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March 22, 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.

On Tuesday, the Public Education committee met to hear a new slate of bills and vote out several from previous hearings. This included the committee substitute for House Bill 3, which made some technical changes and added clarifying language reflective of the original intent. It also added several necessary conforming changes.

You can view the meeting from Tuesday in full by clicking the links below. Due to technical difficulties, the hearing was moved to a second room, resulting in two different tapings.

We are busy preparing for next week, as we get ready to debate the General Appropriations Act, or HB 1, on the floor Wednesday. Amendments are being accepted now through the weekend and we anticipate a long day of spirited conversation in the Chamber that day. We will also have SB 500, of the Supplemental Appropriations bill, on the House Floor that morning. Tune in to watch at www.house.texas.gov. Also, look below for a breakdown of the bills from the House party Caucus.

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,



March 2019 Calendar

Download my March 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 This Month's Calendar!](#)



Hurricane Harvey Updates

Lake Houston Survey

HARVEY RELIEF FUNDS ARE HERE!
STEP ONE: TAKE THE SURVEY.

CALL 832.393.0550

RECOVERY.HOUSTONTX.GOV

City Council Member Dave Martin would like to make City of Houston residents, living in the Kingwood and Lake Houston area, aware City of Houston Public Works Department is conducting a short Lake Houston Survey.

Since March 2018, Lake Houston has been lowered six times in the advance of inclement weather at the request of Council Member Martin. Each time the lake was temporarily lowered it was lowered between twelve to eighteen inches.

Normal pool elevation for Lake Houston is 42.5 feet. Most recently in February, the lake was lowered to 41.5 feet to conduct necessary repairs to the spillway dam and the lake remains close to that level today.

Resident participation in this survey will determine if the City chooses to maintain the current lower water level of 41.5 feet temporarily during the 2019 rainy season or lower the lake an additional six inches to provide more storage in the lake during the wetter months of the year. These measures are strictly temporary for the rainy season only and this survey will assist in providing the City with valuable information before a decision is made.

If a seasonal release is not favorable, the City of Houston plans to continue releasing water on a situational basis. During 2018, the lake was lowered when the San Jacinto River Watershed was forecast to receive more than three inches of rain during a single weather event. The lower lake levels are all temporary and no permanent lowering of Lake Houston is being considered.

The Lake Houston Survey will be open until April 2, 2019 and may only be taken once. Thank you in advance for your participation. To fill out the survey please follow this link. The survey should take no longer than two minutes to complete.

For more information, please contact Council Member Martin's office by calling (832) 393-3008 or via email at districte@houstontx.gov.

Updates from Austin

Public Education Committee Meeting: Tuesday, March 19, 2019



Texas House of Representatives

VIDEO PLAYER

Part 1: Public Education - Mar 19th, 2019

Live and Recorded Public meetings of
Public Education for Texas Legislative
Council - House

[Read more](#)

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Texas House of Representatives

VIDEO PLAYER

Part 2: Public Education - Mar 19th, 2019

Live and Recorded Public meetings of
Public Education for Texas Legislative
Council - House

[Read more](#)

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Rep. Huberty's Legislative Agenda

Representative Huberty has filed 41 bills, as of **1 PM on March 22, 2019**. Here are some are those bills and captions with links to each item. To see a list of Rep. Huberty's filed legislation, [click here](#).

[HJR 3](#) - Proposing a constitutional amendment to provide funding for the cost of maintaining and operating the public school system and to reduce school district ad valorem tax rates through an increase in the state sales and use tax rate.

[HJR 121](#) - Proposing a constitutional amendment allowing increased distributions to the available school fund.

[HB 3](#) - Relating to public school finance and public education.

[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.

[HB 1652](#) - Relating to the public resale by means of a public auction using online bidding and sale of property purchased by a taxing unit at an ad valorem tax sale.

[HB 1671](#) - Relating to water quality protection areas.

[HB 1725](#) - Relating to retired members of the Texas State Guard.

[HB 2795](#) - Relating to a one-time supplemental annuity payment to certain retirees and beneficiaries of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.

[HB 2961](#) - Relating to an allotment under the foundation school program for students with dyslexia or related disorders.

[HB 2983](#) - Relating to the administration to public school students in certain grades of state-administered assessment instruments.

[HB 3599](#) - Relating to certain increases in benefits under the firefighters' relief and retirement fund in certain municipalities.

