



State Representative **GARY VANDEAVER**

April 2022 E-Newsletter



HD 1

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

Around the District.

Texarkana College Kick-Off Day. On April 1st, Texarkana College (TC) kicked off their enrollment campaign with an event called "Step Up with Texarkana College" at the TC campus. The purpose of the event was to push enrollment at Texarkana College for Fall 2022 as part of the state's higher education strategic goal of 60X30XTX.



Left to Right; Brandon Washington, TC's VP and Dean of Workforce; Joe Haynes-Stewart, Texas High School Class of 2023; Rep. VanDeaver; Dr. Jason Smith, TC President; Derrick McGary, TC Trustee; and Dr. Donna McDaniel, VP of Instruction. (Photo: Texarkana College - Allison Haley).

The event included speakers, two-stepping, delicious food and lots of TC memorabilia to spread awareness of the college program around the region. I spoke about why community colleges are important pieces of the higher education system in Texas, as well as from my own perspective as a graduate of Paris

Junior College. It is vital we have a skilled and prepared workforce and it was great being a part of one community college's efforts to improve the lives and economies of their community.

Lone Star Legislative Summit 2022. On April 8th, we attended the Lone Star Legislative Summit in Nacogdoches, Texas. I participated in the panel on Education, specifically; "How to be Smart about Education: Affordability, Accessibility, and Affluence." I joined my fellow legislators, State Senator Taylor (former chair of the Senate Committee on Education), along with State Representatives Dutton, Raney, Huberty, Bell, and Shine to talk about higher education, workforce, and the important role of community colleges.



Left to right: Reps. Raney, Bell, VanDeaver, Shine, Huberty, Dutton, and Sen. Taylor. (Photo: Nacogdoches Chamber of Commerce).

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Atlanta Area Rotary Club. On April 14th, I spoke at the Atlanta Area Rotary Club at Luigi's Italian Restaurant in downtown Atlanta. We discussed the legislative process, the issues that the legislature handled in 2021, and how the state and congressional districts changed. All of Cass County was shifted into Texas House District 1 and Congressional District 4, changing both their state and congressional representation. It was wonderful meeting more service-minded folks in the new parts of HD 1.



Rep. VanDeaver speaking at Atlanta Area Rotary Club, Luigi's Italian Restaurant. Atlanta, TX. (Photo Credit to Atlanta Area Rotary Club).

DeKalb Elementary School nominated as a 2022 Blue Ribbon School. On April 21st, I presented administrators and students at DeKalb Elementary School a state of Texas Resolution for their nomination as a 2022 Blue Ribbon School. They were chosen because of their extraordinary progress in the exemplary gap-closing schools category. I always tell people that my favorite job ever was serving as an elementary school principal. It was wonderful to be around all of the children and to teach them about their government while honoring the efforts of their teachers and administrators.



Rep. VanDeaver speaking to DeKalb Elementary School students about their 2022 Blue Ribbon Nomination. (Photo Credit to DeKalb ISD). DeKalb, TX.

Around the Capitol.

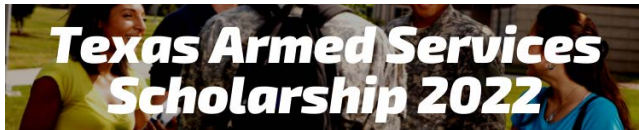
Texas Commission on Community College Finance April Meeting. On April 6th, the Texas Commission on Community College Finance (TxCCCCF) met in Austin to discuss aligning higher education goals with workforce needs, as well as how to change state laws to better accommodate the needs of our community colleges. Senate Bill 1230 (2021) established this commission to make recommendations to the 88th Legislature in 2023. House Speaker Dade Phelan appointed me to serve on the commission, and we are working hard to examine the challenges facing our community colleges and their students.

House Committee on Public Education Interim Hearing to Discuss Interim Charges. On April 26th, the House Committee on Public Education met to receive an update on the public education system from Texas Education Agency (TEA) Commissioner Mike Morath, and listen to testimony on Interim Charge # 2 and

Interim Charge # 11. Interim Charge # 2 instructs the committee to examine the impact, including any financial impact, to the Texas public school system of an increase in the number of children crossing the Texas-Mexico border. Interim Charge # 11 asks the committee to review the impact of investments of the Permanent School Fund by the State Board of Education in businesses and funds owned or controlled by the Russian government or Russian nationals, and determine the need for investment restrictions.



House Committee on Public Education, Reps. VanDeaver, Gonzalez, and Huberty, Texas Capitol, Austin, TX.



2022-2023 Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program Nomination Applications now open. Due July 15, 2022! The 81st Texas Legislature (2009) created the Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program (TASSP) to encourage students to participate in Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs at Texas institutions of higher education. Every year, each state house representative may appoint one student to receive a TASSP. Students must meet specific requirements to be eligible for

nomination and to receive a scholarship. Our office is accepting applications through July 15th, 2022. The students must meet two of these four academic criteria:

- Be on track to graduate or have graduated high school with the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP), the distinguished level of achievement under the Foundation High School program, or the International Baccalaureate (IB) Program;
- Have a high school grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale;
- Have achieved a college readiness score on the SAT (1070) or ACT (23); or
- Be ranked in the top one-third of the prospective high school graduating class.

