



GENE WU

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 137



Issue 26

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2018

Dear Friends,

Each year we celebrate **Black History Month** to recognize the rich cultural heritage and invaluable contributions of African Americans throughout our history. I encourage you and your family to explore the legacies and experiences that have shaped our society by visiting <https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/black-history-month/> and <http://www.pbs.org/black-culture/explore/>.

I also want to extend my best wishes to the Asian community in celebrating the **Lunar New Year**. February 16th marked the beginning of the Year of the Dog. May the new year bring you happiness and good fortune.

The Texas Legislature continues to take an active role in **Hurricane Harvey** relief efforts during this interim session. As a member of the **Subcommittee on Disaster Impact and Recovery**, we have been meeting to address the struggles that many Texans are still facing in the aftermath of Harvey. Public hearings with testimony from local officials is critical for our work to examine the use of federal funds, identify the need for state resources to respond to relief and recovery efforts, and reduce the impact of future natural disasters.



Gene and his boys, Winston and Lyndon, feed lucky red envelopes to the lions and celebrate the Lunar New Year at the Chinese Community Center.

The City of Houston has also been dedicated to improving the quality of life for the Gulfton community, one of our neighborhoods with many needs. The City partnered with BakerRipley to establish a Neighborhood Restoration Center to assist residents recovering from Harvey. Gulfton is also one of five pilot communities in Houston to participate in the City's Complete Communities initiative. We have been a supportive participant in this public neighborhood planning process.

Finally, it is **Primary Election** season and I urge you to participate in the political process. Making your voice heard is the only way we can improve our community and our state. The first day of early voting is Tuesday, February 20 and runs through March 2. Election Day is March 6. Please exercise your right to vote.

Sincerely,

In This Issue...

- Hurricane Harvey Resources
- Gulfton Complete Communities
- Healthcare
- State of the Schools
- Primary Election



Gene meets with law enforcement at the HPD South Gessner Division to discuss public safety concerns.



Gene with University of Houston-Downtown students after a guest lecture on Race, Gender, Ethnicity and Politics class.

Hurricane Harvey Resources

**GULFTON
RESTORATION
CENTER**

**Tuesdays and Thursdays
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.**

Baker-Ripley Neighborhood Center
6500 Rookin St., Houston Tx 77074

Our restoration center provides information, workshops and connection to community resources that can help you get back on your feet after Hurricane Harvey.

EARN. LEARN. BELONG.™

BAKER-RIPLY.Org
A COMMUNITY PARTNER
713.667.9400
P.O. Box 17788 Houston, TX 77218

As Houston continues to recover from the effects of Hurricane Harvey, the City of Houston-- in partnership with local nonprofits-- has opened twelve Neighborhood Restoration Centers (NRC). BakerRipley is operating the Gulfton Restoration Center on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10AM to 1PM.

Learn what resources are available to help you in your recovery. This NRC provides four main service areas:

1. Outreach, Engagement, and Assessment;
2. Disaster Recovery Information;
3. Workshops & Special Events and
4. Direct Services.

Houston residents in need of assistance related to Harvey recovery, who cannot come to the center are asked to call Texas 211 (877-541-7905), so a trained case manager can be made aware of their individual needs, and connect them with recovery services.

Keep up with updates and resources by visiting our local disaster recovery websites:

- City of Houston - www.houstonrecovers.org
- Harris County - <http://www.harrisrecovery.org/>



House Appropriations Subcommittee Hearing on Disaster Impact and Recovery



Gene volunteering at the GRB shelter to help Hurricane Harvey evacuees.

Following the onset of Hurricane Harvey, I was appointed to the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Disaster Impact and Recovery. Members of this subcommittee met in Beaumont on January 12 for a public meeting. Our goal was to examine the use of federal funds by state agencies responding to the effects of Hurricane Harvey. We also discussed the need for state resources to respond to Hurricane Harvey relief efforts and identified opportunities for state investment in infrastructure projects that will reduce the impact of future natural disasters.

During this meeting, we acknowledged the number of families still dealing with the impact of Harvey across the state-- 16,000 children currently attend schools in districts other than where they started their school year pre-Harvey, and 10,000 people who are still staying in hotels. We recognized the unacceptable lack of responsiveness from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to the needs of Texas residents, cities, and counties, and identified the necessity for the state and federal government to more adequately prepare for natural disasters.

We are still on a long path to recovery as funds from Congress are just now being allocated to residents for programs such as temporary housing and making homes livable again. It is clear that our representatives in the federal government must urge the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the FEMA to work better together and with state agencies.

Gulfton Complete Communities

Complete Communities is a City of Houston initiative focused on improving neighborhoods so that all of Houston's residents and business owners can have access to quality services and amenities. District 137's very own Gulfton neighborhood has been selected as one of five pilot communities for the program.

Complete Communities hosted a Public Meeting and Health & Safety Fair on Saturday, February 17th. Gulfton residents made their way to the Burnett Bayland Community Center to learn more from Houston area vendors, watch live performances from local community organizations, and connect with health resources. Attendees also provided the City of Houston with great input and recommendations on how to make Gulfton a Complete Community.

For more information on Complete Communities, please visit www.houstontx.gov/completemunities/.



Complete Communities Map

Support for Healthcare Funding

Ensuring healthcare for Texas' women, families, and children is essential to building a brighter future for the Lone Star State. It is for this reason that I support federally funded programs like the Children's Health Insurance Program and Federally Qualified Health Centers.



