



State Representative Gary VanDeaver



HD 1

87th Legislature
Bowie | Franklin | Lamar | Red River

87th Legislature Report - House District 1 Bowie, Franklin, Lamar & Red River counties

January 2022



Around the District.
DeKalb FFA State Champs.
On January 10, I

wonderfully gifted students representing our area. Our future is in good hands!

Mount Vernon High School Leaders of Tomorrow. On January 11, I gave a presentation at the Mount Vernon City Hall about the Texas Legislature and redistricting to juniors and seniors from Mt. Vernon High School as part of their *Leaders of Tomorrow* program.



Paris Emergency Responder Appreciation Fish Fry. On January 14, the city of Paris and Lamar County communities got together at the East

Rep. VanDeaver with DeKalb FFA Teams - Kyndra Andrews, Cole Triplett, and Thomas Baird; Stephanie Motes, Blake Birdsong

presented the DeKalb ISD FFA teams with resolutions from the Texas House of

Representatives congratulating them on their recent accomplishments in state competitions. The DeKalb Greenhand Skills team of Kyndra Andrews, Cole Triplett and Thomas Baird delivered an exceptional performance, adding a state championship to the district and area crowns they previously collected. In addition, the school's Chapter Skills team of Stephanie Motes, Blake Birdsong and Luke Daniel turned in a seventh-place finish, and its Skills Presentation squads were also state qualifiers. Agriculture is the backbone of our economy not only in House District 1, but the entire state of Texas, and I am proud to know we have such

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Paris Baptist Church to enjoy a delicious fish fry and express gratitude for our first responders. Present at the event were the Paris Police Department, Lamar County Sherriff's Department, Paris Emergency Management and local first responders! It's important to not just pray for these strong men and women, but to let them know we appreciate their service, courage and sacrifice for our communities.



Rep. VanDeaver and a constituent talking at the Fish Fry.

Wilbur Smith Rotary Club of Texarkana. On January 20, we were guests of the Wilbur Smith Rotary Club in Texarkana at the Texarkana Texas Convention Center. We shared information about the legislature, the legislative process, issues important to rural

and Northeast Texans, and how to effectively communicate with your elected officials.



Rep. VanDeaver talking with Ben King, Texarkana resident.

Hooks HS Student Achieved Gold Medal at 2022 UIL Congress State Championships. On January 24, I presented a House Resolution honoring Hooks ISD student, Mr. James DeAnda, for winning the UIL Congress State Championship. He was selected by his peers to serve as a presiding officer during the mock



L-r: Jennifer DeAnda, James DeAnda, Rep. VanDeaver, Jaden Baird & Tammy Smith.

session in which students act as members of the U.S. Congress by drafting

legislation, caucusing in committees,

debating the issues and voting on the measures they have proposed. One day I look forward to voting for Mr. DeAnda when he runs for office!

Lamar-Delta Retired Teachers and School Employees Association.

On January 24, I was also the guest speaker at the meeting of the



Rep. VanDeaver talking with retired educators at Paris Junior College.

Lamar-Delta RTSEA at the Paris Junior College Ballroom. Issues addressed included retired school employees and the current public education system, as well as information concerning an increase in federal tax

withholding for January. TRS provided my office with the following information:

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The difference is due to three combined factors: (1) the supplemental payment is treated as taxable income; (2) federal tax tables changed in December and went into effect January 2022; and (3) the combined supplemental and annuity check may have put some retirees in a different tax bracket for the month of January.

Here is a link to the TRS explanation of this change:
<https://www.trs.texas.gov/Pages/retirees-one-time-supplemental-payment-FAQs.aspx>. Please note that withholding rates will slightly change again in February because as TRS noted, the IRS recently published its new annual tax withholding tables that will be reflected in future payments from TRS.

TEA commissioner visits ESC Region 8. On January 25, TEA Commissioner Mike Morath spoke at the Region 8 Education Service Center superintendents meeting. The commissioner solicited feedback about school operations and problems related to the omicron variant (staff shortages, student absences, lost instructional days, etc...). The commissioner provided information about how TEA is implementing legislation surrounding accelerated instruction, summative assessments and reading comprehension. Superintendents asked questions about educator prep programs, reading academies, burdensome training requirements on first year teachers, library book procurement and review processes and other timely concerns.

Congrats to TC! Earlier this week, Texarkana College was informed that it will receive almost \$650,000 in funding for scholarships for students earning a certification in cybersecurity and logistics occupational skills. These funds are a part of the state's Reskilling and Upskilling

Program to help Texans adjust their skills to industry needs in the everchanging world economy for jobs that are in high demand.

Around the Capitol. Border security concerns/Operation Lone Star. My offices often receive calls from constituents in HD 1 who are very concerned with illegal immigration and the border security problems on the Texas - Mexico border. Though our federal constitution spells out that the federal government is responsible for decisions and actions relating to immigration, most Texas officials believe the federal government is contributing to rather than fixing the problems on the border. Illegal immigration and completely open borders endanger Texans' lives, businesses and properties, and because of this Texas Governor Greg Abbott last year



launched Operation Lone Star to combat ongoing concerns with border security.

