

GENE WU

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 137

CAPITOL OFFICE:
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910
(512) 463-0492
(512) 463-1182 fax
Capitol Extension: E2.820

gene.wu@house.state.tx.us



DISTRICT OFFICE:
6500 Rookin, Building C
Houston, TX 77074
(713) 271-3900
(713) 271-3902 fax

House Website:
www.house.state.tx.us

Committees: Elections, Energy Resources

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE
GENE WU



★ HELPFUL NUMBERS ★

Child Support Hotline (800) 252-8014	Medicaid Hotline (800) 252-8263
Consumer Protection Hotline (800) 621-0508	Children's Health Insurance Program . . . (877) KIDS-NOW
Governor's Assistance Hotline (800) 843-5789	Nursing Home Complaint (800) 458-9858
Elections Division (800)252-VOTE	First Time Home Buyers (800) 792-1119
Social Security Administration (800) 772-1213	SSI/Food Stamp Hotline (800) 248-1078
Lawyer Referral Service (800) 252-9690	Injured Workers Hotline (800) 252-7031
Immunization Hotline (800) 252-9152	Child Care Information (800) 862-5252

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 137



83RD LEGISLATIVE SESSION

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 137

State Representative Gene Wu
Fall 2013

Dear Friends,

It is an honor to represent you in the Texas House of Representatives. When the 83rd Legislative Session began in January, my colleagues and I focused on the pressing issues, like restoring our public education budget, funding the water plan, and fixing our roads. In large part, those issues were debated in a productive, bipartisan way.

When the Session came to an end, we still had unfinished business among these important priorities. Unfortunately, most of the time and attention in the Special Session was spent debating divisive and partisan legislation. We should be working together to improve Texas, and it's my hope that the legislature will be able to return to that point in the future.

Among the work I'm proudest of this past session:

- Raising awareness of the true impact of cuts to Public Education; working in a bipartisan fashion to restore funding.
- Reforming our over-reliance on standardized testing and allow teachers to actually teach students.
- Creating more pathways to graduation so students have more opportunities to excel in either college or career.
- Passing legislation that promotes Houston's energy industry and while ensuring that we reduce our environmental footprint.
- Passing legislation that strengthens law enforcement, removes loopholes, and ensures that child victims are better protected by the law enforcement system.

This was my first year as your State Representative. We have hit the ground running to represent Southwest Houston. Please feel free to contact my office if we can ever be of assistance. Thank you for giving me the honor and privilege to serve as your State Representative.

Sincerely,

Gene Wu

★ LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ★

Public Education

The 83rd Legislature made critical education reforms this session. I was part of a coalition that pushed for restoring nearly \$4 billion to public schools (out of the \$5.4 billion cut two years ago). H.B. 376 became law, improving the quality of child care centers in Texas and helping to ensure that children are ready for kindergarten. H.B. 5 became law, creating new paths to graduation for high school students and dramatically reducing the number of high-stakes, standardized exams students were forced to take. We also lifted the cap on charter schools by passing S.B. 2, allowing new charters to grow and flourish while at the same time enforcing a higher level of accountability. These reforms will greatly benefit our children by improving the quality of public education and better preparing students to pursue success after graduation.

Higher Education

With H.B. 29, the Legislature passed a modest reform of college tuition. The bill requires public universities to offer incoming students a fixed-rate tuition option. While this is not a perfect fix, it at least creates more certainty for new college students. There remains work to be done to pass legislation allowing public universities to issue bonds for infrastructure improvements that will help our universities accommodate a growing student population.

Health Care

Here in Texas we have the highest percentage of uninsured residents than any other state. Nearly one in four Texans are currently without health insurance. Addressing our state's health care issues should have been one of the top priorities going into the session. I supported expanding Medicaid which would have resulted in a health coverage option for over one million hardworking low-income Texans currently uninsured, but the majority in the Legislature opted to turn down Medicaid expansion. We were also unsuccessful in coming up with an alternative "Texas Solution". Regardless of how we failed to address our state's uninsured problem, open enrollment in the federal health care law's Health Insurance Marketplace will begin October 2013 with coverage starting January 2014. The marketplace will offer Texans a new way to shop for health insurance to find affordable coverage. Visit healthcare.gov to learn more. Beyond health insurance, we can be proud of taking major steps to prevent Medicaid fraud, and putting \$1.77 billion into mental health services.



