



State Representative
GARY VANDEAVER
 House District 1

89TH LEGISLATURE DISTRICT UPDATE

JANUARY 2025



**PROUDLY REPRESENTING
 OVER 194,000 CONSTITUENTS
 IN FIVE COUNTIES**

Bowie
 Cass
 Lamar
 Morris
 Red River

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 Gary VanDeaver [here](#).**

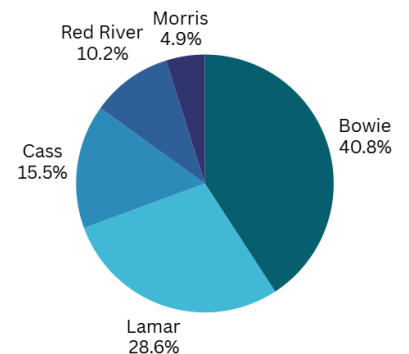
My office is here to help! I thank each of you for letting me serve you as your state representative. Please contact either the District or the Capitol office if there is anything we can help you with.

Around the District

Legislation filed to stop Marvin Nichols Reservoir. In January, Rep. VanDeaver filed six additional House Bills (HBs) for consideration during the 89th session. Two of these bills are designed to prevent the Marvin Nichols Reservoir from being constructed. **House Bill 2109** directs the executive administrator of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to remove a reservoir from the state water plan if it has been in a state plan for 50 or more years and construction has not begun. If a proposed reservoir has been removed by TWDB's executive administrator from a state water plan, the reservoir cannot be added to a state water plan in the future. **House Bill 2114** will prevent engineering firms involved in developing a regional or state water plan from being eligible to participate in the construction of a reservoir in that plan. Information about these, and other bills, can be found at Texas Legislature Online: <https://capitol.texas.gov/>.

Morris County gets the "BOOT." The Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, the Honorable Glenn Hegar, recently informed my office that Morris County has been awarded over \$25 million as a part of the "Bringing Online Opportunities to Texas (BOOT) Program." The "BOOT" is a competitive grant program designed to address connectivity challenges in the state's most disconnected counties to bring broadband/internet/fiber technology to more than 93,000 homes and businesses. There are 1,903 specific sites in Morris County that are slated to be connected as a part of this program. Rep. VanDeaver congratulates everyone in Morris County who worked on the grant application, and he wishes them much success!

89th Legislative Session Survey Results. "Thank you" to everyone who participated in my office's 89th Legislative Session policy survey! Six hundred and eighty four constituents responded from all five counties, with valuable input on topics like school funding, casinos, rural associations and more. A summary of the results is included in the table below for your reference, as well as a chart with percentages of respondents from each county. It's worth noting that the survey's question about taxpayer



funded lobbying aligns closely with the one about rural counties joining associations. Both questions relate to the idea of using public funds to amplify local voices, perspectives and concerns to advocate for resources in our rural communities. For rural counties, joining associations that can pool together to advocate for more resources can be an effective way to ensure that small communities get the same resources as big cities. For House District 1, joining associations can be a cost-effective way to provide support for our unique needs that may otherwise be ignored.

