



GARY
VanDeaver
 State Representative

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

November 2020

Around the District. Branson thanked and honored. On November 14, I had the privilege of presenting former New Boston Mayor, the Honorable Johnny Branson, with an honorary



Photo courtesy of Heather Wilson.

resolution and a Texas flag that flew over the state Capitol thanking him for his commitment and 50 years of service to our community.

I know everyone joins me in wishing Mayor Branson and his family much happiness in his retirement from public service!

Listening Tour survey results. Thank you for participating in the 2020 Community Listening Tour last month via Zoom Webinar! We hope that you found the virtual town hall format informative, as well as highly interactive through our polling and open forum. We wanted to let you know the results of those polls, as well as give you an opportunity to provide feedback on your experience with us. We had 53 people registered to attend the event, and up to 28 people logged in to participate. Our responses indicated between 17 and 23 people answered the polling questions. The following are the results of our

polls (some percentages do not equal 100% due to the Zoom Polling feature's rounding):

- 100% said they are registered voters and planned to vote in 2020.
- 91% said they are voting early and 9% indicated they are voting by mail.
- 68% said their property taxes rose while 32% said their property taxes stayed roughly the same.
- 91% expressed they are either concerned or very concerned about the Texas economy.
- 59% indicated they felt that the current state of health care in our district is either inadequate or more than inadequate.
- 24% have experienced a medical emergency in the district and been unable to receive health care provision in a timely fashion.
- 41% have not been able to visit their relatives/friends in long-term care facilities.
- 67% are concerned about water issues in Northeast Texas.
- 83% indicated they have adequate technology in their household for remote work, virtual learning,

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commerce, and/or telemedicine, but 83% also expressed concerns over broadband access or internet strength areas in their area.

- 56% felt that the K-12 students in the area are NOT receiving a high-quality education right now.
- 44% felt that the state's response to COVID-19 has been inadequate while another 44% believed that it has been adequate. Only 11% felt that the state has had an exaggerated response.

In addition to these polling questions, we also addressed questions from residents in the open forum that dealt with issues such as:

- The logistics of large events on the Capitol grounds in Austin during session;
- The tax burden on home owners versus businesses/industries;
- Property appraisals;
- The logistics of committee meetings in regards to witness testimony;
- The number of bills that will be filed; and
- Redistricting.

We would love to receive your feedback regarding this event so that we can make improvements for any future virtual town halls or in-person listening sessions. **Please take a moment to submit the following survey; it should only take a maximum of three minutes to complete. Survey Link - <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/RHHJ7TF>.**

You can view the complete recording of the event on Rep. VanDeaver's social media. If you have any specific issues, concerns or questions,

please contact the office at (512) 463-0692 or email: district1.vandeaver@house.texas.gov.

TPWD prescribed burn. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) recently informed my office that it will conduct one or more prescribed burns in the White Oak Creek Wildlife Management Area between December 2020 and March 2021. The TPWD will provide additional information on its website and through social media while also providing information to county judges and commissioners, local law enforcement agencies and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. For more information about the TPWD Wildland Fire Management program, visit: https://tpwd.texas.gov/landwater/land/wildland_fire_management/

Bill filing begins for 87th legislature. The first Monday (November 9) after the General Election was the first day that members of the upcoming 87th Texas Legislature could begin filing bills for consideration during the session. I filed five pieces of legislation that day, and ideas for several of the bills came from people living in HD 1; here is a list of the bills I have filed so far:

- **HB 306** - This bill will increase transparency, accountability, and efficiency for the Medical Advisory Board (MAB), which makes recommendations to the Department of Public Safety regarding driver licenses and licenses to carry (LTCs) for people with medical conditions.
- **HB 315** - This bill will enable honorably retired peace officers to purchase a uniform in retirement and use it in their burial if they wish.