In December, the Texas House Women's Health Caucus wrote to the Texas Congressional Delegation and other state leaders to express urgent concern that CHIP be renewed as soon as possible. I joined 21 other Texas Representatives in signing this letter because my constituents and all Texas children deserve access to medical care. Texas' uninsured rate is the highest in the country. Extending federal funding for CHIP is essential to the health of the 400,000 children and 35,000 pregnant women in Texas who depend on this program. Delaying funding for this program is immoral in the wake of Hurricane Harvey, as our community continues to return to normalcy. Our communities deserve compassion as we recover from this devastating storm.

Congress must pass a reliable spending bill addressing the issues that affect the well-being of Texans. The need for funding community health centers and CHIP are items that must be acknowledged by the leaders of our country. They must recognize the financial and mental impact that Hurricane Harvey and termination of CHIP have caused in our communities. It is for this reason that the TWHC

is grateful to have U.S. Representative Eddie Bernice Johnson's support for finding a new sources of funding for a fundamental program that works to close the gap for children who are above poverty lines but whose families cannot afford healthcare. We hope that others in our country's leadership will join her in supporting families in both Texas and the United States. Thankfully, a six-year extension for this program was passed.

State of the Schools

On February 15, I attended Houston Independent School District's annual State of the Schools Luncheon. The theme of this event was "Rebuild and Reimagine" and aimed to discuss the effects of Hurricane Harvey on Houston schools and how HISD is providing its students with innovative opportunities. The program began with a presentation by the Young Women's College Preparatory Academy, during which two sophomores showcased a robot they developed.

Superintendent Carranza urged Texas lawmakers to rethink the school funding system. He stated, "The last time the state of Texas updated [it], Ronald Reagan was President of the United States." This system is based on local property taxes and considers HISD a "property-wealthy" district even though it serves 76 percent of economically disadvantaged students. This has led to a \$208 million deficit and the recapturing of HISD taxes paid by Houston residents.

Texas House Bill 1842 (2015) and Senate Bill 1882 (2017) relate to public school accountability and allow the state to intervene and sanction public schools that have received an academically unsuccessful performance rating for at least two consecutive school years. HISD has 10 schools at risk of closure due to this rating but has been committed to providing opportunities for innovation regardless.



Superintendent Carranza and YWCPA students at the 2018 State of the Schools Luncheon

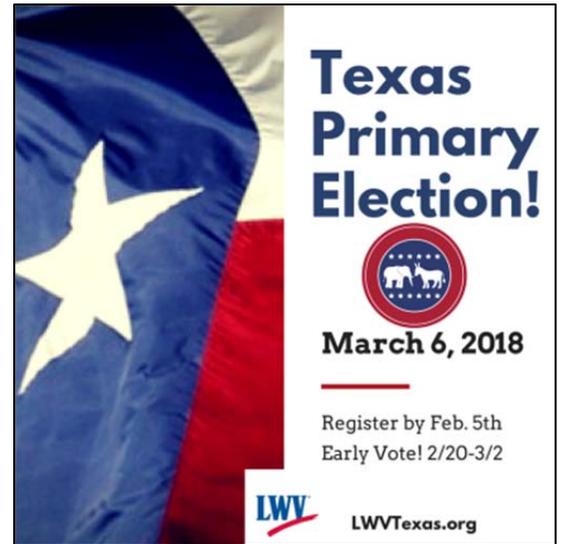
One of my main priorities as Representative is education. This is why I was excited to hear Superintendent Carranza announce that District 137's very own Sharpstown High School received a \$20,000 grant from the HISD Foundation. It is great to see our leaders in education and business encouraging the Sharpstown Storytelling Project that will not only help students improve their literacy and communication skills, but allow them to share their stories digitally.

March Primary Election

Election season is here! Voting is your fundamental right as a U.S. citizen and it is up to you to make your voices heard. The best way to ensure this is to elect someone who you think will best represent your interests in government.

Tuesday, March 6th is Primary Election Day, but I encourage you to take advantage of the Early Voting Period, which begins Tuesday, February 20th and ends Friday, March 2nd.

The Bayland Park Community Center and Tracy Gee Community Center both serve as early voting locations in our area, but you can vote at any one of the Harris County early voting sites.



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| Bayland Park Community Center 6400 Bissonnet Street (near Hillcroft) Houston, TX 77074 | Tracy Gee Community Center 3599 Westcenter Drive (one block East of Sam Houston Tollway) Houston, TX 77042 |
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Visit <http://www.harrisvotes.com/> for information about where and when to vote, and find out what will appear on your ballot. The League of Women Voters of the Houston Area is another great resource for everything you need to know about voting in the primary. Visit <http://lwvhouston.org/>.

| Important Election Deadlines | Date |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| First Day of Early Voting | Tuesday, February 20, 2018* *First business day after Presidents' Day |
| Last Day to Apply for Ballot by Mail (Received , not postmarked) | Friday, February, 23, 2018 |
| Last Day of Early Voting | Friday, March 2, 2018 |
| Last Day to Receive Ballot by Mail | Tuesday, March 6, 2018 (Election Day) at 7:00 p.m. if carrier envelope is not postmarked, OR Wednesday, March 7, 2018 (next business day after Election Day) at 5:00 p.m. if carrier envelope is postmarked by 7:00 p.m. at the location of the election on Election Day (unless overseas or military voter deadlines apply) |
| Primary Election Day | Tuesday, March 6, 2018* *You must vote at your Election Day Polling Location |