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April 26, 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.

The Capitol is buzzing day and night as members move between the floor, committee hearings and meetings. It is not uncommon to see a legislator lay out two or more bills in the chamber or before committees at this time in the session. Just this week, I had five bills on the House calendar. Each one will now move to the Senate where it will hopefully move quickly through the committee process and to the chamber for debate. For an update on those and all of my legislation, look in the bill tracking section below.

Next week, I have several more bills on the Daily Calendar. A handful are in the calendars committee and the last few will be heard in committee. HB 909, relating to best management practices for aggregate production operators, is set for a hearing in the Environmental Regulation committee upon final adjournment on Wednesday. We also anticipate our first Saturday calendar.

It is going to be a busy week and as the days continue to count down to Sine Die, we are getting more work done for Texans. Tune in any day next week to watch us by clicking here: www.house.texas.gov.

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,



April 2019 Calendar

Download my April 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

Emergency Preparation Supplies Sales Tax Holiday: April 27 - 29, 2019

You can purchase certain emergency preparation supplies tax free during the 2019 Emergency Preparation Supplies Sales Tax Holiday. There is no limit on the number of qualifying items you can purchase, and you do not need to issue an exemption certificate to claim the exemption. This year's holiday begins at 12:01 a.m. on Saturday, April 27, and ends at midnight on Monday, April 29. These emergency preparation supplies qualify for tax exemption if purchased for a sales price:

- Less than \$3000
 - Portable generators
- Less than \$300
 - Emergency ladders
 - Hurricane shutters
- Less than \$75
 - Axes
 - Batteries, single or multipack (AAA cell, AA cell, C cell, D cell, 6 volt or 9 volt)
 - Can openers - nonelectric
 - Carbon monoxide detectors
 - Coolers and ice chests for food storage – nonelectric
 - Fire extinguishers
 - First aid kits
 - Fuel containers
 - Ground anchor systems and tie-down kits
 - Hatchets
 - Ice products - reusable and artificial
 - Light sources - portable self-powered (including battery operated)
 - Examples of items include: candles, flashlights and lanterns
 - Mobile telephone batteries and mobile telephone chargers
 - Radios - portable self-powered (including battery operated) - includes two-way and weather band radios
 - Smoke detectors
 - Tarps and other plastic sheeting
- These supplies do not qualify for tax exemption:
 - Batteries for automobiles, boats and other motorized vehicles
 - Camping stoves
 - Camping supplies
 - Chainsaws
 - Plywood
 - Extension ladders
 - Stepladders
 - Tents
 - Repair or replacement parts for emergency preparation supplies
 - Services performed on, or related to, emergency preparation supplies

Additional Charges Affect Purchase Price: Delivery, shipping, handling and transportation charges are part of the sales price. If the emergency preparation supply being purchased is taxable, the delivery charge is also taxable. Consider these charges when determining whether an emergency preparation supply can be purchased tax free during the holiday. For example, you purchase a rescue ladder for \$299 with a \$10 delivery charge, for a total sales price of \$309. Because the total sales price of the ladder is more than \$300, tax is due on the \$309 sales price. For more information, contact us at Tax Help, or call 1-800-252-5555.

HB 9: Texas House Invests in Retired Teachers



Rep. Dan Huberty joined colleagues in the Texas House of Representatives to pass legislation that invests in retired teachers by increasing the state's contributions to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS). The House's version of Senate Bill 12 funds a 13th check for retired teachers, makes the pension fund more stable and solvent, and incrementally increases the state's contributions to the fund over a five-year period.

"Retired teachers in Texas deserve to know that we are investing in their futures in return for all they have invested in Texas students," said Rep. Huberty. "I proudly authored House Bill 9, the House's companion bill for Senate Bill 12, to do just that."

"Because of Rep. Huberty's leadership, the Texas House has taken action to bolster the retirement future for Texas teachers," said Texas Speaker of the House Dennis Bonnen. "Texas educators dedicate their careers to improving the lives of our children and strengthening the economic future of our state. As we work to make unprecedented investments to meet the needs of our classrooms, we must also work to meet the needs of our retired teachers. I thank Representative Huberty for taking action on behalf of our hardworking educators."

