



State Representative **GARY VANDEAVER**

June 2022 E-Newsletter



HD 1

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

June 2022

Around the Capitol. Legislative actions since Uvalde shootings. Since the horrific school shooting last month at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, legislative committees have been meeting to gather as much information as possible to find solutions to prevent such things from happening again. Committees in both the House and Senate have held hours of hearings to listen to victims' family members, survivors, witnesses, school staff members, public safety officials, mental health professionals and gun safety training experts. There are no easy answers or fixes for the complex problems that drive someone to open fire in our schools and murder innocent children and teachers. Lawmakers must balance their emotions with constitutional rights and privileges to provide our schools with the equipment, training and other resources to prevent or stop these shootings. As a former superintendent and now as a legislator, I will work extremely hard between now and the end of the next regular session to help craft needed and appropriate solutions.

Texas Governor Gregg Abbott has also directed several initiatives to help ensure schools are safe when students and teachers return to the classrooms for the 2022-23 school year. These efforts include the following:

- Directing the Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC) to begin immediately conducting comprehensive school safety

reviews to ensure all Texas public schools are following the appropriate procedures to maximize school safety.

- Directing the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to provide strategies to make Texas public schools safer through heightened safety standards.
- Instructing the Advanced Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training (ALERRT) programs to provide training to all school districts across the state, prioritizing school-based law enforcement.
- Directing TEA, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to expand and accelerate the ability to report suspicious activity through the iWatchTexas reporting system.



Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness

Month. Each June, we observe Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month where people across the globe are encouraged to reflect on,

discuss and spread awareness of Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. Around 50 million people internationally live with Alzheimer's, or some other form of dementia and this figure is continuing to grow. Some common signs that it may be time to consider a dementia evaluation for you or a loved one are difficulty remembering new things, handling numbers and logic, carrying out

"The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This newsletter is available in alternate forms upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163."

routine activities and losing things. Early recognition can help treat and limit many reversible causes of memory loss and improve quality of life with Alzheimer's or other types of dementia.

Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) website

technical problems. The TWC recently informed my office about a nationwide technical outage affecting three of its job search websites: WorkInTexas.com; MyTXCareer.com and TXInterhsipChallenge.com. TWC contracts with Geographic Solutions, Inc. (GSI) to host these websites. Not only does GSI support



TWC, it also hosts similar websites across the country in other states. The outage is not expected to be fixed until early

next week. TWC has created a new [webpage](#) to provide resources for jobseekers during these outages. Other portions of the TWC website are maintained by the agency so are not affected by these outages and can be reached at www.twc.texas.gov.

Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) efforts over the 4th of July holiday.

The DPS recently informed my office about two of its initiatives, *Operation Holiday* and *Operation CARE*, to keep Texans safe over the upcoming July 4th holiday weekend. Operation Holiday will run July 2 - July 4 to target drivers violating traffic laws, including those speeding, not wearing their seat belts or driving while intoxicated. Operation CARE (Crash Awareness Reduction Effort) will run from July 1 - July 4 and focuses on reducing crashes and violations of the state's *Move Over, Slow Down* law. The law requires all drivers to slow down when police, fire, EMS, Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) vehicles and tow trucks are stopped on the side of the road with their



emergency lights activated. DPS offers the following safety tips:

emergency lights activated. DPS offers the following safety tips:

- **Don't drink and drive.**
- **Move Over or Slow Down** for police, fire, EMS, TxDOT vehicles and tow trucks stopped on the side of the road with emergency lights activated.
- **Buckle up** everyone — it's the law.
- **Slow down.**
- **Eliminate distractions** while driving, including the use of mobile devices. Texas law prohibits the use of portable wireless devices to read, write or send an electronic message unless the vehicle is stopped.
- **Drive defensively.**
- **Use the left lane for passing only.**
- **Don't cut in front of large trucks.**
- If you can **Steer It, Clear It:** If you are involved in a non-injury crash and your vehicle can be moved, clear the traffic lanes to minimize traffic impact.
- **Keep the Texas Roadside Assistance** number stored in your phone. Dial **1-800-525-5555** for any type of assistance. The number can also be found on the back of a Texas Driver License.
- **Check your vehicle.**
- **Report** road hazards or anything suspicious to the nearest law enforcement agency.
- **Monitor weather and road conditions** at [Drive Texas](#).

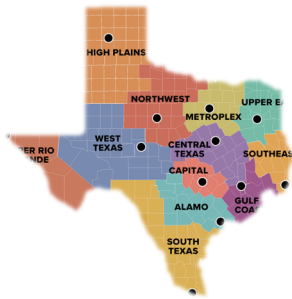
Texas's Broadband Plan. In 2021, the legislature created, funded and set up the state's new Broadband Development Office (BDO) at the comptroller's office to bring this vital public utility

to the approximately seven million Texans who did not have access to this essential service. The coronavirus pandemic not only highlighted the importance of broadband, it also spotlighted the disparate coverage and access across the state that impacted



"The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This newsletter is available in alternate forms upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163."

schools, businesses, health care and other pieces of modern-day life from operating normally. Earlier this year, the BDO held listening tours in 12 cities so it could hear directly from Texans about this important issue. The below summary statement of the findings from this effort are highlighted in the BDO's just-released report:



Sentiment has been consistent: slow data speeds, unreliable access, affordability and coordination are critical areas of concern for Texas families, businesses, educators and

farmers. An important, recurring theme has been the reminder that though high-speed internet may once have been a luxury, it is now a necessity. Texans need reliable, high-speed connectivity for public health, safety, education and modern agriculture.

I expect that the 88th legislature next year will continue efforts to ensure that access to high-speed internet services are available to as many Texans as possible to keep vital services and information available to all parts of the state. Here is a link to the new report: [Texas Broadband Plan 2022 - file:///C:/Users/h2540ac/Downloads/broadband-plan-22%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/h2540ac/Downloads/broadband-plan-22%20(1).pdf).



TxDOT announces data portal.

From a press notice sent to my office, TxDOT announced the launch of its data portal as a tool to be a leader when it comes to safety – "for our customers, our partners, and our employees. As part of this effort, we have launched a new [TxDOT Traffic Safety Data Portal](#), available on [TxDOT.gov](#), that will allow the public and our partners to access user-friendly, simplified visualizations of our traffic and crash data. This portal provides charts, maps, trends projections, and targets. Users can see and analyze crash data

"The Texas House of Representatives is an Equal Opportunity Employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age or disability in employment or the provision of services. This newsletter is available in alternate forms upon request. Please call 1-800-241-1163."

from across the state and by types of crashes, as well as refine their searches to include year and geography. The data available can be viewed at a broad level and also allows for detailed review as needed. "

TxDOT's data portal collects and analyzes a wide variety of traffic safety data, including annual crash statistics published in [Texas Motor Vehicle Crash Statistics Annual Reports](#). Crash data is used to improve traffic safety engineering and education, and fuel TxDOT's campaign [#EndTheStreakTX](#), with the ultimate goal of ending daily deaths on Texas roadways.

Staff change. Earlier this month, my office said goodbye to Grace Kelly who served as my legislative director since September 2020, as she moves to a teaching position with Tarleton State University. I appreciate her dedication and hard work serving my Capitol office and the constituents in House District 1. I wish Grace good luck as she starts the next chapter of her career.

Happy 4th of July! Please join my family and me as we celebrate our nation's 246th birthday! Let's



remember the brave men and women who fought off the yoke of an oppressive government to establish the greatest country on earth. Happy Birthday to the USA!

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.