

Texas Representative Roberto R. Alonzo's



Capitol Report



Rep. Alonzo Co-Authored Bill For Indigent Defense Goes to Governor

Senate Bill 662, the companion to Rep. Alonzo's HB 1346, has reached the governor's desk for his signature. This legislation is designed to provide indigent persons with more accessible legal representation. An indigent person is someone is not financially able to hire an attorney. Currently, a judge has discretion to appoint attorneys to represent indigent defendants who are seeking a "writ of habeas corpus." A writ is basically "a judicial mandate to a prison official ordering that an inmate be brought to the court so it can be determined whether or not that person is imprisoned lawfully and whether or not he should be released from custody." This prevents people from remaining in jail without ever being brought before a judge.

Under certain circumstances, the defense and the district attorney agree that the defendant should be released, namely where the defendant is actually innocent, is guilty only of a lesser offense, or was convicted under a law subsequently declared void. Despite the agreement of prosecution and defense in such cases, some judges do not appoint counsel to assist the release of indigent defendants. SB 662 will make it mandatory for a judge to appoint an attorney for indigent defendants who are not guilty of the crime for which they were convicted or were convicted under a law that is now void.

Representative Alonzo urges the Governor to sign SB 662. He stated, "Our legal system should provide protection and fairness to all of its citizens regardless of status or income. SB 662 make possible these protections."

Rep. Alonzo Wants to Hear From You About Capitol Report!

Please email us and let us know of any comments, ideas or suggested topics for the Capitol Report.

We would like to hear from you!

84th Legislative Assessment



The 84th Legislative session produced good and bad legislation. The session was also notable for a series of controversial and harmful bills that died in committee or on the House floor. Several measures were introduced that sought to deprive Texas residents of beneficial programs and services. Through the efforts of fair-minded and progressive legislators, various measures were successfully defeated.

Controversial bills that were defeated during the session included:

- HB 2835 – Prohibited immigrant children from participating in medical care programs.
- SB 185 – Prohibited Texas cities from adopting "sanctuary city" policies.
- SB 1252 - Established interstate compact that enables state to enforce federal immigration laws.
- SB 1819 – Denied In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students



Rep. Alonzo's HB 3160 Seeks Safer Neighborhoods

Representative Alonzo's HB 3160 passed both houses and is currently on the Governor's desk. The intent of this bill is to prevent abandoned and dilapidated property from becoming an eyesore or danger to the surrounding community.

A significant problem for many communities is abandoned property in which there is no owner. This occurs when property owners have died with no will or heir. The city then becomes the caretaker and creditor of the estate. HB 3160 shortens the time period in which the city can take legal action to dispose of the property thereby preventing danger to the health, safety and welfare of the general public. Rep. Alonzo stated, "I filed this bill to provide cities with more efficient tools for administering and disposing of abandoned and dilapidated properties."



Grant Opportunities U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



The following grants are available from USDHHS, Administration for Children & Families at: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/informate-june-2015>.

- New Pathways for Fathers & Families
- Community Services Block Grant
- Refugee Technical Assistance Programs
- National Center for After School & Summer Enrichment
- Nat'l Center Parental and Family Engagement