The TRS currently provides retirement benefits to more than 420,000 individuals and requires an increased investment from the state to assure the fund remains financially healthy. The state is prohibited from issuing a cost-of-living increase or supplemental payment to retired teachers until the fund is deemed actuarially sound. This legislation would address that requirement.

Earlier in the legislative session, the Texas House of Representatives unanimously voted to pass House Bill 1, the state budget, which appropriates \$684 million from general revenue for the purposes of increasing the state's contribution to TRS and \$658 million from the economic stabilization fund (ESF) for the 13th check.

HB 14: Student Loan Repayment for Peace Officers

Peace officers put their lives on the line to protect our communities, and Texas is facing a critical shortage of officers. House Bill 14 by Representative Lynn Stucky creates a student loan repayment assistance program for future peace officers, which helps address the growing shortage of officers across the state. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) would be charged with operating a student loan repayment assistance program, similar to other loan repayment programs they currently operate.

To apply for loan assistance, the peace

officer must:

- Obtain at least 60 hours of college credit at a community college or four-year institution;
- Become a Peace Officer following their higher education;
- Serve as a full-time peace officer for at least one year; and
- Maintain full-time employment while receiving repayment assistance.

The student loan assistance provided by the THECB may not exceed five years and is limited to no more than \$4,000 per year, or \$20,000 in total. A peace officer would be required to submit an application in each subsequent year after the initial application and approval to confirm he or she is still meeting the requirements of the program. Each year, an approved applicant would be eligible for up to \$4,000 or 20% of the total stated in the person's application. House Bill 1, as passed by the House, includes a contingency rider in Article XI for this bill totaling \$2,500,000 in fiscal year 2021.



HB 8: Lavinia Masters Act

THERE ARE CURRENTLY THOUSANDS OF UNTESTED RAPE KITS IN TEXAS.

THAT ENDS NOW.

- ✓ HB 8 initiates an audit to determine the amount and status of Texas's untested rape kits
- ✓ HB 8 creates a time requirement for testing new kits
- ✓ HB 8 increases the statute of limitations for certain sexual assault offenses and
- ✓ HB 8 requires survivors to be notified 90 days in advance if their rape kit will be destroyed
- ✓ HB 8 allocates \$38 million towards ending the backlog of testing rape kits

Rep. Kimberly joined Texas House colleagues in unanimously passing House Bill 8, the "Lavinia Masters Act," to eliminate the rape kit backlog in Texas. House Bill 8 – a priority item for the 86th Texas Legislature – accomplishes this goal by requiring the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to conduct an audit to determine the amount, location and status of untested rape kits in Texas, creating a time requirement for testing new forensic kits, increasing the statute of limitations for certain sexual assault offenses and requiring survivors to be notified 90 days in advance if their rape kit will be destroyed. House Bill 8 works hand-in-hand with the state budget to dedicate \$38 billion to DPS for increasing crime lab capacity and eliminating the backlog.

House Bill 8 is named for Lavinia Masters, the Dallas survivor whose rape kit sat untested for more than two decades after she was raped at knifepoint at age 13. By the time the DNA evidence from Masters was tested, the 10-year statute of limitations to prosecute her rapist had expired and she was left without the ability to press charges. Though the Texas Legislature has made a number of strides to drastically minimize the backlog in recent years, thousands of rape kits still await testing, leaving survivors without justice and law enforcement with little ability to investigate and prosecute perpetrators.

Two in five Texas women and one in five Texas men have been sexually assaulted. Only around 9% of rape victims report these crimes to law enforcement, and when they do report it, they must undergo a deeply personal 4-6 hour forensic medical exam to collect DNA evidence. House Bill 8 affords survivors added reassurance that their evidence will be tested in a timely manner so that justice can be served.

