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STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**JAMES WHITE**

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CORRECTIONS - CHAIR  
INTERNATIONAL TRADE &  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

DISTRICT 19  
HARDIN, JASPER  
NEWTON, POLK, TYLER

March 30, 2017

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Chairman James White Lays Out Juvenile Justice Legislation; Co-Authors Public  
Education Bills**

- Weekly Legislative Update 3/30/17 -

(Austin, TX) - This week I had the pleasure of laying out two pieces of legislation in the Juvenile Justice & Family Issues Committee.

House Bill (HB) 1204 was heard in the Juvenile Justice committee and it establishes a priority to divert children younger than twelve years of age from the juvenile justice system and make detention a last resort. While offenses committed by these youth should incur consequences, it is important that adults offer guidance and support as well. Becoming involved in the system can lead to undesirable outcomes, such as a decline in academic performance and an increased probability of criminal behavior in adulthood. For these reasons, all efforts should be made to address the delinquencies of 10 and 11 year old children with all stakeholders at the table: educators, mental health providers, child protective services, and juvenile justice advocates to name a few. As an educator of many years, I know the dangers and pitfalls that face our young Texans. Sometimes being put into the justice system is the only option, but I believe there are many ways to teach our youngest constituents how to become respectful citizens.

Also before the Juvenile Justice & Family Issues committee was HB 1361. My legislation looks to help our families involved with the state to dismiss certain suits affecting the parent child-relationship on which the court has rendered a temporary order. Currently, there are no deadlines on temporary orders or case completion when it comes to suits for access, possession, or conservatorship by a non-parent. While suits against parents who are accused of being unfit in CPS cases must be completed within 12 months, cases against fit parents have no deadlines. Children can be removed from the home for an undefined period of time even though there is no accusation against the parent that they were abusive or neglectful. Protecting families is of vital importance to me, and I will continue to fight to make sure the integrity of the family unit is ensured.



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In addition, House committees also heard legislation that fixes portions of the school finance system, protects the dignity of the unborn, strengthens Second Amendment rights, and supports our allies in Israel.

Public education reforms are at the top of my priority list this session. After conversations and input with many of my district superintendents, I co-authored HB 21 which will seek to fix some of the problems we currently have in the school finance system. The bill increases the basic allotment from \$5,140 to \$5,350 per student each biennium and lowers recapture. In addition, the bill will help, though not resolve, our school districts that experience hardship to the expiration of ASATR (Additional State Aid for Tax Reduction) through a Hardship Provision Grant. HB 21 will also add a 0.1 weight for students with Dyslexia, increase the bilingual allotment weight from 0.1 to 0.11, and expand the career and technology allotment weight. The bill has a contingency rider in the proposed budget for the next biennium and I look forward to passing public education legislation that fully funds our Texas schools.

Additionally, I signed on to HB 3904. This bill has not yet had a hearing but one that the Public Education committee should consider. This legislation addresses recent public university policies that have prevented valedictorians from small schools from being admitted. As a former educator, I know how hard our young valedictorians work to earn that number one spot. Universities who have made an uneven playing field have ultimately left many of these young students behind who are smart enough and deserving of an education from their institution.

HB 200 which bans partial-birth abortions and prohibits the sale of fetal tissues and organs was heard in State Affairs. Currently, partial-birth abortions are banned by federal law but cannot be enforced by state prosecutors. This bill provides that enforcement mechanism to prosecute and additionally sets the ban on the sale of fetal tissues statewide.

Legislation to reduce the \$140 application fee and \$70 renewal fee for a handgun was heard before the Homeland Security & Public Safety committee. HB 300, which our State Senator Robert Nichols has also filed as SB 16, will reduce those fees to \$40 per year. I am co-author of this legislation and am supportive of any legislation that reduces burdens placed on our constitutional right to carry.

