



Representative Dan Huberty



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Elections, Veterans and Thanksgiving

November has been a very busy month. We started the first week with an Election and from those results, I am honored to be returning to the Texas House for the 83rd Legislative Session. I would also like to congratulate my fellow returning House and Senate members and welcome the many new members that will now make up the Texas House of Representatives and Texas Senate.

Similarly, I would like to send congratulations to my former fellow Humble ISD School Board members, Mike Sullivan and Dave Martin, in their election success. Council member Sullivan will be leaving the City of Houston to lead the Harris County Tax-Assessor Collector's Office. Dave Martin will be taking his place at City Hall to represent District E for the City of Houston. I am honored to have worked with them as Trustees, and to now have the opportunity to serve our communities in higher offices.

November also brought a large number of events honoring our local veterans. I hope you enjoyed our special Veteran's Day edition of the newsletter highlighting those items and many more valuable programs.

But one more holiday this past month was the highlight for my family and I. We enjoyed the company of family and friends this Thanksgiving while offering our gratitude for the many blessings bestowed upon us. I hope you had an opportunity to join with your loved ones to celebrate this time of Thanks and Giving, as well.

Please take the time to read through our newsletter. If you have any questions, please contact my staff at either the District Office, 281-360-9410, or the Capitol Office, 512-463-0520. And remember you can always contact me through the House website at www.house.state.tx.us.

Sincerely,

Dan Huberty
State Representative- District 127

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83rd Legislative Session

The next legislative session is quickly approaching. The Texas Legislature will gavel-in on Tuesday, January 8. Both the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate will have a large amount of new members. Similar to the last legislative session, the House will have a large number of freshmen members gracing the Chamber Floor. Some are brand new to the Capitol, while a handful are returning to the building after an election cycle or two. In total, there will be 44 new faces on the House floor. The members joined together in Austin this past week for their orientation to the House. Representative Huberty was on hand to meet many of the new members. With this large number of new members and the additional number of sophomore members returning from their first sessions in 2011, they will make-up a majority of the House membership.

The situation is similar in the Texas Senate, where five new members will be heading to that Chamber in January 2013. Four of the freshmen have previous service in the Texas House. For more information on House or Senate members, please visit www.house.state.tx.us or www.senate.state.tx.us. All members will be sworn-in to their respective offices on Tuesday, January 8th, 2013. Visitors are encouraged to attend and watch the event. Those that cannot get to Austin on that day can access the live stream of the events from both Chambers at <http://www.house.state.tx.us/video-audio/> or <http://www.senate.state.tx.us/bin/live.php>. Similarly, these websites offer live stream video of all Chamber and Committee action throughout the legislative session.

Individuals more interested in watching specific legislation as it goes through the process are encouraged to utilize the Texas Legislature Online website. This allows you to track bills, set alerts for hearings, watch specific topics and keep a pulse on what is happening in the Capitol building for the 140 days between swearing-in and Sine Die. This site can be accessed at <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/>.

There are several other great online resources available to all Texans. You can access the Texas Legislative Reference Library (LRL), which performs research for Texas legislators, their staff, and legislative committees, at <http://www.lrl.state.tx.us/index.cfm>. The library also assists the public and other state agencies with legislative research.

Another great resource, the Legislative Budget Board (LBB), is a permanent joint committee of the Texas Legislature that develops budget and policy recommendations for legislative appropriations, completes fiscal analyses for proposed legislation, and conducts evaluations and reviews to improve the efficiency and performance of state and local operations. It can be accessed at <http://www.lbb.state.tx.us/>.

Also available online is the State Auditor's Office (SAO), which serves as the independent auditor for Texas state government. The SAO operates with oversight from the Legislative Audit Committee, a six-member permanent standing committee of the Texas Legislature, jointly chaired by the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House of Representatives. The SAO can be accessed at <http://www.sao.state.tx.us/>.

The Sunset Advisory Commission (SAC) is also a great resource. The SAC was created to identify and eliminate waste, duplication, and inefficiency in government agencies. The 12-member Commission is a legislative body that reviews the policies and programs of more than 150 government agencies every 12 years. The Commission questions the need for each agency, looks for potential duplication of other public services or programs, and considers new and innovative changes to improve each agency's operations and activities. The Commission seeks public input through hearings on every agency under Sunset review and recommends actions on each agency to the full Legislature. In most cases, agencies under Sunset review are automatically abolished unless legislation is enacted to continue them. Their website is <http://www.sunset.state.tx.us/>.

Contact the office of Representative Dan Huberty with questions about these or other resources.

