



GENE WU

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 137



Issue 9

October 2015

NEWSLETTER

Dear Friends,

October 19th marks the beginning of Early Voting for the November 3rd Election. As you may be aware, there are a host of candidates running for City Council. Houstonians will elect a new mayor. The ballot will also include Constitutional Amendments for the state, as well as local ballot items for the City of Houston.

During Early Voting, you may vote at any Early Voting Location. On Election Day, you will have to vote at the particular location where you are registered to vote. The full list of Early Voting locations can be found at HarrisVotes.com. Locations in Southwest Houston include:

- **Bayland Park Community Center**
6400 Bissonnet Street (near Hillcroft)
- **Tracy Gee Community Center**
3599 Westcenter Drive
(one block east of Sam Houston Tollway)
- **Alief ISD Administration Building**
4250 Cook Road

There are two opportunities to learn more about candidates and issues on the ballot this year. The following events will both be held at the Baker Ripley Neighborhood Center, 6500 Rookin St, 77074. Everyone is invited.

- **Baker Ripley Center Mayoral Candidate Forum** (Tuesday, October 20th - 6:30 pm)
- **Town Hall: A Conversation on Discrimination** (Saturday, October 24th - 11:00 am)

Sincerely,

Gene Wu, State Representative - District 137



Rep. Wu with Ana Mac Naught and Veronica Hernandez at a National Night Out event hosted by the City of Houston and Neighborhood Centers, Inc.

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6500 Rookin, Building C
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Previous Events



National Night Out in Southwest Houston

Rep. Wu and staff attended various neighborhood and community events throughout the district including: Baker Ripley Neighborhood Center (first page), Diho Square (above), Sharpstown (top right), Shenandoah (right), and Westchase apartments.



Town Hall Meeting at the Chinese Community Center: A Conversation on Discrimination

Rep. Wu hosted a town hall to discuss the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO) and discrimination based on national origin, ethnicity and religion in Houston. Former Houston City Council Member Gordon Quan moderated the discussion between panelists and attendees.

Upcoming Events

We hope to see you at one of the following upcoming events!

October 24 - Town Hall: A Conversation On Discrimination



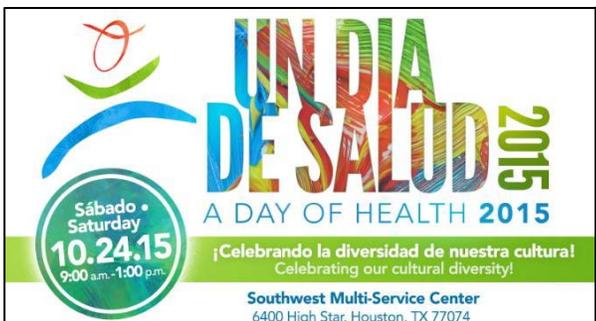
Representative Wu invites you to attend an upcoming town hall meeting for a conversation on the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance (HERO), and discrimination based on national origin, ethnicity, and religion in Houston.

**Saturday, October 24th
11:00 am - 12:30 pm**

**Baker Ripley Center
6500 Rookin
Houston, TX 77074**

For more information, please contact the District Office at District137.Wu@house.state.tx.us or 713-271-3900

October 24 - Un Dia de Salud - A Day of Health

	<p>Saturday, October 24th 9:00 am - 1:00 pm</p> <p>Southwest Multi-Service Center 6400 High Star, Houston, TX 77074</p> <p>This community health event celebrates the cultural diversity of Southwest Houston, and will feature different stations for attendees to access medical and community resources.</p>
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October 25 - Sharpstown Fall Festival by Connect Partners



Fall Festival

By Connect Partners

Sunday, October 25th

3:00 pm - 6:00 pm

6856 Bellaire Blvd, Houston, TX 77074

Food, music, games, and prizes!
Comida, musica, juegos, y premios!
Nourriture, musique, jeux, et prix!

*Parking is available in KIPP CONNECT parking lot
on De Moss Street off of Tarnef Drive.*

October 28 - Seeds of Sharpstown Opening Reception



Remnants of the Past, Visions of the Future

Featuring Alexander Squier, with Alice Bateman and Edwin Terrell



Opening Reception: October 28, 2015 / 4 pm to 9 pm

7831 Fondren Road, Houston, TX 77074

Utilizing an entire house in Sharpstown, artist Alexander Squier has blended visual elements and various objects that evoke reactions to transitions in our landscape, including nostalgia and excitement for the future.

