



State Representative
Gary VanDeaver

March 2023 E-Newsletter



**88th Legislature Report - House District 1
Bowie | Cass | Lamar | Morris | Red River**

District Update

Safety lighting is to be installed at area highway intersections. Plans for four highway intersections in House District 1 to receive new safety lighting systems were approved in June by TxDOT. “Nighttime lighting systems at the intersections will be installed that will have energy-efficient LED lighting and will better illuminate the roadways,” said Rebecca Wells, director of Transportation Operations for TxDOT in Atlanta. “Data from the Federal Highway Administration shows that lighting is a proven safety improvement. Lighting at intersections can reduce nighttime crashes up to 38 percent,” Wells added.

Texas Traffic Control Systems, Inc. of Dike, TX, was awarded the contract for the safety lighting projects with a bid of \$587,345. Work is expected to begin this fall and take about nine months to complete, Wells said. Intersections scheduled for lighting additions are:

- In Bowie County: US 259 at FM 1701
- In Bowie County: FM 561 at FM 990
- In Bowie County: FM 2149 at FM 3098
- In Morris County: US 259 at FM 130

State Update

Bill filling ends. I have filed eight additional bills since last month for a total of 25 House Bills. The last day to file a bill was March 10th. Bills are now being referred to committees for consideration and public testimony. Here is the link to Texas Legislature Online, where you can follow a bill's progress, watch committee hearings, and see what is happening on the floor of the Texas House and Senate: <https://capitol.texas.gov/> Here is information about these bills:

1. [**HB 3009**](#) - relating to the health care providers authorized to examine a person to determine whether the person is incapacitated for purposes of certain guardianship proceedings.
2. [**HB 3560**](#) - relating to a membership interest in a limited liability company subject to a charging order.
3. [**HB 3561**](#) - relating to the payment of certain contributions for retirees of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas who resume service.

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4. [HB 3564](#) - relating to the limitation on increases in the appraised value of a residence homestead for ad valorem tax purposes.
5. [HB 3638](#) - relating to the break in service period for certain retirees preventing the loss of benefits and the state making payments for certain retirees of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas who resume service.
6. [HB 4375](#) - relating to instruction in cardiopulmonary resuscitation and the use of an automated external defibrillator in public schools.
7. [HB 4376](#) - relating to self-settled asset protection trusts.
8. [HJR 147](#) - proposing a constitutional amendment to authorize the legislature to limit the maximum appraised value of a residence homestead for ad valorem tax purposes to the appraised value of the property when it was first qualified as a residence homestead, plus the value of subsequent improvements.

Update on HB 8. House Bill 8, the community college legislation I filed last month, had its public hearing in the House Committee on Higher Education on March 20, and later that week it was voted out of the committee. House Bill 8 will soon go before the full House of Representatives for discussion, debate, and a vote. The bill represents a historic change for our 50 community colleges since their funding will now be based on student outcomes and affordability. Most colleges will receive additional funding with 90 percent of the new funding targeting “credentials of value” at an affordable price for students. House Bill 8 also establishes the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) program so eligible high school students can enroll in dual credit courses to accelerate their post-secondary pathway to transfer to a four-year institution or find well-paying jobs that are in high demand across the state and in the region. All 50 community colleges support HB 8, and I thank them for their partnership and hard work on this matter so important to Texas's continued economic success and growth.



Rep. VanDeaver laid out HR 292 which commemorated Northeast Texas Regional Alliance Day.

Northeast Texas Regional Alliance Day at the Capitol.

On February 28, Bowie, Cass, Delta, Franklin, Hopkins, Lamar, Morris, Red River, and Titus counties that make up the Northeast Texas Regional Alliance held their "Day at the Capitol." These counties share many significant social and economic characteristics; the member counties of the coalition are united in their efforts to further the vitality and prosperity of the region. The coalition's rural counties are an important transportation gateway, and the organization is dedicated to keeping freight moving, advancing rural broadband, and stimulating opportunities for innovation. In addition, the alliance facilitates

cooperation in all areas of regional and workforce planning, supporting the retention and creation of jobs, as well as increased opportunities for education.

Through its initiatives, the alliance advocates for area colleges and universities and for the parks and trails that enhance the quality of life in the region. It also promotes careful stewardship of monetary and natural resources. This noteworthy organization is helping to make Northeast Texas an even stronger and more vibrant place to live and work, and it is indeed fitting to recognize the alliance for its essential contributions. Legislators recognized the members of the alliance while they were in the House Chamber and passed [House Resolution 292](#) in recognition of their work.

