

SAM HARLESS

State Representative District 126
Mid-May 2019 Newsletter



Texas House of Representatives



District 126

News
and
Information



86th Session Action

As we are nearing the final weeks of the session, its time to recap some of the accomplishments that are now behind us. This session began full of promise and opportunity and leadership remained focused on achieving as many of their primary goals as possible. Many of the priority issues we heard in the District did follow us to the State Capitol. While flooding issues are still a high priority within the District, tax and teacher issues crept to the top. The flooding issue still remains a high priority in Harris and many coastal counties.

The Texas House has passed all three of its largest session priorities .

- ✓ A fiscally responsible budget
- ✓ A transformational school finance plan
- ✓ A property tax reform bill

I'm proud to have co-authored and voted for all 3, which work together to provide meaningful tax REFORM, and TRANSPARENCY for Texans!

Many bills continue to be held up in committee awaiting votes or committee reports. While we focus on killing bad bills as a primary part of the process, a number of good bills get caught up as well.

Taxpayer Transparency Act

Senate Bill 2 - The Senate version of the tax cap bill was brought to the House in advance of the House version and was considered on the House Floor. Both bills originally slated as the 2.5% Tax Cap ultimately became about taxpayer transparency with numerous offered amendments with almost a day of debate that ultimately led to an overall cap of 3.5%. This eased the burden on numerous municipalities that would have suffered impacts to their base budgets for police and fire services at the lower rate. The Senate and House have appointed conference committees to address the disparities between the two.

Public Education Funding

House Bill 3 - While we made some critical gains in House Bill 3, the measure is being taken up by the Senate and the two chambers have widely different approaches to funding formulas and dedicated expenditures. We believe the approach used in the House better meets the needs of the taxpayers by reducing taxes while adding more money to the classroom and benefiting all school employees. Given the disparity of the two versions, conference committees have now been appointed in both chambers to address it.

Texas Retired Teachers

House Bill 9 - HB 9 addresses the sustainability of the Teacher Retirement System. Their retirement system will now have a continued increase in State participation by 7.7% and increase to through 2023 to 8.7% We have certainly improved the situation with retired teachers, but by no means is it completely fixed. Adding viability to their retirement system is an important step, but we can't lose sight of the improvements we have left to do.

Marijuana Laws & the 86th Session

Lowering Criminal Penalties or Decriminalizing possession of small amounts of marijuana found a higher degree of interest this session than in previous years. A number of bills sought to either remove or lower the penalty and the ultimate compromise in **House Bill 63** resulted in lowering possession of 1 ounce or less to a non-arrestable offense as a Class "C" Misdemeanor. The bill has some provisions for expunging criminal arrest records on charges of dismissal or acquittals. The Senate so far has generally indicated that the measure was not likely to advance in the upper chamber.

Compassionate Use Act - Expansion of Medical Marijuana to illnesses outside of Epilepsy was a target this session. **House Bill 1365** authorizes a qualified physician to prescribe low-THC cannabis for a patient with a debilitating medical condition, defined to include "debilitating medical condition" as cancer, autism, post-traumatic stress disorder, certain neurological conditions, Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, or any other medical condition considered to be debilitating by the cannabis therapeutic research review board. This would include Parkinson's disease, autism, epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, and post-traumatic stress disorder, among many others. The bill expands the number of locations a dispensary may have as well. This bill has been approved by the House and sent to the Senate.

CBD Oil & Hemp - Low THC (The hallucinogenic compound in marijuana) products derived from commercial hemp is addressed in **House Bill 1325**. Commercial hemp is a different variety of the cannabis plant with a wide range of commercial and health related uses, such as topical oils and creams for pain relief. House Bill 1325 finished the process in the House and is now in the Senate.

Committee Action

State Affairs: The action in State Affairs has been fast paced with lots of attention being

paid to bills regarding abortion, non discrimination ordinances, and municipal regulation of paid sick leave, employment regulations, and benefits. On several occasions we had lengthy hearings and set a record for hours and witnesses, with 1,400 registered to testify on one day alone.