This exhibition will run starting October 28, 2015 through January 3, 2016.

RSVP

joseph@seedsofsharpstown.com, or you may text to 713.443.3816

Parking: Houston Baptist University has graciously offered the use of their parking lot at the southwest corner of Fondren and the Southwest Freeway (next to the Burger King – 7406 Fondren). Continuous running shuttlebuses will transport guests to and from the art installation.

www.seedsofsharpstown.com

November 3, 2015 Ballot: State Constitutional Amendments

Amendment No. 1

The constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation for public school purposes from \$15,000 to \$25,000, providing for a reduction of the limitation on the total amount of ad valorem taxes that may be imposed for those purposes on the homestead of an elderly or disabled person to reflect the increased exemption amount, authorizing the legislature to prohibit a political subdivision that has adopted an optional residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation from reducing the amount of or repealing the exemption, and prohibiting the enactment of a law that imposes a transfer tax on a transaction that conveys fee simple title to real property.

Summary: Amendment No. 1 would increase the portion of the market value of a residence homestead that is exempt from ad valorem taxation for public school purposes from \$15,000 to \$25,000. In addition, the proposed amendment provides for a reduction of the limitation on the total amount of ad valorem taxes that may be imposed for those purposes on the homestead of an elderly or disabled person to reflect the increased exemption amount. The proposed amendment also authorizes the legislature to prohibit the governing body of a political subdivision that has adopted an exemption from ad valorem taxation of a percentage of the market value of a residence homestead from reducing the amount of or repealing the exemption. Finally, the proposed amendment prohibits the legislature from imposing a transfer tax on a transaction that conveys fee simple title to real property. The increase in the amount of the exemption to \$25,000 takes effect for the tax year beginning January 1, 2015.

Amendment No. 2

The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a 100 percent or totally disabled veteran who died before the law authorizing a residence homestead exemption for such a veteran took effect.

Summary: Section 1-b, Article VIII, Texas Constitution, governs residence homestead exemptions from ad valorem taxation on property. A 2007 amendment that added Subsection (i) to Section 1-b allowed the legislature to provide a residence homestead exemption to a 100 percent or totally disabled veteran. The legislature enacted a law in 2009 to implement Subsection (i). In 2011, an amendment that added Subsection (j) to Section 1-b allowed the legislature to extend the exemption for 100 percent or totally disabled veterans to the surviving spouse of those veterans if the surviving spouse had not remarried since the death of the veteran and the property was the residence homestead of the surviving spouse when the veteran died and remains the homestead of the surviving spouse. However, current law has been construed to apply the exemption only to a surviving spouse of a veteran who died after the 2009 law took effect. The constitutional amendment amends Section 1-b by adding Subsection (j-1) to that section to allow the legislature to extend the residence homestead exemption to the surviving spouse of a disabled veteran who would have qualified for the exemption under the 2009 law but died before the law took effect under the same conditions as a surviving spouse of a disabled veteran who died after the 2009 law took effect.

The proposed amendment also amends Section 1-b(k) of Article VIII to authorize the legislature to provide that a surviving spouse who receives an exemption under proposed Subsection (j-1) and who subsequently qualifies a different property as the surviving spouse's residence homestead is entitled to an exemption from ad valorem taxation of the subsequently qualified residence homestead in an amount equal to the dollar amount of the exemption from ad valorem taxation of the former homestead in accordance with proposed Subsection (j-1) in the last year in which the surviving spouse received that exemption for that homestead if the surviving spouse has not remarried. The proposed amendment applies only to ad valorem taxes imposed for a tax year beginning on or after January 1, 2016.

Amendment No. 3

The constitutional amendment repealing the requirement that state officers elected by voters statewide reside in the state capital.

Summary: Amendment No. 3 requires certain state officers elected by the voters statewide, including the comptroller of public accounts, commissioner of the General Land Office, attorney general, commissioner of agriculture, and railroad commissioners, to reside at the state capital while in office. The constitutional amendment removes that residency requirement. The residence of the governor is addressed by Section 13, Article IV, Texas Constitution, and is not affected by this proposed amendment.

