

Texas House of Representatives



**Lyle Larson**

State Representative - District 122

### **What's New in District 122**

Howdy folks! It's hard to believe February is already here and we're nearly a month into the 83rd Legislative Session. Things have been pretty busy under the pink dome and we've had the opportunity to meet with several constituent groups and organizations. We welcomed CASA volunteers from San Antonio, members of the Plumbing, Heating, and Cooling Subcontractors Association, the San Antonio Chapter of the American Subcontractors Association, Tex-21, Sierra Club, American Heart Association Volunteers, the United Methodist Women of San Antonio, the North Texas Crime Commission, folks from Zachry Construction, representatives from the San Antonio River Authority, and folks from the San Antonio Tenth Amendment Center.

Sen. Glen Hegar, Rep. Drew Darby and I also participated in a panel hosted by StateImpact Texas called "The Texas Water Crisis: Finding and Funding a Solution." Later that week, we traveled to the Lower Colorado River Authority Headquarters to meet with general manager Becky Motal and her staff.

Stay tuned for an announcement about the re-opening of our district office, which was closed for over 7 months due to a fire that occurred over the summer. We're still working moving and organizing the office, but we anticipate re-opening in the next few weeks.

### **83rd Legislative Session Committee Assignments**

As you may have heard, Speaker Straus announced committee assignments for the 83rd Legislative Session last Thursday. Over 40 substantive committees are charged with reviewing and fully vetting various bills filed this session. We were very fortunate to receive four committee assignments, including:

- [House Natural Resources Committee](#) (HNR), which oversees water policy statewide. We look forward to serving for a second session on HNR to work toward our overarching goal of securing Texas' water future.
- [Culture, Recreation and Tourism Committee](#) (CRT) is charged with overseeing our state park system, cultural resources and historical sites, preserving our wildlife and promoting tourism to our great state. Team Larson likes to call it the "Bubbas and Ballerinas" Committee!

- [Local and Consent Calendars Committee](#) (L&C) I was honored to be appointed Vice Chairman of the L&C Committee, which is a procedural committee that sets the calendar for local and/or non-controversial bills.
- [The Select Committee on Transparency in State Agency Operations](#) This is a new committee charged with ensuring accountability in various state agencies and foundations. We will monitor financial operations, hiring and compensation practices and purchasing decisions of these agencies. We look forward to sharing our findings with you and working toward the goal of providing the utmost accountability in state government.

### **Legislation by Larson**

We've filed a few more pieces of legislation since our last newsletter. Legislators are able to file bills until March 8. While we plan to file a few more, we're getting close to completing our legislative package. [Here](#) are the bills we've filed so far. What do you think?

#### **Protecting Our Parks by Restoring Integrity in Budgeting: HJR 40 and HB 162**

Sen. Craig Estes, Sen. Kirk Watson, Rep. Jessica Farrar and I joined several parks advocates across the state to call on legislators to announce our effort to restore integrity in our budgeting process by ensuring revenue from the sporting goods sales tax is used for its intended purpose. In 1993, the Legislature began using revenue from the sales tax on sporting goods (such as baseball bats, golf balls, tennis rackets and other various items) to fund our state park system. Unfortunately, since then, only a small fraction of this funding has been used for parks. The lion's share of the revenue is usually spent on other items, or left in the state coffers in order to certify the budget.

If we're going to restore integrity in the budgeting process, there is no better place to start than providing parks the funding that has been promised. Our state parks have a profound impact on every person who lives in or visits our great state, and they are the most visible example of how the state takes care of its most iconic Texas institutions. A bipartisan coalition in both the House and Senate has committed to work together to see this through, and we look forward to working to convince our colleagues in the Legislature to restore truth in budgeting. Please take a look at [this article](#) to read the full recap of the announcement.



