



**House District 101  
Online**

Greetings!

Since many of you have inquired, I wanted to send a quick update on the progress of H.J.R. 13, authored by Rep. Dan Branch and myself. If passed by the Legislature and approved by the people of Texas, this constitutional amendment would require County Commissioners to run for re-election in their new districts after redistricting.

Because County Commissioners serve staggered, four-year terms, our Texas Constitution currently allows for a situation in which two members of the Court do not have to run for re-election in their new districts in the first general election following redistricting. What this means in practical terms is that voters whose precincts are moved into a district scheduled for election in 2014 must wait for two years before they have a chance to vote for the person who sets their local tax rate. In my opinion, this situation is a clear-cut case of taxation without representation.

H.J.R. 13 seeks to remedy this problem by requiring all four County Commissioners to run for re-election in the first general election following a Court redistricting action. After the election, the Commissioners would decide by lot who would serve a two-year and who would serve a four-year term, thus preserving the staggered nature of the Commissioners Court. This re-election method is the one currently utilized in Texas by the Senate and the State Board of Education.

On June 16, the Elections Committee held a public hearing on H.J.R 13. We heard testimony from several witnesses, including Dallas County Republican Party Chairman Wade Emmert and an attorney representing the County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas. Chairman Emmert reminded the committee of the current situation facing Dallas County, in which around 70% of voters in one of the newly drawn precincts will not be able to vote for their new Commissioner before he is responsible for representing them. The Chairman also reminded the committee that the problem is not simply a Dallas County problem--every county in the state is potentially at risk.

The attorney from the Commissioners Association opposed the measure, as did many County Commissioners. One of his concerns was that the administrative function of the Court might suffer in the years when all members of the Court face election at the same time. Other Commissioners cited the inconvenience they would face by having to run two cycles in a row.



**Follow the link below to track the progress of legislation and to access information about Mesquite, Balch Springs, and Sunnyvale.**

**HD 101 Website**

**Special Session Update**

The Governor has placed the following items on the call for the special session:

- School Finance and Flexibility Measures
- Medicaid Reform
- Congressional Redistricting
- Texas Windstorm Insurance Reform
- Sanctuary Cities
- Driver License Security
- TSA Procedures

While it is true that the Commissioners Court is not simply a legislative body, I believe upholding the voting rights of citizens trumps the stated concerns regarding administrative instability. After all, it is likely that all four Commissioners would find themselves on the ballot at the same time only once every ten years. Additionally, we have already tested the proposed process in both the Texas Senate and the State Board of Education without ill effect.

As to Commissioners citing the inconvenience of facing the voters every two years, I would answer that the convenience of an elected official should not be considered when the franchise rights of voters are at stake.

As the hearing concluded, it became clear that there was not the political will at this time to pass the legislation, especially given the condensed time-frame imposed by a special session. There will likely be an interim study committee dedicated to the topic, and I will keep you posted as we move through the process.

While I am disappointed that you will not have a chance to vote on this constitutional amendment in the fall, I remain committed to solving this problem. The right to vote for those who represent us (especially those who tax us) is the foundation of our entire political system. When we fail to abide by this fundamental principle, we enter dangerous territory as a state.

Again, please do not hesitate to contact me or my office with any questions or concerns.

In friendship,



## Town Hall Schedule

**Sunnyvale - June  
30th from 7:00 to  
8:00 pm at the  
Sunnyvale Town  
Hall**

**Balch Springs - July  
5th from 6:30 to 7:30  
pm at the Balch  
Springs Library  
Auditorium**

**Mesquite - July 7th  
from 7:00 to 8:00 pm  
at the Mesquite Arts  
Center**

**CONTACT CINDY**

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