

Texas Representative Roberto R. Alonzo's

Capitol Report



**Rep. Alonzo's HB 2945 Takes Public Testimony in House Committee on Juvenile Justice & Family Issues, Wed, April 15**

On Wednesday, April 15, public testimony was taken on Rep. Alonzo's House Bill 2945, a measure which would authorize juvenile case managers to expend any remaining money from the juvenile case manager fund for educational programs and other projects designed to prevent or reduce delinquent conduct indicating a need for supervision. The fund is financed by a \$5 fee assessed on each fine-only misdemeanor in municipal courts. Under current law, the fund is restricted in use and may only be used to finance the salary, benefits, training, travel expenses, office supplies, and other necessary expenses relating to the position of a juvenile case manager.

Some cities utilize this fund to finance salaries and benefits for case managers, training, and a one-time expenditure for office furniture and equipment. However, the fund does not allow the purchase of tools which could be used for the benefit of at-risk juveniles and their families. This bill would permit the funds to also be allocated for materials to aid in the prevention of drug, alcohol, tobacco abuse, educational opportunities aimed at abating risky behaviors.

**[Photo to left:** Rep. Alonzo (center) outside the hearing room, with Committee Chairman Harold Dutton of Houston, Grand Prairie Chief of Police Steve Dye, and other Dallas area residents who were in Austin for the public hearing.]

**Rep. Alonzo's HB 451 Would Encourage More Minorities To Become Optometrists; Public Testimony Heard on Wed, April 15**

Rep. Alonzo's HB 451, legislation which proposes to support an optometry career program at the University of Houston, would encourage more minorities to enter the medical field of optometry. The highly successful program would prepare highly qualified, economically disadvantaged junior-level, senior-level, and post baccalaureate students from both public and private institutions of higher education for advanced studies and a career in the field of optometry. Currently, UH is the only public professional optometry program in Texas.

Research data and other statistical information reveals that there are numerous barriers to recruiting and retaining economically and/or academically disadvantaged and minority students to many fields of medicine, including the profession of optometry. There are many communities that traditionally have a shortage of health care providers, including optometrists. With few role models, individuals contemplating a career in the health professions may not even be aware of the profession of optometry. To meet the health care needs of the future, optometry needs to reach out to underserved communities for students who, upon completing their professional training, are likely to return to their home community to provide vital health care for their neighbors and citizens of a region that they may be familiar with in a given region of Texas.



Rep. Alonzo (left) meet with members of The Texas Association of Realtors® (TAR). TAR represents nearly 95,000 members. This visit gave the Dallas TAR constituent members an opportunity to meet with Rep. Alonzo and staff to discuss issues that are important to maintaining the overall health of the real estate sector; it also gave them an opportunity to understand the importance of what happens at the Capitol and how public policy affects the real estate industry, consumers and the state's economy. During the legislative session TAR works to ensure that eminent-domain proceedings include fair compensation to property owners whose land has been condemned by the government. They also focus work on open and reasonable rules that balance the interests of the HOA and property owners. Lastly TAR works to ensure that eminent-domain proceedings include fair compensation to property owners whose land has been condemned by the government.