



TEXAS HOUSE *of* REPRESENTATIVES

James White

*House District 19
Jasper, Newton, Hardin, Polk, Tyler*

CORRECTIONS
CHAIR

REDISTRICTING

JUDICIARY &
CIVIL JURISPRUDENCE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, February 1, 2019

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Chairman White Reappointed to Serve as Chairman of Corrections

- Weekly Legislative Update 1/25/19 -

(Austin, TX) - The Texas House convened again this past Tuesday and Wednesday to continue preparing the chamber for the upcoming policy debates. Thanks to the strong leadership of our new Speaker of the House, Dennis Bonnen, committee assignment day came early and ahead of the usual legislative timeline for my fellow colleagues and I.

I would like to thank Speaker Bonnen for reappointing me as the chairman of the House Committee on Corrections. Previous Speaker Joe Straus provided me the opportunity to serve as chairman last session and I am thankful to Speaker Bonnen for continuing to place the responsibility of oversight of the state correctional system with our returning and new committee members.

The Corrections Committee presides over matters concerning the incarceration and rehabilitation of convicted felons and the establishment and maintenance of programs that provide alternatives to incarceration. The Committee also has jurisdiction over five state agencies: the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Special Prosecution Unit, the Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Texas Civil Commitment Office, and the Texas Correctional Office on Offenders with Medical or Mental Impairments. I welcome back Representative Alma Allen (D-Houston) to her Vice-chairmanship, as well as the six new members; Rep. Ernest Bailes (R-Shepherd), Rep. Rhetta Bowers (D-Garland), Rep. Jay Dean (R-Longview), Rep. Victoria Neave (D-Dallas), Rep. Carl Sherman Sr. (D-DeSoto), and Rep. Phil Stephenson (R-Wharton). Our committee is expecting another member once the voters in Texas House District 145 elect a new representative due to a vacancy.

I look forward to another successful and productive session in which the Corrections Committee addresses critical issues concerning Texas' criminal justice system. Primarily, the work of this committee involves maintaining safe communities, discouraging and punishing wrongdoing, and helping victims and surviving family members of crime victims restore their lives. This extends to the incarceration and rehabilitation of justice-involved individuals not only in the units I represent (Polunsky, Gib Lewis, and Goodman units) but those all across the state. Once they have completed the terms of their sentence, this Committee works with TDCJ to ensure that we



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reintegrate the formerly incarcerated into our communities positively prepared to assume their roles as family members and productive citizens. It is imperative for public safety that we do what is right to provide services that are appropriate and rehabilitative for the individuals who intersect with the criminal justice and juvenile and foster care systems.

Additionally, I will serve on two committees; the House Committee on Redistricting and the House Committee on Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence.

The Redistricting Committee will begin the work that the Legislature must do in the next legislative session in 2021. Our U.S. Constitution requires a census every ten years for the purpose of apportionment or the redrawing of our U.S. Congressional representation. This census count is also used to redraw our State House and Senate districts, judicial districts, and State Board of Education districts. The census will occur throughout 2020. After this session, I look forward to traveling the state and attending Committee hearings to listen to my fellow Texans express their desire to have congressional, state, and judicial representation that is sensitive to their regions' commonalities of interests and uniqueness. After all, in a republic, which champions the rights of the people and the common good, representation is an important aspect. I look forward working with Chairman Phil King in the coming months.

The Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee will give me the opportunity to look into our state's fines and penalties arising under civil laws, civil procedure in our Texas courts, the district jurisdiction of our courts, and courts and their procedures. Additionally, the committee has oversight over the following state agencies: the Supreme Court, the courts of appeals, the Court of Criminal Appeals, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct, the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System, the State Law Library, the Texas Judicial Council, the Judicial Branch Certification Commission, the Office of the Attorney General, the Board of Law Examiners, the State Bar of Texas, and the State Office of Administrative Hearings. I look forward to working with Chairman Jeff Leach and extend my congratulations for his first appointment as a chairman in the Texas House.

On the House Floor, I had the opportunity to welcome Dr. Ron McMurry of Jasper to serve as our Doctor of the Day. Dr. McMurry is an asset to Southeast Texas and I am grateful for his service. He has prioritized the health of rural Texans and has been instrumental in funding some of the first rural health clinics in Texas. Dr. McMurry has served as the Physician of the Day every regular and special session since 1985's 69th Texas Legislative Session.



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During the week, I had constituents from Altus Emergency Centers come by my office to discuss healthcare needs for our rural communities in Southeast Texas. I plan to work with them in ensuring that our citizens have access to the best healthcare in the state.

Lastly, Texas A&M Agrilife Extension and the staff at Rebuild Texas provided all members of the Southeast Texas delegation that were impacted by Hurricane Harvey with the latest updates on the recovery efforts. Additionally, they discussed the new "Eye of the Storm" report that was put together to address the needs and future mitigation that will need to be addressed.

<https://www.rebuildtexas.today/wp-content/uploads/sites/52/2018/12/12-11-18-EYE-OF-THE-STORM-digital.pdf>.

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, you can email him at saul.mendoza@house.texas.gov.

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