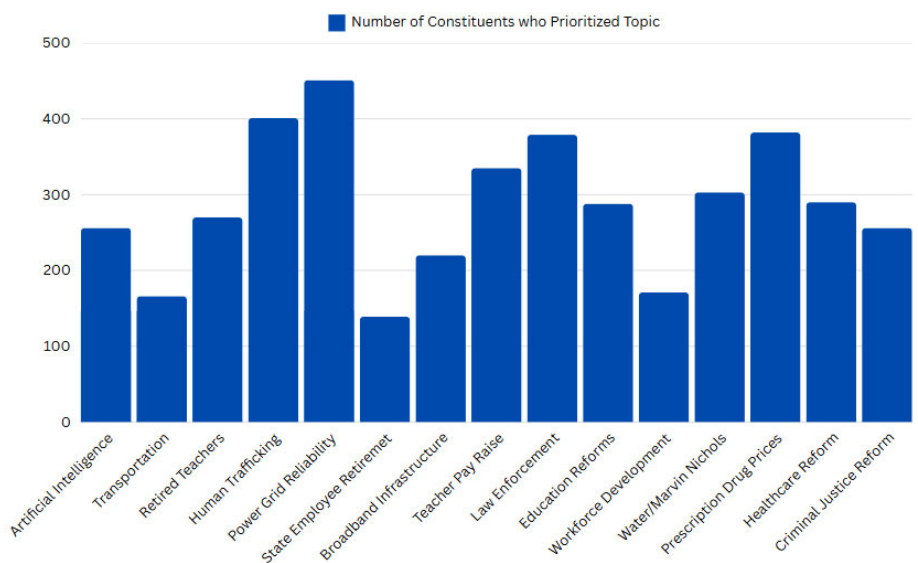
Questions	Yes	No	No Response
Do you support taxpayer funded lobbying?	5%	88%	7%
Do you support rural public schools subsidizing the operating budgets of urban private schools?	6%	86%	8%
Do you support the expanded legalization of medical cannabis?	47%	46%	7%
Do you support displaying the Ten Commandments in school classrooms?	72%	24%	4%
Do you support allowing exceptions to Texas's abortion laws when medical professionals have determined the mother is at extreme risk?	87%	8%	5%
Do you support casino gambling at destination resorts in Texas?	55%	40%	5%
Do you support online sports betting in Texas?	70%	24%	6%
Do you support rural counties joining associations to advocate for policies important to their communities and to share resources to reduce the cost of certain county services?	76%	11%	12%

The survey also asked which policy topics constituents valued most, offering valuable insight into the priorities of House District 1. Among 15 diverse policy areas, respondents placed the highest importance on power grid reliability, human trafficking, law enforcement and prescription drug prices. A study by the [Texas Politics Project](#) found that, statewide, the top legislative concerns were immigration and border security, the economy and public education. These topics were not expressly listed in the House District 1 survey, precisely because I know they are important topics that deserve attention.

Comments left by constituents in the survey, as well as correspondence to my office has confirmed that opinions from House District 1 align with the results from the Texas Politics Project poll.

Additionally, the Texas Politics Project study revealed that Texans' opinions on gambling, abortion and cannabis closely mirrored those of House District 1, highlighting shared perspectives on key issues. Your

feedback is invaluable to help shaping policies for our communities. Thank you for making your voices heard—I remain committed to advocating for the issues that matter most to Northeast Texas.



State Updates



Representative VanDeaver with granddaughters Susanna and Clara on Opening Day.

89th legislature convenes. The 89th Texas Legislature convened on Tuesday, January 14, 2025, at the state Capitol in Austin. Rep. VanDeaver begins his sixth term representing House District 1 and was joined by his daughters and granddaughters at his desk in the historic House Chamber during the swearing-in ceremonies. The House is now organizing its 150 members into committees so that bills can have their public hearings, which is a critical step in the legislative process. The Texas Legislative Council, a state agency that is basically the "law firm" for the legislature just informed members that it has received almost 9000 bill draft requests so far for the 89th session. This is an all-time high number of requests showing the interest that members have in responding to inquiries and requests of their constituents. To date, my office has filed 14 bills, and I have seven other bills still being drafted. The 60th day of the 140 legislative session is the "bill filing deadline." March 14th is this session's bill filing deadline.

HB 1108. This session, I have filed HB 1108, to end the practice of "motorcycle profiling" by law enforcement. HB 1108 seeks to ensure that motorcyclists are not unfairly targeted or stopped solely based on their attire or vehicle. The proposed legislation requires Texas law enforcement agencies to adopt clear, written policies to define and prohibit motorcycle profiling, establish a process for citizens to file complaints and mandate appropriate action when an officer is found to have engaged in profiling.

Our office is actively working to build support for the bill as it progresses. On January 26th, my staff attended the Texas Bikers Legislative Association meeting to engage with bikers and discuss HB 1108.

On January 27th, motorcyclists from across the state gathered at the Capitol for Texas Bikers' Day, meeting with legislative offices and rallying support for HB 1108. Their passion and commitment prove how important this bill is to the biking community, and I am proud to stand with them in working toward fair treatment for all Texans.



Representative VanDeaver addressing State Motorcycle Riders Foundation at Texas Bikers' Day.



