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Picking-Up the Pace

With the conclusion of the seventh week, there are less than ninety days left in the 83rd Legislative Session. The pace of the political process has quickly picked up here at the Capitol, especially as we approach Bill Filing deadline.

This past week, the house again convened at 2 PM on Monday to handle business. That evening, I met with several small business owners from District 127 at the National Federation of Independent Business' (NFIB) Small Business Day Reception.

The following day, the Capitol was overrun with Justices of the Peace and Constable's for their Day at the Capitol. Once off the house floor, I had the opportunity to meet with several students who actively participate in the Atascocita FFA. From there, I headed into the Public Education committee hearing which you can further read about below.

Tuesday also saw House Resolution 585, honoring the life of Travis Winfield Sampley, son to District 127 residents, Donald & Gayle Sampley. Travis graduated from Humble ISD in 1997 and went on to serve the public in a legislative capacity in positions across the Texas Capitol. At the time of his passing in November 2011, he was serving as Chief of Staff for State Representative Ralph Sheffield of Temple. To read more about Travis and view the resolution written in his honor, simply [click here](#).

The remainder of the week saw visits from volunteer and professional firefighters from across Texas, plus home school students speaking to the proposed "Tim Tebow" Bill which would allow them to participate in UIL activities.

You can read more about that and much more in the attached newsletter. Please contact my office with any questions you may have regarding the 83rd Legislative Session.

Sincerely,

Dan Huberty

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March 2nd - Texas Independence Day

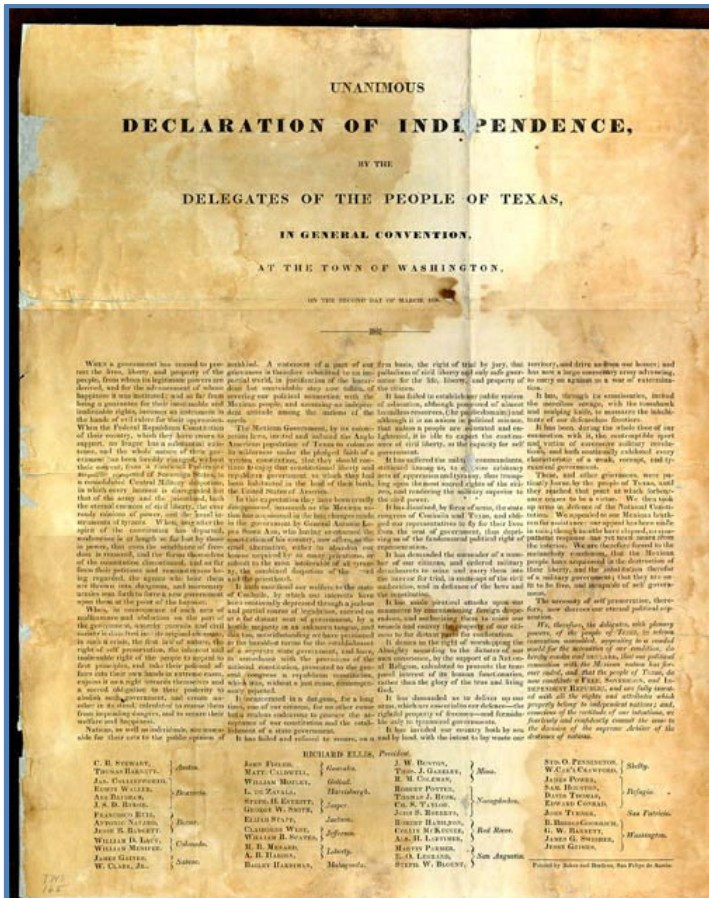
Saturday, March 2, marks the 177th anniversary of the signing of the Texas Declaration of Independence. The story of the declaration is rarely talked about outside of Texas State History class, so here is a quick run-through to jog your memory.

On March 1, 1836, the first day of the of Convention at Washington-on-the-Brazos, Convention President Richard Ellis assigned George C. Childress, James Gaines, Edward Conrad, Collin McKinney and Bailey Hardeman the task of drafting a Texas Declaration of Independence from Mexico. George Childress, the committee chairman, is generally accepted as the author of the Texas Declaration of Independence. The six-page document was submitted for a vote of the whole convention only one day later, on March 2, 1836. It is even thought that Childress had probably written a draft version of the document prior to his arrival.

The document very much parallels the United States declaration. It contains statements on the function and responsibility of government, followed by a list of grievances. Finally, it concludes by stating, "our political connection with the Mexican nation has forever ended, and that the people of Texas do now constitute a free, Sovereign, and independent republic, and are fully invested with all the rights and attributes which properly belong to independent nations; and, conscious of the rectitude of our intentions, we fearlessly and confidently commit the issue to the decision of the Supreme arbiter of the destinies of nations."

A free and independent Republic of Texas was officially declared that day, March 2, 1836. All 54 delegates, representing the individual settlements in Texas, approved the document and signed it. Five copies of the declaration were then made and dispatched to the designated Texas towns of Bexar, Goliad, Nacogdoches, Brazoria, and San Felipe. [The full text of the declaration can be found here.](#)

This year, there are several ways to get involved and celebrate Texas Independence. Visit the Celebrate Texas! website at <http://www.celebratetexas.org/> to learn about this organization and events happening all weekend.



