

Charles "Doc" Anderson

Capitol News Report

Texas House District 56



McLennan
County

1850

Volume 4 - Summer 2007



CHARLES "DOC" ANDERSON District 56

Howdy Friends and Neighbors,

It is an honor and a privilege to serve a second term as your Representative in the Texas Legislature. The 80th Legislative Session had neither a crushing revenue short-fall (78th session) or the threat of a court take-over of the public schools (79th session) facing legislators during our 140 day session. This was due to action taken last year in special session to re-work our public school finance and business taxation systems in order to keep our state and economy growing.

The issues we addressed were diverse. First among these was maintaining our promise and funding the commitments to the education reforms enacted last year. It's easy enough to say we passed a great reform bill and just walked away, but our commitment to public schools requires continual effort and diligence at every level.

We undertook assignments such as property tax relief, children's health insurance program (CHIP), clean air, future water supply, funding for cancer research, reforming the troubled Texas Youth Commission, state parks funding reform and many other issues important to Texans. We also passed legislation (moratorium) to get a better handle on toll-road construction.

Other major issues that were my personal priorities: 1. A moratorium on construction of 18 pulverized coal plants in order to protect the health of our people and the beauty of our environment in Central Texas. 2. Jessica's Law to protect our most vulnerable youth from sexual predators. 3. Safety belts in school buses to protect our children and grandchildren.

I introduced legislation on all three of these major issues and was therefore able to have a voice to represent Central Texans on these statewide matters. I was proud to have a seat at the table to help shape this very important legislation. (Note: Jessica's Law and the safety belt bill both passed but the moratorium legislation was dropped when the TXU buyout proposed doing just what my legislation called for.)

There were several things that the legislature was unable to accomplish, but will continue to address next session, such as: illegal immigration, photo ID's for voting, the cumulative effects of emissions from electrical generation plants and the capping of the reformed business tax at 1%.

In conclusion, I hope you will find the information in this newsletter informative. I greatly appreciate you sharing your thoughts and opinions with me on these important issues.

Again, it is my distinct honor and privilege to serve as your State Representative.

Sincerely,

Doc

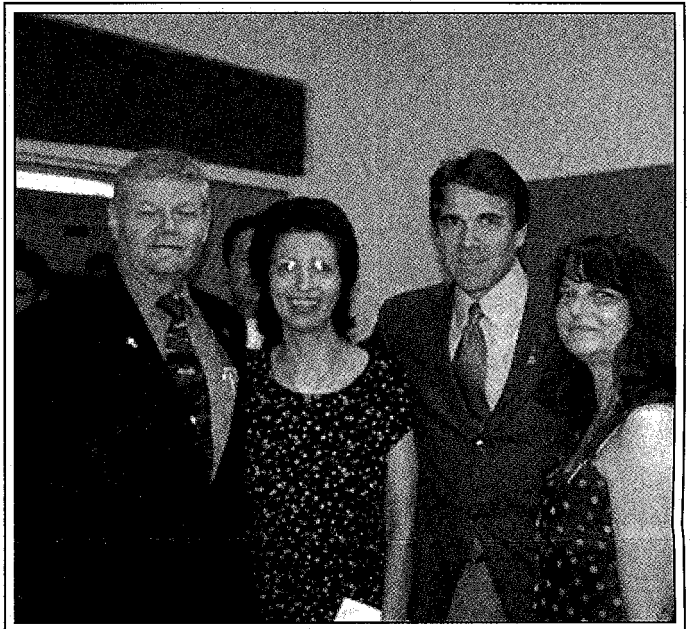
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SAFETY BELTS ON SCHOOL BUSES PROVIDE MORE PROTECTION FOR OUR CHILDREN