[HB 3904](#) - Relating to public school accountability, including certain assessment requirements, performance standards, and sanctions, including sanctions affecting educator contracts, and to providing alternative methods to satisfy certain public high school graduation requirements.

[HB 3906](#) - Relating to the adoption and administration of assessment instruments used to assess the performance of public school students.

[HB 3913](#) - Relating to an exception from required disclosure under the public information law for certain personal information obtained by certain flood control districts.

[HB 3967](#) - Relating to access to certain health information of public school students during an emergency evacuation.

[HB 4334](#) - Relating to the creation of the office of inspector general at the Texas Education Agency to investigate the administration of public education.

[HB 4335](#) - Relating to the assessment and collection of ad valorem taxes imposed by a school district.

[HB 4611](#) - Relating to certain distributions to the available school fund.

[HB 4621](#) - Relating to the imposition of sales and use taxes and the allocation of certain revenue from sales and use taxes to school district property tax relief and public education; authorizing the imposition of a tax.

Texas House Republican Caucus: HB 1 & SB 500

General Appropriations Bills, otherwise known as the state budget, are introduced by the House and Senate at the start of the legislative session following an assessment of the Legislative Appropriation Requests (LARs) submitted by state agencies over the interim and the Comptroller's Biennial Revenue Estimate (BRE).

The Legislature may change the state budget through a supplemental appropriations bill after the budget has been approved. Because the regular session begins in January, with eight months remaining in the two-year budget period, the Legislature sometimes appropriates funds to supplement an agency



for the last fiscal year of a biennium.

The Comptroller anticipates state lawmakers will have \$119.1 billion for spending over the FY 2020-2021 budget cycle, which is roughly 8.1 percent more funding available compared to the last biennium.

The House Appropriations Committee has been hard at work preparing House Bill 1, the state budget for the upcoming biennium, while the Senate recently passed and sent over Senate Bill 500, the supplemental budget which will address the obligations and critical needs of the state in the final months of FY 2019.

As substituted, House Bill 1 (HB 1) spends \$116.5 billion of general revenue, well under the Comptroller's BRE of \$119.1 billion. The bill also includes approximately \$2.3 billion of items funded with the Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF).

HB 1 responsibly funds items Texas taxpayers expect and deserve, like public education, mental health, school safety, and sexual assault prevention education and training. HB 1 is fiscally conservative spending taxpayer dollars efficiently and effectively to provide critical government services, while coming in well below all four Constitutional spending limits.

Below is a breakdown of HB 1 by article highlighting certain issues.

Article I - General Government: *Funding the critical services Texans expect efficiently and effectively.*

- Standing up for Texas Veterans: The Texas Veterans Commission is provided with an additional \$7M GR to meet the increasing demand for veterans assistance in underserved rural areas; to expand the Women Veterans Program; to expand the Veteran Entrepreneur Program; and to provide more funding for Veterans Treatment Court grants.
- Protecting Victims of Sexual Assault: Sexual Assault Crisis Centers under the Office of the Attorney General are provided with an additional \$7.5M GR to eliminate waitlists, expand crisis centers into 15 counties, and cover projected caseload.
- \$10M GR is appropriated for grants to Sexual Assault Forensic Exam-Ready (SAFE-Ready) Facilities for education and training so that acute care hospitals are fully equipped and trained to care for victims of sexual assault.
- Rebuilding Texas after Harvey: \$100M ESF is provided to the Office of the Governor for disaster response and recovery grants.

Article II - Health and Human Services: *Putting the health of Texans first.*

- Prioritizing Mental Health for all Texans: HB 1 includes \$173.4M GR to address capacity demands for behavioral health services including fully funding additional inpatient psychiatric services and access to residential treatment beds for children. Included in this amount is funding for substance abuse disorder (SUD) treatment, including \$23.6M GR to address the waitlist for pregnant women and women with dependent children.
- Assisting Children with Developmental Challenges: The Early Childhood Intervention (ECI) program is provided with an additional \$72.6M GR in order to fund caseload growth and develop provider stability.
- Critical Healthcare for Texas Women: \$88.1M GR is provided to the three women's health programs at the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to meet caseload growth and fund providers that serve rural and underserved areas.
- Protecting Vulnerable Texans: Adult Protective Services (APS) at the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) is provided with \$6.5M to fund additional caseworkers. Another \$22M GR is provided for salary increases and bonuses for APS frontline caseworkers, investigator caseworkers, supervisors, and support staff.