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Texas leads the nation in job growth over the last 12 months. The governor's office recently announced new employment data from February that shows Texas is leading the nation for jobs and set new historic highs for employment. Key employment numbers from the [Texas Workforce Commission](#) and the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#):

- Texas added over 58,200 jobs in February, which is nearly one in five of the jobs added across the nation.
- Texas led the nation for jobs added over the last 12 months at 611,400.
- Texas reached a new high for the total number of jobs at 13,831,900.
- Texas reached a new high for Texans working, including employed and self-employed, at 14,232,104.
- Texas has the largest labor force ever in the state's history at 14,819,440.
- Texas has added jobs in 33 of the last 34 months, including two full years of uninterrupted monthly job growth.

Spring 2023 STAAR administration. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) has posted two new web pages that host specific resources about the redesigned State of Texas Assessments of Academic Readiness (STAAR®). The [STAAR Redesign Resources for Districts](#) webpage has resources and assets to help districts keep their staff informed about the STAAR redesign. The [STAAR Redesign Resources for Parents](#) webpage includes curated information about STAAR developed especially for parents. This new webpage hosts flyers, short videos, and FAQs to assist districts in communicating important information about STAAR to parents. Both web pages include an updated version of the [What Families Should Know About STAAR](#) one-page document.



Rep. VanDeaver & Sen. Hughes, HR 81 Texas Rural Education Association Day.

Texas Rural Education Association Day (TREA) at the Capitol. On 03/01/2023, the Texas House of Representatives congratulated TREA on its 30th anniversary. TREA members spent their time at the Capitol in meetings and visiting with legislators and their staff about important educational issues. I was pleased to lay out HR 81 honoring TREA on its founding in 1992 and its ongoing work advocating for rural school districts. Here is a link to HR 81: [House Resolution 81](#).



Rep. VanDeaver with the board of the Texas Forestry Association.

Forestry Day at the Capitol. The Texas Forestry Association celebrated Forestry Day at the Capitol on 03/21/2023. The Texas Forestry Association was founded in 1914 by a group of conservationists to advance forest management, promote conservation practices, and support and protect actively managed forests in Texas. Texas actively manages forests that cover more than 12 million acres and are maintained by over 70,000 workers. These forests constitute one of the state's leading agricultural sectors with a total economic impact of more than \$41

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billion. Texas loggers harvest over 18 million tons of trees and haul hundreds of thousands of logs to mills, ultimately resulting in thousands of products that supply consumers' needs.

HOUSE BILL 2

PROPERTY TAX RELIEF ACT

SUMMARY

The Property Tax Relief Act would 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, shielding homeowners, small business owners and other property owners from sudden increases in values to their property that are oftentimes unsustainable.

\$17.3 billion
Total tax relief package by the Texas House including HB 1

\$.25
Total tax rate compression by FY 25

\$542 Homeowner savings in 2024

\$733 Homeowner savings in 2025

5%
Proposed annual appraisal cap for all real properties per year

Additionally...
HB2 reduces total recapture payments by \$4.5 billion

The number of school districts in recapture is reduced from 241 to 211

Requires tax assessors to provide escrow accounts, at the request of property owners

The House plan increases the State's share of public education to over 50%

House Bill 2.

Skyrocketing property taxes have become unaffordable for too many residents in this state. Texas taxpayers need real property tax relief and for the state to make much-needed improvements to the property appraisal system.

House Bill 2, also known as the Property Tax Relief Act, by [Rep. Morgan Meyer](#) offers a long-term, sustainable solution to rapidly increasing property taxes. By capping appraisal increases, Texans will experience immediate financial relief, while simultaneously inheriting protection for years to come. Make sure you take the time to read [our blog](#) to learn more about HB 2.



The Honorable Jane Nelson being sworn in as Secretary of State.

Secretary Nelson reminds eligible Texans to register and prepare for May 6th local elections. Texas Secretary of State, the Honorable Jane Nelson, urges all eligible Texans to make sure they are registered to vote by April 6th so they can vote in the May 6th local elections. Not all local governmental entities will be holding elections on May 6th, and Texas voters should check with their [county elections office](#) for more information on which municipalities, school districts, and other local political subdivisions will be holding elections. Early voting is from

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April 24th through May 2nd. To confirm your voter registration status, you can visit the Texas Secretary of State's "[Am I Registered?](#)" portal, where you can look up your voter registration record in the statewide voter registration database.

If you are not already registered to vote but have an existing Texas Driver's License or state identification card, you can register to vote online when renewing, replacing, or changing your contact information for either of these cards through the Texas Department of Public Safety. Follow the steps on the [DPS web portal to update your driver's license information](#), and you will be given the option to register to vote when renewing or updating your information.

Whether you have recently moved or changed your name, you can now update all the information on your voter registration record through the state of Texas portal. [Click here to update your voter registration information online.](#)

Contact Information

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 or the Capitol office if there is anything we can do to help you. Follow me on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram for more updates!

District Office

Bowie County Courthouse
710 James Bowie Drive
New Boston, Texas 75570
(903) 628 - 0361

Capitol Office

Room E1.304
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910
(512) 463 - 0692

State Representative Gary

VanDeaver
[Email Gary](#)