Addressing members of the Texas House of Representatives.



University of Houston President, Renu Khator, on the floor of the House of Representatives.

Water

H.B. 4, which passed early in the legislative session, includes funding for many water supply strategies such as conservation, drought management, and groundwater resource projects. The proposal calls for \$2 billion from the state's Rainy Day Fund to create a water infrastructure bank that operates as a revolving account for financing projects included in the State Water Plan. The fund will provide support through state financing assistance to locally identified water projects. Funds loaned through this program would be repaid and made available for future local and regional water projects. This bill is an essential step toward developing the state's growing need for new water projects and conservation initiatives.

Transportation

With a fast-growing population, Texas has reached a breaking point over how we fund transportation, both in state infrastructure maintenance and long term solutions for dealing with traffic congestion. At the start of the legislative session, possible solutions included increasing the gas tax, or increasing fees for motor vehicle registrations as a means of increasing revenue for the transportation needs of the state. But these options were eventually discarded.

After much debate, legislation passed during the third special session that would provide a new source of transportation revenue from the state's rainy day fund, although that decision ultimately is up to the voters in Texas on the November 2014 ballot.

Criminal Justice

When I served Harris County as a prosecutor, I saw firsthand the cracks in our justice system. We made progress toward reducing recidivism among persons with mental illness in our jail population with the passage of S.B. 1185, a mental health jail diversion pilot program for Harris County. I filed a number of enforceable measures that leverage the resources of our law enforcement, and close loopholes in our justice system. I authored H.B. 3259, which became law, to ensure that child victims are protected during investigations of abuse or neglect. I filed H.B. 2230 to give nonviolent offenders a better chance at leading a productive life, and proposed H.B. 2405 to encourage law enforcement to review their policies when handling low-level misdemeanors. At the end of the 83rd Legislative Session, I was honored to be named Freshman of the Year by the Texas District and County Attorneys Association.

★ COMMITTEE UPDATE ★

Elections

I was honored to serve on the Elections Committee this Session. Our committee dealt with a broad range of issues that relate to campaign ethics and the administration of elections. Much of this took place in a very bipartisan manner and I'm proud to have co-authored a bill with Rep. Rick Miller of Fort Bend County to require poll watchers to be required to wear identification in order to differentiate them from Election Judges and Clerks. Unfortunately, while we worked to create an Ethics Commission Sunset bill which created a fair system of violations and punishments, Governor Perry vetoed the bill.

Energy

I was appointed to serve on the Energy Resources Committee. Given that energy issues are important for the state's economy, improving areas such as water, environment, and roads, was truly an honor. Our committee debated a variety of issues, from property rights to the continuation of the Texas Railroad Commission. I worked with members on both sides of the aisle, both representatives and senators, and passed bills that would help increase safety by decreasing oil and gas production truck traffic; expand the use of co-generation facilities; and bring Texas in line with federal pipeline safety standards.

NEW DISTRICT OFFICE

We are proud to announce the opening of our district office in the Baker-Ripley Center. Their campus is home to a charter school, community health services, financial services, and award-winning non-profit work to serve and strengthen communities that have traditionally been underserved in our area. It is my hope that not only will my constituents feel welcome to visit my office anytime, but that they will take advantage of the resources provided at the Baker-Ripley Neighborhood Center.



If we can be of any assistance, feel free to visit or contact us:

District 137 – District Office
6500 Rookin, Building C
Houston, TX 77074

phone: 713.271.3900
email: district137.wu@house.state.tx.us

**HONORING OUR 2013
Valedictorians & Salutatorians**

Congratulations to all graduating seniors in Southwest Houston. The following students were named as the top two scholars from their schools.

Lee High School
Nimra Aleem & Shaista Ali

Sharpstown High School
Yaddy Rojas & Victoria Ho

Sharpstown International High School
Annie Truong & Jenny Truong



On March 25, 2013, Representative Wu introduced Sister Jane Meyer, headmaster of St. Agnes Academy, as Pastor of the Day.