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- **HB 318** - This bill will prohibit employers from discriminating against employees who are volunteer emergency responders and miss work because of their service.
- **HB 363** - This bill increases protections of K-12 student data by requiring operators to adhere to strict information protocols and a student data protection agreement.
- **HCR 3** - This concurrent resolution directs the lieutenant governor and speaker of the House of Representatives to direct the appropriate house and senate committees to conduct an interim study regarding the feasibility of integrating the Northeast Texas Trail (NETT) into the state park system.

My office is still working with the Texas Legislative Council to finalize language on several other bills that I will file this session. If you would like to follow the progress of legislation filed this session, please visit www.capitol.texas.gov. As of November 24, there have been 830 bills filed so far. The legislative session begins on January 12; the bill filing deadline in the House of Representatives is March 12; and May 31 is the end of the regular session.

Around the Capitol. Capitol office to move.

Since taking office in January 2015, my office at the Capitol has been located on the first floor of the Capitol Extension in E1.310. My office will move in December to E1.304, which is just across the hall from my current location. Please make a note of our new office, but you should also know that our telephone number will still be 512-463-0692. I look forward to seeing people in our new location.

COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan. On November 23, Governor Greg Abbott and the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) announced the guiding principles for Texas' COVID-19 vaccine allocation process, which will serve as a foundation for the state's initial distribution of vaccines expected as early as next month. These principles have been established by the [Expert Vaccine Allocation Panel \(EVAP\)](#), created by DSHS to make recommendations on vaccine allocation decisions, including identifying groups that should be vaccinated first to provide the most protection to vulnerable populations and critical state resources. Texas will initially allocate COVID-19 vaccines based on the following criteria:

- **Protecting health care workers** who fill a critical role in caring for, preserving the lives of COVID-19 patients, and maintaining the health care infrastructure for all who need it.
- **Protecting frontline workers** who are at greater risk of contracting COVID-19 due to the nature of their work providing critical services and preserving the economy.
- **Protecting vulnerable populations** who are at greater risk of severe disease and death if they contract COVID-19.
- **Mitigating health inequities** due to factors such as demographics, poverty, insurance status and geography.
- **Data-driven allocations** using the best available scientific evidence and epidemiology at the time, allowing for flexibility for local conditions.
- **Geographic diversity** through a balanced approach that considers

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access in urban and rural communities and in affected ZIP codes.

- **Transparency** through sharing allocations with the public and seeking public feedback.

The approved plans state that health care workers likely to provide direct care for COVID-19 patients and other vulnerable residents will be the first group to receive the vaccine. This includes staff at hospitals and long-term care facilities, emergency medical services and home health care workers. As part of its ongoing work, EVAP will make recommendations on how and when to roll out vaccines to other critical groups.

Birth certificates. One of the requests for assistance my office gets several times a year is for help from people trying to get their driver's license renewed in order to comply with the Real ID requirements. These constituents have run into problems because they were born at home, and they do not have a birth certificate. My staff talked with the Bureau of Vital Statistics (BVS) about this issue and found that there is a process for people to get a delayed birth certificate. More information can be found at <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/vs/birth/delayed.aspx>.

To submit a Delayed Certificate of Birth application, you must:

- Be the registrant or the parent/legal guardian of the minor who is the registrant.
- Sign the application in front of a notary and get a notary seal:

- For children under 15, parent/guardian must sign.
- For individuals 15 and older, individual must sign.

- Provide a copy of [acceptable identification](#).
- Provide a check or money order made out to DSHS Vital Statistics.
- Provide required [documentation](#).
- Be sure to mail your application to the [correct location](#).

All documents must be from independent sources. You must present valid, original documents (not photocopies) or certified copies unless otherwise specified below. All originals will be returned after filling is completed. A copy or abstract of a document may be accepted if certified as true and correct by the custodian of the document.

- Driver's License/ID from a U.S. state or Driver's License/ID application*;
- Military discharge record (DD214);
- Religious record with signature of religious official* (original);
- School enrollment record/transcript;
- Selective service record;
- Social Security Administration records or application* (*Do not send the Social Security card.*);
- U.S. Census Bureau records;
- Hospital/medical/birthing center record*;
- Affidavit of Birth Facts* (sent with the Delayed Birth Registration application) signed in front of a Notary Public by an immediate family member who is at least 10 years older than the individual. (**Note:** The

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person who signs the Affidavit must also attach a copy of his/her unexpired government-issued photo ID.)

