



GARY
VanDeaver
State Representative

86th Legislature Report - House District 1
Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties
September 2019

Around the District. This month, I have had the please of speaking to, visiting and celebrating with various groups in House District 1 (HD 1) including the following:

Lamar Avenue Church of Christ 150th Anniversary service & celebration; Paris - 09/08/2019.



Paris EMS Director Kent Klinkerman and Rep. VanDeaver.

Paris EMS 40th anniversary celebration - 09/20/2019



Daughters of Texas Chuck Wagon gathering at the Trailhead Pavilion in New Boston - 09/21/2019



Lamar-Delta Counties Retired Teachers and School Employees Association - in Paris - 09/23/2019.

Paris Junior College students volunteering during Suicide Prevention Week - 09/23 - 29/2019.



Town Hall meetings in October. Attached to the newsletter mailing will be a flyer about the upcoming Town Hall meetings scheduled in HD 1 from October 7 - 10. Please make plans to attend one of these meetings to hear directly from your state representative.

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Around the Capitol. Proposed constitutional amendments on November 5, general election ballot.

Texans will head to the polls on Tuesday, November 5, to vote on various local and state measures. There are 10 proposed constitutional amendments to the Texas constitution on this fall's ballot. These measures were approved by at least a two-thirds vote of the legislature this spring and now must be voted on by the general public. The House Research Organization (HRO) has analyzed the joint resolutions and prepared an excellent document providing exact language as it will appear on the ballot, as well as information about the subject matter of the proposals while noting what supporters and critics of the measures have to say about each item. Check out this link: <https://hro.house.texas.gov/pdf/focus/amend86.pdf>. From the adoption of the current Texas Constitution in 1876 through November 2017, the legislature has proposed 680 amendments to the constitution, of which 677 have gone before Texas voters. Of the amendments on the ballot, 498 have been approved by the electorate and 179 have been defeated.



Voter registration and early voting

deadlines. If you plan to vote this fall on the proposed constitutional amendments, you need to make sure you are currently registered to vote. The deadline to register is Monday, October 7, 2019. Here is a link to voter registration information:

<https://www.votetexas.gov/register-to-vote/index.html>. You can also use this site to determine if you are already registered. Early voting begins October 21 and ends November 1.

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Texas High School Aerospace Scholars Program.

This year marks the 21st year of the Texas High School Aerospace Scholars (HAS) that is offered to high school juniors across the state. Sponsored by the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), Texas high schools and the state's homeschool communities have been notified that students can apply for the HAS through October 23, 2019. The HAS is composed of two parts where



students work throughout their junior year in high school in an interactive, online learning environment focusing on needed

skills of critical thinking, communication, creativity, self-direction, productivity and accountability to gain an in-depth understanding about past, present and future of space exploration. After this portion of the program, the highest achieving HAS students will travel to NASA's Johnson Space Center the summer between their junior and senior year to work with NASA scientists and engineers. Interested students, parents or teachers can find more information at https://www.nasa.gov/centers/johnson/stem/High_School_Aerospace_Scholars.html. Remember the deadline to apply online is October 23, 2019.

Driver Responsibility Program ended. The legislature, earlier this year, adopted House Bill 2048 that ended the long-maligned state driver responsibility program (DRP) that began in September 2003. The program assessed surcharges based upon a driver's traffic offenses using a system of points or convictions. The funds from the assessed



surcharges were dedicated to supporting emergency medical services and trauma facilities. The new bill (HB 2048) requires the Department of Public

Safety (DPS) to reinstate any driver's license that was suspended under the program if the only reason for the suspension was a failure to pay an applicable surcharge. As of August 2019, more than 1.4 million Texas drivers had their license suspended under the DRP, but as of September 1, 2019, all surcharge assessments and suspensions were waived. Please note that drivers with non-DRP suspensions, fines or fees are still responsible for paying those assessments. To check your record or for more information, email DRPRepeal@dps.texas.gov where you must include your full name, date of birth, driver license or identification card number and phone number. Here is a link to the DPS frequently asked questions (FAQs) concerning the repeal of this program: <https://www.dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/FAQs/drpIndex.htm>

Texas Tuition Promise Fund enrollment. The state comptroller's office recently announced an open enrollment period for the state's prepaid college tuition program known as the Texas Tuition Promise Fund that will run through



February 29, 2020. This program offers parents and

loved ones a chance to prepay a child's future higher education at most Texas public colleges and universities at today's prices. Program participants can purchase "education units"

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based on 2019-20 academic year cost for the state's public colleges and universities, excluding medical and dental institutions. The plan has flexible payment options ranging from either paying a lump sum or installment payments. For more information, refer to <https://www.texastuitionpromisefund.com/> or call 800-445-GRAD (5723).

Legislature funds upgrades to driver's license offices in HD 1 and across the state. This session, the legislature appropriated over \$200



million in new funding and added 762 additional employees to help DPS

overcome the long lines and wait times in the state's driver's license offices. I am pleased that the offices in Clarksville and Texarkana are two of the ones that will be fully staffed to help Texans who need to go into a physical office for assistance. Please be aware that a number of services can be completed online without the need to actually go to a driver's license office. As of June 2019, DPS also authorized Texas Highway Patrol Troopers and other interested DPS employees to provide Class C driving tests, which frees up regular office staff from having to interrupt their work station assistance efforts with customers to give a 20-minute driving test. Check out the DPS website at <https://www.dps.texas.gov/DriverLicense/> to see which services can be handled online to avoid having to take time out of your busy day waiting in line at the driver's license office.

House Bill 1545 authorizes "beer-to-go" sales in Texas. The legislature this year adopted HB 1545 that levels the playing field between the state's wineries and brewers of beer.

Customers have long been able to visit the state's wineries, have tastings and purchase the wine on site to take home. Until September 1, people visiting the state's growing craft breweries have not been able to do the same thing. House Bill 1545 changed all of that as long as certain requirements, as noted below, are met:

- The brewery cannot produce more than 225,000 barrels of beer and ale a year;
- Beer-to-go sales are capped at 288 fluid ounces (one case) per person, per day.
- A brewery's total sales to consumers (for on and off-premise consumption) are capped at 5,000 barrels per year.
- Brewers must keep detailed records showing the amount of beer and ale it sells to consumers each month.

If these requirements are not met, the brewery is subject to an administrative penalty, fine or suspension of license or permitted activities.



Record of \$308 million in unclaimed property returned in FY 2019. Earlier this month, the comptroller's office announced that in

fiscal year 2019, it returned more unclaimed property to the rightful owner than any previous year in the program's history that began in 1962 and has returned over \$3 billion in cash and other valuable assets. The unclaimed property included forgotten utility deposits or other refunds, insurance proceeds, payroll checks, cashier's checks, dividends, mineral royalties, dormant bank accounts and abandoned safe-deposit box contents.

Businesses normally turn over forgotten assets to the unclaimed property program after it has been considered dormant for one to five years. If you think you may have some forgotten assets that rightfully belong to you or a family member, be sure to visit the comptroller's unclaimed property website at <https://claimitexas.org/> or call 800-321-2274 (CASH).

Social Media. Please follow me on both my Facebook and Twitter accounts!

My office is here to help. I thank each of you for letting me serve you as your state representative. Please contact either the District office (903-628-0361) or Capitol office (512-463-0692) if there is anything you think we can do to help you.