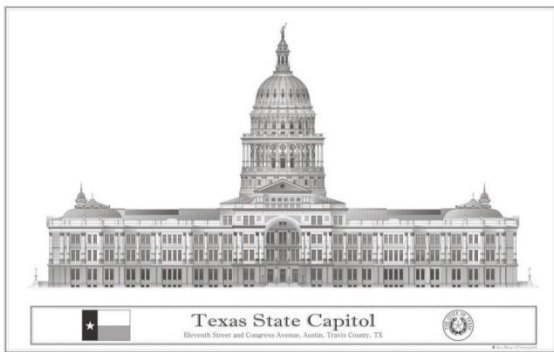




House District 1 - Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties
District & Capitol Report - 85th Legislature
June 2018



Colton Bradford & Rep. VanDeaver at his District office in New Boston.

names to the Coordinating Board if they do not have a constituent student who was interested in the TASSP. I appreciate everyone's interest in this program.

Around the District. Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP) nomination submitted to Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. As the state representative for House District 1, I can nominate one student to receive a \$4000 annual scholarship for college ROTC students. My office received four inquiries from interested 2018 graduating seniors across the district, so mine was not an easy decision. Earlier this month, I chose Redwater ISD's Colton Bradford as my nominee. Colton has an impressive resume of academic achievement, athletic recognition, community involvement and work experience. He will be a freshman at Angelo State University this fall. Congratulations, Colton! I wish I could have nominated all four students who applied for the TASSP, but my office has informed the other three students of other legislative offices that might be able to submit their

Three Bostons Museum and Tourist Center. Earlier this month, I had the honor of speaking at the grand opening of the new Three Bostons Museum and Tourist Center that honors the history of all three communities. The new museum building was constructed with the city's



hotel-motel tax. According to the *Texarkana Gazette*, the museum "also features an area honoring the founding settlers of the original three cities, a military room that pays tribute to local military veterans, and an outside memorial listing all local and area veterans. There also is a school room focusing on the cities' education history, as well as a concessions

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area. The museum also features a state-of-the art genealogical and family research information center."

Texarkana student visits Capitol. Ms. Lauren Friday, a sixth grader at Texas Middle School from Texarkana ISD, was at the Texas Capitol on June 27, as a part of the Education in Action program designed to expose middle school students to different activities so they can



Rep. VanDeaver and Lauren Friday at the Capitol.

become active and involved leaders in their communities. Lauren and other students were at the Capitol to visit legislative offices and talk to members and staff about what they do to study issues to make informed policy decisions.

Around the Capitol. June hearings for House

Committees. Two of the committees that I serve on held several meetings at the Capitol this month. Here is a brief summary of some of those meetings:

Select Committee on Opioids and Substance Abuse. On June 26, we heard invited testimony on two of our charges that examine the impact of "Good Samaritan" laws and the impact the opioid epidemic has had on law enforcement, first responders and hospital emergency personnel. The committee heard not only from state officials with the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), but also from local law enforcement and medical professionals across the state. The committee will meet two more times in August where we will hear public testimony prior to developing recommendations for the 86th Legislature that convenes in January 2019.

House Committee on Public Education (HPE). The committee met on two of its interim charges relating to

school safety and how a school building's design can provide a more secure environment. Nine panels of experts testified to the committee that included Mike Morath, the TEA commissioner of education, superintendents, social workers, mental health experts, representatives of the Texas School Safety Center, emergency responders, DPS and school police forces, and school architects. One area of the governor's safety plan (see link below in the governor's school safety recommendations) is calling for an increased focus on student mental health with a recognition that mental health professionals' duties in school have expanded over time to include more test-related functions rather than being a resource to help with school culture and challenges faced by students. The HPE heard from several mental health professionals that focused on the need to restructure their job functions to free up their time to help identify and serve students in need.

HPE and the House Committee on Public Health.

Members at the joint hearing heard invited and public testimony on strategies to improve school safety by having more counselors available in the schools and to free up their time to focus on counseling rather than being "test coordinators." The goal should be to use the counselors to focus their time on the needs of students rather than performing duties such as lunch and bus monitors. Unfortunately, it could cost approximately \$1 billion a year to increase the number of counselors in schools to the recommended number.

Later this fall, all of these committees will make recommendations for consideration by the 86th legislature that convenes in January 2019.

