



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
JAMES WHITE

CORRECTIONS - CHAIR
INTERNATIONAL TRADE &
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

DISTRICT 19
HARDIN, JASPER
NEWTON, POLK, TYLER

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Chairman James White Joint-Authors Mental Health Reforms; Lays out Pro-Second Amendment Legislation
- Weekly Legislative Update 4/3/17 -

(Austin, TX) - Over the interim, I was appointed to the Select Committee on Mental Health. The committee held various hearings and sought input from all stakeholders. Chairman Four Price, who presided over the committee, has filed four omnibus bills that address the concerns we heard. I have signed on to two of those bills as a Joint-Author.

House Bill (HB) 10 addresses access to and benefits for mental health conditions and substance use disorders. This bill is scheduled to be heard on the House Floor on April 4th.

HB 11, which I Joint-Authored, addresses mental health in our public schools and makes sure that parents, teachers, and students have the adequate resources they need. The bill is set for hearing on April 4th.

I also signed onto HB 12 which addresses individuals who suffer from mental illness or intellectual disabilities that are involved in our court system. The legislation also addresses medical assistance of certain mentally ill inmates within our criminal justice system.

Lastly, HB 13 addresses a matching grant program that will support community mental health programs for those with mental illness.

The House Floor celebrated our Texas retired teachers. As a former educator, I was honored to visit with these former teachers regarding their concerns for the legislative session. These individuals have given their all to educating the State's children and we can never thank them enough for going above and beyond to ensure their success after graduation. As part of the House budget plan, retired teachers will receive \$500 million in funding over the next four years towards their healthcare fund.



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Pastor David Hardage with the Baptist General Convention of Texas came by my office to discuss their support for criminal justice reforms. I enjoyed meeting with him and discussing how we can best serve the people of Texas.

I had the opportunity to lay out two more pieces of legislation in committees. HB 1911, is my legislation geared at providing an option for Texans to carry a handgun without the need of a physical license. Texas already has unlicensed carry when it comes to rifles. HB 1911 would apply those same standards to handguns. In addition, the bill is worded to allow for optional licensing to maintain reciprocity agreements made by Governor Greg Abbott in other states. Every session, I have filed legislation that either protects or removes regulations placed on those 2nd Amendment rights, this session is no different. Texans have a right to self-defense and it is time the Legislature returns those rights to its citizenry. My hopes are that the Committee on Homeland Security and Public Safety will send this important piece of legislation to the Calendars committee.

Additionally, I laid out HB 1522 in the Committee of State Affairs. This bill creates a task force on parent engagement that brings together state agencies and stakeholders to coordinate to compile best practices and provide Texas parents with the resources they need to nurture the next generation of outstanding Texans. Parents are a child's first and best teachers and I hope that the passage of HB 1522 will give them the resources they need for success.

This week the House will be passing the State budget for the next biennium. I am looking for a budget that adequately funds our public schools and foster care system. We need to prioritize the needs of our Texas children and I intend to vote on a budget that meets those needs.

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.

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