Just last week, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) specialized "brush teams" apprehended several groups of illegal immigrants for trespassing on private ranches. As Governor Abbott said about Operation Lone Star "we are here to protect and serve our state and its people." In 2021 during the Second Called Special Session, the legislature passed House Bill 9 to appropriate almost \$2 billion in additional funds to combat the continuing surge of people unlawfully crossing the border into Texas who have increased rates of human trafficking, illegal drugs, property crimes and threats of violence. The legislature passed HB 9 to mitigate these threats by providing

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supplemental appropriations and staffing to enhance border security. For more information about Operation Lone Star, link to this announcement from the governor's office: <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-dps-launch-operation-lone-star-to-address-crisis-at-southern-border>.



DPS Reminds Texans to Use iWatchTexas. DPS recently sent my office a reminder about available resources to keep our kids safe. In its notice, DPS is reminding

"students, parents, teachers and other school administrators that the *iWatchTexas* program is a critical resource for reporting suspicious activity in schools and communities in order to help prevent dangerous attacks. During the 2020-21 school year, there were no school shootings in Texas. By using the numerous resources available, everyone can continue working to prevent attacks by reporting any potential threats."

Here is a link to [iWatchTexas](#) that can be used in conjunction with resources at the Texas School Safety Center ([Texas School Safety Center](#)) housed at Texas State University in San Marcos along Active Shooter Alert system ([Active Shooter Alert System](#)) if an attack is underway. The *iWatchTexas* program is a partnership between communities and law enforcement and uses citizen-sourced tips on suspicious activity to thwart potential criminal acts. *iWatchTexas* is a valuable tool for school safety reporting, because it adds important threat information to the Texas School Safety Network. DPS is then able to use all of the available information to provide greater situational awareness and increase sharing between schools and law enforcement

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agencies, while still protecting the privacy of the student. Tips can be reported via the [website](#), the free iOS or Android mobile app or by calling 844-643-2251. **All reports are confidential.** For information on how to use *iWatchTexas*, you can view this [how-to video](#). Remember, *iWatchTexas* is not for emergencies. If there is an emergency on a school campus or in a community, call 911 immediately. Also, the program can be used to report suspicious activity in areas other than schools. As DPS officials said, "utilizing these available resources, Texans can work together to keep our children and schools safe."

Comptroller's office looks at supply chain issues. If you are like most Americans over the last two years, you and your family have experienced first hand delays in receiving packages you've ordered via the internet from Amazon and other merchandizers, as well as stared at the empty shelves in grocery and other



stores. When you've ask "why" and "where are things," you've been

told well "it's the supply chain issues." What exactly does this mean and what can be done to fix these problems? The most recent issue of *Fiscal Notes*, from the comptroller's office, delves into the supply chain conundrum. As Texas Comptroller, the Honorable Glenn Hegar, states in the January - February issue of *Fiscal Notes*:

Before COVID-19, the global network of supply chains created efficiencies for companies, saved them time and money and generally performed well. The pandemic disrupted production and

transportation lines, revealed supply chain vulnerabilities and made clear the global interdependence of our current supply chains.

In 2021, Comptroller Hegar embarked on a tour of Texas businesses/industries that are integral to the state's success as a player on the global stage. What he found highlights the fragile supply chain where one weak link can paralyze efficient production and timely delivery of goods and services. Comptroller Hegar said:

Texas business leaders are reporting much stronger demand for goods and services this year, but supply chain issues remain a concern. As the nation's top state for international trade and the 9th largest economy in the world, limiting supply chain disruptions is critical to the Texas economy.

For the complete story, link to *Fiscal Notes*: [file:///C:/Users/h2540ac/Downloads/fn%20\(3\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/h2540ac/Downloads/fn%20(3).pdf).

Key election dates to keep in mind. There will be many important local and state elections held throughout the year and you need to be a registered voter to vote in these key races. To vote in the March 1, primary



elections, you have to be registered by January 31, 2022. Here is a link for more information:

<https://www.votetexas.gov/register/index.html>

Also, here are important dates to keep in mind for elections this spring:

- **January 31** - last day to register to vote.
- **February 14** - first day of early voting.

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- **February 18** - deadline to apply for a mail-in ballot.
- **February 25** - last day of early in-person voting.
- **March 1** - Primary Election Day with polls open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m.
- **May 7** - constitutional amendment election raising the residence homestead exemption amounts from \$25,000 to \$40,000.

For more information, visit VoteTexas.gov

Thank you for your prayers! Please welcome my newest grandbaby and first grandson -



Nevill Dean Launius. Nevill was born six weeks early on January 3, 2022, at six pounds

and eight ounces. Both he and his mom are doing great, and his sisters are ready to show their baby brother the world!

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.