



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 Votes for 2018-2019 Budget; Raises Awareness of Child Abuse Prevention Month

- Weekly Legislative Update 4/10/17 -

(Austin, TX) - April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month, a time designated to acknowledge the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. It is crucial to promote the social and emotional well-being of children and families across Texas.

The Texas Department of Family and Protective Services has a wide variety of programs. I am proud to support and encourage my constituents to take advantage of these programs. The Prevention and Early Intervention (PEI) program contracts with community-based programs and agencies to provide a variety of services that help prevent abuse, neglect, delinquency, and truancy of Texas children. Among the programs offered under PEI are:

- **Community-Based Child Abuse Prevention (CBCAP):** A program that informs parents of prevention services in their communities. This program strengthens community and parental involvement in child abuse prevention efforts.
- **Community-Based Family Services:** This service works with low-risk families investigated by CPS, who do not have confirmed allegations of abuse or neglect. Services under this program include home visitations, case management and parent education.
- **Services to At-Risk Youth (STAR):** A program that contracts with community agencies to offer family crisis intervention counseling, short-term emergency respite care, and individual and family counseling. This is designed to alleviate conflicts at home, and provides support for truant, delinquent, and run-away youth.
- **Texas Families: Together and Safe (TFTS):** This approach funds community-based programs designed to relieve stress and promote better parenting.
- **Texas Youth and Runaway Hotline:** A toll-free hotline that offers crisis counseling and referrals for troubled youth and families. Many callers face problems such as family



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conflict, delinquency, truancy, and abuse and neglect. The line can be accessed at 1-800-989-6884.

- **Help for Parents, Hope for Kids:** A campaign through the Special Initiatives Programs of PEI that promotes awareness and encourages child abuse prevention. The campaign can be viewed at www.helpandhope.org.
- **Project Help through Intervention and Prevention (HIP):** A program that provides voluntary services to families to increase protective factors and prevent child abuse. The program includes family assessment and home visitation along with parent education and support to targeted families.

I ask that my constituents seek out the services available to them, so together the Southeast Texas community can prevent child abuse. For a listing of services available in your county go to:

[http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention and Early Intervention/Programs Available In Your County](http://www.dfps.state.tx.us/Prevention%20and%20Early%20Intervention/Programs%20Available%20In%20Your%20County).

After hours of debate, the Texas House passed the budget for the 2018-2019 fiscal year. The House has exercised leadership in crafting a fiscally responsible budget that spends \$106.8 billion in available revenue. **Despite revenue challenges, and very significant population and inflation growth, the House biennium budget is \$1 billion less than the current budget.**

Despite the very real budget cuts, the House budget still makes significant investments in critical priorities. Our proposal includes nearly \$1.5 billion in new money for public education, while also reducing recapture (better known as Robin Hood), thereby, allowing more local communities to keep their tax monies for their public schools instead of sending it to Austin for redistribution. We are addressing the foster care crisis in Texas by investing \$433 million of additional funds to child protective services. Furthermore, the House is dedicating \$62.6 million in new funds to eliminate waiting lists for community mental health services across the state and maintains our commitment to border security funding.

The House budget is fully transparent and protects the state's investment in transportation while maintaining our long-standing commitment to using dedicated funds for their rightful purpose.

Additionally, the House voted on House Bill (HB) 10 that improves insurance access and coverage for mental health. The legislation creates an ombudsman for behavioral health care access, a Mental Health Condition and Substance Use Disorder Parity Work Group, improves insurance parity and enforcement, requires a report by the Texas Department of Insurance on medical for surgical expenses for mental health conditions and substance use disorders to



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determine parity, and requires a report by the Health and Human Services Commission on the benefits of medical or surgical expenses for mental health conditions and substance use disorders provided by Medicaid managed care organizations to determine parity. I am dedicated to improving mental health patient care and access for Texans and believe that HB 10 is just the first of many bills this session that will significantly improve mental health care in our state. Improving mental health in Texas will lead to stronger families, stronger communities, a stronger economy, and a stronger Texas.

I also had a great visit with the Texas Catholic Bishop's Conference and students from Lamar University advocating for criminal justice reforms. As the chairman of the Corrections committee and former educator, I was proud to hear of these students' commitment to working for a more rehabilitative and effective criminal justice system.

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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