



State Representative Lyle Larson
TX HD-122

04.12.2011

Weekly Recap #13

What's new in District 122

As many of you know, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT) have been custodians of the Alamo complex since 1905. We are grateful for their dedicated service and countless volunteer hours to preserve and promote the #1 tourist attraction in Texas. As discussed in previous newsletters, I have been working with the DRT over the past few weeks to craft legislation to address concerns dealing with their custodianship. The committee substitute to HB 3726 was heard in the Culture, Recreation & Tourism Committee last week, and will be sent to the House Floor for a vote very soon. This bill requires the DRT to submit annual financial reports to the state, and sets up a preservation advisory board comprised of representatives from the city, county, and state levels. We believe this will bolster the Daughters' financial and preservation efforts and help them to continue the wonderful work they've done for over 100 years.

Several of our bills were heard in committee last week and all were very well received. We will continue to work to pass our tent jail bill, EPA push back legislation and ending diversions from the state gas tax fund.

On Wednesday of this week, the House will vote on **HB 279**, legislation that will strengthen property rights by limiting instances in which entities can take property using eminent domain.

Again this week, 3 of our bills will be heard in committee. They include:

- **HB 1553:** For decades, Texas taxpayers have speculated how much the state spends to provide state services to illegal immigrants. Estimates for this figure are as high as \$8 billion. HB 1553 would require every agency, individual, nonprofit organization, and public or private entity that receives state funding to determine citizenship information before rendering services, and later report citizenship and cost of services to the Comptroller. In order to hold other countries accountable for hosting their citizens, real, true numbers – not estimates - are necessary. Upon gaining

documentation of how much Texas spends providing services to undocumented immigrants, the Comptroller can draft an invoice to send these countries' governments, demanding reimbursement for services rendered. This strategy will be applied to every country in the world whose citizens are here illegally. To use Mexico as an example, if they are unwilling or unable to provide money, we should accept payment in the form of resources such as oil and minerals. Mexico, the 2nd largest exporter of oil to the U.S., is rich in minerals like oil and gas, though much of it hasn't been developed. The United States could facilitate the extraction of mineral resources as payment for hosting Mexican citizens, while creating jobs for folks in Mexico.

- **HB 1302:** Our own intuition and numerous studies tell us that elected representatives are more accountable and far more likely to do what we, the voters, want because they risk being thrown out of office if they don't. In Texas, most industries are regulated by different state agencies, many of which are lead by a board or commission appointed by the governor. For some agencies, this process seems to be sufficient, but for other agencies, especially those that oversee our basic needs, such as energy, water and transportation infrastructure, voters should choose the regulators. HB 1302 would abolish the Public Utility Commission (PUC), transfer its duties to the Railroad Commission (RRC) and rename the RRC the Texas Energy and Communications Commission (TECC). Many people have long questioned the Public Utility Commission's lack of transparency and lack of accountability to Texans. Since 1991, there have been several legislative efforts to consolidate and streamline the PUC and Railroad Commission (RRC). With the PUC slated for Sunset review this session and as Texas faces a daunting \$27 billion shortfall, the 82nd Legislative Session is the optimal time to pursue and achieve this change.
- **HB 2348:** A "paper-ready" inmate is awaiting transfer to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's Institutional Division (TDCJ-ID) following a conviction of a felony or revocation of probation. There are approximately 250 "paper-ready" inmates in the Bexar County jail. TDCJ-ID has 45 days to transfer a "paper-ready" inmate from the county jail to a state facility. HB 2348 would allow these inmates to be held in county facilities without being subject to TCJS standards. This bill would save Bexar County money because TCJS standards are more costly and stringent than standards for state inmates.

If you wish to testify for any of these bills, please contact my office as soon as possible at (512) 463-0646!

At the Capitol



With Senator Wentworth and members of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas



Meeting with military leadership about base protection measures

If we may be of assistance to you, please feel free to contact our Capitol office at (512) 463-0646 or lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us. Please continue to let us hear from you!

Best,