Amendment No. 4

The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to permit professional sports team charitable foundations to conduct charitable raffles.

Summary: Amendment No. 4 authorizes the legislature to permit a professional sports team charitable foundation to conduct charitable raffles under the terms and conditions imposed by the law and to use raffle proceeds to pay reasonable advertising, promotional, and administrative expenses. The provision limits the applicability of the law to an entity defined as a professional sports team charitable foundation on January 1, 2016, and limits the conduct of the raffles to games hosted at the home venue of the professional sports team associated with the foundation. Section 47, Article III, Texas Constitution, as originally adopted in 1876, required the legislature to pass laws prohibiting all lotteries and gift enterprises in the state. Section 47 has been interpreted to prohibit the state from authorizing most forms of gambling. However, Section 47 has been amended to provide several specific exceptions to the general prohibition. The constitutional amendment proposed by H.J.R. 73 adds another exception to the general prohibition.

Amendment No. 5

The constitutional amendment to authorize counties with a population of 7,500 or less to perform private road construction and maintenance.

Summary: Amendment No. 5 proposes an amendment to the Texas Constitution to increase from 5,000 to 7,500 the maximum population threshold of a county that may construct and maintain private roads if the county imposes a reasonable charge for the work. In 1980, voters approved a constitutional amendment adding Section 52f, Article III, Texas Constitution, authorizing counties with a population of 5,000 or less to perform private road construction and maintenance if the county imposed a reasonable charge for the work. Money collected by the county may be used only for the construction or maintenance of public roads. Section 52f authorizes the legislature to limit the counties' authority.

Amendment No. 6

The constitutional amendment recognizing the right of the people to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife subject to laws that promote wildlife conservation.

Summary: Amendment No. 6 creates a new right for people to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife and establishes hunting and fishing as preferred methods of managing and controlling wildlife. The proposed right includes the use of traditional methods of hunting, fishing, and harvesting, although those methods are not defined. Under the proposed amendment, laws or regulations that conserve and manage wildlife and preserve the future of hunting and fishing apply to the exercise of the right to hunt, fish, or harvest wildlife. The proposed amendment does not affect laws or regulations that relate to trespass, property rights, eminent domain, or the municipal regulation of the discharge of a weapon in a populated area in the interest of public safety.

Amendment No. 7

The constitutional amendment dedicating certain sales and use tax revenue and motor vehicle sales, use, and rental tax revenue to the state highway fund to provide funding for nontolled roads and the reduction of certain transportation-related debt.

Summary: Amendment No. 7 proposes an amendment to the Texas Constitution directing the comptroller of public accounts to annually deposit to the state highway fund, in each state fiscal year beginning with the 2018 state fiscal year, \$2.5 billion of state sales and use tax revenue that exceeds the first \$28 billion of those taxes collected during the fiscal year, and, in each state fiscal year beginning with the 2020 state fiscal year, 35 percent of the state motor vehicle sales, use, and rental tax revenue that exceeds the first \$5 billion of those taxes collected during the state fiscal year. The proposed amendment dedicates the tax revenue deposited to the state highway fund to constructing, maintaining, or acquiring rights-of-way for public roadways other than toll roads and to paying certain transportation-related bond debt.

The proposed amendment authorizes the legislature to make two types of modifications to the deposits to the state highway fund required by the amendment. First, the proposed amendment allows the legislature, by adoption of a resolution approved by a record vote of two-thirds of the members of both houses of the legislature, to reduce the amount of state sales and use tax revenue or motor vehicle sales, use, and rental tax revenue deposited to the state highway fund in the state fiscal year in which the resolution is adopted, or in either of the two following state fiscal years, by an amount or percentage that does not result in a reduction of more than 50 percent of the amount of tax revenue from either source that would otherwise be deposited to the state highway fund. In addition, although the proposed amendment provides that the duty of the comptroller of public accounts to deposit state sales and use tax revenue and state motor vehicle sales, use, and rental tax revenue to the state highway fund ends on August 31, 2032, and August 31, 2029, respectively, it authorizes the legislature, by adoption of a resolution approved by a record vote of a majority of the members of each house of the legislature, to extend the duty to make those deposits in 10-year increments.