Medicare News

According to *Senior News*, one quarter of seniors rarely review ways to save on Medicare costs. And if there's one mantra for the open enrollment season, it's "review your options." Certain universal advice applies no matter what Medicare coverage you have: You should review all of your coverage options even if you are happy with your current coverage, because plans change their costs and benefits every year. But a recent Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that 1/4 rarely review their coverage. Advisors suggest you read your Annual Notice of Change (ANOC), which you should have received by September 30. It will list the changes in your plan, such as the premium and copays, and will compare the benefits in 2013 with those in 2012. Many plans make changes every year, and your current plan may not be your best choice for 2013.

Health Coverage Options

If you are considering enrolling in a Medicare Advantage (MA) plan, take the time to answer some key questions, such as:

1. Will I be able to use my doctors or other providers I want to see?
2. Are they in the plan's network and are they taking new patients who have this plan?
3. Which specialists, hospitals, home health agencies and skilled nursing facilities are in the network?
4. How much will it cost to see my primary care physician? A specialist?

Drug Coverage Options

If you are considering switching to a new **Part D plan**, either as part of an MA plan or as a stand-alone prescription drug plan (PDP), review your ANOC and pay particular attention to the summary of the new formulary (list of covered drugs). If you use the online Plan Finder tool at www.medicare.gov to select the best plan for your needs, call the plan and confirm the information you have gathered with a plan representative. This will protect you if you discover your decision to enroll in a plan was inaccurate.

Doughnut Hole

Just as in 2012, there will be a 50% manufacturer's discount for brand-name drugs during the coverage gap (also known as the doughnut hole). However, in 2013, there will be a 2.5% government discount in addition to the 50% manufacturer's discount. And as such, Medicare beneficiaries will have a 52.5% discount on the cost of their brand-name drugs during the coverage gap. The discount for generic drugs during the doughnut hole will increase from 14% to 21%.

Medicare Advantage Disenrollment Period

The Medicare Advantage Disenrollment Period (MADP) runs from January 1 to February 14 each year. So during this MADP period, people who are unhappy with their Medicare Advantage (MA) plan are allowed to switch to Original Medicare, and may also add Medicare prescription drug coverage, even if their MA plan did not include drug coverage. People in MA plans CANNOT switch to another MA plan. People with Original Medicare CANNOT make any changes. There are some exceptions to these two rules, and that applies to people who have a Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to enroll in a five-star MA or Part D plan at any point during the year, including during the MADP period.

"Viva Maplebrook" Inaugural Gala

On Friday, November 9, Maplebrook Elementary had an inaugural gala held from 6-10pm at the Walden on Lake Houston Country Club. The theme of the night was Las Vegas and featured a dinner, dancing, silent auction, live auction, and wine pull. All monies raised will go towards technology and capital improvements. Representative Huberty served as the live auctioneer. The items auctioned at the gala were "grade-level gifts," in which each grade level donated a gift that contained a variety of items based on a theme, with the themes ranging from family game night to holiday décor. Such collaboration and participation on the part of parents, students, and teachers made the event a certain success.



District 127 Town Hall Meeting

On November 14, Representative Huberty hosted a town hall meeting at Atascocita Middle School to discuss the upcoming legislative session. Residents were able to ask questions and voice concerns regarding various issues relevant to many in the community.

Having served as a member of the Public Education committee during the last legislative session, Representative Huberty was able to speak from experience on the issues facing this year's legislature with regards to public education. "We have created a monster in the testing system," Huberty said, cautioning that the recently imposed standardized testing body, STAAR, still runs the risk of encouraging teachers to teach disproportionately toward what material is likely to be covered on the standardized tests administered at the end of each school year. With regards to the next session, he mentioned that "Representative Scott Hochberg and I crafted a mechanism, where, for example, a student who scores 85 percent or better on their third-grade math and reading tests, won't have to take them again in fourth grade and can focus more on the writing test." Such a mechanism could perhaps remove some of the pressure put on teachers to devote high amounts of time and energy on preparing students for the tests, time and energy that could be better spent on more practical aspects of the curriculum. In addition, Representative Huberty stressed the importance of instituting vocational training programs that could better help to ensure that more students are adequately equipped for success in the workforce upon graduating high school.

Another education-related issue facing the Legislature is education finance. Last session, in order to make up for a budget deficit, the education budget had to be cut, but Representative Huberty claimed that this year, the Legislature will likely to be facing a budget surplus in which education finance can be considered from a more comprehensive perspective. "More than likely, we'll have a special session on school finance," Huberty said, adding that "we still have to find a way to fix the \$1.9 billion deferral in public education."

