



# Lalani's Legislative Letter

## *Volume 2023 Issue 7*

### ***Greetings from your Texas Capitol!***

There are now just 23 days remaining in 88th Legislative Session. We are working late into the night and through the weekends to finish bills before the calendar deadlines.

I am excited to share with you the work I'm doing on behalf of every HD 76 resident. No matter how busy we get, my office and I are never too busy to make time for constituents who make the journey to Austin.

***Remember this is your Capitol. You are the most important part of what happens here. Come and see it, get involved, make your voice heard.***

Blessings,

*Representative Suleman Lalani, M.D.*

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### ***Get Out and Vote!***

Saturday, May 6<sup>th</sup> was Election Day. Depending on your city, a variety of local offices and propositions are on the ballot awaited your decision. You can see the election results at by clicking [here](#).

Turnout for local elections is typically much lower than for presidential or congressional elections. In this local election, turnout in Fort Bend County was 6.29%. That means that out of the 406,838 registers voters in Fort Bend County, only 25,586 voted. Voting is one of our great civic responsibilities. I would love to see us do better this year. Local elections matter, ***your voice heard***, especially in a rapidly growing and changing county such as ours. In many ways, local elections have a bigger and more consistent impact on voters' lives than elections at the state or national level. Local elections often set the trends which filter up to state and national politics.

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## ***AAPI Month: Diversity Keeps Texas & HD 76 Strong!***

May 1st marked the beginning of Asian-American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month. There are 1.9 million AAPIs in Texas. We are the fastest growing minority group, our population has nearly doubled since 2000. AAPIs make important contributions to our state and are an essential part of Fort Bend County's diverse social and cultural fabric. The AAPI community is, itself, a mirror of the enormous cultural, linguistic, and faith diversity we should strive for in our state and in our nation. As a proud AAPI, I hope everyone will use this month to celebrate your friends, neighbors, and, perhaps, yourselves.

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## ***Legislation Update***

On Saturday, I will lay out [House Bill 5395](#) on the House Floor. Conditional upon voter approval, this bill will create Fort Bend County Water Control and Improvement District #11 in the city of Richmond.

The bill is almost 5,000 words long and does not make for engaging reading. Yet, it is absolutely necessary. Water is essential for individuals and communities. The creation of this water district will make a real difference for Richmond families and businesses.

Not every piece of potential legislation is exciting or headline-grabbing. Many bills are technical, dry, and, unless they impact you directly, rather dull. Just because they are technical and dry, however, doesn't mean they're not important. The bills that do the work are not always the ones which get the spotlight!

This session, I've authored three technology-related bills. Two of these bills are designed to strengthen protections for Texans from the misuse of technology by others. The third is intended to ensure Texans are well placed to benefit from advances in artificial intelligence. For this week's Legislative Lens, I want to explore all three bills in greater detail.

[House Bill 3633](#) directs the Committee on International Relations and Economic Development to conduct a study on the advantages of establishing a Texas Workforce Commission program to train individuals in artificial intelligence systems. The impact of Artificial Intelligence will grow exponentially in the coming years. We must ensure our current workforce is ready, that young Texans are well placed for good jobs in artificial intelligence, and that our state will remain a technology-sector leader. A study on the need to train our workforce in the creation, maintenance, and operation of AI systems is the first solid step in ensuring those things happen.

[House Bill 4761](#) reduces the time in which businesses must notify clients or customers of a computer data security breach from 60 days after the initial breach to 30 days. In the wake of a breach, the sooner

customers can change passwords, report fraudulent activity, and alert law enforcement, the better. This bill gives Texans more time to act promptly and decisively to preempt future problems.

[House Bill 4897](#) creates civil penalties for impersonating another person online, a practice sometimes known as “catfishing.” Advances in technology and artificial intelligence have increased the rate of fake online accounts on social media platforms. Because technology and its uses and misuses evolve so rapidly, there is not yet a section of code that defines “online impersonation,” making it difficult to crack down on. This bill codifies the definition, and creates civil liabilities and damages arising from online impersonations.

If you want to follow any of my legislation, please go to my House [website](#).

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## ***Capitol Happenings***

***Engage Texas Emerging Leaders.*** I had the pleasure of speaking to youth from the Engage Texas Emerging Leaders Program. These gifted and hardworking future leaders came to Austin to learn more about government, the democratic process, and the many ways they can become leaders. It was exciting to see their interest as I shared some of my experiences as a state representative and the importance of leadership.



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## ***Advocacy at the Capitol***

***Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas Lobby Day.*** On April 14th, I was honored to welcome so many Texans from all walks of life to the state capitol for Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas Lobby Day. As a physician, I know that sound healthcare means that deeply personal and intimate medical decisions should be between a patient and their chosen healthcare professionals. Texas has some of the

worst maternal health and maternal mortality in America, with alarming disparities in outcomes based on ethnicity and income. Access to the many services provided by Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas are essential not only for the health of individual Texans but for the public health of our state.



## ***In Our District***

***Eid al-Fitr at the White House.*** On May 1st, I had the honor to travel to Washington DC to represent HD 76 constituents at the White House Eid al-Fitr celebrations. Eid marks the conclusion of Ramadan, a month of fasting, service, and contemplation for nearly half-a-million Texas Muslims. I want to thank President Biden for his warm, inspiring message to America’s Muslims, including those of us in Fort Bend Country: “...thank you for your community spirit, contributions to our nation, and commitment to the shared values that make America great.”



***Southeast Asian Real Estate Professionals Eid Celebration.*** I recently had the opportunity to meet with members of the inaugural chapter of the South Asian Real Estate Professionals, from

Houston. Real estate is so important for all of us, whether it's a place for our families to live or a place to do business, and this group of talented and ambitious professionals is doing great work in professional development and advocacy.



***Child Advocates of Fort Bend Count: Charlie and the Chocolate Factory Gala.*** I had the privilege of attending Child Advocates of Fort Bend's "Charlie's Chocolate Factory" gala with my wife. This was a magnificent event, one that really channeled the look and energy of Roald Dahl's classic book and the films it has inspired. At the same time, the book's theme, a child in need who gets the opportunity of a lifetime, was perfect for a Child Advocates fundraiser. CA of Fort Bend, through its Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) and Children's Advocacy Center (CAC) programs, does great work in combating child abuse and ensuring every Fort Bend child has the "golden ticket" they deserve – to a safe and happy childhood.



# How to Reach Us



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### This week at the Capitol

Saturday, 05/06/2023  
House in Session at 9:00am

Monday, 05/08/2023  
Higher Education Committee at 8:00am  
House in Session at 10:00am

Tuesday, 05/09/2023  
Asian American Day at the Capitol  
Natural Resources Committee at 8:00am  
House in Session at 9:00am

Wednesday, 05/10/2023  
BAPS Celebration of Selfless Service at the Capitol  
House in Session at 10:00am

Thursday, 05/11/2023  
World War II Veterans Day at the Capitol  
House in Session at 10:00am

Friday, 05/12/2023  
House in Session at 9:00am

### Follow us!

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 @DoctorLalani

Tune in to watch the Committees or House Floor live this week.

<https://house.texas.gov/video-audio/>

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