



NEWS FROM THE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE JIM MURPHY

Dear Friends,

The Fall season is just around the corner and in addition to the much welcomed cooler temperatures, Texans will be asked to cast their ballot to amend our State's Constitution. Since 1876, Texas voters have approved 467 amendments. With early voting to begin Monday, October 24th, here is a quick overview of the proposed amendments you can expect to see on the ballot:

- **Proposition 1** (SJR 14 by Senator Van de Putte): *Would allow the surviving spouse of a disabled veteran to receive a homestead tax exemption.*
- **Proposition 2** (SJR 4 by Senator Hinojosa): *Renewing authority for the Texas Water Development Board bond.*
- **Proposition 3** (SJR 50 by Senator West): *Renewing state bond authority to finance low-interest student loans.*
- **Proposition 4** (HJR 63 by Representative Pickett): *Would allow counties to participate in certain tax financing zones.*
- **Proposition 5** (SJR 26 by Senator West): *This would allow cities and counties to enter into interlocal contracts with other cities or counties without meeting the tax assessment and sinking fund requirements.*
- **Proposition 6** (HJR 109 by Representative Orr): *Would allow for the distribution of revenue from the permanent school fund to the available school fund.*
- **Proposition 7** (SJR 28 by Senator Rodriguez): *This amendment would authorize El Paso County districts to issue bonds for parks and recreational facilities.*
- **Proposition 8** (SJR 16 by Senator Estes): *This would provide for the taxation of open-space land that is devoted to water stewardship purposes to be based on its productive capacity.*
- **Proposition 9** (SJR 9 by Senator West): *Would allow the governor to pardon those who have successfully completed a term of deferred adjudication.*
- **Proposition 10** (SJR 37 by Senator Van de Putte): *This amendment would lengthen the time period before county officials must resign to run for another office.*

The House Research Organization (HRO) has prepared a full report on the proposed amendments, which can be viewed electronically by clicking here: [HRO Report on Proposed Amendments](#). During the 82nd Legislative Session, the HRO provided us with daily floor reports that included analyses of all legislation scheduled for a floor debate. This was an invaluable, and impartial, resource that I used each day to inform myself on legislation and issues we would be discussing.

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.



Casting Your Ballot by Mail?

The Harris County Clerk's Office is now accepting requests for a ballot-by-mail for the upcoming election. To qualify to vote by mail, a voter must have one of the following apply: age of 65 years or older; disabled; out of the county on Election Day and during the period for early voting by personal appearance; or confined in jail, but otherwise eligible.

A ballot-by-mail application may be obtained by calling 713-755-3150. Applications may also be downloaded from the County Clerk's election web page, www.harrisvotes.com (click voting information). The application may be completed on-line. However, it cannot be submitted electronically. The completed application must be printed and then sent to the County Clerk's office using one of the options provided by law:

- Mail to: Harris County Clerk, PO Box 1148, Houston, TX 77251-1148
- Deliver to: Harris County Clerk, Administration Building, 1001 Preston, 4th Floor, Suite 440, Houston, TX 77002
- Fax to: 713-755-4983 or 713-437-8683

All ballot-by-mail applications must include an original signature.

Here are some helpful dates to remember when preparing to cast your ballot:

- Last Day to Register to Vote : Tuesday, October 11, 2011 (Deadline is extended to next business day after Columbus Day)
- First Day of Early Voting : Monday, October 24, 2011
- Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail: Tuesday, November 1, 2011 (Must be received on)
- Last Day of Early Voting: Friday, November 4, 2011
- Election Day: Tuesday, November 8, 2011

SAVE THE DATE

Town Hall Meeting
Saturday, October 1, 2011 at 10:30 A.M.
Stratford High School Auditorium
14555 Fern Drive

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