



February 11, 2019

Thank you for subscribing to my e-newsletter. Below you will find updates from federal, state and local agencies on events from the past week and the week ahead.

It was a busy week at the Capitol, as the Public Education committee met Tuesday and Wednesday. The first meeting was a broad overview of school finance and during the second, the committee heard from members of the Commission on the Public School Finance's Final Report.

Should you have questions regarding anything in this newsletter, please feel free to contact us directly using the information provided at the bottom of this email.

Sincerely,

Dan



February 2019 Calendar

Download my February 2019 calendar by clicking the link below. This month is full of events in and around Texas that could be fun or useful to you and your family! This new format allows you to save the document for printing or sending to your family members.

Keep watch for these updated calendars at the beginning of each month. Important local and legislative dates and events will be posted here.



[Click here to view and download the calendar!](#)

Hurricane Harvey Updates

Commissioner Bush Sends President Donald J. Trump Letter Requesting Help Getting Mitigation Rules Approved by HUD And OMB



Comr. George P. Bush sends President Donald J. Trump...

Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush announced he sent a letter to President Donald J. Trump requesting help getting rules for Texas' Community Development Block Grants for Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) ...

[Read more](#)

www.glo.texas.gov

Mobile Hurricane Harvey Recovery Centers Coming to District E

Houston, TX - Council Member Dave Martin would like to make residents aware the City of Houston has launched its Homeowner Assistance Program (HoAP). The first step for residents interested in accessing the City's recovery programs is to take the [Harvey Recovery Survey](#).

There are four upcoming mobile Hurricane Harvey recovery center events taking place in District E this month. Information regarding times and locations can be found below. The District E office is continuing to look for more opportunities and will notify the community of additional dates and locations as more information becomes available.

Intake specialists will be available at four upcoming events in District E:

- Saturday, February 9, 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at the Kingwood Branch Library, 4400 Bens View Lane, Houston, Texas 77339.
- Monday, February 11, 9:00 to 12:00 p.m., at the Edgar A. Smith Family YMCA, 14560 Galveston Road, Webster, Texas 77598.
- Saturday, February 23, 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., at the Kingwood Community Center, 4102 Rustic Woods, Kingwood, Texas 77345.
- Wednesday, February 27, 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. at the Kingwood Community Center, 4102 Rustic Woods, Kingwood, Texas 77345.

If you were affected by Hurricane Harvey, please take the Harvey Recovery Survey before the upcoming events:

- Online at <https://recovery.houstontx.gov>
- By phone at 832-393-0550 (Monday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.)
- Or in person at any of the [4 new Housing Recovery Centers \(HRC's\)](#)

The Recovery Survey is a tool to direct residents to the appropriate recovery program and to help the City prioritize those with urgent needs. No documentation is required to take the Recovery

Survey, and it takes less than 15 minutes to complete. While priority will be given to low and moderate income homeowners, assistance is available to homeowners of all income levels. An Intake Specialist will contact you after you complete the Survey regarding next steps.

If you need assistance filling out the Survey, please call 832-393-0550 or visit one of the HRC's:

- Northeast: 9551 N. Wayside, Houston, Texas 77028
- Northwest: 13101 Northwest Freeway [Hwy. 290], Suite 101, Houston, Texas 77040
- Southwest: 6464 Savoy Drive, Suite 110, Houston, Texas 77036
- Southeast: 11550 Fuqua St., 3rd floor, Houston, Texas 77036 (in District E)

The centers are open Monday and Tuesday, from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Wednesday and Thursday from 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., and Saturday from 9:00 to 3:00 p.m. The centers are closed on Sundays. For a map, please click [here](#).

For a map, please [click here](#). The City received the \$1.17 billion for housing recovery through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the State of Texas General Land Office. The recovery funds include the HoAP, which offers five program options including:

- Reimbursement for completed repairs
- Homeowner-managed rehabilitation
- City-managed rehabilitation and reconstruction
- Buyouts
- Interim mortgage assistance.

For more information, regarding this project please contact the Houston Recovery Center by calling 832-393-0550.

Updates from Austin

Rep. Huberty's Legislation

[HB 76](#) Relating to cardiac assessments of high school participants in extracurricular athletic activities sponsored or sanctioned by the University Interscholastic League.

[HB 734](#) Relating to the carrying of concealed or holstered handguns by certain handgun license holders attending a meeting of the board of trustees of a school district or the governing body of an open-enrollment charter school.

