

REPRESENTATIVE ROBERTO R. ALONZO'S capitol report



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**Rep. Alonzo Urges Parents, Schools & Students
To Take Advantage of Tax-Free Holiday Coming Up Weekend of
Fri, Sat, & Sun, Aug. 19-21, 2011
~ Texas Families Save Millions during Break ~**

Rep. Alonzo once again reminds Texas' families, including the thousands in Dallas and the surrounding DFW region, that the annual back-to-school Sales Tax Holiday starts the coming weekend of **August 19-21, at 12:01 a.m. on Friday, August 19 and ends at midnight on Sunday, August 21.**

"The Sales Tax Holiday is a great way for Texas families to save some money as they prepare for the new school year. I support any type of tax breaks that Texas families can take advantage of in order to offset the increasing cost of living, especially during this time of the year when so many of our children are getting ready to go back to school and many coming from families that are having to struggle to put food on the table. Every year, it is becoming more expensive to purchase even the most basic pieces of clothing and standard school supplies simply to help our children start the school year. The problem is magnified when children come from families that earn minimum wage or live from paycheck to paycheck. While I agree that this annual tax-free holiday weekend may not be the cure all, it will go a long way in helping many Texas families with much needed tax breaks as they get ready to send their children back to school. I am pleased to have been part of the legislation and to do my part to make this tax-free holiday a successful one for all Texas families and children. I encourage everyone to take advantage of it as much as possible," Rep. Alonzo said.

Rep. Alonzo said that consumers will be able to buy most clothes and shoes priced under \$100 tax-free during the three-day weekend. Also, because of a 2007 change in the law, shoppers can also purchase school backpacks for elementary and secondary students tax-free this year. Also, as a result of 2009 legislation, there are a number of other items that have been added to the list. To help with that, this press release includes a couple of useful attachments from the Comptroller of Public Accounts (CPA) state agency that outlines an all-inclusive list of all items that qualify for the tax-free exemptions. Texas families are expected to save tens of millions of dollars in sales tax during this year's Sales Tax Holiday.

Rep. Alonzo explained that consumers will not be required to pay state or local sales tax on items less than \$100, no matter how much they buy. According to Rep. Alonzo, in addition to the relief of the state's sales tax of 6.25%, communities across Texas have also chosen to waive their local sales taxes, which will save taxpayers an additional 2% in most areas. This year, Comptroller Susan Combs predicts shoppers will save \$62.1 million in state and local sales taxes during the Sales Tax Holiday. The tax holiday weekend has been an annual event since 1999. Currently, the Tax Code sets the holiday for the third Friday, Saturday and Sunday in August.

Even with the sales tax savings, some families may not be able to afford all that they need during the third weekend in August, said Rep. Alonzo. Texans will not be charged sales tax on tax-exempt items placed on layaway or items bought out from layaway during the Sales Tax Holiday, explained Rep. Alonzo.

The 81st Texas Legislature passed HB 1801 (2009) expanding the list of items qualifying for exemption from Texas state and local sales and use taxes during the annual sales tax holiday in August. Effective this year, in addition to clothes, footwear and some backpacks, Texas families also get a sales tax break on most school supplies priced at less than \$100 purchased for use by a student in an elementary or secondary school.

For further information on the Sales Tax Holiday weekend, one can call toll-free at (800) 252-5555 or (512) 463-4600, or visit the Comptroller's website at www.texasastaxholiday.org. Of course, for more information on the Sales Tax Holiday and a list of tax-exempt items, Rep. Alonzo also encourages those interested to call his Austin Capitol office at (512) 463-0408, toll-free at (866) 449-5770, or his Dallas Legislative Office at (214) 942-7104, or visit the State of Texas website at www.capitol.state.tx.us.



**Alonzo Scholars Program to Continue Training Teachers
in Bilingual Education at UNT-Dallas**

Rep. Alonzo recently received great news from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB). Once continue, sufficient funding will continue to fund and keep intact for two more academic years of the 2012-2013 biennium the **Roberto R. Alonzo Bilingual/ESL Education Scholars Program** at the University of North Texas (UNT) - Dallas campus. Thanks to efforts of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), particularly Commissioner Dr. Raymund Paredes and the UNT-Dallas campus administration, the program was able to secure the **\$300,000** funding to continue the operation of the program at UNT for the 2011-12 and 2012-13 academic years. This much-needed funding will make sure that this nationally-recognized teacher training program at UNT stays in place and continues to address the bilingual education teacher shortage problem in the DFW/North Texas region. The program which has been funded since the 2004-2005 school year and has collectively offered **over \$1.5 million dollars** graduating over 125 teachers, helps both current and potential teachers gain certification in bilingual education and English-As-A-Second Language (ESL) teaching, specifically in the DFW area where there is a shortage of such teachers. The program was initially passed by the 78th Texas Legislature in 2003 *"to provide tuition assistance and loan forgiveness as incentives for college students to pursue certification programs in bilingual or ESL education."* Since its initial funding, the Alonzo Scholars Program has received much praise from both the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE) and the Texas Association for Bilingual Education (TABE) because of its success. Both organizations continue to encourage its replication in other parts of the state and nation.

***Dallas ISD gets Ready for the Start of the
2011-2012 School Year***

1st Day of School is Monday, Aug. 22, 2011 !