Paul Landers, State Motorcycle Riders Foundation Representative with Alex Maldonado, Representative VanDeaver's Legislative Director

Texas Courthouse Preservation Project/Texas Historical Commission. This year marks the 25th anniversary of the state's nationally recognized program to preserve, restore and retrofit the state's historic courthouses that have served many Texans for over 150 years. The Texas Historical Commission (THC) is the lead agency for this program, and their research found there are 240 courthouses in the state that are at least 50 years old with about 80 of those built before the start of the 20th century. The Texas Courthouse Preservation Project (TCHPP) is a nationally recognized program that works very closely with communities and local officials involved in these restorations. The legislature appropriates \$10 million each biennium to further these projects and help local officials apply for the restoration grants. Of the five counties in House District 1, the following three have had their courthouses restored:

This program not only preserves communities' history, it also upgrades these historic sites to be fully functional working buildings for use in the 21st Century. Here is a link to a map of completed projects along with those currently doing restoration

projects: https://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/images/programs/THCPP%20Graphic%202023%20Cornerstone_1.pdf. For more information about existing restorations or how the THC can assist, here is a link to the THC website: <https://thc.texas.gov/serve/preservation-programs/courthouse-preservation/restored-historic-courthouses>.

Social Security Reforms in Congress to benefit TRS retirees. Earlier this month, [The Social Security Fairness Act of 2023](#) officially became federal law, repealing the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) that reduced or eliminated Social

Security benefits for certain retirees who receive a pension from an employer that did not pay into Social Security. Specifically, the law repealed WEP, which in some instances reduced Social Security benefits for individuals who also receive a pension or disability benefit from an employer that did not withhold Social Security. The law also repealed GPO, which in various instances reduced Social Security benefits for spouses, widows and widowers who also receive government pensions of their own.

Cass County Courthouse;
photo: Texas Historical Commission website

County: Cass

Originally opened: 1861

Restoration finished: 2012



Lamar County Courthouse;
Photo: Texas Historical Commission website.

County: Lamar

Originally opened: 1917

Restoration finished: 2003



Red River County Courthouse;

Photo: Texas Historical Commission

County: Red River

Originally opened: 1884

Restoration finished: 2002



Information from the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) said that a majority of TRS retirees are likely impacted by WEP, GPO or both. Approximately 96 percent of Texas public education members do not participate in Social Security as their employer did not opt to pay into the program. While TRS has limited information regarding the number of TRS members impacted and timing the law will have on members, TRS informed our office that it will work to share updates from the Social Security Administration (SSA) as they are available. The latest on the federal law from the SSA is found online at: <https://www.ssa.gov/benefits/retirement/social-security-fairness-act.html>

VanDeaver shares info re HB 8 (88R). Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to brief legislative staff about HB 8, passed in 2003, to prepare them for any technical changes under consideration this session. That bill redesigned the finance system for our 50 community colleges. The new system builds upon student's academic achievements from earning an associate's degree, to transferring to a four-year institution or earning an industry certification. These measures are referred to as "credentials of value," which are so important for students being prepared with the needed education and skills to earn a living without taking on mountains of debt.



Rep. VanDeaver providing information about HB 8 (88R) at a legislative staff briefing.

Social Media & Helpful Websites

Social Media. Please follow me on my [Facebook](#), [X](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts for more update.

Useful State Government Websites

- Governor of Texas.....www.gov.texas.gov
- Texas Senate.....www.senate.texas.gov
- Texas House of Representatives.....www.house.texas.gov
- State of Texas.....www.texas.gov
- Texas Legislature Online.....www.capitol.texas.gov
- Office of the Attorney General.....www.texasattorneygeneral.gov
- Health & Human Services Commission . . .www.hhs.texas.gov
- Medicaid, Food Stamps, & TANF . . .www.yourtexasbenefits.com
- Child/Elder Abuse Reporting.....www.txabusehotline.org

- Texas 2-1-1 (United Way)www.211.org
- Texas Education Agency.....www.tea.texas.gov
- Texas Department of Motor Vehicleswww.txdmv.gov
- Texas Department of Transportationwww.txdot.gov
- Texas Department of Public Safetywww.dps.texas.gov
- Texas Department of Insurance.....www.tdi.texas.gov
- Texas Parks & Wildlife Department.....www.tpwd.texas.gov
- Texas Workforce Commissionwww.twc.texas.gov
- Texas Veterans Commissionwww.tvc.texas.gov