

# Giovanni's Journal

A publication of Texas State Representative Giovanni Capriglione

The 84th Legislative Session

Vol. 2, Issue 5

March 19, 2015

This week, I have some exciting news to share. I am the new secretary of the House Energy Caucus. The Caucus will study Texas' use of energy resources, hear educational lectures from various leaders in the energy field, and visit a few energy production sites.

Both traditional and alternative energy will be studied, as well as emerging technologies like clean coal/coal gasification.

This Caucus is so relevant, because according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, Texas is the first in the nation in oil, natural gas, and wind energy production.

Energy is a growing industry, and there will be many things to consider, but I'm confident the House Energy Caucus will be productive in putting us farther along the path.

On an unrelated note, thank you for sending in so many "page for a day" applications. I loved seeing the determination displayed by so many young constituents. Unfortunately, all ten of my allotted page spots have been filled for this session. Please don't hesitate to apply for the program in later sessions, or visit the Capitol sometime during the 84th Legislative Session. I'd be happy to have you visit.



Listening to testimony during my first Subcommittee on State & Local Bonded Indebtedness.

## Budget 101: Articles VI, VII, & VIII

For the second "Budget 101" column, I'd like to briefly discuss the articles of the budget my Appropriations subcommittee deals with: Articles VI, VII, and VIII. Article VI relates to Natural Resources, Article VII relates to Business and Economic Development, and Article VIII relates to Regulatory agencies. All dollar amounts given are for the 2016-2017 biennium. This information can be found on the Legislative Budget Board's website.

### Article VI: Natural Resources

There are several large agencies under this article: the Department of Agriculture, the Commission on Environmental Quality, the General Land Office and Veterans' Land Board, the Parks and Wildlife Department, and the Water Development Board.

All funds for Natural Resources agencies total \$3,962.2 million for the 2016-2017 biennium, which is a decrease of \$2.9 billion, or 42.8 percent, from the 2014-2015 biennium.

Article-wide funding reflects a General Revenue Fund decrease of \$10.9 million from the current biennium primarily due to one-time funding reductions at multiple agencies.

### Article VII: Business and Economic Development

Agencies under this article include, but are not limited to, the Department of Transportation, the Department of Motor Vehicles, The Texas Lottery Commission, and the Texas Workforce Commission.

All funds for this article total about \$28 billion, an increase of 2.1 percent from the current 2014-2015 biennium.

### Article VIII: Regulatory

Several agencies under Article VIII are: the Public Utility Commission, the Department of Licensing and Regulation, the Department of Insurance, and the Texas Medical Board.

All funds for this article total \$920.4 million for the 2016-2017 biennium, which is a decrease of 18.3 percent from the current biennium.

Funding for a majority of these agencies is maintained at levels to support current services. These agencies regulate a variety of industries, and each one requires careful attention.

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# Apply For The Texas Armed Forces Scholarship

The Texas Armed Services Scholarship has been created to assist promising students from throughout the state who are committed to education and service. It encourages young leaders to participate in the Texas Guard, Army National Guard, or Air National Guard, or to become commissioned officers in the United States armed services.

The scholarship will provide recipients with up to \$10,000 per academic year for up to four years (out of the five

years allowed for graduation) toward undergraduate education at any Texas university with an active ROTC program.

To be eligible, a student must meet academic criteria including:

- Be on track to graduate high school in a Distinguished Achievement Program or International Baccalaureate program
- A GPA of 3.0 or higher
- Ranked in the top third of their

graduating class

- SAT score of 1590 or ACT score of 23

Additional details and criteria can be found at: <http://www.texasarmedservicescholarships.com/>.

High School seniors, please contact Amanda Calongne at [amanda.calongne@house.state.tx.us](mailto:amanda.calongne@house.state.tx.us) for nomination requirements. Please submit all materials by April 3, 2015.

## Bills: Veterans, Teachers, And Road Closures

**House Bill 1985** relates to the use of high occupancy vehicle lanes by motor vehicles displaying license plates issued to veterans with disabilities. This bill amends the Transportation Code to allow a motor vehicle displaying license plates issued under this section to use any high occupancy vehicle lane in Texas regardless of occupants in the vehicle unless the use would violate federal transit or high funding restrictions.

House Bill 2034 relates to an exemption from the requirement that a legislative caucus file reports of contributions and expenditures. This bill says that a legislative caucus may be exempted from the mandatory filing of contributions and expenditures if no reportable activity occurs.

House Bill 2734 amends the Occupation Code by developing a voluntary certification program for roofing companies by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. This bill requires an applicant

to submit an application to the executive director with confirmation of the roofing company's existence and authority to conduct business in Texas, proof of insurance coverage and the application fee. Once the certificate is issued, a roofing company may advertise that the company is certified by the state.

House Bill 2736 prohibits the temporary closure of segments of the state highway system on days that certain schedule events are being held. This bill amends the Transportation Code by requiring a contract for improvement to a segment of the state highway system must prohibit a contractor from temporarily closing the highway on the date that an event is scheduled to be held in a municipality in which the improvement is being proposed if, not later than 180 days before the date that the event is scheduled to be held, the municipality notifies the department and the contractor

of the date.

House Bill 2739 allows a concealed handgun license (CHL) to be used as valid proof of personal identification. This bill amends the Business & Commerce Code to say that a person may not deny a CHL holder access to goods, services, or facilities unless otherwise noted in the Transportation Code or in regards to the operation of a motor vehicle.

House Bill 2743 relates to the enrollment of certain retirees in the Texas Public School Employees Group Insurance Program. This bill provides a supplemental enrollment period for retirees who can prove that extenuating circumstances caused them to miss their initial enrollment period.

House Bill 2740 relates to the automatic admissions of students to general academic teaching institutions. This bill amends the Education Code to require each general academic teaching institution shall admit an applicant for admission to the institution as an undergraduate student if the applicant graduated with a grade point average in the top eight percent of the student's high school graduating class. The requirement is currently top ten percent.



Speaking about one of my bills at one of the many recent press conferences.

Giovanni's Journal is an official publication of State Representative Giovanni Capriglione, Texas House of Representatives District 98



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