helpful link from the governor's office about Hurricane Harvey that also includes links to the Salvation Army and Red Cross if you can make donations to help the victims of this historic event: <https://gov.texas.gov/hurricane>.

**Legislative summaries.** Several key agencies have issued post-legislative summaries of changes to their operations. If interested, you can access the TxDOT summary at: <http://ftp.dot.state.tx.us/pub/txdot-info/sla/85th-legislative-summary.pdf>, as well as the state

comptroller's office summary in this month's edition of *Fiscal Notes* at:

<https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/fiscal-notes/2017/september/budget.php#article>.

The Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) has updated the *Texas Driver Handbook* that highlights important driving laws and is available at:

<http://www.dps.texas.gov/internetforms/FormDetail.aspx?Id=304&FormNumber=DL-7.pdf>.

***My office is here to help.*** I thank each of you for letting me serve you as your state representative. Please contact either the District office (903-628-0361) or Capitol office (512-463-0692) if there is anything you think we can do to help you.