When submitting documentation to obtain a delayed birth certificate as described above, you must submit three or more that meet the following:

- At least two must show the individual's name, date and place of birth.
- At least one document must show the individual's name, the parents' names* and individual's date and place of birth.
- At least one document must have been created within 10 years of birth.
- Any document, other than an affidavit, must be five years old or older.
- Only one document may be an Affidavit of Birth Facts.

Any supporting document(s) submitted found to be fraudulent will cause immediate denial of the application for filing a delayed certificate of birth and those documents will then be retained. **Types of documents that might show parents' names.*

TWC updates. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) has been working almost around the clock to help out-of-work Texans receive the unemployment insurance (UI) benefits they are entitled to receive. TWC Call Centers remain open 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM seven days a week, however, the TWC announced recently that its call centers will be closed on Thanksgiving Day but will be open all other days next week. On Monday (11/16), TWC had approximately 47,500 unique callers who

placed just over 191,000 call attempts into TWC Tele-centers.

Last month, TWC announced a resumption of the work search requirements as of November 1, for individuals receiving UI benefits. This federal requirement was suspended earlier this year, but it is now again required to continue receiving UI benefits. All individuals receiving UI benefits will need to complete the designated number of work searches, beginning on the date listed in their work search notification document that was sent to their inbox or received in the mail. Individuals who intend to reopen their business do not need to complete work search activities they do need to take steps to reopen their business. Self-employed individuals who do not intend to reopen their business will need to complete work search activities. Registering at the Work in Texas website can assist in meeting these work search requirements:

<https://www.workintexas.com/vosnet/Default.aspx>. In addition, the TWC has partnered with Metrix Learning to offer over 5,000 online courses free to all Texans.

Stay safe this Thanksgiving. DSHS shares advice for a safe, healthy Thanksgiving. Texas enters the Thanksgiving holiday season at a time when COVID-19 is again spreading rapidly and hospitalizations continue to rise throughout the state. As of November 24, Texas has reported: 1,100,979 total cases since the start of the pandemic; 165,126 active cases; and 20,588 deaths.

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is providing guidance on how to decrease the risk of spreading the novel

coronavirus to protect yourself, your family and your community. One of the things that makes the holiday season special is spending time with family and friends. This year, it will be safer to celebrate in person with the people who live in your household and connect virtually with those who live elsewhere.

One of the safest ways to celebrate is with a virtual Thanksgiving dinner. Friends and family can gather in their own homes and connect online or by phone as they sit down to dinner together. Other safe activities include watching parades, sports and holiday movies at home or making a meal for a neighbor and delivering it without direct contact.

If you do choose to gather with people you do not live with, there are steps you can take to reduce the chances of spreading COVID-19:

- Talk ahead of time to set expectations about the precautions everyone should be taking.
- Keep gatherings small.
- Wear a mask with multiple layers that completely covers your nose and mouth.
- Always maintain six feet of physical distance between people who do not live together.
- Gather and eat outside. If you choose to be inside, improve ventilation by opening windows.
- Have guests bring their own food rather than sharing dishes and utensils.
- Frequently clean and disinfect items and surfaces touched by multiple people.

People should avoid large gatherings, including crowded stores on Black Friday and at other peak shopping times. Instead, shop online, when it is less busy, or in open-air markets where physical distancing is possible. As always, washing your hands frequently, covering coughs and sneezes and staying home when you are sick will help prevent COVID-19 and other respiratory illnesses from spreading.



Thanksgiving wishes. As we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving later this week, I want to express my heartfelt thanks for my

family, friends and constituents who I work hard to serve every day. I am so blessed to live and work in our part of Texas where we care about and help one another to be the best that we can possibly be. I wish you and your family a blessed and safe Thanksgiving.

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.