



State Representative Lyle Larson
TX HD-122

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Weekly Recap #21
What's new in District 122

We're one week into the Special Session. We're looking for the light at the end of the tunnel! The Senate is moving quickly and has passed several bills that the House will consider this week. The first, SB 7, which creates strategies for improvements and efficiencies in the quality of health care provided through various state programs, will be voted on tomorrow. Also on the agenda is SB 1, the new fiscal matters bill, which failed to pass due to a filibuster in the Senate the night before Sine Die. SB 2, another key appropriations bill and SB 13, which will achieve Medicaid reform, will also be considered. The Governor has also added congressional redistricting and reforming the Texas Wind Insurance Agency to his special session call.

When we're not in Austin for the Special Session, we've been moving into our new district office! We plan to host constituents for a grand opening later this month, so we'll keep you posted.

Recap of the 82nd Legislative Session

While we will need to stay in Austin for a few more weeks to address some unfinished business, the Legislature can be proud of its many accomplishments. Several pieces of legislation that our office worked to pass are currently awaiting the Governor's signature:

- **SB 341 the "Fix BexarMet Bill":** After years of fiscal mismanagement by the utility's board and inability to provide adequate delivery of water and waste water services, a solution to this ongoing problem is long overdue. For several years, we've worked with stakeholders and constituents served by BexarMet to develop a solution that incorporates their needs and addresses their concerns. This bill will allow BexarMet ratepayers to decide whether they wish to dissolve the BexarMet board of directors and receive water and waste water service from SAWS, or to continue with the status quo. The election could be held as early as this coming November.

- **SB 988 Creation of a Cyber Security Council:** SB 988 would create a "Cyber Security, Education, and Economic Development Council." The Council would develop synergy between governmental agencies, businesses, and institutions of higher education to help Texas become a leader in cyber security technology. Cyber security is one of the fastest growing industries in the nation. In San Antonio, cyber security is part of an information technology sector whose local economic impact in 2008 was \$8 billion, according to a study distributed by the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce. This council will help Texas become a leader in cyber security technology and set an example for the rest of the nation.
- **SB 1543 Helping school districts with their investment strategy:** This bill will allow public school districts to invest in corporate bonds to provide them with an additional tool to use in their investment strategy. This bill is permissive, it would only allow districts to use this method of investment if they choose to. This measure is already available to public universities.
- **HB 3726 Helping the DRT manage the Alamo:** As discussed in previous newsletters, I have been working with the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT) over the past few weeks to craft legislation to address concerns dealing with their custodianship. 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.
- **HB 3597 Super PIDs:** Authorizes certain public improvement districts (PIDs) to annex land and issue bonds on hotel occupancy tax revenue. Cibolo Canyons is one of these PIDs, and is home to the world's largest JW Marriott hotel.
- **HB 1499 Historic designation of roads comprising the Old Spanish Trail in north western Bexar County:** HB 1499 would designate a group of roads that were part of the Old Spanish Trail as the "Scenic Loop Road--Boerne Stage Road--Toutant Beauregard Road Historic Corridor."

The following pieces of legislation were drafted and passed by majorities of both houses of the Legislature to reflect the desires of our constituents who voted to send us to the Capitol last November.

- **Budget:** On opening day of the Legislative Session in January, we knew we were facing a daunting \$25 billion shortfall. We also knew that voters sent us to Austin to make tough decisions, while ensuring that we didn't neglect the state's most important functions, including public schools and universities, mentally ill and nursing homes. We passed a two year budget totaling \$172.3 billion, a \$10 billion decrease from current spending levels.
- **Tort Reform:** HB 274, the "Loser Pays" bill, will allow a judge to make a loser in a civil case pay legal fees for the prevailing side. This measure should reduce the amount of the frivolous lawsuits filed in Texas.
- **Election Reforms:** Several measures that will ensure integrity in elections in Texas were passed this Session. Citizens will now be required to show a valid form of identification when voting, as required by SB 14, the Voter ID bill. SB 100 will improve the ability of military personnel who are overseas to vote in elections.

- **2nd Amendment Protections:** The Legislature passed SB 321 which allows concealed handgun licensees to store their firearms in their vehicles while parked on private property. We also passed SB 766 which provides a mechanism to identify sports shooting ranges whose operations needed to be corrected or closed, but would protect ranges who met best practices and accepted industry safety standards.
- **Eminent Domain:** SB 18, which provides greater protection for property owners from government condemnation, was passed this Session.
- **Veterans:** The Legislature approved SB 516, which allows the surviving spouse of a totally disabled veteran to continue to receive the property tax exemption for a residential homestead after the veteran's death. We also passed SB 201, which allows a totally disabled veteran's property tax exemption to move with the veteran. The bill would allow a qualifying disabled veteran who sells their old home and purchases a new one to continue to use their property tax exemption for the duration of the year.
- **State Sovereignty:** Several House Resolutions affirming Texas as a sovereign state as guaranteed by the 10th amendment were passed by the House. Our EPA push back bill, known as HB 3188, was passed as an amendment to the fiscal matters bill, SB 1811, but was removed in conference committee. While we were unsuccessful with this measure and a few others, we will continue fighting unfair intrusion from the federal government.
- **Ethics Reform:** The House passed HB 1616, which strengthens the reporting requirements of political contributions and expenditures.

We will continue to keep you informed of the Legislature's action on a weekly basis as the Special Session continues. In the meantime, please contact us if you have any questions or concerns, or feel free to visit our district office beginning June 13th. The office is located at 14607 San Pedro, Suite #180, just north of the Bitters Exit on the southbound side of 281 in San Antonio.

At the Capitol



Working on budget legislation with fellow House members.



Greeting family members of a fallen soldier from District 122 at the Legislature's Memorial Day ceremony honoring those who lost their lives defending our freedom.

If we may be of assistance to you, please feel free to contact our Capitol office at (512) 463-0646, our District Office at (210) 402-5402 or by email at lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us. Please continue to let us hear from you!

Best,