



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 White Votes for School Finance Reform and Ethics Reform: UIL Academics
Competes in Austin**
- Weekly Legislative Update 4/24/17 -

(Austin, TX) - I was able to cast my vote for very important pieces of legislation last week. Most importantly, House Bill (HB) 21 which addresses our broken school finance system. Although not perfect, the Public Education committee has done a great amount of work on this legislation that helps our Texas schools.

HB 21 increases the basic allotment by appropriation from \$5,140 to \$5,350 per student each year of the fiscal biennium. Transportation funding is modernized and simplified and repeals the antiquated hold-harmless mechanism that benefits a handful of property-wealthy school districts. Bilingual education and programming for those with dyslexia or related disorders will receive increased assistance.

Additionally, recapture is reduced by \$375 million dollars and a Hardship Grant is established to aid school districts affected by the expiration of ASATR or other financial hardship. HB 21 marks the first step in the long road ahead to a full reform of Texas' public school finance system. This plan simultaneously improves and simplifies public education funding in Texas, it provides more resources for schools, and distributes those resources in an efficient method.

I also voted in favor of five emergency calendar ethics reform bills; HB 1377, 1378, 1379, 1381, and 1384. The bills simplify the personal financial statement reporting requirements for state officers, candidates elected to office, and state party chairs. These personal financial statements are also streamlined to increase efficiency and transparency in reporting. Transparency for elections is also enhanced and provides for easier access for the public in regards to the flow of campaign money.

The Texas House is committed to increasing transparency in government and holding elected officials accountable to those who elected them to serve. I am proud to support legislation that



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keeps myself and my colleagues accountable to the voters who sent us to Austin to do the people's work.

As part of my commitment to foster care reform, I laid out two bills before the House Human Services Committee. HB 928 which will assist foster care children in applying for college and financial aid. The other, HB 3338 that will ensure that foster care children have a proper identification card when they age out of the system. I believe that we must ensure that our most vulnerable have the tools they need to succeed. Additionally, in the committee on Juvenile Justice & Family Issues, I laid out HB 1521 which provides for more communication between the Department of Family and Protective Services and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. Sometimes youth who are in foster care system are also involved in the juvenile justice system and it is important that the agencies communicate efficiently on these matters.

I was enthused to host various UIL students who qualified for the various State Academics competitions and were able to make it to their State Capitol. Justin Pulliam, Gracie Roth, and teacher, Sharon Atkins, from Jasper joined me on the House Floor on Thursday before their events.

Alex Owens, Javyn Fontenot, and Christian Kotara from Spurger also made the drive to Austin along with their teacher, Jerry Wilson.

Caylee Allen and her father drove up on Friday to visit with me and compete on behalf of Woodville. I am extremely proud of these young students for making it to UIL Academics at the State level. This is truly indicative of not only the students intelligence but the quality of teachers we have in Southeast Texas.

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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