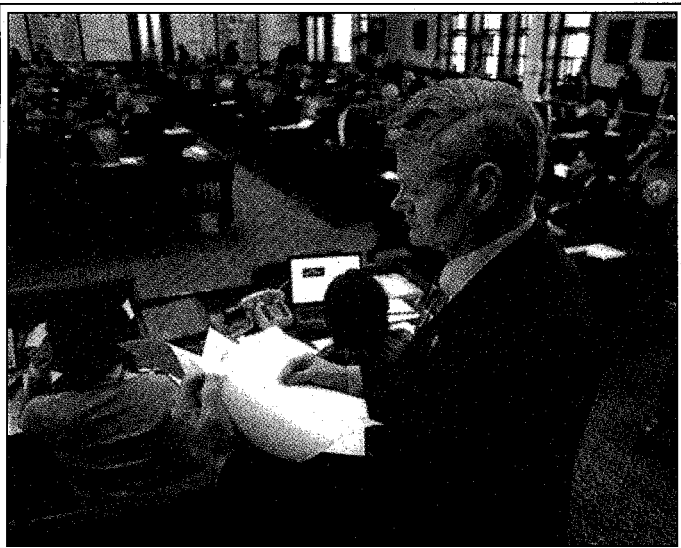
Our children are trained from birth to always be strapped in their vehicles with safety belts. But when it came to safety belts for school buses, I found it very frustrating that the arguments against safety belts centered mostly around numbers. (The money to buy new buses or the money to retrofit existing buses and numbers of children transported.) During the discussion about numbers in committee testimony on safety belt legislation, I always brought up this number. One. One death. One devastating injury. That's all it takes. When that number means something to you or your family, you can't throw up your hands and say it's all too inconvenient. I introduced legislation (HB 1791) and worked in as part of a team effort to develop HB 323 by Rep. Mike "Tuffy" Hamilton (District 19, Mauriceville). This bill passed and was signed by the Governor in Beaumont, Texas on June 8th. I was proud to be there for the signing ceremony.



Beaumont was the site of a special signing ceremony for the bill requiring safety belts on school buses. The ceremony honored the lives and families of those affected by a 2006 bus accident in Beaumont. Doc was proud to accompany the Governor to the event, and is shown here with family members JoAnne Bonura of Beaumont and Valerie Duty of Hewitt.

JESSICA'S LAW NOW IN TEXAS

All Texans' hearts break at the thought of child sexual abuse. Those who prey on the most vulnerable among us must be held accountable. Therefore, I introduced HB 205 to require a mandatory minimum sentence of 25 years for child sexual abusers. This bill was folded into HB 8 which I co-authored. I was proud to have participated in the process which assured that our prosecutors could go after certain child sex abusers and get a 25 year minimum sentence. HB 8 also gives prosecutors the option of capital punishment for a second conviction.



MCLENNAN COUNTY LEGISLATIVE ISSUES

I was proud to help local officials address some of their legislative needs this session as well. This included:

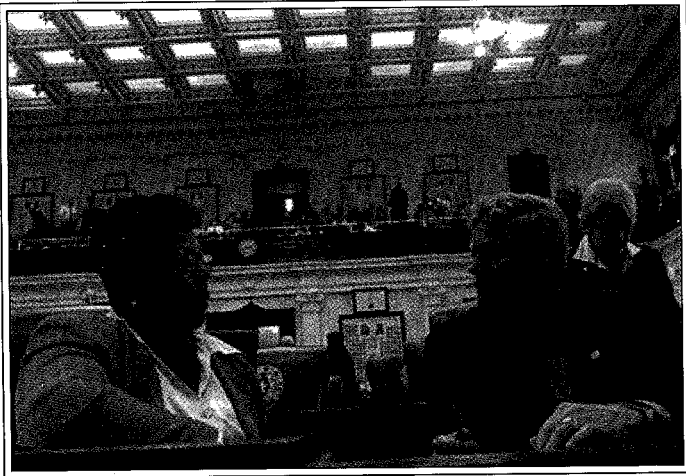
- Legislation allowing for the appointment of a magistrate for the McLennan County Jail to help expedite the processing of offenders;
- Establishment of the McLennan County Groundwater Conservation District. This was a joint effort by all three McLennan County legislators, and I was a co-author; and
- Technical corrections to law for the membership of the McLennan County Juvenile Board.
- Additionally, I successfully amended the statewide water bill at the request of Baylor University to exempt private colleges & universities from stormwater utility fees in the future.

Rep. Anderson prepares legislative notes and commentary for the House floor.



God Bless Texas!





Doc discusses the morning agenda with his desk mate, Rep. Senfronia Thompson of Houston.

