



# GENE WU

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 137



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## NEWSLETTER

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### Department of State Health Services Workshop: Responding to Ebola and Zika in Texas

After the 2014 Ebola incident in Dallas, Texas established the Task Force on Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response to improve the state's readiness for infectious disease outbreaks. The task force advises the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and provides expert, evidence-based assessments, protocols, and recommendations related to state responses to infectious diseases, and a strategic emergency management plan for state and local levels of government.

Preparing for future disease outbreaks requires coordination from numerous public and private entities, including hospitals, state health agencies, ambulance services, and other groups. For this reason, DSHS began hosting workshops across the state for the purpose of sharing in-depth, Texas-specific preparedness and response information pertaining to high consequence infectious diseases.

**High Consequence Infectious Disease Response:**  
*Ebola and Other Pathogens, a Multi-Disciplinary Workshop*

- Region 11 – McAllen  
December 8-10, 2015
- Region 8 – New Braunfels  
January 20-22, 2016
- Region 6/5 South – Houston  
February 2-4, 2016
- Region 7 – Austin  
February 16-18, 2016
- Region 4/5 North – Tyler  
March 1-3, 2016
- Region 1 – Lubbock  
March 29-31, 2016
- Region 2/3 – Dallas/Fort Worth  
May 3-5, 2016
- Region 9/10 – El Paso  
June 7-9, 2016

TEXAS Department of State Health Services  
WWW.TEXAS-HCID-WORKSHOPS.ORG



Amidst news of the Zika virus, the DSHS Region 6/5 workshop took place in Houston on February 2nd. The significance and importance of the workshop could not have been more clear. Speakers and panelists discussed the history, risks, and lessons learned of previous infectious disease outbreaks. Attendees were provided information in order to review current strategies, assess levels of preparedness and response, and identify gaps.

While there are 13 cases of the Zika virus in Texas, and 7 in Harris County, Houston has a first-rate medical, health care, and emergency response capability and we can handle a large scale response. Scientists at two Houston hospitals have already developed the nation's first hospital-based rapid test for the Zika virus, potentially cutting the diagnosis time from a month to as little as a day. Read about it [here](#).

For more information on the Zika virus, please visit [www.texaszika.org](http://www.texaszika.org).

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## County Judge Ed Emmett's State of the County Address

As Harris County's chief executive officer, Judge Ed Emmett works with our county commissioners to oversee a county government serving more than four million remarkably diverse residents.

On February 2nd, Judge Emmett delivered his ninth State of the County Address. Before he was introduced by Mayor Turner, a trio of Christian, Jewish, and Muslim faith leaders took the stage to deliver the invocation. In the spirit of working together, Judge Emmett later remarked, "I hope the invocation arranged through Interfaith Ministries sends a clear message that Harris County's diversity in race and faith makes us stronger and that we must seek understanding and reject intolerance."



The theme of diversity and cooperation continued throughout Judge Emmett's address as he called for the end to political divisiveness and to work together to address local challenges. He discussed major issues such as transportation, health care, criminal justice, mental health, emergency management, and even the Astrodome.

I applaud Judge Emmett for the county's work on a pilot program to end the cycle of incarceration for those who suffer from mental health issues. I also thank him for emphasizing the need to expand Medicaid to give more of our people access to health care. These are two issues that I see as priorities at the state level, as they impact all of us on the local level.

[Click here](#) to watch Judge Emmett's 2016 State of the County Address.

[Click here](#) to read a text version of Judge Emmett's 2016 State of the County Address.

## **TxDOT projects focus on relieving roadway congestion**

The Texas Department of Transportation ((TxDOT) is governed by the five-member Texas Transportation Commission. Last month, the commission unveiled a \$1.3 billion plan to reduce traffic congestion on some of the most clogged Texas roadways. \$210 million will be going to Houston to relieve gridlock on I-10. The Texas Legislature made these funds available through the passage of HB 1, which ended the use of diversions of highway money to agencies other than TxDOT.

In an effort to set priorities and address needs, TxDOT conducted a listening tour to gain insight from transportation planners and local communities in the five major metro areas (Austin, Dallas, Houston, Fort Worth, and San Antonio) that see the worst congestion. While TxDOT regularly allocates funding for road projects around the state, these five major metro areas of Texas represent more than two-thirds of the state's population and 97 percent of the state's most congested roads.

[Press Release: TxDOT Unveils Initial \\$1.3 Billion to Address Congestion](#)

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## **Consumer Protection Bill by Rep. Wu makes headlines**

During the 84th Legislative Session, Rep. Wu authored and successfully passed HB 1265, a consumer protection bill to target solicitations that are designed to deceive people into thinking they are government documents or communications.

Everyone has received unsolicited mail. While most entities are honest, some step over the line and use tactics to deceive people into responding. HB 1265 made headlines and received national attention earlier this month after a formal complaint was filed alleging that a fundraising solicitation violated state law.