Governor's school safety recommendations. In response to the school shooting in Santa Fe ISD in May, the governor held three roundtable discussions with key stakeholders to discuss ways to help prevent such tragedies in the future. Not only did Governor Abbott hear from students, parents and staff from Santa Fe, he also included survivors of last fall's shooting at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs. On May 30, the governor released a 40-page report, *School and Firearm Safety Action Plan*, with recommendations for

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immediate ways to improve school safety prior to the start of the 2018-19 school year and other ideas that will need to be discussed by the 86th legislature next year. Here is a link to the governor's safety plan:

https://gov.texas.gov/uploads/files/press/School_Safety_Action_Plan_05302018.pdf. One of the immediate safety measures rolled out is the *iWatch Texas* mobile application that the public can use to report suspicious activities or behaviors. The app is now available for both iPhones and Android users. The public can report suspicious behaviors through the *iWatch Texas* program via the new mobile app, online at www.iwatchtx.org or by calling 1-844-643-2251.

Compassionate Use Act for intractable epilepsy. The Texas Legislature adopted Senate Bill 339 (Texas Compassionate Use Act) in 2015 to help treat intractable epilepsy that affects about one-third of the patients diagnosed with epilepsy and causes severe seizures that do not respond to traditional medications. Symptoms include convulsions, loss of consciousness, loss of bowel or bladder control, falling and muscle rigidity. Parents of children diagnosed with intractable epilepsy testified to various legislative committees in 2015 about their children's almost uncontrollable seizures that occur several times an hour, each and every hour of the day, and their frustration over the lack of effective treatment for their children. The Compassionate Use Act was adopted to help these children receive the necessary therapies so they can live more normal lives. The Compassionate Use Act received strong legislative support in the Senate and the House of Representatives passing with a 26-5 vote and a 96-34 vote respectively. The bill modified the state's Health and Safety Code and Occupations Code to establish a physician's authority to prescribe low-THC cannabis to a patient with intractable epilepsy. The bill provided for the Department of Public Safety's (DPS) licensing of low-THC cannabis dispensing organizations and registration of certain associated individuals. The bill required DPS to establish and maintain a compassionate-use registry with information regarding prescribing physicians and records of low-THC cannabis dispensed by a dispensing organization to a patient under a prescription. It took several months for DPS to develop the program, review applications and

issue licenses, but now there are three approved dispensing organizations in Texas able to fill patients' prescriptions for cannabidiol (CBD) that has proven effective in treating the seizures of intractable epilepsy. Earlier this month, I toured one of the approved facilities, Compassionate Cultivation near Austin, to see their operations and procedures that comply with DPS guidelines. I was very impressed with the work of the chemists and other scientists working to ensure the purity of their patients' medication.



Compassionate Cultivation's chemist, Geoff Young, director of extraction and processing, distilling the CBD for patient.

Active military personnel enjoy free admission to Texas Historical Commission's historic sites. Active military personnel and their families this summer can enjoy free access to more than 1800 museums in all 50 states between now and Labor Day (September 3) as a part of the Blue Star Museums program sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts, Blue Star Families, the Department of Defense and state agencies and museums. Two of the Texas sites include the National Museum of the Pacific War in Fredericksburg and the Fannin Battleground in Fannin. For more information, visit <https://www.arts.gov/national-initiatives/blue-star-museums> or call the Texas Historic Commission at 512-463-7948 or <http://www.thc.texas.gov/historic-sites>.

DPS urges Texans to be safe this summer. The DPS reminds Texans to take extra precautions for themselves, their children and pets this summer as the weather heats up. DPS again reminds drivers not to leave children or pets unattended in their cars and to be extra cautious around parks, swimming pools and playgrounds to watch out for children. Some of the extra safety measures noted by DPS include: not to drink and drive; slow down and drive safely; remember

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that Texas is a no-texting state; be sure that everyone uses seat belts and car seats as appropriate; drive defensively; and be sure to pull over for emergency vehicles on the road.

Happy 4th of July! You know the summer is moving fast when the 4th of July arrives. Please join my family and me as we celebrate our nation's 242nd birthday! Let's



remember the brave men and women who fought off the yoke of an oppressive government to establish the greatest country on earth. Happy Birthday to the USA!

Social media. Please follow me on both my Facebook and Twitter accounts!

My office is here to help. I thank each of you for letting me serve you as your state representative. Please contact either the District office (903-628-0361) or Capitol office (512-463-0692) if there is anything you think we can do to help you.