OTHER LEGISLATIVE NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS

Toll Road Moratorium

- The 80th Texas Legislature established a statewide moratorium on private toll road deals for two years, exempting certain projects in some of the more congested parts of the state. A committee was established to study the statewide mechanism of toll road funding and to make future recommendations for building roads and improving transportation in Texas.

Property Taxes for Seniors/Disabled

- The first bill passed in the legislature this session was a constitutional amendment approved by voters in the May 12th election which allows senior and disabled homeowners to have their school property taxes reduced and frozen at the new reduced rate.

Castle Doctrine

- The legislature passed a law improving the rights of homeowners and citizens to protect themselves from criminals. The new law allows Texans to defend themselves with deadly force without being required to retreat first. The law reduces the probability that law-abiding citizens could be charged with a crime for acting in self defense.

Animal Cruelty

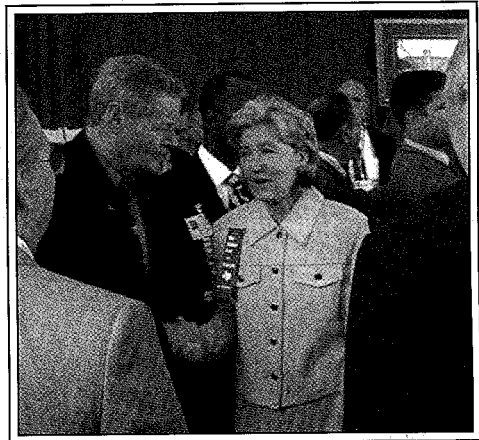
- Legislation was passed to give prosecutors a better angle to charge people for cruelty to animals (long overdue). This will provide stricter penalties under the law for those who cause harm to animals, as was the case with "Queso" here in Waco.

Education

- The education budget was increased by \$3.9 billion in new money. Legislation was passed to create grants and programs for **dropout prevention and college & workforce readiness** in public schools. The TAKS test in high schools will be replaced with **end-of-course exams**. Teachers received a modest raise; also, the Teacher Retirement System Trust Fund contribution from the state was increased to 6.58% of payroll, and all retired teachers will receive a 13th monthly check this year.

Organic Food Industry

- As the desire grows for consumption of organic products, I authored legislation to help producers meet the demands of this developing market. House Bill 2345 creates the Organic Agriculture Industry Advisory Board under the Commissioner of Agriculture, which is designed to give producers and policy makers an idea of how this market is emerging, and how to make organic agriculture an economic development success for Texas.



Rep. Anderson welcomes U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison to Waco for an event honoring her contributions in saving the Waco VA Hospital.

DATES FOR THE 2007 SALES TAX HOLIDAY

BACK TO SCHOOL SHOPPERS GET A BREAK FROM STATE AND LOCAL SALES TAXES ON AUGUST 17, 18 AND 19TH - THE STATE'S ANNUAL TAX HOLIDAY. MOST CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR AND BACKPACKS PRICED UNDER \$100 ARE EXEMPTED FROM TAXES FRIDAY, AUGUST 17, 2007 THROUGH SUNDAY, AUGUST 19, 2007.



