

Texas House of Representatives



**Lyle Larson**

State Representative - District 122

## **What's New in District 122**

Good morning from Austin, Texas! The Legislature is starting to move bills in committees for consideration and action this week. The process, in football terms, we're in the first quarter of a four quarter game. Lot of folks are ready to tackle some of the big challenges in front of us like education, healthcare, infrastructure needs in both water and highways, and state parks.

Some say this Session is off to a bit of a slow start, but Team Larson sure isn't! Last week, we met with Eddie Aldrete of IBC Bank and Daniel Lasater of Broadway Bank, discussed healthcare delivery issues with doctors from District 122 from the Bexar County Medical Society, sang the Aggie War Hymn with Heisman Trophy winner Johnny Manziel, and talked to a group of UT Austin students regarding higher education issues. Also had the opportunity to speak at several forums including, a water panel at the Texas Roundtable Policymakers' Conference, a Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited meeting, and a Texas Coalition for Water, Energy and Economic Security Briefing.

### **Legislation by Larson**

Since last week, we've filed a few more bills, and joint or coauthored others. Many of our bills have been referred to various committees over the last few days. [Here](#) is our current legislative package. As always, we want to know what you think. Please send us an email to let us know!

### **Joint Meeting of the House and Senate Natural Resources Committees**

Speaking before both the House and Senate members during the session's first Natural Resources Committee meeting, state climatologist John Nielson-Gammon painted a bleak picture regarding Texas' ongoing drought. Compared with a normal year, Texans have only received 68 percent of the rainfall they're used to getting. Nielson-Gammon told the joint committee that no part of the state has withstood the drought, and there's no way of knowing how long these current conditions will last. But based on temperatures in the Pacific and Atlantic Oceans, we're likely going to be susceptible to drought for the next two decades. The joint committee also heard from L'Oreal Stepny, the Deputy Director of the office of water at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. Stepny discussed the measures her commission has taken in response to the most severe drought on record. There are over 6000 water systems in Texas that self-report their status to the TCEQ and over 1000 of them are on some sort of water

restrictions. There are 19 systems that have less than 180 days of water left; three of those have less than 45 days of water available.

The combined drought testimony only underscores the need for proper funding and legislation during this session. I'm committed to securing the money and allocating it responsibly so that Texas' water future is secure for the present and distant future. Many of our water-specific bills have already been referred to committee, and we will follow them diligently as they make their way through the legislative conversation over the next three and a half months. We must stay vigilant to ensure that our water needs are made priority this Legislative Session.

### **Joint Base San Antonio Day**

On Friday, February 8, we hosted the Texas Legislature's very first Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA) Day. San Antonio is known to many as "Military City USA." While many decision makers and elected officials around the state and across the country are aware of San Antonio's rich military heritage, we set a goal to raise the profile of JBSA by inviting members of the Legislature and their staffs to visit Camp Bullis. The mission was to obtain a better understanding of the military training that takes place there, and learn about encroachment and endangered species preservation, and how these issues affect military installations in our state.

Several members of the Legislature attended, including Senators Leticia Van de Putte and Donna Campbell, as well as State Representatives Nicole Collier, Joe Deshotel, Ken King, and Phil Cortez. The offices of Senator Carlos Uresti, Speaker Joe Straus, and Representatives Larry Gonzales, Jimmy Don Aycock, David Simpson, Armando Martinez, Allen Fletcher, Roland Gutierrez, Ruth Jones McClendon, John Kuempel, Bill Zedler, and Jim Murphy were represented as well. Brigadier General Theresa Carter and her staff showed us around the 28,000 acre installation that has been used by the military for over 100 years. We participated in a simulation exercise that all of the military members experience as part of their training. The simulations replicate the sights, sounds and even smells of battle to give them a very realistic idea of what they will experience in theater. We watched service members simulate an emergency medical situation where they attempted to save a member of their team who had been greatly injured by an improvised explosive device (IED) during a mission, while dodging enemy fire. We drove the perimeter of the installation and discussed the effects of encroachment and the need to preserve the habitat of the golden cheeeked warbler on the training exercises. Finally, under supervision of military personnel, we were able to fire some of the military weapons at the installation's firing range, including an M240 machine gun, an M4 and an M9, a semi-automatic pistol.



Military personnel simulate a medical evacuation to demonstrate the training they undergo at Camp Bullis

It is so important for our elected leaders from across the state and nation to understand what we do here as we compete for infrastructure funds and pursue legislation to support our mission here in Military City USA. We want to recognize and thanks the Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, Speaker Straus and Senator Van de Putte for helping host what will become a regular event each legislative session. We will continue to invite legislators to attend and highlight the different military missions we have in Bexar County.



Team Larson posing with unloaded military firearms at the range on Camp Bullis.

### **HB 5: Education Reform - Coursework, Assessment and Accountability**

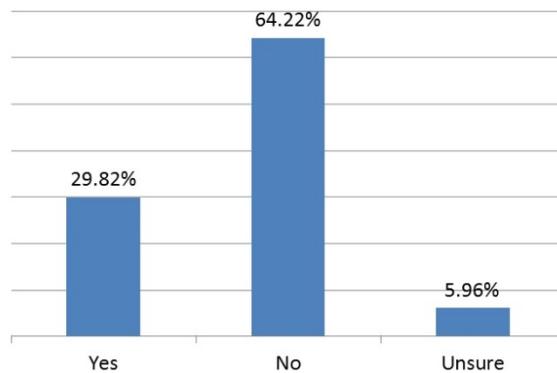
Public Education Chairman Jimmy Don Aycocock recently filed a piece of legislation intended to provide major needed reforms in our education system. The bill includes measures that will provide flexibility for students to ensure they are able to pursue their interests in the future. The bill would overhaul the way student assessment is pursued by reducing the number of standardized tests students must take, remove the requirement that an end-of-course exam must constitute 15 percent of a student's final grade and would allow for the fulfillment of graduation assessment through the passage of core subject classes. Finally, it provides an improved school accountability system by creating an academic performance rating system with letter grades A, B, C, D and F to rank schools based on various factors including academic and financial performance. For a more in depth summary of this legislation, please see [this article](#) in the Texas Tribune. The full text of HB 5 can be found [here](#).

We look forward to being part of the conversation of public education reform and are pleased to see that our state's leadership is addressing this extremely challenging issue.

### **Survey Says**

In light of last week's school finance ruling, we asked what you thought about the way we fund education in Texas. Here are the results:

In light of the current legal challenges to the state's method of school finance, do you believe public education is adequately funded in Texas?



### Texas Politics

With the 2012 presidential election in our rear-view mirror, many folks in Austin have begun speculating on the 2014 governor's race. Governor Perry has not said whether he'll seek re-election, and many believe Attorney General Abbott will enter the running regardless. We want to know what you think. Please let us know in [this brief survey](#).

### Other Legislative News

We've been busy joint and coauthoring bills this week! First, we joint authored [HB 700](#), which would legalize open carry in Texas. We also joint authored [HB 827](#), which authorizes county clerks to renew driver licenses and provide other identification certificate services. This bill is intended to provide additional and more convenient ways to allow folks to renew their driver's license, other than driving to a DPS driver license office. Finally, we joint authored [HB 1054](#), which would prohibit the conversion of a previously non-tolled road to a toll road.



With Johnny "Football" Manziel in the Texas Capitol

### **In the News**

As always, please feel free to contact me if I may ever be of assistance to you by phone at (210) 402-5402 or by email at [lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us](mailto:lyle.larson@house.state.tx.us).

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lyle Larson'.

Lyle Larson