

# State Representative Gary VanDeaver



87th Legislature  
Bowie | Franklin | Lamar | Red River

HD 1

## **87th Legislature Report - House District 1 Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties**

**October 2021**

**Around the District. House District 1 (HD 1) redrawn.** As the third called special session wrapped up earlier this month, the legislature adopted House Bill 1 (87, 3rd) that redrew all 150 legislative districts for members of the Texas House of Representatives. House District 1, as drawn in 2011, included Bowie, Franklin, Lamar

and Red River counties. Going forward, HD 1 will now include Bowie, Cass, Lamar, Morris and Red River counties. Unfortunately (for me), Franklin County has now been drawn into the new House District 62,



which is currently represented by the Honorable Reggie Smith from Sherman. I am sorry that HD 1 was redrawn without retaining Franklin County, but my staff and I are looking forward to getting to know my new constituents in Cass and Morris counties.

**Searchable app.** One of Texas's independent news sources is the *Texas Tribune*, which has developed a new app to help you determine your new legislative districts. Just enter your address in the app linked below:  
[https://apps.texastribune.org/features/2021/texas-redistricting-map/?\\_ga=2.50147238.1840778416.1635167967-1139260344.1621517235](https://apps.texastribune.org/features/2021/texas-redistricting-map/?_ga=2.50147238.1840778416.1635167967-1139260344.1621517235)

This app will show which House, Senate, Congressional and SBOE districts you are now living in as a result of redistricting. Also, please note that many court challenges are expected over the redrawn districts so it may actually be several months, if not years, before the boundaries are actually finalized.

**Other redistricting changes affecting HD 1.** The legislature also redrew districts for other elective offices as described below. Please note that for each redistricting bill linked below, you can click on the "enrolled" version of the bill to access the actual map for those districts and offices.

**Texas Senate - SB 4 -**  
<https://tlis/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=873&Bill=SB4>. All of the newly drawn HD 1 is still included in Senate District 1 that is currently held by the Honorable Bryan Hughes (Mineola).

**Texas Congressional delegation - SB 6 -**  
<https://tlis/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=873&Bill=SB6>. Texas gained two seats in the US Congress due to the state's population growth over the last 10 years. These new districts increase the number of Texas Congressional representatives to 38.

These new districts split Bowie and Red River counties so that part of these two counties will

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remain in Congressional District 4 and the other part will now be in Congressional District 1. Current officeholders for these districts include the Honorable Pat Fallon (Sherman) in CD 4 and the Honorable Louie Gohmert (Tyler) in CD 1.

**State Board of Education (SBOE) - SB 7 -**  
<https://tlis/BillLookup/Text.aspx?LegSess=873&Bill=SB7>.

The governor signed all of these redistricting bills on October 25, 2021, and they will become effective throughout January 2022. Because the legislature was able to adopt these bills when it did, the candidate filing period for elective offices will not change for next year's primary election on March 1, 2022. The deadline for candidates to file for office is 6 p.m., December 13, 2021.



**SWEPCO to install "smart meters."** SWEPCO recently informed my office that it will begin installing approximately 10,000 advanced digital electric meters on

November 1, for customers in the Texarkana area (within zip codes 75501 and 75503), as well as Hooks, Nash, New Boston, Red Lick, Red River Army Depot and Wake Village. The installation dates for individual homes and businesses will vary and will take place over the next four to eight weeks.

Customers will experience a brief power outage -- approximately five minutes -- at the time of installation. Customers are asked to provide clear access to their meters but do not have to be present for the installation. Personnel from contractor QUES or SWEPCO will install the meters. Installers will leave a door hanger if any condition prevents the meter change-out.

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SWEPCO is mailing postcards to customers to notify them about the installation. SWEPCO is also emailing and calling customers who have email addresses and phone numbers on file in their SWEPCO accounts.

The Advanced Metering System (AMS) uses advanced metering and secure wireless technology to provide timely and accurate meter reading data. Customers can use this data to better understand and manage their electricity usage. Instead of monthly data, customers will see their usage in 15-minute intervals, which can provide customers with opportunities to save money through proposed time-of-use tariffs and energy conservation.

SWEPCO has an "opt-out" provision for customers who do not want a "smart meter." Customers who do not want a smart meter will be charged a one-time fee ranging from \$131.68 to \$233.39 and a recurring monthly customer fee of \$22.97. For more information, see the FAQ at [SWEPCO.com/AMS-Texas](https://www.swepeco.com/AMS-Texas).

**Around the Capitol. Constitutional amendment election is next Tuesday.** Don't forget to either early vote (deadline 10/29/2021) or vote on Election Day which is Tuesday, November 2. Texans will have a



chance to express their support or opposition to the proposed eight amendments to the state's constitution adopted by the legislature earlier this year. Here is a link to information about the proposed amendments: <https://tlc.texas.gov/docs/amendments/analysis21.pdf>.