### **School Finance Lawsuit**

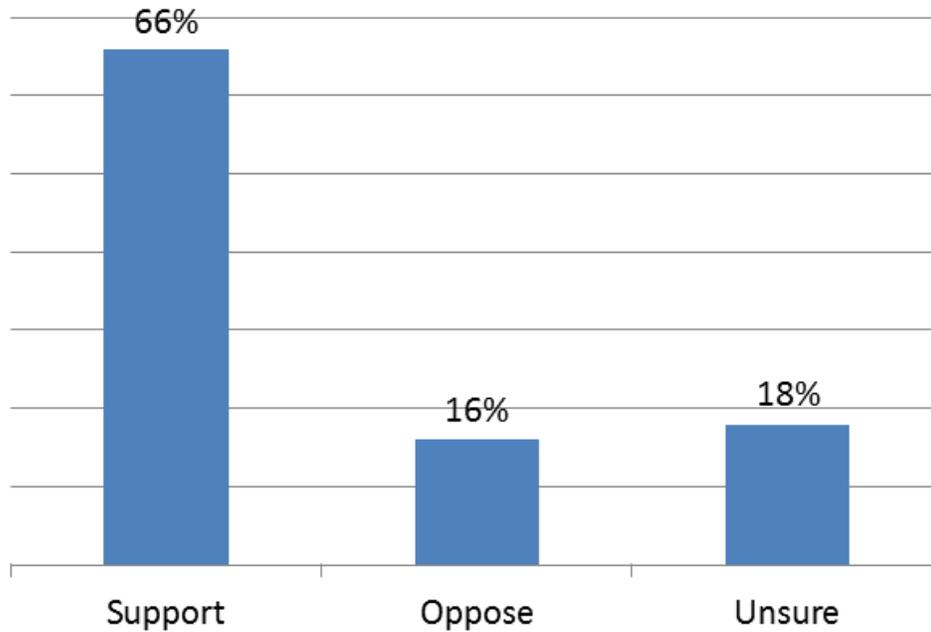
Yesterday, we received word that a state district judge [ruled in favor](#) of hundreds of Texas school districts that sued the state in 2011, claiming that the state inadequately funds public education. We understand the Attorney General will appeal the case, where it will ultimately be decided by the Texas Supreme Court. Historically, the most profound changes in law occur either when there is a budget deficit or by judicial decree. Many are speculating that the Legislature will be forced to convene a special session to redetermine how to adequately and efficiently finance public education if the Texas Supreme Court rules in favor of the school districts.

We want to know what you think about the way public education is financed in Texas. Please take a moment to share your thoughts in [this poll](#).

### **Survey Says**

Survey response As you may know, Allan Ritter, Chairman of the House Natural Resources Committee, [recently filed HB 4 and HB 11](#), which would allocate \$2 billion of the rainy day fund to develop a revolving fund to pay for water projects throughout the state. We asked you what you thought in our last newsletter. Here are the results:

House Natural Resources Chairman Allan Ritter filed legislation that would allocate \$2 billion from the state's rainy day fund to create a revolving fund to pay for water projects throughout the state. Do you support or oppose this legislation?



### Other Legislative News

Last week we coauthored [HB 553](#), the Second Amendment Protection Act, which would prevent the federal government from enacting gun control laws in Texas and [HB 46](#), which would legalize the sale of raw milk at various locations other than where it is produced, like farmers markets.

Yesterday, we honored the leadership of the Texas Municipal League with a [House Concurrent Resolution](#) recognizing Municipal Government Day at the State Capitol. City councilmembers are the shock troops of American government and we were proud to have the opportunity to thank them for all they do.



Meeting with leadership of the San Antonio River Authority.

### In the News

StateImpact Texas: [Preventing the Texas Water Plan from Becoming a Boondoggle](#)

1200 WOAI: [Larson: SAWS would benefit from Rainy Day Fund Water Plan](#)

Dallas Morning News: [Texas state parks may face closure in proposed budget cuts](#)

Austin American-Statesman: [Austin senator wants public vote on budget trick](#)

San Antonio Express-News: [Committee named to review agencies' financial activities](#)

Texas Tribune: [Bill Aims to Stop Diverting Funds Meant for State Parks](#)

Associated Press: [Bipartisan group promises end to diverting funds](#)

Corpus Christi Caller Times: [Water resources becoming more valuable in Corpus Christi, statewide](#)

Amarillo Globe-News: [Texas lawmakers leave immigration reform debate to feds](#)

StateImpact Texas: [Governor Joins Chorus for Water Funding](#)

The Daily Texan: [State legislators propose plan for conserving water during state drought](#)

StateImpact Texas: [Water for Texas: Lawmakers Say State Needs More Than Money](#)

Waco Tribune: [Bill Whitaker: Truth in budgeting, Texas-style](#)

Houston Chronicle: [Gov's security travel tab just keeps rising](#)

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](mailto:lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us).

Best,

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

Lyle Larson