House Bill 8 is one of many bills the House has passed to crack down on sexual assault and improve the State of Texas' response to such crimes, including:

- HB 1, the state budget, allocating:
 - \$38 million to the Department of Public Safety to reduce the backlog and increase crime lab capacity, with an additional \$6 million to DPS for replacing crime lab equipment and remodeling the Garland Crime Lab
 - \$10 million in 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 sexual assault victims
 - \$7.7 million to Sexual Assault Crisis Centers under the Office of the Attorney General to eliminate waitlists, expand crisis centers into 19 counties and cover project caseload

- \$1 million for the Supreme Court's Basic Civil Legal Services program, which is devoted to victims of sexual assault
- \$4 million for crime analyst training and education in toxicology disciplines, with the assistance of Sam Houston State University
- HB 616, which removes administrative burdens and makes it faster and easier for healthcare facilities and Certified Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE nurses) who conduct forensic exams of sexual assault victims to receive reimbursement for their services
- HB 467, requiring existing continuing education programs for licensed cosmetologists to include information on sexual assault and domestic violence awareness
- HB 667, or "Melissa's Law", enhancing the penalty for crimes of sexual assault from a second degree felony to a first degree felony
- HB 1735, cracking down on sexual assault and dating violence at institutions of higher education by requiring them to adopt a policy applicable to students and employees and improve reporting and response
- HB 1661, or "Rachel's Law", making continuous violence against the family a third-degree felony
- HB 531, prohibiting hospitals from destroying medical records from forensic medical examinations of sexual assault victims until 15 years after the records were created

Gov. Abbott Opens Star Of Texas Nominations

Governor Greg Abbott announced that nominations for the 2019 Star of Texas Awards, which honor peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical first responders who were seriously injured or killed in the line of duty, are now open. Nominations must be submitted to the Governor's Office by June 15, 2019.

"Each year, the State of Texas takes pride in recognizing our exemplary peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical first responders," said Governor Abbott. "This past year has undoubtedly tested our resilience, but the Texas spirit remains stronger than ever, and that is in-part due to the incredible work of the men and women in uniform serving their communities. These awards allow us to recognize and celebrate those who put their lives on the line every day to keep us safe."

To be eligible for the 2019 award, the critical incident must have occurred between September 1, 2003 and June 15, 2019, and the first responder must not have previously received a Star of Texas Award.

The nomination form can be accessed through the Governor's Office website at <https://gov.texas.gov/organization/cjd/star-of-texas>

Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program



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TO: The Honorable Greg Abbott, Governor
The Honorable Dan Patrick, Lt. Governor
The Honorable Dennis Bonnen, Speaker, Texas House of Representatives
Members, Texas Senate
Members, Texas House of Representatives

FROM: Charles Puls, Ed.D.
Deputy Assistant Commissioner for Student Financial Aid Programs

DATE: April 16, 2019

SUBJECT: Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program

The 81st Texas Legislature created the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP) to encourage students to participate in Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs at Texas institutions of higher education. The program also encourages students to become members of the Texas Army National Guard or the Texas Air Force National Guard, or 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 a TASSP award. Students must meet specific requirements to be eligible for nomination and to receive an award. Prior to receiving the TASSP award, students must agree to certain conditions including a four-year commitment as a member of the Texas Army National Guard, Texas Air National Guard, Texas State Guard, U.S. Coast Guard, U.S. Merchant Marine or a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States. The award becomes a loan carrying a 5.20% interest rate if the conditions are not met.

Nominations for the 2019-2020 TASSP will open today for next year's class (fall 2019/spring 2020 academic year). The Coordinating Board respectfully requests that you make a TASSP nomination between April 16, 2019 and July 31, 2019. The TASSP award amount for the 2019-2020 academic year is estimated to be \$4,000 but is subject to the final General Appropriations Act for the 2020-2021 biennium.

Details on the nomination process are found on the attached overview document. You or your designee may submit a formal nomination at the following link: <https://www1.thecb.state.tx.us/apps/tassp/>. We encourage you to begin your search for an eligible candidate.

Please contact the External Relations Department at (512) 427-6111 if you have any questions. Thank you for your commitment to the students of Texas and for your continued support to strengthen higher education.

Attachment

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

[Overview: Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program](#)

Rep. Huberty's Legislative Agenda

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.

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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