



State Representative Lyle Larson
TX HD-122

05.03.2011

Weekly Recap #16
What's new in District 122

Navy SEALs - i. Osama bin Laden - o.

As we enter the final month of the 82nd Legislative Session, the Texas House will begin working 7 days a week to finish voting on legislation before Sine Die on May 30th. We look forward to working to pass good legislation that will benefit all Texans. We plan to open our district office shortly after Session ends. Stay tuned for an announcement in the coming weeks about our office opening and post-session town hall meeting!

Last week, after several hours of debate, the House passed CSHB 150, the redistricting bill for the Texas House at 3:00 a.m Thursday morning. To ensure that each of the 150 Texas House districts are drawn to include an equal population, several districts underwent extreme alterations. We believe the map passed by the House, with a few exceptions, represents very well the changes in population that have occurred over the last decade.

Last Friday, the House took up the TxDOT "sunset bill." Every 12 years, each state agency must undergo a review by the Legislature, during which the Sunset Advisory Committee determines whether to recommend to continue the agency or abolish it. During the review process, the Committee often discovers ways to reform agencies and provides these recommendations to the Legislature in the form of a sunset bill. There were over 100 amendments to the TxDOT sunset bill introduced by various legislators. I spoke in favor of an amendment by Rep. Ruth Jones McClendon, which would change the structure of the Texas Transportation Commission (TTC) from 5 appointed commissioners to an elected commissioner. Unfortunately, the amendment failed. Rep. McClendon's amendment is similar to HB 2350, which I filed this session. HB 2350 would change the process of selecting the Commission from appointment by the governor to election by the people of Texas. Under HB 2350, the Commission would consist of 3 commissioners, each elected statewide to at-large positions for 6 year terms. Elected oversight of TxDOT would create accountability and transparency and ensure that Texans can someone who can tell them what roads are going to be built, when they're going to be built, and how we're going to pay

for them. We have an opportunity to reel in a bureaucracy that has had a lot of problems over the last 5 years with the TxDOT sunset bill. Unfortunately, the bill doesn't include enough changes to the structure of TXDOT to change the culture of an organization that is lacking both creditability and transparency in most Texans eyes.

On Thursday evening, I presented HJR 149 before the Appropriations Committee. This legislation would require members of the Legislature to meet for a mid-biennium special session if the Comptroller releases revenue estimates that are more than 5 percent below or above the projected revenue estimate. HJR 149 would provide a better planning process for the Legislature to use when we face situations like the current budget crisis. Simply put, it would allow the Legislature to weigh in on current revenue projections provided by the Comptroller and make appropriate adjustments to the budget between Legislative Sessions. For example, our general revenue was off projection 6% in 2010. The legislature would have been able to start cutting programs sooner to diminish some of the extreme cuts that are needed now to balance the budget. The bill was very well received and several members of the Committee voiced support for the idea.

We're also working very closely with the Governor's and Attorney General's offices to ensure our EPA pushback bill, HB 3188, gets voted favorably out of committee. We will keep you posted on HB 3188's movement.

Also last week, the Culture, Recreation and Tourism Committee voted to name the red drum the official State Saltwater Fish of Texas!

At the Capitol



With members of the AARP.



With Chairman Ryan Guillen and Speaker Straus, discussing legislation

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 Larson".