Lastly, I have co-authored HB 89 that was also heard in State Affairs. This legislation defends the state's economy from financial or contractual engagement with parties who would inflict economic harm upon Israeli and other state businesses based on national origin discrimination. Israel is a long-time ally of the United States and Texas. It is important that we stand with our allies and avoid deals with companies that engage in discriminatory boycotts



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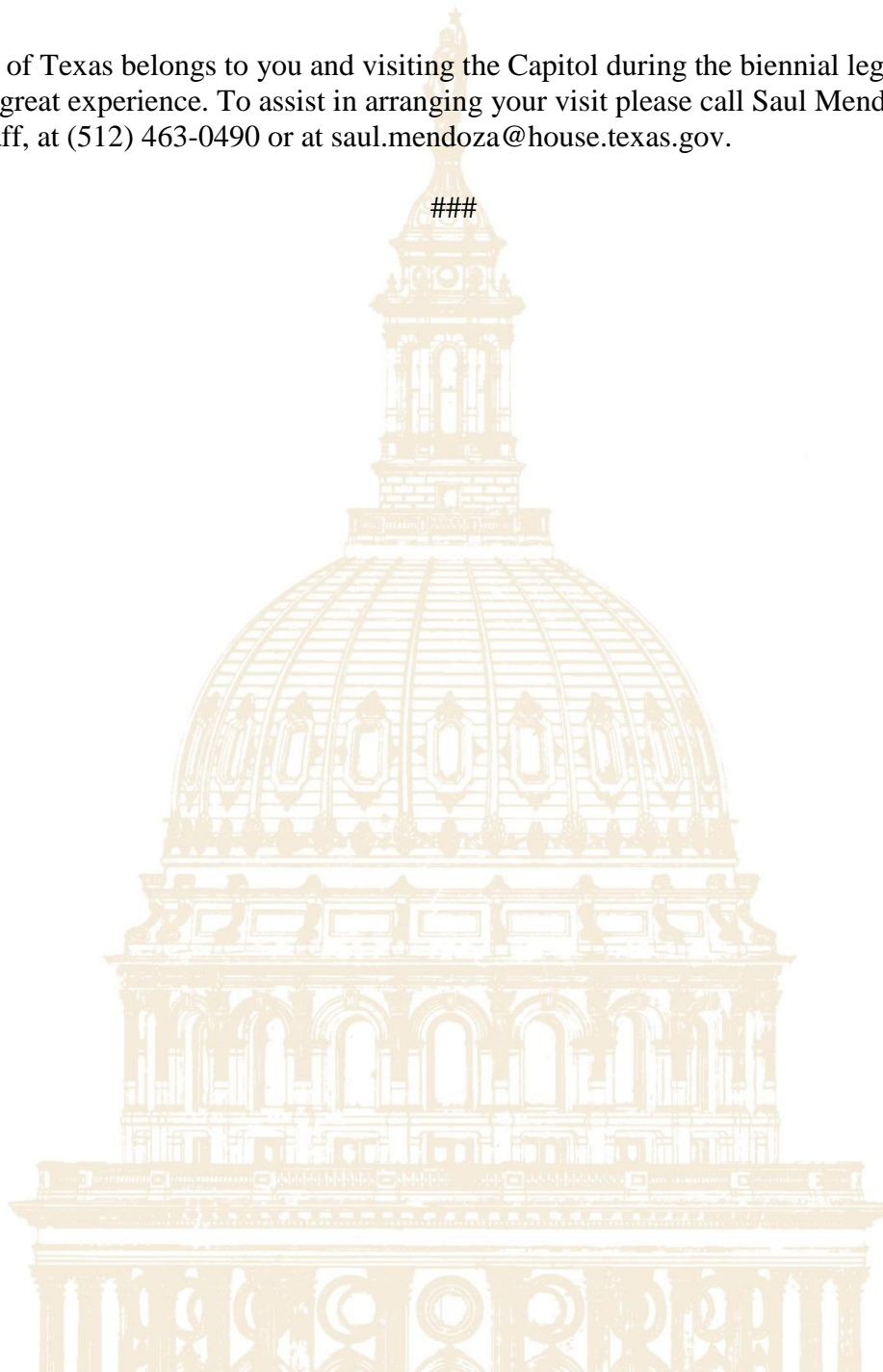
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The Capitol of Texas belongs to you and visiting the Capitol during the biennial legislative session is a great experience. To assist in arranging your visit please call Saul Mendoza, my Chief of Staff, at (512) 463-0490 or at [saul.mendoza@house.texas.gov](mailto:saul.mendoza@house.texas.gov).

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