



Your District 45 Weekly Update

Friends -

It's hard to believe, but there are only 17 days left in the session! With updates on the property tax debate, news about a huge victory for the LGBTQ Caucus, and highlights from around the district, this newsletter is a big one. Thanks for reading, and as always, please reach out to our office with any questions or concerns you may have.

For a better Texas,

Erin Zwiener

State Representative | District 45

Hays & Blanco Counties

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Click [here](#) to sign up for our office newsletter!

The Main Stories

Standing Up for LGBTQ Rights



The first-ever LGBTQ Caucus in Texas took down a bill to legalize LGBTQ discrimination on April 9th in the House. My hat is off to Rep. Julie Johnson for her masterful work using a parliamentary point of order to kill the bill on the floor and to Rep. Mary Gonzalez for leading us through a trying but ultimately successful day.



I want this to be the last time the Texas House brings a bill like this to the floor, a bill that was written to diminish the humanity of our community. Y'all means all. 🙏🏽

Property Tax Update



The tax swap that was proposed in HJR 3 is not a tax cut. In fact, for those making under \$100,000 per year, their annual taxes would have been increased. That is why I am in agreement with my colleagues: This swap is bad policy that would hurt hardworking Texans most

Fortunately, this past week the legislation was postponed until next session, 2021. I am hopeful that going forward, we can work together to both provide homeowners with real property tax relief and ensure our public education system is properly funded. And we already have some ideas on how to do this.

The state should start paying its fair share for public education, and we should double the homestead exemption from \$25,000 to \$50,000 to save homeowners an average of \$325 a year on their tax bill.

Compassionate Use and Decriminalization

We're making progress on compassionate use, y'all! Look at the overwhelming support for the medical marijuana bill that passed in the House this week 128-20.

State Rep. Eddie Lucio III's HB 1365 will greatly improve the quality of life for many Texans by extending low-THC medical marijuana to patients with PTSD, Alzheimer's, autism, and muscular dystrophy.

Fighting Bad Bills



HB 3557

Landowners who peacefully push back against their land being taken should not face the same penalties as kidnappers, burglars, and arsonists. But that's what HB 3557 does.

It makes peaceful protests, even on one's own property, a second-degree felony.

That's why I tried to amend the bill to create an affirmative defense for a landowner on their own property protesting a facility operated by a different entity. While not

fixing the legislation, this amendment would have at least addressed a glaring issue with it. The amendment was unfortunately voted down as we saw many members of the legislature yet again put big corporations over the rights of Texas property owners.

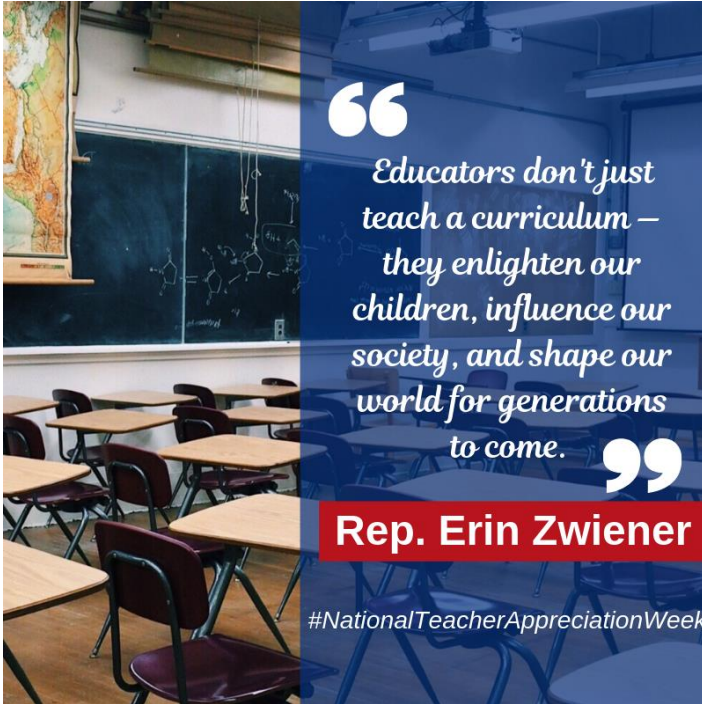
[You can see me speak on the amendment here.](#)