Left: Texas Declaration of Independence
Above: The Signers of the Texas Declaration

Public Education Hearing - 2.26.13

On Tuesday, February 26, the House Committee on Public Education met in order to hear and discuss five different bills that were referred to the committee late last week. It was a significantly shorter committee hearing as compared to last week's ten hour hearing. Representative Aycock's bill, HB 525, was one of the most discussed bills at the hearing with several witnesses testifying for, on, and against the bill. If passed, HB 525 would require school districts to collect and report data to Texas Education Agency (TEA) about students whose parents are military personnel. This data would be reported to TEA through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS), which is currently the main resource for school districts to report information about their districts.

This coming week Representative Huberty will have the opportunity to lay out two of his bills, HB 222 and HB 1264, for the Public Education Committee to consider. It should be an even more eventful week for public education as session continues to move forward and the bill filing deadline slowly approaches.

Legislative Update

As the bill filing deadline draws near, Representatives legislative packages are slowly growing larger. It is not uncommon for individuals or organizations to bring bills to members asking for their support and assistance in passage by carrying the legislation. As of Friday, March 1, the Texas House has already filed 2,937 pieces of legislation. That number is surely to increase before the closing of filing.

To view the current legislation in the Texas House or Senate, simply visit the Texas Legislature Online, at <http://www.legis.state.tx.us/>. You can view all filed bills by Chamber, Author, Subject, Committee and even Filing Date by clicking the "Reports" link. You can view a list of Representative Huberty's bills by clicking [here](#).

State Affairs Hearing - 2.27.13

This week's State Affairs hearing provided several of the new, or Freshmen, legislators their first opportunity to lay out a bill in committee. They offered up bills concerning ethics training, term limits, and a constitutional amendment for statewide elected official to vacate their office upon announcing candidacy for another office. Some more senior members offered up "clean-up" bills that simply help to update statute. Chairman Cook proposed a bill to create a Sunset Review for the Employee Retirement System (ERS), not allowing abolishment, but reviewing the system for inadequacies.

Chairman Senfronia Thompson's bills clean up language affecting the power of the Governor when out of the state. Advanced technology allows officials to communicate from long distances quickly and with ease, and this bill will clarify language in the constitution so that the Governor and Lieutenant Governor still retain executive authority when they leave the state, but remain in the contiguous United States. All bills were left pending in committee.

Honorary House Page Program

All house members have the opportunity to host a certain number of honorary pages during the legislative session, through the Texas House Honorary Page Program at the Texas Capitol. Students, ages 8 to 18 years old, serve as honorary pages for one half-day shift and witness the legislative process from inside the Capitol walls.

Honorary pages are granted floor access and have the opportunity to visit with Texas Representatives, meet the Speaker of the House and learn the legislative process. In addition, honorary pages will work with the Sergeant-at-Arms office to assist with the delivery of messages and documents around the Capitol for members, as they are escorted with a Sergeant. For more details on how to apply, e-mail Representative Huberty at Dan.Huberty@house.state.tx.us and ask specifically about the Honorary Page Program.

Explore UT: The Biggest Open House in Texas

Explore UT is an annual event hosted by the University of Texas at Austin on the first Saturday in March. Based on the model of an open house held during the university's Centennial observance in 1983, the first "Explore UT" was held in 1999. The program was then called "UT Interactive: A Campus Wide Exploration." The response to UT Interactive was overwhelming and in spring 2000, plans were made to establish a more permanent structure that would allow the program to be held annually beginning in 2001. The program name was changed and "Explore UT: The Biggest Open House in Texas" was established.

Like most open houses, Explore UT offers an opportunity to come "inside" — in this case, to see the university's literary and art collections, learn about cutting-edge research, experience the history and traditions, and interact with faculty, staff and students. Explore UT aims to inform the public about the university's mission of teaching, research and public service. The program invites Texans of all ages to experience the intellectual life, technological advances and rich resources of a world-class university. It helps them see how the university is shaping the future. Explore UT seeks to help parents and teachers instill the excitement and wonder of learning in children. It welcomes alumni to re-connect with the institution that prepared them for their careers.

The University of Texas at Austin belongs to the citizens of Texas. Explore UT is an opportunity for people to enhance that sense of ownership. To view the Explore UT schedule of events, simply visit: <http://ormue.webhost.utexas.edu/exploreut/images/ExploreUT2013.pdf>

Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP)

The Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program is open for applications. TASSP was created to encourage students to become members of the Texas Army National Guard, the Texas Air National Guard, the Texas State Guard, the United States Coast Guard, or the United States Merchant Marine, or to become commissioned officers in any branch of the armed services of the United States. Each year the governor and the lieutenant governor may each appoint two students, and each state senator and state representative may appoint one student to receive an initial conditional scholarship.

Program participants must meet two of the following four academic criteria to be selected: be on track to graduate or have graduated high school with the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) or the International Baccalaureate Program (IB); a high school GPA of 3.0 or higher; achieved a college readiness score on the SAT (1590) or ACT (23) and/or ranked in the top one-third of the prospective high school graduating class. To be eligible for selection, students must: enroll in a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC); agree to: complete four years of ROTC training, graduate no later than six years after the date first enrolled, and after graduation, enter into: a four year commitment to be a member of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, United States Coast Guard, or United States Merchant Marine; contract to serve as a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States, or repay the scholarship if the requirements are not met.

Representative Huberty is now accepting applications for selection via personal request letters. Please include details on all eligibility requirements listed above. For more information on the TAASP, the application process, eligibility requirements and the amounts that may be awarded, please visit the program [website](#).

