



# GENE WU

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 137



Issue 23

July 2017

## NEWSLETTER

### 85th Legislative Session Recap

The 85th Regular Session is now behind us, and while it was challenging, we did make progress in very important issue areas.

My proudest achievement was passing a bipartisan, comprehensive Child Protective Services (CPS) reform bill, which will improve the court process for CPS cases and ease the burden on children, families and child welfare stakeholders. We also passed criminal justice reforms that will help give minor nonviolent offenders a second chance and reduce inefficiencies that keep them in jail or tied up in the court system. Our legislative agenda also included measures to strengthen our community and address local issues in our county, city and neighborhoods.

None of our accomplishments would have been possible without the hard work and dedication of your District 137 legislative staff. We had a talented group of interns who worked with us in Austin. Hannah Bevers, Mimi Duong, J Ehlinger and Alyssa Perez-Morrison were instrumental in advancing our legislative agenda. We are grateful for their service to the state of Texas and the people of District 137 and know they will go on to do amazing things in their future endeavors!

You've probably heard that the Texas Legislature will reconvene for a special session later this month. Before I return to Austin, please join me and my staff on **Sunday, July 16th** for a District 137 town hall and recap of the 85th regular session. I look forward to visiting with you!



Gene with legislative staff during the 85th Regular Session. [Alyssa, Beth, J, Gene, Amy, Mimi and Hannah.]

**Legislative Town Hall for District 137**  
**Sunday, July 16th 1:00 - 3:00 PM**  
St. Luke's Methodist Church, Canterbury Hall  
6856 Bellaire Blvd, Houston, TX 77074

#### Also in This Issue...

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- It's Hurricane Season
- District Office Summer Interns

Here are just a few highlights from our legislative accomplishments:

**House Bill 7**, authored by Gene Wu, is a major CPS reform that modifies court procedures for child abuse and neglect cases. A culmination of nearly two years of negotiations and collaboration between a myriad of stakeholders, Gene compiled eight of his own individually filed bills and incorporated fifteen bills filed by his colleagues in the House. HB 7 addresses the complex, lengthy, and sometimes obtuse legal proceedings of CPS courts to improve children's health outcomes and support whole families. It will make CPS legal standards more transparent, streamline communications and decrease trauma among foster care youth.

**House Bill 62**, joint authored by Gene Wu, is a significant public safety bill that bans texting while driving. According to TxDOT, last year saw 455 people killed and 3,000 seriously injured in crashes related to distracted driving. Texas is one of the last states to adopt a texting while driving ban.

**House Bill 681**, authored by Gene Wu, seals Class C misdemeanor records after five years. A Class C misdemeanor is the lowest level criminal offense. Criminal records follow people for the rest of their lives and are major barriers for housing, employment and education. This criminal justice reform will help people move on and become contributing members of society.



**METRO**

Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County, Houston, Texas

## METRONext Transit Plan

METRO's Board of Directors is developing a new plan for transit services in the Houston region. METRONext will build on the long-range transit plan approved by voters in 2003 to provide more transportation choices to more people. Goals include *Improving Mobility, Enhancing Connectivity, Supporting Vibrant Communities, and Ensuring a Return on Investment*. With these goals in mind, METRO invites your input to develop a transit system plan that best serves our area's residents, businesses and visitors.

**Monday, July 17th**  
**6:00PM - 8:00PM**

**Southwest Multi-Service Center**  
**6400 High Star, Houston, TX 77074**

**Tuesday, August 1st**  
**6:00PM - 8:00PM**

**Tracy Gee Community Center**  
**3599 Westcenter, Houston, TX 77042**

Attend a **METRONext Community Open House** meeting or provide your input at [RideMETRO.org](http://RideMETRO.org).

## Summer of Fun Pass Program

HISD & METRO partner to offer free summer rides to students

The Summer of Fun Pass allows students to ride any METRO local bus, Park & Ride bus, or METRORail for free until Sept. 1, 2017. The program helps students attend summer programs and jobs without having to worry about transportation.



To participate, obtain a card online at [RideMETRO.org](http://RideMETRO.org), by calling 713-635-4000, or visit a Metro RideStore (1990 Main St. or 1001 Travis St). Students must be entering grades K-12 this fall to participate.

The card works like a regular METRO card. Riders must tap their cards on the Q box to receive the free trip. The Q box is located at the front of the bus next to the driver and on all METRORail platforms.

## It's Hurricane Season

The recent Tropical Storm Cindy serves as a reminder for all of us to prepare for Hurricane Season, which began June 1st and continues through November 30th.

Keep in mind that a storm severely impact our state, even prior to or without making direct landfall in Texas. Additionally, the rainbands associated with a tropical storm system have an extremely wide reach, so monitoring changing weather conditions during hurricane season is critically important.



Here are several measures residents can take *now* to prepare for potential storms:

- Assemble an emergency kit that includes essential documents, supplies and provisions.
- Review hurricane evacuation maps, and select a route for you and your family.
- Plan how all family members and pets will evacuate safely.
- Consider any special needs for individuals with disabilities or the elderly.
- Stay informed about changing weather conditions in and around your area.

**If you or someone you know might need assistance during a disaster, please register for the State of Texas Emergency Assistance Registry (STEAR),** a free registry that provides local emergency planners and responders with additional information about needs in their communities. To register, contact 2-1-1 Texas, the state's free 24-hour helpline. No matter where you live in Texas, you can dial 2-1-1 or (877) 541-7905 for community resources.

For more information about hurricanes and how to prepare for the 2017 hurricane season, visit [www.dps.texas.gov/dem/ThreatAwareness/hurricaneAwareness.htm](http://www.dps.texas.gov/dem/ThreatAwareness/hurricaneAwareness.htm) and [www.texasprepares.org](http://www.texasprepares.org).

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## District Office Summer Interns



We are excited to host two interns in our District Office this summer: Francisco Cernada and Jasmine Wang.

Francisco is a sophomore at Harvard University concentrating in Social Studies. He is a graduate of YES Prep Gulf ton and was raised in District 137. On campus, he coordinates an after-school program through the Phillips Brooks House Association in Boston, MA, is a member of the Institute of Politics, and loves to run. He plans on attending law school after college.

Jasmine is a junior political science major and sociology minor at Texas A&M University in College Station. Originally from Sugar Land, TX, she currently serves as the Speaker of the Student Senate through the Texas A&M's Student Government Association and has plans to attend law school to pursue her JD upon the completion of her undergraduate degree.