Article III – Education: *Preparing young Texans to compete in the workforce of the future.*

Public Education—Investing in Texas school children to prepare them for college or career.

- The Foundation School Program (FSP) is provided with an additional \$9B GR to fund HB 3 as introduced.
- The Texas Education Agency (TEA) is provided with \$50M GR for special education grants.
- TEA is also provided with \$64.5M (out of \$109.4M total allocated for school safety efforts) for increased investment in Communities in Schools and the agency's Safe and Healthy Schools initiative.

Higher Education—Ensuring Texas students have access to a quality higher education so they can compete in the workforce.

- \$80M GR is provided for TEXAS Grants to maintain 70% of eligible students in all pathways. This amount funds growth and maintains the percentage of eligible students for these grants.
- \$18.5M GR is provided for the small institution supplement to help growing institutions that do not yet generate enough formula funding to operate on their own.

Article IV – Judiciary: *Ensuring all Texans have access to a fair and efficient legal system.*

- The Supreme Court's Basic Civil Legal Services program receives an additional \$6M GR for veterans and \$10M GR for victims of sexual assault.

- The Office of Court Administration is appropriated an additional \$3.4M GR to create nine additional child protection courts, as well as \$1M GR for the Children's Commission to provide judicial training to Child Support Courts.

- The Texas Indigent Defense Commission is appropriated \$10M GR-D to provide grants to counties for indigent defense, as well as \$10M GR for grants to public defender offices for the specialized representation of indigent defendants with mental illness.

Article V – Public Safety and Criminal Justice: *Ensuring law enforcement has the resources it needs to keep our families and communities safe.*

- The Department of Public Safety (DPS) is appropriated \$6M ESF for crime lab equipment replacement and remodel of the Garland Crime Lab; and approximately \$2M GR is given to fund crime analyst training and education in drug and toxicology disciplines.

Article VI - Natural Resources: *Using our natural resources responsibly, now and in the future.*

- The Water Development Board is appropriated \$8.5M GR for strategic mapping, floodplain mapping, hydraulic river and coastal mapping, and flood monitoring.

Article VII - Business and Economic Development: *Expanding economic opportunity to every corner of the state.*

- The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs is appropriated \$3M GR to fund a youth homeless initiative.

- \$200M GR is provided to the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) for improvements to the Drivers License Program, contingent upon the transfer of the Driver License Program from DPS to DMV.

- The Texas Workforce Commission is appropriated \$6M GR for the Jobs and Education Training Program and \$1.3M GR for the Apprenticeship Training Program.

Information Technology Needs at State Agencies: *Protecting Texans' data and ensuring state agencies operate efficiently.*

- HB 1 provides approximately \$40M ESF for all Centralized Accounting and Payroll/Personnel System (CAPPS) projects.

- The bill also provides for \$73M AF for agency requests related to information technology (IT) projects. Projects were designated into three areas; Cybersecurity, Legacy Systems Modernization, or a combination of both.

SB 500 - The Supplemental Budget

The main focus of SB 500 is to fund FY 2019 obligations, while also funding critical needs such as Hurricane Harvey damage, using General Revenue (GR) and the Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF). Senate Bill 500 spends \$2.7 billion of general revenue and approximately \$4.3 billion of the Economic Stabilization Fund. Comptroller Hegar previously estimated that the ESF would have nearly \$12 billion for budget emergencies. Highlighted below are several key areas SB 500 funds.

- \$2.7 billion ESF may be used for expenses related to Hurricane Harvey, including \$1.5 billion for reduced property values and increased costs and \$873 million to match local public needs
- \$1.34 billion in funding for the Teacher Retirement System
- \$2.1 billion GR to fund a shortfall in Medicaid
- \$100 million GR to fund state children's hospitals
- \$250 million ESF to match local funding for damaged county roads

CSHB 1 was voted out of the House Appropriations Committee on March 18, 2019 and is scheduled to be considered on the House floor on Wednesday, March 27, 2019 and Thursday, March 28, 2019. SB 500 passed the Senate on Wednesday, May 13, 2019 and is scheduled for consideration on the House Floor on Wednesday, March 27, 2019. Once passed by both the House and Senate, both bills will head to a conference committee between the two chambers, where legislative members of both bodies will then finalize the supplemental budget for each chamber's approval.

Capitol Events



Speaker Bonnen presenting Rep. Huberty with his Chairman's Gavel

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.



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