**Comptroller's office latest edition of "Fiscal Notes."**



The state comptroller's office has published a monthly periodical called *Fiscal Notes* since the 1970s, and the publication is

well-known for providing very timely economic news affecting the state and all Texans. The latest *Fiscal Notes* focuses on the economic impact of the historic Winter Storm Uri that brought a lot of the state to its knees in February. The article states that the full economic and social impact of the storm is still being analyzed and debated; however, there is no denying that almost everyone in the state at that time was impacted especially those areas where electrical power and water services stopped working. Here is a link:

[file:///C:/Users/h2540ac/Downloads/fn%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/h2540ac/Downloads/fn%20(2).pdf).

Approximately half of HD 1 is in the state's deregulated market regulated by the state's own power grid known as the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) while the other portion is in the multi-state electric grid and power market known as the Southwest Power Pool (SPP). Customers in these different areas had different power-related and supply experiences during the winter storm, but everyone was affected by subfreezing temperatures for days on end. It resulted in between \$80 billion and \$130 billion in financial losses to the state's economy, and it claimed at least 210 lives.

The article is a very comprehensive look not only at the failure of the state's power grid but

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also interruptions to water supply operations, adverse impacts on the state's agricultural industries, health care limitations and deaths, cell phone usage and supply chain issues.

This storm struck at the start of this year's regular session, and key legislative committees immediately examined the causes of the power failures, the state's response and ongoing implications for future severe weather events. The legislature passed SB 2 and SB 3 that were signed by the governor in June. These bills now require plants to improve their weatherization and communications, and they changed the governance structure at ERCOT.

**Recap of special legislative sessions.** After the regular session of the legislature adjourned on May 31, the governor called three special sessions to address issues that did not pass. These overtime sessions began on July 8, August 7 and September 20, with the third special session ending on October 19. Following is a brief summary of action from these special sessions; and, here is a link to the Texas Legislature Online with links to filed legislation and committee hearings: <https://capitol.texas.gov/>.

No action was taken or bills passed during the first special session due to a quorum break in the House of Representatives when over 50 members fled to Washington, D.C. to stall



changes in the state's election laws. A quorum was restored about two weeks into the second special session so work progressed on numerous issues on

the governor's call including:

- **HB 5** - appropriating funding for the legislature and legislative agencies.
- **HB 7** - storing or disposing of high-level radioactive waste.
- **HB 9** - appropriating additional funds to secure the border.
- **HB 20** - protecting the public from being censored by social media platforms.
- **SB 1** - protecting the integrity and security of the state's elections.
- **SB 3** - requiring civics training programs for social studies teachers and principals and protecting parental rights.
- **SB 4** - preventing the sale or distribution of abortion-inducing drugs.
- **SB 6** - reforming the state's bail bond system to ensure that the public is protected from criminal activities by people previously in the criminal justice system.
- **SB 7** - providing a 13th month check for retired members of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas capped at \$2400 and to be delivered to retirees in their January 2022 payment.



- **SB 8** - allowing a home owner to receive a homestead exemption in the first year the property is acquired.
- **SB 9** - requiring school districts to include information and materials in their curriculum for middle and high school students to prevent child abuse,

family violence, and dating violence and sex trafficking.

- **SB 12** - providing additional tax relief for elderly or disabled property owners; it is the enabling legislation for the proposed constitutional amendment.
- **Senate Joint Resolution (SJR) 2** - this proposed amendment will be on the May 7, 2022, ballot authorizing a change in the state constitution to provide additional property tax relief for elderly or disabled homeowners.
- **SB 13** - scheduling alternative dates for candidate filings and primary elections in case the legislature fails to complete its redistricting in time to hold the currently scheduled 2022 primary on March 1, 2022.
- **SB 15** - providing funding for school districts offering a "local remote learning program" through virtual learning platforms if they meet certain requirements and standards.

The last special session was very productive in addressing the governor's "to do" list that included the following:

- **HB 1** - drawing new legislative districts for the 150 members of the Texas House of Representatives.
- **HB 25** - requiring that students participate in UIL sports based on the students' biological sex at birth regardless of what sex may be designated on the birth certificate.
- **HB 133** - clarifying who qualifies to receive higher education benefits under a previously adopted program for certain survivors of public servants.



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- **SB 1** - enabling legislation to increase the homestead exemption for property taxes from \$25,000 to \$40,000.
- **SJR 2** - the proposed constitutional amendment approved by two-thirds of the legislature so voters can decide on May 7, 2022, whether to raise the homestead exemption to \$40,000.
- **SB 4** - drawing new legislative districts for the 31 seats in Texas Senate.
- **SB 5** - establishing new guidelines



concerning the restraint of dogs.

- **SB 6** - drawing new districts for members of the Texas delegation to the US Congress,

which included adding two new districts to reflect the growth in the state's population over the last decade.

- **SB 7** - drawing new districts for the 15 members of the elected State Board of Education.
- **SB 8** - appropriating approximately billions of funding approved earlier this year by the US Congress through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).
- **SB 52** - authorizing approximately \$3.3 billion in bonds for capital construction



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projects at the state's colleges and

universities.

**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.