



State Representative Lyle Larson
TX HD-122

04.05.2011

Weekly Recap #12

What's new in District 122

Last week's budget debate brought another round of late night discussions and passionate arguments. In total, members of the House spent over 25 hours debating CSHB 1. Around midnight on Sunday, the vote was taken and the measure passed 98-49.

CSHB 1 is the starting point in developing a budget to fund the state's functions over the next two years. It simply creates a budget that includes all projected revenues that will be available in the next biennium, without including any money from the "rainy day fund." This bill will be amended through the reconciliation process with the Senate. The final budget may assume the deferral of costs and/or additional use of the "rainy day fund."

The good news is that state revenue projections are up more than 7 percent compared to this time last year. After the vote to fund obligations in our current budget with \$3.2 billion from the "rainy day fund," we will have approximately \$6 billion leftover.

Based on discussions with my constituents and folks across the state, there are 4 areas that are consistently discussed: K-12 education, higher education, Texas Equalization Grants and Medicaid related to assisting the elderly and mentally impaired. We will do our best to ensure these essential aspects of the budget are adequately funded.

This week, 4 of our bills will be heard in committee. They include:

- **HJR 84** and **HB 1131** Since 1986, more than \$12 billion has been diverted from Fund 006, the state motor fuel tax fund. Fund 006 was created to provide for the maintenance and construction of state roadways, which is generated from a 20-cent tax on each gallon of gas that is purchased at the pump. As a result of the Legislature's cannibalization of Fund 006, TxDOT has been forced to look to other funding sources to provide desperately needed additional capacity to our state road system, including

toll roads. This legislation would end diversions from Fund 006 and ensure that every cent collected at the pump will be spent on maintenance and construction of our state roadways. This legislation is the companion to Senator Jeff Wentworth's senate version, SB 135.

- **HB 3188** This legislation would allow Texas agencies like the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to refuse to administer federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) greenhouse gas regulatory programs. We believe environmental management is the sole responsibility of the states, as evidenced by the Tenth Amendment to the Constitution. This bill would put the power back in our hands.
- **HB 3533** Currently, general development surrounding Air Education and Training Command (AETC) pilot training units in Texas is increasing to accommodate a growing population in Texas. Texas is home to five of the twelve AETC programs in the U.S., located at Goodfellow, Sheppard, Randolph, Lackland, and Laughlin Air Force Bases. These five pilot training units conduct specialized undergraduate pilot training for the United States Air Force. The bases have an extremely large economic impact on their neighboring areas, making them critical to the economic well-being of the cities surrounding the bases. HB 3533 protects the areas around the AETC bases from development that may hinder their military operations, thereby securing the future of the bases and protecting the neighboring cities and counties as well. The bill authorizes the governing bodies of a municipality and the county in the regulated area to appoint a joint airport land planning board.
- **HB 684** This legislation would help Texas counties to address the high costs of jail overcrowding by allowing them to house low-risk inmates in tent facilities. In 2006, I visited Maricopa County, Arizona and met with Sheriff Joe Arapaio, who runs the largest tent jail facility in the nation. The Maricopa County Sheriff is known for being possibly the toughest sheriff in the country for housing inmates in tents. Sheriff Joe designed his tent jail facility to reduce recidivism and cut costs. In efforts to reduce the high costs of jail overcrowding, HB 684 would allow counties to house low-risk inmates indefinitely in tents or other facilities in lieu of a county jail, in keeping with standards already in place. Maricopa County Deputy Chief Jack MacIntyre is flying in from Arizona to testify in favor of this legislation!

If you wish to testify in favor of any of these bills, please contact my office as soon as possible at (512) 463-0646!

At the Capitol



Lyle Larson and Lyle Lovett



With leadership from North East Independent School District



With friend and Texas Water Development Board member Weir Labatt

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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Lyle".