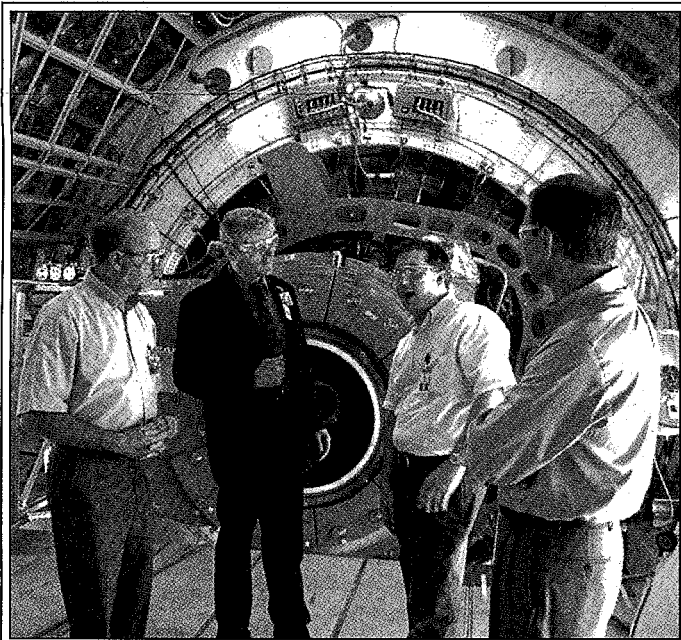


HOW YOUR MONEY IS SPENT



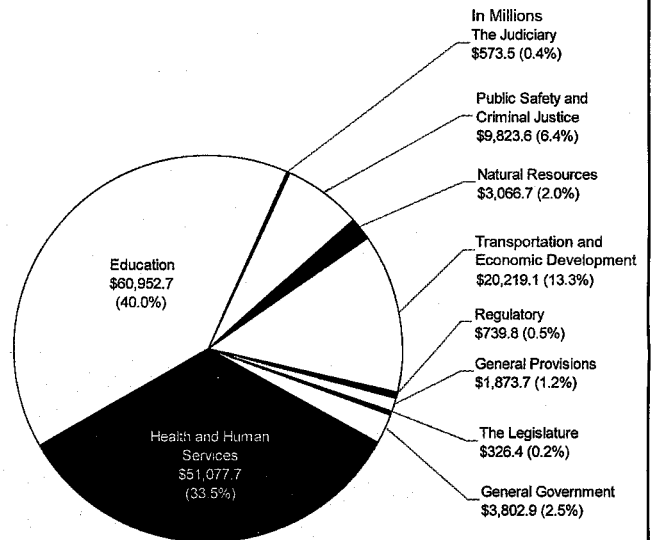
BUDGET

- Once again, the budget for the next two years will be within available revenues.
- The total budget for all items and all sources of spending, including federal funds, is \$152.5 billion for the next two years. This represents a 7% increase over the previous two-year period, and is well within economic growth indicators, which is required by the Texas Constitution. This includes **\$2.5 billion held in reserve** to anticipate revenue estimate adjustments related to property and business taxes.
- **An additional \$14.3 billion outside of the General Appropriations Act is being used for property tax relief, following up on legislation passed in special session a year ago.**
- Insurance coverage for the children of working poor (CHIP) has been restored, which makes 127,500 more children eligible.
- Public school teachers and state employees are both slated for modest raises; 2% per year for state employees, and around \$400 per year for teachers.

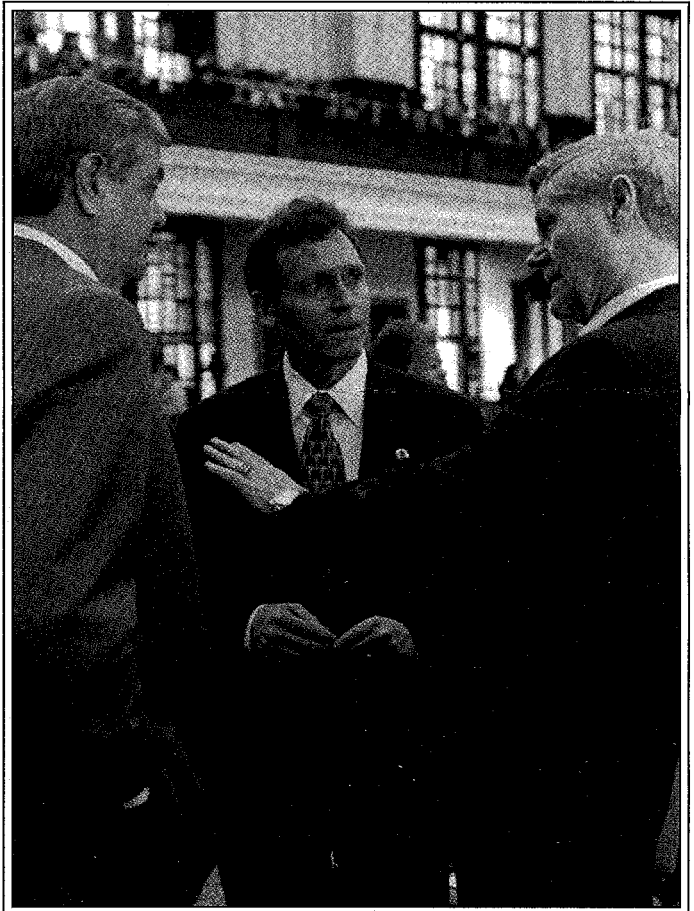


Doc tours L-3's SOFIA project.