To receive the scholarship, the student must:

- Be registered with Selective Service or be exempt;
- Be enrolled at a public or private (non-profit) institution of higher education in Texas and in good standing in a Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) program or another undergraduate officer commissioning program as certified by the institution;
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress (SAP) as indicated by the financial aid office at the recipient's institution of higher education;
- Enter into a written agreement with the THECB;
- Complete school-initiated TASSP application by November 30, 2022; and
- Repay the scholarship if requirements are not met.

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In order **to apply**, please send via email (district1.vandeaver@house.texas.gov) the following materials and information **by July 15, 2022**:

- Contact information, including full name, address, date of birth, email, and phone number;
- Resume;
- Cover letter;
- High school and/or college transcript(s);
- Three references with contact information; and
- Letter of recommendation.



TxDOT Launches "Be Safe. Drive Smart." Campaign. As road construction projects ramp up statewide, TxDOT officials are asking motorists to slow down and stay alert when driving through the thousands of work zones in Texas. In 2021, traffic crashes in the state's work zones claimed the lives of 244 people, a 33 percent increase over the previous year. Drivers and their passengers accounted for the majority of those who died in Texas work zone crashes last year. Speeding and driver inattention were among the leading causes of crashes. The **"Be Safe. Drive Smart."** campaign offers five tips for driving safely through a work zone:

1. **Slow down.** Go the speed limit and adjust your driving to match road conditions.
2. **Pay attention.** Avoid distractions, keep your mind on the road and put your phone away.

3. **Watch out for road crews.** The only protective gear they wear is reflective clothing, a hardhat, and safety boots. Always follow flaggers' instructions and be mindful of construction area road signs.
4. **Don't tailgate.** Give yourself room to stop in a hurry. Rear-end collisions are the most common kind of work zone crashes.
5. **Allow extra time.** Road construction can slow things down. Count on it and plan.



April is National Distracted Driving Awareness Month. Distracted driving deaths increased 17 percent in 2021 compared to 2020, claiming the lives of 431 people and seriously injuring another 2,934. In light of these grim statistics, TxDOT is conducting its annual "Talk. Text. Crash." campaign during National Distracted Driving Awareness Month in April to urge Texans to keep their heads up, put their phones down and just drive. Distracted driving is not only dangerous, it's a crime. Since September 1, 2017, it has been illegal to read, write or send a text while driving in Texas, and violators can face a fine of up to \$200. TxDOT is relaunching its web-based augmented reality game "Dart Those Distractions" to reinforce the importance of paying attention behind the wheel.



Drivers Wanted – Texas Trucking Strives to Stay on the Move. About 3.5 million truck drivers, with an average age of 46, are on U.S.

roadways, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. By 2030, more than half of current truck drivers will have passed retirement age. In the recently released March/April issue of Fiscal Notes, the Comptroller's office looks at looming labor shortages in the trucking industry. To read the full article, please follow this link:

<https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/fiscal-notes/>.



Texas has the fourth lowest nurse-to-population ratio in the country. Another issue of Fiscal Notes examines labor shortages in the nursing profession. According to a March 2022 NurseJournal analysis of U.S. Bureau of Health Workforce data, Texas had the fourth-lowest nurse-to-population ratio among all states, with only 9.62 nurses per 1,000 residents. The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) projects that, in a decade, Texas will face a severe shortage of nurses if demand continues to outpace supply. Read the full article at the link:

<https://comptroller.texas.gov/economy/fiscal-notes/2022/apr/nursing.php>.



Upcoming Deadlines for May Elections. The state's Constitutional Amendment elections and local elections are scheduled May 7th, while the Primary Runoff Elections are May

24th. With these elections scheduled so close to one another, several key dates and deadlines overlap due to statutory deadlines set in the Texas Election Code. Below are several key dates and reminders for Texas voters who wish to participate in either election:

May 7th - Statewide Constitutional Amendment Propositions and Local Elections

- **Tuesday, April 26th** - Last day to apply for a ballot by mail (received, not postmarked);
- **Tuesday, May 3rd** - Last day of Early Voting; and
- **Saturday, May 7th** - Election Day.

Read the ballot language and explanatory statements for statewide Propositions 1 and 2 at the following link:

<https://www.sos.texas.gov/elections/forms/explanatory-statements-may-2022-final.pdf>

May 24th - Primary Runoff Elections

- **Friday, May 13th** - Last day to apply for a ballot by mail (received, not postmarked);
- **Monday, May 16th** - First day of Early Voting; and
- **Friday, May 20th** - Last day of Early Voting; and
- **Tuesday, May 24th** - Election Day

A full list of candidates can be accessed at this link: <https://candidate.texas-election.com/Elections/getQualifiedCandidates!nfo.do>.



Governor's Easter Egg Hunt. Governor Abbott and his family hosted legislators and their children and/or grandchildren for an Easter Egg hunt on the lawn of the Governor's mansion on April 14th. My granddaughters Susanna and Clara had a wonderful time petting bunnies and finding eggs with little goodies. It's because of them that I continue to serve!



Left to Right: Clara, Pam VanDeaver, Rep. VanDeaver, and Susanna, Governor's Mansion, Austin, TX.



Contact Us!

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** at (903) 628-0361 or the **Capitol office** at (512) 463-0692 if there is anything you think we can do to help you.

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