[HB 766](#) Relating to exemptions for disabled peace officers and fire fighters from payment of tuition and fees at public institutions of higher education.

[HB 791](#) Relating to the definition of volunteer fire department for purposes of certain motor fuel tax exemptions.

[HB 802](#) Relating to voting rights and eligibility for office of residents of certain districts subject to a strategic partnership agreement.

[HB 813](#) Relating to money used by counties that participate in the low-income vehicle repair assistance, retrofit, and accelerated vehicle retirement program.

[HB 831](#) Relating to the residency requirement to be eligible for public office.

[HB 851](#) Relating to the use of individual graduation committees and other alternative methods to satisfy certain public high school graduation requirements.

[HB 907](#) Relating to the penalty for failure to register certain aggregate production operations with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

[HB 908](#) Relating to the regulation of aggregate production operation by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality; increasing an administrative penalty.

[HB 909](#) Relating to best management practices for aggregate production operations.

[HB 911](#) Relating to the creation and functions of the Lake Houston Watershed Commission.

TDI Overhauls Complaint Process to Address Backlog

When Kent Sullivan took over as the state's Insurance Commissioner about a year ago, he directed a top-to-bottom review of the agency to find problems, develop solutions, and improve customer service.

Backlogs in processing agent licenses and consumer complaints were two of the biggest issues identified. In the first year of Sullivan's leadership, TDI has overhauled and reorganized both areas. Performance is now dramatically better in agent licensing and showing steady improvement in consumer complaints.

"We found that the agency's technology and processes were often out of date," Sullivan said. However, he noted that he was the agency's fifth commissioner in seven years. Making major organizational changes and investing in technology is difficult without consistent leadership to approve and prioritize those initiatives.

Improving complaint processing is a priority for the agency. TDI's technology and processes remained essentially unchanged over years as the number of complaints increased. The result: A backlog first developed in 2015 and continued to grow as the gap between the number of complaints received and the number resolved widened.

Over the past year, the complaint process had undergone a comprehensive makeover:

- Changes were made to modernize business operations and emphasize processing center best practices.
- More staff were assigned to process complaints about health claims, which make up half of all complaints.
- The agency is working to reduce the number of complaints it gets about health plans it doesn't regulate. TDI regulates fully insured health plans, which cover about 16 percent of Texans. In 2018, almost 10 percent of all complaints TDI received were about plans it doesn't regulate.
- Online improvements are in the works to make it easier for consumers to submit complaints and check their status.
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Sullivan also created a new unit to better monitor complaint trends. "The ultimate goal is to spot emerging issues so we can take action before they grow into larger problems."

Chris Herrick, who now heads the complaint processing unit, said the changes put in place are reducing the backlog, but he acknowledged that it will take several months to eliminate it.

"Working complaints involves several steps," Herrick explained. After getting a complaint, TDI requests more information from the insurance company involved. Once the company responds, a complaint specialist reviews all the information submitted by the consumer and the company.

"We want to get rid of the backlog as soon as we can, but we aren't going to cut corners on our reviews," Herrick said. "Our staff have responded really well to the changes we're making, and they're working through the backlogged cases faster than we had expected. We should see dramatic improvements in our numbers within six months."

Sullivan makes it clear that the agency will push to make improvements more quickly if possible.

"Our overarching goal is to modernize so we can sustain the improvements we're making and keep pace with demand," he said. "We're committed to turning this agency into one that delivers excellent customer service."

If you have any constituents who need assistance in filing a complaint or have any questions, please contact TDI Government Relations at 512-676-6605.

Staff Highlight: Laura Villegas, Legislative Intern



Laura is a sophomore at the University of Texas working towards her Bachelor of Science in Human Development and a minor in Communication Studies.

She has a strong heart for her hometown of Houston, TX, and is absorbing as much knowledge and experience as possible here in Austin in hopes of bringing it back home and making a larger impact in her city.

Laura enjoys volunteering with her alma mater's choir program in East Houston as well as in her childhood church on the same side of town.

Constituent Resources

Need Assistance?

Our office is always ready to assist you. Call or email us and we will do our best to help. Many State Agencies also have hotlines or citizen assistance offices to assist you. That contact information is available at this link, in alphabetical order:

<http://www.lrl.texas.gov/genInfo/stateAgencies.cfm>

Live Updates

All of the relevant information our office has gathered during the week will be posted to our Facebook page. By "liking" us, you will stay up-to-date about important matters across the state that affect you and your family. Click below to find our page.



Contact Information

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