ALL FUNDS TOTAL = \$152,456.1 BILLION



NOTE: Excludes Interagency Contracts and property tax relief.



Rep. Anderson confers on the House floor with Representatives Joe Driver of Garland, and John Zerwas of Katy.



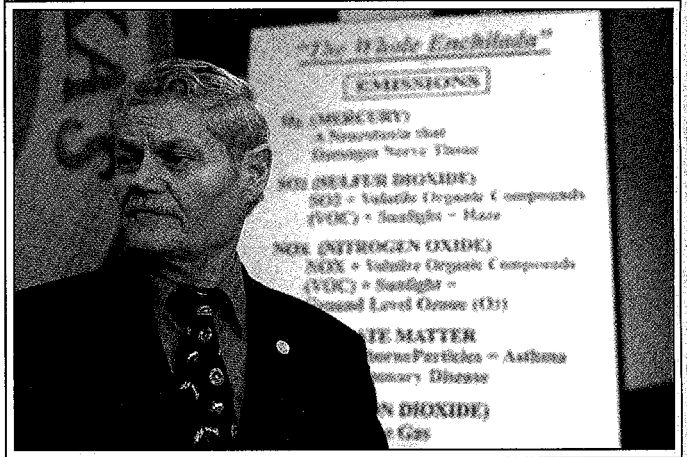
God Bless Texas!



"Trust not on ego or self, but concentrate on serving others"

CLEAN ENERGY TO THE FOREFRONT

When legislators came to Austin for the beginning of the Texas Legislature, Central Texas was staring down the barrel of 18 fast-tracked pulverized coal plant permits. The health of millions of Texans, our air quality, the environment and clean water supply were at stake. Therefore I had no choice but to file a resolution seeking a moratorium on the pulverized coal plants' permit process to afford the legislature and our communities the time to study the **cumulative impact** of the emissions from these energy plants. After all, the need to grow our economy and produce more energy is real, but I felt that we must **put the health and well being of our citizens first** and insure that Central Texas did not become a non-attainment area. I will continue to work to provide legislation to require the TCEQ to study the cumulative effects of emissions, and to require that TCEQ, ERCOT and PUC fight as a task-force on environmental impact issues. I also passed legislation in the House (HBs 1950 & 1952) to provide economic incentives for clean coal technology, but unfortunately, it died in the Senate.



Rep. Anderson speaks at a **Capitol news conference** on his proposed moratorium of 18 pulverized coal plants. He discussed the detrimental cumulative effect of the proposed plants and developing cleaner coal technology for our energy needs.