License and Administrative Procedure. The action in LAP has been less dramatic with issues relating to bringing your own wine into restaurants, sale of wine, fees for towing and storage of vehicles, moving the regulation of the plumbing industry under the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, training and licensing of barbers and cosmetologists and other licensed occupations around the state.

District 126 Legislative Survey

No Survey for this period



I was honored to recognize the Abercrombie Academy for their 50 years of service in teaching the children of our community. Founded by Cathy Abercrombie in 1969, the school has expanded to cover all elementary grades. Terry Abercrombie, son of the founder and Anna Skelton accompanied them on a tour of the Capitol and a visit with Governor Greg Abbott.

Miss Texas Visits Capitol

This month, my desk mate, Representative John Raney of Bryan\College Station , recognized Miss Texas on the House Floor. Miss Texas, who is Madison Fuller, is an elementary teacher in Tyler, is a graduate of Texas A&M.



Focus On The Future - Opportunities for Students

Scholarship Links

[City of Houston Scholarship Page](#)

[Unigo Scholarship List Webpage](#)

[Tomball ISD Scholarship Page](#)

[Scholarship.com](#)

[Cy-Fair ISD Scholarship Page](#)

[Klein ISD Scholarship Page](#)

[Cy-Fair Education Foundation Scholarship Page](#)

Our Bills In Motion

HOA Board Membership - (HB 1396) This bill would preclude membership on the board of a property owners association by more than one member in a given household. (Excludes the subdivision or community developer during declaratory period) ***(Out of the House, Referred to Senate Business & Commerce)***

Entry of Bond Conditions HB -738 In cases where a defendant is authorized to be out on bond is permitted bail that has specific conditions imposed by a judge or magistrate, those conditions have not previously been electronically distributed via the statewide law enforcement network. This bill would require judges to notify Sheriffs for computer entry when bail bonds have conditions. ***(Out of Committee, Awaiting Committee Report)***

Tuition and Fees For Military Spouses - HB 739 Currently military spouses and dependents who are Texas residents but are currently deployed out of state can be charged out of state tuition, even if they maintain residency in Texas. ***(3rd Reading on House Floor Calendar 5/8/19)***

Charterwood M.U.D. HB 1488 This bill realigns the percentage of expenditures in one category for this single MUD. It allows for a percentage increase in the expenditures for improvements to recreational facilities. It does not increase the amount of tax collected, just the single category expenditure percentage. ***(Passed the House, Heard in Senate Intergovernmental Relations)***

Tainted Beer Bill HB 3271 This bill permits manufacturer and distributor to coordinate with beer retailers to remove unfit products that have been contaminated or tainted through natural disaster at no cost to the retailer. ***(Out of Committee Awaiting Final Report) Senate companion SB 1210***

Fire Marshal Training Bill HB 3753 This bill authorizes the Fire Marshal to act as a fire-related training provider. ***(Passed the House May 2nd Received by the Senate)***

Flood Control Removal of Encroaching Property HB 3782 This bill will give the Flood Control Authority the right to remove property encroaching on areas owned or controlled by the Harris County Flood Control District. ***(Out of the House sent to Senate)***

Cy-Champ Public Utility District - HB 4646 This bill provides road development authority to the Utility District and allows them to assist with building new roads within their area. ***(Out of the House, Referred to Senate in Intergovernmental Relations)***

Co-Authored Bills

House Bill 3 - Public Education Reform Bill

House Bill 5 - Disaster debris removal and regional coordination planning

House Bill 9 - Teacher Retirement System

House Bill 13 - Flood Planning & Mitigation, Appropriation for Infrastructure Costs

House Bill 16 - Enforcement of the rights of a living child born after an abortion

House Bill 39 - Repeal of certain time limitations on the award of grants by CPRIT

House Bill 41 - Paid leave for a state employee who is a search and rescue volunteer.

House Bill 539 - Automatic college admission for the valedictorian in a graduating class.

House Bill 1214 - Allocation of state sales and use taxes on sporting goods.

House Bill 1397 - Establishment of rates for certain non-ERCOT utilities.

House Bill 1500 - Fetal heartbeat bill

House Bill 1576 - Delivery of certain transportation services under Medicaid

House Bill 1631 - Prohibiting the use of photographic traffic signal enforcement systems.