Making Companies Pay for Environmental Violations

We all know that fines exist to discourage bad behavior. But if the consequence for ignoring the law is less than the financial gain, why would you stop? We need to ensure that businesses whose violations harm Texans are penalized at least the amount of any economic benefit from the harm done. That's exactly what the bill, HB 3035, I laid out last week would do.

We need a regulatory structure that encourages proactive compliance instead of rewarding strategic negligence. TCEQ's job is to protect our air and water quality. Appropriate penalties for endangering our environment are essential to protecting Texas from industrial disasters.

Teacher Appreciation Week



“
*Educators don't just
teach a curriculum –
they enlighten our
children, influence our
society, and shape our
world for generations
to come.*”

Rep. Erin Zwiener

#NationalTeacherAppreciationWeek

It's National Teacher Appreciation Week, and I want to give a special acknowledgment to District 45's educators who are shaping over 33,000 young people's futures in Hays and Blanco Counties.

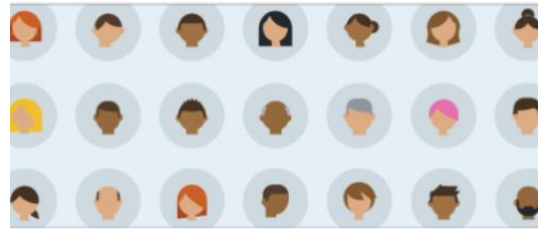
Their commitment to our kids makes our society better, and I am so grateful for their service to our community.

Mourning Lives Lost in Hays County

The severe weather over the weekend tragically turned fatal for District 45. We rose for a moment of silence on the House floor to remember the four lives lost last weekend due to the extreme flooding. [You can watch the resolution being delivered here.](#)

This is something that unfortunately is not a one-time occurrence. When our area floods, we often lose members of our communities. It is tragic, and we must do more to mitigate flood damage and prepare for disasters.

Recent Photos



You just reached 1,000 Page likes. Nice work!

Create a post thanking the people who like your Page.

Create Post



TOP LEFT: Cutting the ribbon to celebrate the brand new Buda Elementary School campus!

TOP RIGHT: Our Facebook page reached 1,000 likes this week! If you don't already like our page, [pay us a visit here.](#)

BOTTOM LEFT: Staff at Centro's Cinco de Mayo Luncheon last week in San Marcos!

BOTTOM RIGHT: Ran into advocate and friend Jessica Soukup on her way to testify for Rep. Celia Israel's HB 517 against conversion therapy!

Get Involved

Thank you to everyone who has signed up to join our Legislative Action Team! In case you missed the call to action, please read the message below!

As more opportunities for constituent involvement in the policy-making process pop up, I want to make sure that your voice is being heard. **What are you passionate about? What issues affect your day-to-day life? What do you want to see happen this session?**

Our **Legislative Action Team** is a place for you to share your answers to those questions with me. **Sign up to join the Action Team [here!](#)**

Recent Articles

[Rep Zwiener Receives Passage of First Bill, Takes on Patient Care, TCEQ Penalties](#)

[Wastewater Permit Oversight Bill Passes Texas House](#)

[Texas Lawmaker Lays Out House Bill to Help Protect Clean Water](#)

[VIDEO: Rep. Martinez Fisher: Texas' New Property Tax Proposal May Increase Taxes](#)

[House Backs Stiffer Penalties for Those Who Damage Pipelines](#)



[BREAKING: 'Dangerous' HB 3172
Stopped Through Parliamentary Move](#)