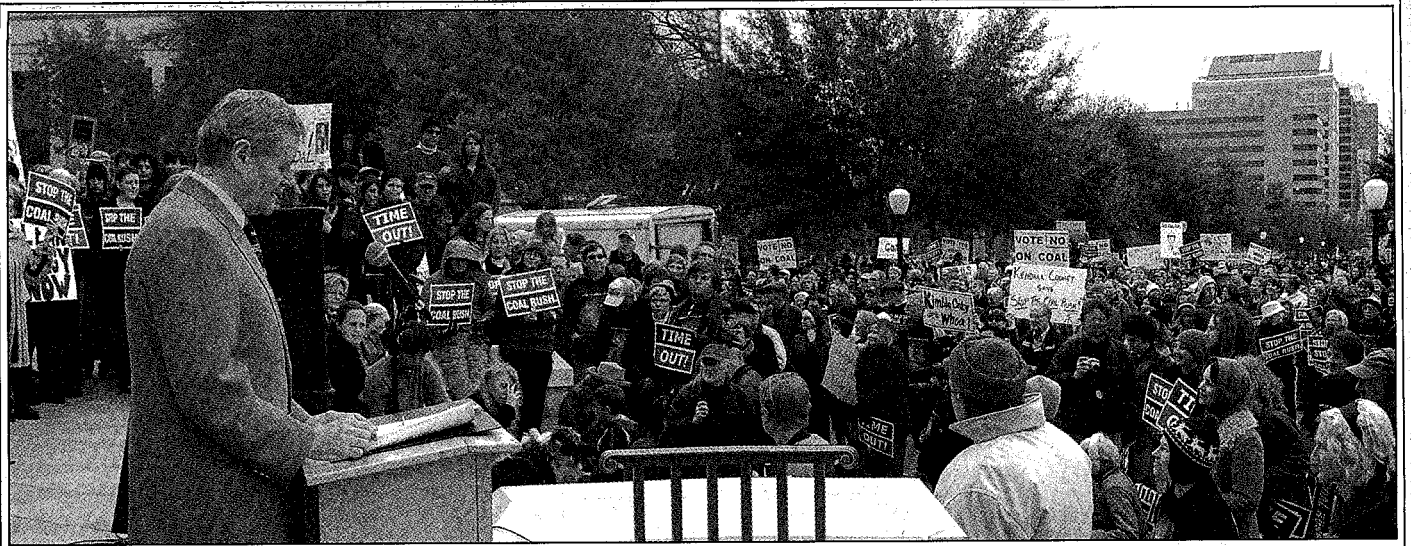
NEWS FROM THE DISTRICT

Waco Tribune Herald:

Rep. Anderson "deserves considerable credit for challenging Texas to become a national leader in clean burning coal-fired plants."

ANDERSON NAMED TO NATIONAL ENERGY STUDY PANELS

REPRESENTATIVE ANDERSON WAS INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THE WORK GROUP ON CLIMATE CHANGE FOR THE UPCOMING ANNUAL MEETING OF THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES. THIS FOLLOWS HIS APPOINTMENT BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE TO THE NCSL COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ENERGY, AND ENVIRONMENT. THE SPEAKER ALSO APPOINTED DOC TO THE ENERGY COUNCIL, A MULTI-STATE GROUP OF LAWMAKERS AND OTHER POLICY EXPERTS DEALING WITH ENERGY ISSUES.

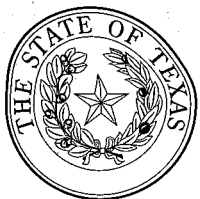


An estimated 1,800 Texans gathered on the steps of the Capitol in Austin to rally for Rep. Anderson's coal plant moratorium legislation.



God Bless Texas!





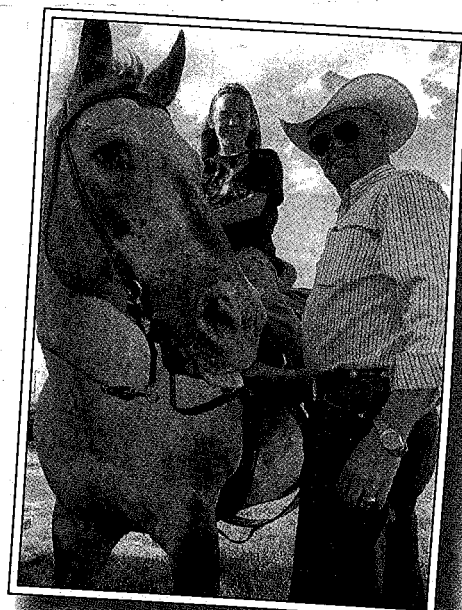
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Rep. Anderson hosts children from the district often during the legislative session as they are made Honorary Pages for the day.



At the Central Texas Horse Show Association barrel race in Robinson, Doc visits with Auburn Sears riding "Fancy".

Mortgage Fraud

- As Texas becomes one of the nation's largest targets for fraudulent activity in mortgage lending, consumers are affected by increased risks; as well as higher loan rates and fees.

Legislation passed this session will require:

- increased disclosure in mortgage lending and
- establish a residential mortgage fraud task force under the Attorney General, to assist local prosecutors.

Border Security

- A statewide response network was established for emergencies and disasters. Additional funding was provided for law enforcement agencies on the border to help stop the surge of drug trafficking.

Water

- The legislature passed a major statewide water management plan, focusing on conservation and ecology, as well as designating several sites as being of unique value for future reservoirs.

State Parks

- Increased funding -- through directing more of the sales tax on sporting goods to the Texas Department of Parks & Wildlife -- will allow needed improvements in our state park system.

Texas Youth Commission

- The legislature overhauled the leadership of this agency, improved the process for reporting abuse and neglect of youths in custody, and for prosecuting those involved. People with criminal records will no longer be able to be employed at TYC.

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