House Bill 1821 - Designation Loop 111 as Richard Overton Memorial Highway.

House Bill 1929 - Prohibiting an advantage to abortion providers in lease rates

House Bill 2945 - This bill relates to credit card skimmers on motor fuel dispensers

House Joint Resolution 13 - A constitutional amendment authorizing the allocation of a portion of oil and gas production tax revenue to the counties from which the oil and gas originated.

[House Joint Resolution 12](#) - A constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to increase the maximum bond amount authorized for the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas

[House Joint Resolution 39](#)- proposing a constitutional amendment relating to the appropriation of the net revenue received from the imposition of state sales and use taxes on sporting goods.

News Articles

[Community Impact News - April 8th](#) - Local school districts voice concern over rising costs for health coverage

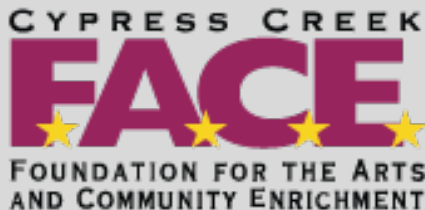
In The District



Service Dog Memorial

Saturday May 18th at 1:00 pm the Cy-Champ PUD and the National Memorial Ladies will hold dedication ceremonies for a Service Dog Memorial as an addition to the Fallen Warrior Memorial at 14619-1 Cutten Rd, Houston, Texas. the park is located just South of Cypresswood Dr.

[Map Link](#)



[Visit our F.A.C.E. Website](#)

Cypress Creek F.A.C.E.

Foundation for Arts and Community Enrichment

(FACE) will hold their 2019 Strings Camp on June 17th. This Camp is a week-long, half-day camp for violin, viola, cello and bass students entering 6th grade in Klein ISD. The camp will be conducted by exemplary specialists in middle school orchestral music. The program includes sectionals, technique classes, and orchestra rehearsals.



[Visit the Houston NW Chamber Website](#)

Houston NW Chamber President Retiring!

Outgoing President Barbara Thomason is retiring from the Chamber this month after serving the Chamber since 2005. Barbara has guided the

Chamber through very challenging years for the business community in North Harris County. She has worked with a number of Chamber Presidents and on various initiatives designed to revitalize our area. She deserves our gratitude and best wishes in her retirement.



Cy-Fair Chamber of Commerce

Transportation & Government Affairs

This committee investigates current and future community and transportation issues. The results are taken to the appropriate government and legislative offices to encourage and facilitate improvements. Past speakers have included local and state agency representatives and elected officials. Meets 1st Thursday each month at 8:30

CY-FAIR HOUSTON Chamber of Commerce

Visit Cy-Fair Chamber of Commerce Website



Greater Tomball Area Chamber of Commerce

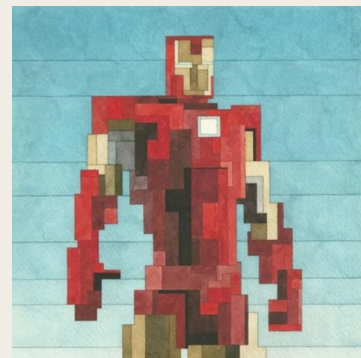
Transportation and Mobility Committee

2nd Tuesday of each month
Meeting Location:
29201 Quinn Rd.
Tomball, Texas 77375
Upstairs Conference Room

Tomball Government Affairs Committee

Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Art Summer 2019 Art Camp

Join us this summer and embrace your inner hero! Discover your art superpowers in this one-week long "Heroes & Villains" art camp, where students will develop their own superhero – or antihero – and express their unique abilities through a variety of art projects. Students will start each day in the galleries with a brief look at artwork featured in our summer exhibition



Pearl Fincher Museum of Fine Arts

Visit our House of Representative Website:

Contact Us

Capitol Office Phone - 512-463-0496

Ron Hickman
Chief of Staff
[Email Ron](#)

Ashley Hyten
Legislative Director
[Email Ashley](#)

James Cook
Legislative Aide
[Email James](#)



[Email Sam](#)

