



# Representative John Turner

District 114, Dallas – June 6, 2019

---

Friends,

Last week, the 86th Texas Legislative Session drew to a close. As your District 114 State Representative, I was glad to be a part of it all.

While no session is perfect, we made real progress on important issues for our community and our state. I am proud of what we accomplished. Below are some of the highlights.

(Also, see the end of this message for information on **two town hall meetings** that I will be holding on June 18 and 20. I would love to see you there!)



*Our Capitol office staff on the floor of the Texas House of Representatives*

## ***Highlights***

**The budget.** Possibly the most important bill in a legislative session is our state's budget. The bill that now awaits the Governor's signature appropriates over \$250 billion in the next two years to meet some of our state's most pressing needs. It includes \$11.6 billion for increased funding to public schools and property tax relief. It also features additional funding for mental health services, early childhood intervention, graduate medical education, disaster recovery for those affected by Hurricane Harvey, and anti-human trafficking efforts. I appreciated the chance to serve on the Appropriations Committee and be a part of the budget-writing process.

**School finance reform.** The Legislature passed a major school finance bill in the form of House Bill 3, which provides \$6.5 billion in new funding directly to our schools. At least 30% of the new funding that school districts receive will be dedicated to pay raises for teachers and school employees. For Dallas and Richardson ISDs, here's what the bill means next year:

- Dallas ISD:
  - Total funding will increase by over \$70 million, or \$508 per student (a 5% increase)
  - Recapture payments back to the state will decrease by 93% or nearly \$174 million
- Richardson ISD:
  - Total funding will increase by over \$16.4 million, or \$447 per student (a 5% increase)
  - Recapture payments back to the state will decrease by 97% or over \$7.2 million

**Property tax relief.** House Bill 3 also includes significant property tax relief to the tune of \$5 billion. This will cut the current tax rates for both Dallas and Richardson ISDs by 11 cents in 2020 and by 12 cents in 2021. That means hundreds of dollars each year back in the pockets of individual homeowners.

**Support for retired teachers.** Another important accomplishment from this session was better support for retired teachers through Senate Bill 12. That bill shores up the TRS pension fund and provides a “13th Check” of \$2,000 for each enrolled retired teacher in our state.

### ***Other Important Legislation***

The Legislature passed over 1,700 other bills, covering a wide range of topics. A few of the more notable ones, several of which I was proud to co-author, include:

- Legislation that will make more mental health resources available to schools and create a consortium to connect Texas students to mental health services
- A bill raising the legal tobacco purchasing age from 18 to 21
- Legislation providing patients with greater protection against surprise medical bills from out-of-network providers
- Steps to improve the oversight of the managed care companies the state contracts with to coordinate health services for Medicaid clients
- Extension of the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT), which has helped make Texas a biomedical research hub
- A proposed constitutional amendment to dedicate our sporting goods sales tax to the support of our state parks
- Numerous bills addressing disaster relief and flood mitigation projects following Hurricane Harvey
- A bill strengthening prosecutions of human trafficking and related crimes
- Important legislation authored by my Dallas colleague Rep. Victoria Neave, which extends the statute of limitations for sexual assault and requires audits of untested rape kits

- New pipeline safety legislation authored by my Dallas colleague Rep. Rafael Anchia, which will require gas pipeline operators to remove cast-iron pipes and ban the future use of iron or bare steel pipes

Although the positives of the session were many, it was a less successful session for our local governments – our cities and counties that provide police and fire services, street maintenance, parks, libraries, and much more. Senate Bill 2, which I opposed (as did Mayor Rawlings, the City of Dallas, Dallas County, and many other cities and counties) will place new, lower state-imposed limits on the property tax revenues that cities and counties can receive without having special elections.

I agree with the objective of providing property tax relief: House Bill 3 does that, and I also supported other proposed legislation that would have increased the homestead exemption. But I am concerned that Senate Bill 2 will adversely affect Dallas’s ability to properly support our first responders and provide other critical city and county services.

We also didn’t make true progress on a number of other important issues, including addressing our state’s high uninsured rate, reforming our bail system, and doing our part to prepare for and help address climate change, to name just a few. These and many other issues will, I hope, be on the agenda for the 87th legislature to take up next session.

### ***Our Office’s Work***

I was honored each and every day to represent District 114. I am happy to say that of the nine bills I filed during the session, four passed both chambers (either as my House bill or as the identical Senate companion) and await the Governor’s signature. If signed, these bills will provide better support to our first responders, improve families’ access to pre-kindergarten for their young children, and ensure that we can continue to conduct proper background checks on day-care and elder-care workers.

I also sponsored amendments to other bills that helped secure additional funding for Children’s Advocacy Centers, allowed more vaccines to be made available to under-insured adults, and supported Gifted & Talented education in our schools.

**Finally, I will be hosting two town hall meetings in Dallas on June 18 and 20.** Please join us to talk more about what happened in the 86th Legislature! To RSVP, you can send an email to Brenda Allen at [Brenda.Allen@House.Texas.Gov](mailto:Brenda.Allen@House.Texas.Gov). Here are the details:

June 18, 7:00 PM  
Audelia Road Branch Library  
10045 Audelia Rd., Dallas, TX 75238

June 20, 7:00 PM  
Walnut Hill Recreation Center  
10011 Midway Rd., Dallas, TX 75229

I would like to thank all of the residents of District 114 who have visited and reached out to me. My staff and I had many meetings and logged 3,992 emails, phone calls, and letters. Hearing from you on the legislation that matters most to you helped to guide me through each of the 140 days of the session.

I am always glad to hear your opinions. Please feel free to contact me at any time at [District114.Turner@House.Texas.Gov](mailto:District114.Turner@House.Texas.Gov), or the Austin office at (512) 463-0576, or the Dallas District Office at (214) 234-7625. You can also write or visit our District Office at 10300 Central Expressway, Suite 198, Dallas TX 75231, or email our District Director, Brenda Allen, at [Brenda.Allen@House.Texas.Gov](mailto:Brenda.Allen@House.Texas.Gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Turner", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

John Turner