



Dear Friends,

The first 60 days of session are behind us and today is the last day to file bills in the Texas House. Our office has been busy filing our final bills this week and as of this newsletter, we've officially filed over 70 bills! Here's a few we've filed recently:

House Bill 1739: Victim's Rights Bill - Survivors of sexual assault and related sex crimes can regularly face institutional barriers and poor treatment by those working in the criminal justice system. This bill aims to empower survivors within the criminal justice process by granting a victim or their representative the right, if requested, to be informed about the Statewide Electronic Tracking System for forensic evidence (rape kits) and to confer with the prosecuting attorney about the disposition of their case.

House Bill 1743: For Texans leaving the criminal justice system with no means to afford groceries, not receiving SNAP benefits in a timely manner leads to hunger and undermines their reentry. HB 1743 would allow an upcoming discharged inmate to apply for supplemental nutrition assistance program benefits at least 45 days but not more than 60 days before their release date. HB 1743 makes no changes to the eligibility requirements and does not provide to automatic enrollment – it merely allows people who are incarcerated to apply for benefits once they have a release date. This will support the reentry process and help reduce recidivism by allowing formerly incarcerated individuals to meet their basic needs.

House Bill 4598: Although we made big strides last session, catalytic converter theft continues to be a major problem with recent years seeing an increase of more than 1000% in catalytic converter theft. HB 4598 seeks to build upon HB 4110 from the 87th legislative session by increasing the penalty for this crime as well as equipping law enforcement with the tools they need to find and arrest the perpetrators.

TEXAS HOUSE PRIORITY BILLS

There are a number of bills that have been deemed by the Texas House as priority bills. Over the next few weeks, I'll highlight a couple of these bills in detail.

[House Bill 2](#): The Property Tax Relief Act will provide Texans with actual and sustainable property tax relief, while also protecting our economic stability as a state. House Bill 2 by Rep. Morgan Meyer will lower school district property taxes by 28% and reduce the limit on annual appraisal increases to 5% for ALL types of property in the state. Additionally, HB2 safeguards property owners from price shock of rapidly rising rates.

[House Bill 9](#): This bill will establish the Texas Broadband Infrastructure Fund, expanding the state's framework for improving broadband connectivity across the state. The fund would oversee the state's broadband development program as well as make a number of investments such as supporting critical programs, including 911 services and school safety initiatives and eliminating costly and oftentimes unnecessary fees that are passed on to the consumer. The Texas Legislature would have guidance over the appropriations of the new fund and maintain flexibility to address the evolving technology and consumer needs. Texas voters would sign off on this proposal on the ballot — if approved, the measure would dedicate \$5 billion toward this effort (House Joint Resolution 125)

THIS WEEK AT THE TEXAS CAPITOL

The committee I chair, the House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence meets every Wednesday at 8am and hears a number of unique and very important bills. We were proud to unanimously vote our first bill out of committee this past week. It was [House Bill 44A6](#) by Representative Tom Craddick which will remove the words "mentally retarded" and "mental retardation" from statute. We passed this bill out of the Texas House last session too and we know that this session we will get it over the finish line and remove these hurtful and derogatory words from statute once and for all.



I also had the privilege of welcoming Frisco ISD students to the Capitol. I enjoyed spending time with them and answering their questions about how the Texas House works. These bright young men and women are the future of this great State and I can't wait to see the impact they will make!



Things are heating up in the Texas House so be sure to tune in next week as we gavel back in at 2pm on Monday and then 10am Tuesday through Thursday.

Have a great weekend friends!

All My Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Leach". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeff" and last name "Leach" clearly legible.

Jeff Leach

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