

Texas House of Representatives



Lyle Larson

State Representative - District 122

What's new in District 122

Congratulations to all whose children are returning back to school after an enjoyable summer. Best wishes for a great school year! Team Larson is finishing up a very productive summer. Last month, we spoke before the Public Affairs Committee of the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, the San Antonio Transportation Association, the Texas Economic Development and Energy Summit, and the 9th Annual West Texas Legislative Summit. We also met with a group of San Antonio neonatal physicians regarding Medicaid cuts and other challenges and the Upper Guadalupe River Authority about water issues in the Hill Country.

Tired of the long lines at the Driver's License office? Relief is on the way!

Many of you have written and called my office about long lines at the DPS Driver's License offices in San Antonio. Some have reported waiting several hours in line to renew their licenses or make minor changes. Fortunately, we're all about to experience some long awaited relief. Next month, the DPS will open its brand new San Antonio megacenter in Leon Valley. The megacenter will be larger than a regular Driver's License office, including expanded parking, and is expected to relieve other San Antonio offices and greatly reduce wait times in the area.

The San Antonio megacenter has been in the works since the 82nd Legislature appropriated \$63 million to hire 266 additional DPS employees and open six new driver's license mega centers, including two in the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex; two in the Houston area; one in the Austin area; and one in the San Antonio area. Such expansions have been necessary to deal with the rapidly growing population in Texas—between 2000 and 2010, Texas' population increased by over 4 million. The San Antonio-area megacenter will have 36 employees, and will be able to conduct 600-800 transactions per day, which is significantly more than the current highest-volume San Antonio office (located at Babcock Road), which can handle 385 transactions per day.

Pre-K 4 SA?

In light of the San Antonio City Council's recent decision to pursue a sales tax increase to expand pre-kindergarten in San Antonio, I wanted to share with you my concerns about the proposal. As you've likely heard, the plan, now known as "Pre-K 4 SA," entails raising the city sales tax by an eighth of a cent to the state maximum of 8.25 percent and expects to raise \$31 million annually to expand Pre-K in San Antonio over the next 8 years.

Bexar County Commissioner Kevin Wolff and I outlined our opposition to the program in a letter we sent to the Mayor and Council earlier this month. There are several points with which we disagree.

While we made clear that we don't disagree that Pre-K is worthwhile, providing for the education of our citizens is not in the purview of city government, nor does the City of San Antonio maintain the authority in its charter to provide this type of service. San Antonio boasts 19 school districts with elected boards that bear this responsibility, along with state government, which currently spends approximately \$3 billion each year in San Antonio, including Pre-K programs. The last thing the City of San Antonio needs is its own Department of Education – another unnecessary bureaucracy that simply duplicates an existing system.

Further, as a former city councilman who is very familiar with the city charter, I don't believe that the City of San Antonio has the authority to fund education. Thus, San Antonians should first be asked to amend the city charter, before authorizing the city to collect taxes for a purpose that it doesn't currently have the authority to levy.

Additionally, the City of San Antonio enjoys the distinction of being an extremely well run city that operates without collecting the maximum amount of sales taxes that it is statutorily allowed. In a time of economic uncertainty, it simply doesn't make sense to raise taxes – no matter how small the increase – just because we can.

Finally, it appears that the program will not ensure equitable taxation as residents of unincorporated Bexar County will be forced to pay the tax but will not have the ability to vote on the issue or enroll their children in the program.

For those of you who may have missed it, please read the San Antonio Express-News article about it here: [2 N. Side officers oppose pre-K proposal](#)

Thanks to all who shared your comments with me about this issue, but if you haven't yet, we want to know what you think about this proposal! Please take a moment to take [this very brief survey](#). We'll release the results next week on our Facebook page.

Meeting Recap: Interim hearing of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs

Last week, I traveled to Austin to participate in an interim hearing of the House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs. At the meeting, witnesses provided public testimony on the interim charge dealing with studies and recommendations on how the state and local governments can work together to protect our federal military installations from unnecessary encroachment while still allowing appropriate use of land near bases to be used for nonmilitary purposes. Particularly important to the San Antonio area was the testimony from the Joint Base San Antonio representative who

spoke to the developmental encroachment challenges facing Lackland and other installations in our community. All over the country and the state, residential and commercial development is increasing in areas directly surrounding military bases. Many installations were built in areas that were once remote, but are no longer due to a growing population. Development in these "accident potential zones" around bases can create challenges that threaten mission training and the viability of the base. The overall trend continues to be population increases that create unintended consequences, including lighting from surrounding development that adversely affects night training and unwanted noise from military bases. Various strategies have been undertaken to address these issues and many of you will remember our efforts to address this issue around Camp Bullis.

Ret. Col. Snodgrass advocated for consistency in policy and continuity in the joint planning processes between bases and local governments. The challenge remains to find a balance between protecting the rights of private property owners and military installations to ensure their long-term viability and we look forward to staying involved in this issue.

Protecting our state's water supply

Earlier this month, I wrote a column about the importance of starting a dialogue about the water needs with 4 of the states contiguous to Texas. Previously, we've proposed the formation of a 4-state water council tasked with working to develop solutions to water issues faced by our region. Please take a moment to read the article [linked here](#), which was printed in the Victoria Advocate.

In the News



Finishing out the summer fishing on Lake Michigan with MacArthur High School buddies.

As always, please feel free to contact me if I may ever be of assistance to you by phone at (210) 402-5402 or by email at lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyle Larson".

Lyle Larson