[Houston Chronicle: Critics file complaint alleging Cruz campaign mailer violated Texas law](#)

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## **"Supporting LNG exports, the Texas way" By Sen. Paul Bettencourt & Rep. Gene Wu**

In the recent legislative session, Republican Senator Bettencourt and Democrat Representative Wu worked together to sponsor a resolution urging Congress to expedite the permitting process for natural gas exports. The measure, SCR 32, passed without opposition and was signed by Governor Abbott.



Below are excerpts from an opinion editorial co-written by Sen. Bettencourt and Rep. Wu. The article appeared in *Houston Community Newspapers & Media Group* on February 23, 2016. [Click here](#) to read the article in full.

*Bipartisan support isn't something you hear very often in Washington, D.C., but in Texas we understand the importance of working together to support efforts that will benefit the Texas economy and add jobs. Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) exports are an opportunity to do just that...*

*...Texas is uniquely positioned to become a leader in the next chapter in America's energy transformation due to our abundant natural gas supply, infrastructure and access to deep water ports...*

*...The Texas way is a recognition of the obvious: that we must allow the United States to realize its full potential as a global energy leader with LNG.*



## Go Red For Women Day - Raising Awareness of Heart Disease and Stroke

February is National Heart Month. On February 5th our office teamed up with the American Heart Association for National Wear Red Day.

We wore red and joined their "Go Red For Women Day" to raise awareness about heart disease and stroke in women, and to show our support for saving women's lives.

**Heart disease and stroke kill 1 in 3 women each year, yet it's 80% preventable.**

[Click here](#) for more information on Go Red For Women.

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## Texas Charter School Association Education Town Hall in District 137

District 137 is home to more charter schools than any other Texas House District. KIPP and YES Prep are two shining examples of high performing public charter schools that serve economically disadvantaged and racially diverse students.

This month, our office worked with the Texas Charter School Association to host a town hall where we discussed key legislative priorities and highlights for public education, such as: adequately funding our public education system to keep up with the pace of student enrollment, investing in early education, school accountability, and teacher evaluation and training.



## 2-1-1 Texas/United Way HELPLINE Open House



On February 11th, United Way of Greater Houston invited legislative offices to the 2-1-1 Texas/United Way HELPLINE Open House to visit the largest information and referral service in the nation.

We toured the new facility, listened to live calls, and learned how United Way can assist in connecting District 137 residents with needed community resources and social service programs.



2-1-1 Texas/United Way HELPLINE provides free information and referral service and is the number to call if you are looking for available resources nearby. Using the most comprehensive database of social services in our community, Helpline Specialists can provide information about affordable child care, afterschool programs, housing, basic needs, utility assistance and an array of other services located right in the neighborhood of the caller.



The top needs of District 137 callers in 2015 fell in the categories of food programs/services, medical care/services, rent/mortgage assistance, and utility assistance.

### Need Help? Dial 2-1-1.

*A free helpline operated by United Way of Greater Houston, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in many languages.*

## METRO Offers Free Rides for Primary Voters on March 1st

Residents who are heading out to vote in the primary elections can grab a free ride to the polls courtesy of METRO. Free local bus transport for voters will be available on **Super Tuesday, March 1, 2016 from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.**

Patrons will be asked to show a current voter registration card to bus operators.

Map out your ride with METRO's [Google Trip Planner](#) by noting your starting location and destination polling place.

Find your election day polling place [here](#).



## March 2nd - Happy Birthday Dr. Seuss! Legacy Clinic Little Readers Program



Join Legacy Clinic on Wednesday, March 2nd from 10am-2pm to celebrate Dr. Seuss' birthday! Volunteers will be onsite reading to the children as well as other activities. Free books and free giveaways (first come first serve)!

Celebrations will take place at all of Legacy's clinics in Southwest Houston:



**HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY  
DR. SEUSS!**

- Legacy Southwest Clinic - 6441 High Star Dr, 77074
- Legacy Baker Ripley Clinic - 6500 Rookin St, 77074
- Legacy Mapleridge Clinic - 6550 Mapleridge St, 77081

## March 12th - Youth Empowerment Fair



Our office is working with the Baker Ripley Neighborhood Center to offer the Youth Empowerment Fair for area students. This promises to be a fun and unique experience that will prepare students with tools and resources for life after high school.

Going to college? Living on your own? Find a job? Questions about college loans? 2 year vs. 4 year college? Interested in starting your own business? Are you a young parent? What is TAFSA & FAFSA? These are just some of the questions you can find answers to at the Youth Empowerment Fair.

Colleges and universities on site, immigration resources and sessions for parents will be available!

[TO ATTEND, YOU MUST REGISTER ON EVENTBRITE.](#)

Free Event + Free Lunch + Music  
+ Raffles + Refreshments + Games

[Register On](#) [Eventbrite](#)

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/youth-empowerment-fair-life-after-high-school-tickets-21781299453>

**Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup> 2016**  
**10AM-2PM**  
**+ After Bash Party**

@ Baker Ripley Neighborhood Center  
6500 Rookin St. Houston, TX 77074 | 713-273-3701