Representative Huberty also discussed Texas' recent conflicts with the EPA regarding regulations on emissions from coal-fired power plants, stating that electricity and power generation is likely to be a crucial issue facing the State Affairs Committee in the upcoming session. He also mentioned that planning for increased importation in the Houston Ship Channel, as well as improvements to waterways and the Port of Houston will be subjects likely discussed during the legislative session.



Humble ISD Education Foundation Golf Tournament

The Humble ISD Education Foundation hosted a fundraising golf tournament on Wednesday, November 7 at the Kingwood Country Club presented by Insperity. The event featured golf games and silent/live auctions with such items as Texans tickets for four and a round of golf with Humble ISD Superintendent Dr. Guy Sconzo. The Humble ISD Education Foundation is a non-profit organization that was created by concerned community members who wanted to support innovative educational programs not supported by the school district's standard operating budget that lead to increased student achievement. Since its inception, the Foundation has gifted more than \$5 million in grants for Humble ISD campuses. Proceeds from this year's golf tournament event will be used to fund the foundation's education grant program.

Wildcat Salute to Veterans

The annual Wildcat Salute to Veterans ceremony was held November 9 at Humble High School. This event functions as a campus-wide service learning project for students, as well as a service to honor both local veterans and all men and women who serve and have served in the armed forces in order to protect the rights we all cherish.

Representative Huberty was honored to serve as the guest speaker for the event. He presented the Jr. ROTC members and their team sponsor with a House Resolution highlighting their achievements and thanking them for their dedication local veterans in hosting this annual event.

The event featured a replication of Arlington Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Several JROTC students stood guard all day long in front of the replica, marching in exact duplication of the soldiers that stand guard in Arlington each and every day. These students' demonstration brought to mind the precision, dedication, and diligence required by all servicemen. During the ceremony, students placed a wreath at a replica accompanied by the playing of TAPS by Humble High School band students. The National Anthem was performed by the Humble High choir and the American Sign Language students signed for those guests who might have been hard of hearing.

After the ceremony, which was put on by students and various school organizations, the students were able to spend time with attending veterans where they could thank them for their service and hear their stories about their service in the military. Just as the school's student body came together so successfully to honor veterans, we are reminded that irrespective of any political and ideological differences we may have with one another, we can all come together to honor veterans and express sincere gratitude for their service, as such service has protected our freedoms since the nation's founding.



Texas High School Aerospace Scholars

The Texas High School Aerospace Scholars project (HAS) has extended its deadline to December 16. HAS is an interactive on-line science, technology, engineering and mathematics learning experience for high school juniors, culminating in a one-week residential experience at NASA Johnson Space Center in Houston. Offered at no cost to the student, HAS consists of eight online modules and a final project from January 2013 through May 2013 under the guidance of Texas certified educators. Based on success in the online coursework, students may be selected to attend a week during the summer where they interact with NASA scientists, engineers and technologists to design a human mission to Mars. Students who successfully participate in the online lessons and attend the summer experience are eligible to ask their high school for science elective credit.

Please visit the website for project information and application, www.has.aerospacescholars.org. The deadline for the application and supporting documentation is midnight CST, December 16, 2012. The project is sponsored by NASA and funded by the State of Texas, Houston Livestock Show and Rodeo™, and Rotary NASA, at no cost to the participants.

Upcoming Events

Saturday, December 1

- 10:00 AM Huffman Children's Christmas Festival & Christmas Parade
Huffman Church
- 10:00 AM Kingwood Christmas in the Park
Town Center Park
- 4:00 PM Holiday at the Harbor Concert
Kings Harbor

Monday, December 3

- 9:30 AM HARTA Christmas Luncheon and Madrigal Choir Concert
Humble ISD Instructional Support Center

Tuesday, December 4

- 6:30 PM Humble Christmas Parade of Lights
Main Street, Humble

Wednesday, December 5

- 11:00 AM Kingwood Chamber of Commerce "Season for Seniors" Luncheon
The Nathaniel Center
- 11:30 AM East Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce Monthly Luncheon
21575 Hwy 59 N. New Caney, TX 77357

Thursday, December 6

- 11:00 AM Kingwood BizCom Group Meeting
Kingwood High School

Saturday, December 8

- 7:00 AM Crosby Chamber Jingle Bell Fun Run
Crosby Fairgrounds
- 10:00 AM Crosby Children's Christmas Festival & Christmas Parade
Crosby Fairgrounds

Wednesday, December 12

- 9:00 AM Golfing for a Cure! Curefest Golf Tournament
Kingwood Country Club

