



NEWS FROM THE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE JIM MURPHY

Dear Friends,

I hope everyone is settling in after the first few weeks of school. Our younger son, Pace, is a high school senior, so Kathleen and I have a big year ahead of us.

A few weeks ago we sent out a note about energy savings. The forecast is showing a cooling trend, but let's continue to be mindful of our electricity usage, and hopefully, our air conditioners can get some relief. Energy is not our only resource that is strained. Due to the record heat and the drought, our water supply is also affected across the state. Please note the watering restrictions issued by the City of Houston and reduce your usage when possible. Here is the link for more information from the City of Houston- [City of Houston Water Conservation](#)

Now for the real reason we are sending you an e-mail. We passed 1,119 bills (only 24 of these were vetoed by the Governor). Beginning tomorrow, most of these laws become effective. September 1 is the most common effective date for bills and we thought we would let you know what laws might affect you.

Budget- September 1 marks the beginning of our fiscal year. Our budget is \$172.3 Billion for this biennium. This is \$15 billion less than the last biennium. We had to make tough decisions to keep Texas moving forward.

Eminent Domain- S.B. 18 passed to provide additional protections for property owners. The bill limits eminent domain takings for "public use" only as required by my HB 1062, which requires fair compensation for loss of access and expenses, ends government land speculation, and provides a number of other protections. This legislation is a true victory for private property rights. **SB 18 (Estes)**

Loser Pays- The goal of creating a "loser pays" system is to reduce frivolous lawsuits in Texas. The bill calls for plaintiffs who sue and lose to pay not just the court costs, but also the legal fees of those they sue. **HB 274 (Creighton)**

Sundown Speed Limits- The state will no longer have separate speed limits for day and night driving. The black nighttime speed limit signs that required motorists to drive 5 mph slower at night will start coming down Thursday, but officials say it will take months to remove all of them. **HB 1353 (Elkins)**

Primary Homestead Exemptions- Texas homeowners who apply for a homestead exemption on their primary residence must show identification, mainly a driver's license or ID card, and a copy of their vehicle registration receipt. The address on the ID and receipt must match the residence's address. Those without vehicles may submit a notarized affidavit certifying that they don't have a vehicle along with a current utility bill that bears the name and address that is on the homestead exemption application. **HB 252 (Hilderbran)**

Guns in Parking Lots- Most employers will no longer be able to prevent employees who legally own guns and ammo from storing them in locked private vehicles parked in company parking lots during business hours. There are a few exceptions, such as school and federal building parking lots. The law only allows guns and ammunition to be stored in parking lots, garages and other parking areas provided to employees, not work areas. **SB321 (Hegar)**

Driver's Ed Instructors- Driver's education instructors will have to undergo background checks, and the Texas Education Agency may revoke licenses given to people who have been convicted of certain felonies, such as sex offenses. **HB 2678 (Smith, T)**

Missing Adults- Statewide Amber Alerts can now be used to call attention to missing adults with diagnosed intellectual developmental disabilities, in addition to alerting the public about abducted children. **HB 1075 (Anderson)**

Boating Safety Education- Texas boaters born on or after Sept. 1, 1993, must complete a boater safety education course. Boaters must keep with them a valid ID and documents showing that they passed a boater education course. The new law also says those operating a motorboat with a motor above 15 horsepower must be at least 13 or supervised by someone older than 18 who can legally operate the boat and is on board. **HB 1395 (Parker)**

Medicine given at Day Care- This bill was passed in the memory of Nathan King, who died after day-care workers gave him medication that his parents had not approved. Under this bill, day-care workers need written parental permission to give medicine to a child or face prosecution. **HB 1615 (Brown)**

Paddling in Schools- Texas parents now have the right to opt-out of paddling as a means of punishment by our school teachers. **HB 359 (Allen)**

This is just a small sample of the bills that are going into effect on September 1. If you would like to read more about the 1,095 laws that may affect you, there are several resources out there for you. Please visit www.house.state.tx.us and www.legis.state.tx.us to learn more about laws passed during the 82nd Regular and Special sessions.

As always, if you have questions about specific bills or anything related to the Texas Legislature, please call our office. Molly, Scott and I would love to hear from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be the name 'Jim', located at the bottom left of the page.

Need Help with Homework?

The Texas House has a great website dedicated to kids. It's called Kid's House. There are many different resources for you and your children. If you are a school teacher there are lessons that you can incorporate into your instruction. The website is easy to navigate and very well done. Just log on to www.kids.house.state.tx.us to start exploring.

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