



Your District 45 Weekly Update

Friends -

There is now less than one week until sine die, which means the end of the 86th Legislative Session. If you've been following along, you know that also means we have kicked it into high gear here at the Capitol. The House passed my bill to protect dark skies, a bill to extend Medicaid to new mothers for 12 months after birth, a bill to allocate an additional \$13 million to Texas State University, and much more. But there's still a lot to come, so be sure to stay engaged. And as always, reach out to our office with any questions or concerns.

For a better Texas,

Erin Zwiener

State Representative | District 45

Hays & Blanco Counties

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Click [here](#) to sign up for our office newsletter!

The Main Stories

Preserving the Night Sky



San Marcos Daily Record

Rep. Zwiener's Dark Sky Preservation Bill Passes House

Friday, May 17, 2019

Tourism is a key industry in the Texas Hill Country. Bed and breakfasts, inns, and hotels all rely on our dark skies to attract and retain visitors. That's why I introduced House Bill 4158, which will give our communities one more tool to protect the night sky and bring more astronomical tourists to local businesses.

In fact, bills like this support our small towns' tourism, natural beauty, and the economy as a whole. I am thrilled this bill was passed out of the House, and I'm optimistic that the Senate will move it forward as well.

[You can read more about HB 4158 here.](#)

Expanding Medicaid to New Mothers

Currently, Medicaid coverage expires 60 days after giving birth. House Bill 744, authored by Rep. Toni Rose, would require the Health and Human Services Commission to provide coverage to Texans for at least a year after delivery.

As a new mother, I know firsthand the importance of having access to health care the first year after pregnancy. Texas' maternal mortality rates are unconscionable, and complications often arise a few months after delivery. That's why I supported Rep. Rose's bill to expand access to health care for new mothers. By extending Medicaid coverage to 12 months after pregnancy, we can address ongoing health conditions in new parents and reduce Texas' maternal mortality rates.

Protecting Voting Rights



SB 9 was a wide-sweeping voter suppression effort that would have, among other things, created a criminal offense for those who unintentionally make a mistake filling out a voter registration form.

Miss a letter in your address?

Accidentally switch a number in your zip code?

Allowing SB 9 to go through would have meant that those minor slip-ups could be treated as criminal offenses in Texas.

The bill also posed threats to voters with disabilities. Many folks rely on assistance to correctly fill out their ballot, but this bill would have made communicating in the voting booth, even in these circumstances, a jailable offense.

Thanks to the hard work from many advocates, legislators, and other folks around the state, SB 9 was removed from consideration on the calendar this session. I want to extend a huge thank you to all who came out to testify against this bill. We will continue to guard against amendments that would attach some of SB 9's provisions to other bills.

Increasing Funding to Texas State University



The House passed SB 709 to raise the Texas State University Higher Education Fund allocation from \$24 million to \$37 million. This bill allows dollars to be used on capital projects and technology needs of the San Marcos campus.

We previously secured an additional \$90 million for Texas State University's main campus with a separate bill earlier this session. The funds will go toward a new, state-of-the-art STEM classroom building. Taken together, these two bills will enrich the lives of students, their time on campus, and their careers for years to

come. I look forward to seeing the difference it will make for Texas State's San Marcos campus.

[You can read more about the funds we've secured for Texas State University here.](#)

Pushing Back Against Anti-LGBTQ Bill

Just over a week ago, the LGBTQ Caucus killed a bill in the House that would have allowed discrimination based on gender identity and expression. Unfortunately, the Senate decided to revive the bill, and it has rapidly moved through the legislative process. Senate Bill 1978 opens the door to LGBTQ Texans being denied everyday government services under the guise of religious liberty.



But make no mistake: It is designed to make the LGBTQ community feel less-than and attacked by their government. It is yet another affront to the LGBTQ community and puts Texas on the wrong side of history.

The supporters of this bill claim that they're not pro-discrimination, but when they had the chance to protect LGBTQ people from employment discrimination with an amendment, they voted that measure down.

The LGBTQ Caucus stood together against this bill. And despite this license-to-discriminate bill moving forward, I want the Texas LGBTQ community to know that

the House LGBTQ caucus isn't going anywhere. We'll continue to fight for each and every Texan.

Recognizing Mayor Capra

I took to the House floor last week to recognize a very special person in House District 45. Dawn Capra finished up her third term as Mayor of Johnson City last week. Beginning her service as a city councilmember in 1999, Mayor Capra has showcased her hard work, talent, and leadership while helping Johnson City grow over the years.



Her dedication and integrity will be fondly remembered by citizens, officials, and employees with whom she has served.

She has also been an essential part of my office during my first session. Thank you for your service, Dawn! [You can watch the full recognition here.](#)

Recent Photos



TOP LEFT: Celebrating my first Mother's Day with Lark!

TOP RIGHT: Our District Director speaking with constituents in the district last week.

BOTTOM LEFT: Members of the LGBTQ Caucus fighting against a license to discriminate bill. Although we killed the bill the first time around, the Senate revived it and has pushed

through a stripped-down version.

BOTTOM RIGHT: School Fuel San Marcos' 5th Annual Fill the Tank Banquet and Silent Auction

Get Involved

Thank you to everyone who has signed up to join our Legislative Action Team! In case you missed the call to action, please read the message below!

As more opportunities for constituent involvement in the policy-making process pop up, I want to make sure that your voice is being heard. **What are you passionate about? What issues affect your day-to-day life? What do you want to see happen this session?**

Our **Legislative Action Team** is a place for you to share your answers to those questions with me. **Sign up to join the Action Team [here!](#)**

Recent Articles

[Rep. Zwiener Votes to Expand Compassionate Use Program, Dark Sky Preservation Passes House](#)

[Lack of Oversight?: Dead Bill Stirs Discussion on Environmental Violations](#)

[New State Rep. Zwiener Pulls in a Whopping \\$103M for Texas State University](#)



[Rep. Zwiener's Dark Sky Bill Passes House](#)

[Once Again, Bills to Study Impacts of
Climate Change in Texas Have Stalled](#)