

TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**EDDIE MORALES, JR.**  
**DISTRICT 74**

BREWSTER • CULBERSON • HUDSPETH • JEFF DAVIS • KINNEY • LOVING • MAVERICK • PECOS • PRESIDIO • REEVES • TERRELL • VAL VERDE

Friends,

I hope that you all had an Easter holiday weekend filled with joy, and surrounded by family. I was fortunate to spend some time with my family back home, before coming back to the Capitol. I feel more energized than ever and ready to continue to tackle important legislation in the Texas House.

Here's what happened in the Texas House this week:



**Broadband Infrastructure Bill**  
**Co-Authored by State Representative**  
**Eddie Morales Passes the House**

Austin, TX -- Today, House Bill 5, co-authored by State Representative Eddie Morales was passed on final reading on the Floor of the House of Representatives and will now be sent to the Senate for consideration.

The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the need for reliable access to internet and exposed the breadth of ways in which connectivity impacts daily life. Over the past year, more families than ever have experienced challenges as a result of lacking access to broadband. Roughly 900,000 Texans or 316,717 households are unserved by broadband. Now is the time for the state to step in and help close the gap for the many Texans that still lack access or face barriers to the subscription of broadband.

House Bill 5 aims to make measurable progress towards closing the digital divide and expanding access to broadband by creating the Broadband Development Office within the Office of the Comptroller, which will prepare the State Broadband Plan. Texas is currently one of only six states without a state plan. This puts Texas at a disadvantage when applying for federal dollars.

This new office will also participate in proceedings at the Federal Communications Commission. Federal broadband maps have traditionally been inaccurate. Texas can complement the FCC's new mapping initiative by actively working to improve its accuracy. This office will produce the Broadband Development Map with granular, address-level data so the state can better identify which areas of Texas have the most need. Finally, this new office will administer the Broadband Development Program. This program will make certain that any private, federal, or state funding is ready to be delivered to applicants so service can be expanded as soon as possible.

Representative Morales said, **"Whether connecting students to teachers or patients to doctors, Texans everywhere will be better served by expanding access to broadband. All 12 of the counties in House District 74 have rural areas and this bill is especially impactful for those constituents. I am proud to co-author this bill and be a part of something that will improve daily life in rural Texas."**



**This week the House passed House Bill 739**

House Bill 739 aims to establish a program to provide financial assistance for veterans seeking training for energy industry employment, which would support further job and training opportunities for veterans, improve their economic mobility, and provide skilled employees for the energy industry that is central to the state's economic prosperity.

I am proud to be a joint author of HB 739.

### [COVID-19 Vaccine](#)

As of March 29th, all people 16+ can now receive a COVID-19 vaccine in Texas. There are multiple tools to help you find a vaccine. DSHS encourages people to use a tool that works best for them. Click on the link below!

[Vaccine Locator Tools](#)





THE TEXAS HOUSE PLAN ON HEALTHCARE:  
**HEALTHY FAMILIES,  
 HEALTHY TEXAS**  
 A bipartisan legislative package to ensure healthcare in the Lone Star State is accessible and affordable for all 29 million Texans

**INCREASING ACCESS TO CARE**

 **EXPANDING TELEHEALTH**  
**HB 4** • Provides greater access to care for patients who are in underserved communities and codifies the state's ability to reimburse providers for these innovative services in order to incentivize more to provide them


 **INCREASING ACCESS TO BROADBAND**  
**HB 5** • Unleashes the full benefits of telemedicine by expanding access to reliable, high-speed internet across the state, benefiting patients in underserved communities who have less access to physicians and specialists


 **CARING FOR TEXAS CHILDREN**  
**HB 290** • Streamlines the Medicaid eligibility process by providing two 6-month periods of continuous coverage for eligible children in the Medicaid program, ensuring that eligible children do not fall off coverage when they need it most


 **EXPANDING ACCESS TO VACCINES FOR VULNERABLE TEXANS**  
**HB 797** • Allows home care and hospice agencies to administer certain vaccines to medically fragile and elderly Texans in the comfort and safety of their own homes

**IMPROVING HEALTH OUTCOMES**

 **INVESTING IN BRAIN HEALTH**  
**HB 15** • Creates the infrastructure needed to invest in research on brain health, including how we make strides in preventing and treating traumatic brain injuries and substance use disorders


 **REDUCING DRUG PRICES FOR THE UNINSURED**  
**HB 18** • Allows ~3 million qualifying, uninsured Texans to access significantly reduced prices on life-saving medications such as insulin, which benefits the uninsured and prevents costly visits to the emergency room

 **ADDRESSING MATERNAL MORTALITY**  
**HB 133** • Protects the lives of mothers by continuing Medicaid eligibility for new mothers for the first year of their child's life

 **INCREASING HEALTH EQUITY**  
**HB 4139** • Creates an office within the Health & Human Services Commission to eliminate health disparities, tackle health equity, and pursue grants to advance this goal

**INCREASING AFFORDABILITY OF CARE**

 **PROVIDING CONSUMER PROTECTIONS**  
**HB 2487** • Requires hospitals to disclose prices in advance of providing the services

 **EXPANDING HEALTHCARE OPTIONS**  
**HBs 3923, 3924 & 3752** • Expand free-market offerings for competitive healthcare coverage for small employers and individuals who are not Medicaid eligible or do not have access to employer-based plans

This week, the House of Representatives came together to announce their priority healthcare legislation. A bipartisan effort to ensure healthcare in the Lone Star State is accessible and affordable for all 29 million Texans. I am proud to be a co-author of several of these bills and plan to support them all.



Sincerely,

State Representative Eddie Morales, Jr.