



**VIKKI GOODWIN**



STATE REPRESENTATIVE • DISTRICT 47

**MARCH 6, 2019**

Great news - the school finance bill has been released. HB3 has good bones and will morph into something even better by the time the House takes a vote. Let me outline the basics of the bill.

### **HB 3**

First, the basic allotment is substantially increased, from \$5,140 per student to \$6,030. That's an increase of \$890 per student, which will go a long way to reducing the amount of money our districts send to the state in recapture payments.

Second, teacher and support personnel pay raises will be handled by each district rather than the state acting like teachers are our employees. While a \$5,000 pay raise is a great thing, the Senate's version doesn't give raises to nurses, cafeteria workers, custodians or bus drivers, and yet they are all very important when it comes to taking care of and supporting our children. The House version provides the money for school districts to give pay raises in a way that makes sense for their districts.



Third, full-day Pre-K will be fully funded with formula funding, which means it is sustainable and not a one-time grant program. This will help ensure our children are reading at grade level by third grade.

Finally, there is a component to the bill that would compress the tax rate by 4-cents and potentially lead to lower property taxes, or a minimal increase in property taxes over time. This is where the House

Democrats and the bill diverge slightly. A more substantial savings would be realized if the homestead exemption were raised from the current \$25,000 to \$50,000, but that isn't the plan at the moment.

The most frequent question I get is "Will this make Robin Hood go away?" The answer is no, and we can't do away with Robin Hood due to our constitution requiring an equitable education system. However, the plan does go a long way to helping our Central Texas school districts by increasing the money received per student and reducing the recapture requirement.

## **HB 672**

One bill that I co-authored would help small businesses. It is HB 672, the "beer-to-go" bill that allows our local craft brewers to sell 6-packs of beer to people when they come into the brewery.

## **HB 2814**

Another bill, related to transportation, is my "Safety Corridor" bill HB 2814. It would give TxDOT a tool to help make our highways safer. TxDOT could designate a section of highway that has had a high number of traffic accidents as a "safety corridor" where traffic fines would be doubled, just like in construction zones. While this may not solve the problem entirely, it would bring about awareness and hopefully safer driving practices.

## **TxDOT Open House**

Speaking of transportation, yesterday our Constituent Services Director, Susan, attended a TxDOT Open House on RM 1431 to learn about improvements coming in the Lago Vista area. Tomorrow I will be attending a TxDOT project workshop to learn about improvements on Loop 360 at the Courtyard Drive and FM 2222 intersections. I've also recently met with Terry McCoy with TxDOT to get updates on the many road projects going on in House District 47. It is good to see the many regional approaches to solving our District's traffic problems.



## **Central Texas Food Bank**

Finally, last Friday I volunteered with the Westlake Chamber of Commerce at the Central Texas Food Bank for their first Humanitarian Services Project of 2019. The food bank served 45 million meals to our community last year. The meals ended up in the hands of families and local nonprofits that turn to us for help. I was especially proud to do my small part to serve 936 meals to after-school programs for children in need.

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