



State Representative Lyle Larson
TX HD-122

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Weekly Recap #8

What's new in District 122

We're already off to a busy start this week. Today, HB 1752, the "Fix BexarMet Bill" will come before the House Natural Resources Committee. Several District 122 BexarMet customers are at the Capitol now waiting to testify for this legislation. We'll provide you with a recap of what took place at the hearing next week. On Wednesday afternoon, the Culture Recreation and Tourism Committee, of which I am a member, will be provided with an update about the Alamo from the Daughters of the Republic of Texas.

This Friday, March 11th, is the last day members of the Legislature can file bills. As of today, we have filed 24 bills, all of which we believe will change the architecture of state government for the better and provide real solutions to issues faced by both residents of District 122 and all Texans.

Accountability in transportation planning

Experience shows that if you're not getting what you need from a group appointed to serve you, making them run for election to their positions will change the way they govern and make them more accountable to you.

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) is overseen by a five-member board, the Texas Transportation Commission, who are appointed by the governor to six-year terms. The Commission is charged with planning and choosing the location of all construction and maintenance of state roadways. Currently, they oversee an agency with a budget of \$18.6 billion (2010-11 biennium). Over the years, the Commission has taken heat for promoting toll roads and other controversial construction financing methods, the failed Trans Texas Corridor project and for failing to listen to the citizens it's supposed to represent. TxDOT, the agency it oversees, has been accused of mismanagement of funds, arrogance in dealing with the people it is set up to serve and lacking transparency.

Historically, the Commission has consisted of political appointees who don't typically have transportation experience or knowledge. By virtue of being appointed, not elected, they are often most accountable to the governor who appointed them, not to the people of Texas. I think it's time to change that and put the power of deciding when and where to build state roads back in the hands of Texans.

HB 2350 would change the process of selecting the Commission from appointment by the governor to election by the people of Texas. The Commission will consist of 3 commissioners, each elected statewide to at-large positions for 6 year terms.

As our population continues to grow, we need to ensure our transportation infrastructure grows with it. As citizens of Texas, we deserve to be part of the process in determining when, where and how our state roads are built. We need statewide elected officials who will tell us what highways will be improved, when they will be improved and how we will pay for them! It's time to reform the system and make the Texas Transportation Commission accountable to each of the 25 million people who call Texas home.

Other Legislative News

Last week, I coauthored the following bill:

- **HB 7** which addresses recommendations from the Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force. These include: clarifying definitions of sex and labor trafficking; extending the criminal statute of limitations for human trafficking crimes; requiring an offender who is convicted of sex trafficking to register as a sex offender; adding human trafficking offenses and compelling prostitution as a 3g offense within the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure; and increasing the penalty for compelling prostitution of a child to a felony of the first degree.
- **HB 32** which ensures that no resident of Texas is required to obtain or maintain an individual insurance coverage policy.

In E2.816, we were visited by members of the San Antonio Associated General Contractors, San Antonians with the Texas Retailers Association, Texas Social Workers and hundreds of members of the Texas Federation of Republican Women, including friends from the Bexar County Republican Women, the Alamo City Republican Women and Republican Business Women of Bexar County.

At the Capitol



With members of the Texas Dental Association from San Antonio.



With members of the Texas Associated General Contractors San Antonio Chapter.

If we may be of assistance to you, please feel free to contact our Capitol office at (512) 463-0646 or lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us. Please continue to let us hear from you!

Best,