



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JAMES WHITE

CORRECTIONS - CHAIR
INTERNATIONAL TRADE &
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

DISTRICT 19
HARDIN, JASPER
NEWTON, POLK, TYLER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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State Representative James White Votes for Foster Care Reform
- Weekly Legislative Update 3/7/17 -

(Austin, TX) - I proudly voted in favor of two reforms to foster care that will greatly enhance the protection of our Texas children. In collaboration with my colleagues, the Texas House showed their commitment to providing the necessary reform to Child Protective Services (CPS) by approving House Bill (HB) 4, which provides additional monetary assistance for family members (kinship care) who care for a child who has been removed from his or her home, and House Bill 5, which makes the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) a stand-alone agency with a Commissioner appointed by the Governor.

Protecting children from abuse is one of our most basic and core government functions. The Texas House is focused on offering a different vision of foster care that includes funding and systematic changes. However, I believe that there is still more improvement needed. Therefore, I will continue to push various bills currently on my legislative agenda that will encourage communication between state agencies that overlap in jurisdiction and strengthen the protection of children in the foster care system.

This week, I was honored to once again participate in the Texas Legislative Black Caucus (TLBC) Legislative Summit. As part of the summit, TLBC Members are able to award scholarships to three students from their legislative district. The recipients this year included Josiah Atkinson of Batson, Michelle Machuca of Livingston, and Marcus Ruckett of Silsbee. Not all the scholarship recipients were present at the event and I hope to visit with them back in the district in the near future. In addition, I was honored to award Byron Lyons of Livingston with an Outstanding Texan Award from the TLBC.

I was proud to welcome various constituents to their State Capitol. The office saw visits from many law enforcement officers who were in attendance as part of Sheriffs and Constables Day at the State Capitol. Suzie Adams and Shawn Loring from Escapees RV Club also came by to meet



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with me in regards to the interests of the senior citizens that live in the escapee park in Polk county.

Prairie View A&M students dropped in to visit with me to discuss their legislative priorities and emphasize the importance of higher education. I am proud of these students and even prouder to share my alma mater with them.

Lastly, I took members and staff of the House Corrections Committee on a tour of the women's prison in Lockhart, TX. We gained insight from the staff about job training, alcohol and substance abuse programs, educational opportunities, and the overall security posture of this facility. More important, we listened to inspirational testimonies from these incarcerated women about their challenges and how these programs offered effective rehabilitation. It is one thing to read bills and reports. It is another thing to listen to committee testimony. However, it is highly beneficial for legislators to travel throughout the state and do on-site visits of the agencies they oversee.

The Capitol of Texas belongs to you and visiting the Capitol during the biennial legislative session is a great experience. To assist in arranging your visit please call Saul Mendoza, my Chief of Staff, at (512) 463-0490 or at saul.mendoza@house.texas.gov.

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