

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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VALOREE SWANSON



NORTHERN HARRIS COUNTY · DISTRICT 150



## 2023 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Dear District 150 Constituent,

It is a true honor to represent you in the Texas House of Representatives!

The 88th Session of the Texas Legislature began with the excitement of new opportunities to keep Texas great and the challenges of addressing the hot-button issues of our day: protecting women's sports, funding public education and parental school choice, lasting property tax relief, healthcare for pregnant women and mothers, and so much more.

For the last two Sessions and the three Special Sessions in between, I promised to file and pass legislation to protect female student athletes from having their personal safety, accolades, and opportunities ruined by competing with biological males in female-only sports. In the Third Called Session of the 87th Legislature, I passed the "Save Girls' Sports Act" to protect 7-12th grade female athletes. This Session, we finished the job by passing SB 15, the "Save Women's Sports Act." I am proud to be the sponsor of this monumental legislation that will protect our talented college female athletes.

In addition to protecting women's sports, the Legislature delivered many other major victories in 2023, including:

- Lasting property tax relief (SB 2, SB 3, and HJR 2)
- The READER Act, protecting schoolchildren from explicit content in school libraries (HB 900)
- Cracking down on Fentanyl dealers (HB 6)
- The SCOPE Act, protecting young Texans online (HB 18)
- Banning sex transition surgeries for minors (SB 14)
- Enhanced security measures in public schools (HB 3)
- Providing a cost-of-living adjustment and a 13th check for retired teachers (SB 10)
- Banning sexual performances in front of children (SB 12)
- Abolishing diversity, equity, and inclusion offices in universities (SB 17)
- Removing rogue district attorneys who refuse to enforce the law (HB 17)
- Restoring felony offenses for illegal voting (HB 1243)
- Banning government-imposed mask and vaccine mandates (SB 29)

The Legislature passed many other victories that you can read about in the next few pages!

Very soon, the Legislature will reconvene for yet another Special Session to tackle the pressing issues of public education funding, parental school choice, and teacher pay raises. I look forward to expanding opportunities for Texas students while ensuring our teachers are well-compensated for their incredible work.

Please consider responding to the Legislative survey enclosed in this newsletter. Your responses are valued for future legislative efforts.

Sincerely,

*Valoree Swanson*  
Rep. Valoree Swanson

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## Low-Income Housing

Since taking office in 2017, a top priority of mine has been to represent our district in matters of low-income, government-subsidized housing. I have stopped all proposed housing projects within the authority of a Representative and led the charge to ensure we retain such authority.

Overview of the various types of low-income housing programs:

- **Section 8** – Section 8 is a federal voucher program. Vouchers are given to individuals to pay rent in any type of HUD-approved housing. This is a federal program not controlled by the State.
- **TDHCA Housing** – Texas Dept. of Housing & Community Affairs (TDHCA) administers two different low-income housing programs, one of which State Representatives have input in:
  - **4% Program** – this program provides housing subsidies through private activity bonds managed by TDHCA. Representatives have no influence over this program, only County Commissioners or City Council Members do.
  - **9% Program** – this program administers massive federal tax credits to build housing projects based on a competitive scoring system. State Representatives may write **letters of opposition** to these projects, halting their approval.
- **Public Facilities Corporations** – PFCs are a legal tool that allows housing authorities to give 100% tax breaks to existing apartment complexes under the pretense of affordable housing, without notification or approval from any elected officials, thus throwing the tax burden onto single-family homeowners. This Session, we cracked down on this out-of-control scheme by passing HB 2071 to stop more apartments from becoming tax-exempt as well as penalties and potential loss of exemptions for current complexes that abuse this tax break.
- **Private Development** – Housing ventures that are funded entirely with private capital, whether low-income or luxury, cannot be stopped by elected officials if they follow the law. All apartments currently being built or proposed in District 150 fall into this category.

## Election Integrity

SB 1070 removes Texas from the Electronic Registration Information Center or “ERIC,” a problematic, interstate voter information system that routinely failed to catch election fraud; this change allows Texas to implement stronger security measures to protect our elections. SB 1750 abolishes the controversial Harris County Elections Administrator, returning the duty of elections to elected officials who are accountable to voters. SB 1933 provides the Secretary of State with administrative oversight power to rein in county election offices which fail to keep elections safe and secure.

## Constitutional Amendments

On November 7, 2023, Texans will have the opportunity to vote on 14 proposed amendments to the Texas Constitution, including property tax relief, a cost-of-living adjustment for retired teachers, water infrastructure funding, and banning “net worth taxes.” To see the ballot order and learn more about the propositions, visit [sos.state.tx.us](https://sos.state.tx.us).



*Rep. Swanson working on policy with Sen. Middleton on the House Floor.*

# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## Property Tax Relief

In July, the Legislature came together on a sweeping package to provide the largest property tax cut in the history of Texas for homeowners and small businesses. We also reformed appraisal review boards to better represent the taxpayers.

I believe in the dream of homeownership and fought for increased homestead exemptions to deliver the greatest possible tax relief to Texas homeowners.

SB 2, SB 3, and HJR 2 – the three bills composing the relief package - deliver the following pro-taxpayer reforms:

- **\$7 billion** in state money for increased funding of school district operations to lower or “compress” tax rates on property owners.
- **\$100,000 exemption** from school Maintenance & Operation (M&O) taxes on homesteads for homeowners under 65 and **\$110,000 exemption** for those over 65. These exemptions, combined with compressed tax rates, will provide a **\$1,373** or **41.5%** savings on an average homeowner’s M&O tax bill.
- Increased the exemption from franchise taxes for businesses of **\$1 million** total revenue to **\$2.4 million**, exempting roughly **67,000** small businesses from paying franchise taxes.
- Three-year pilot program creating a 20% cap on annual increases in the appraised value of non-homestead properties, such as rental homes or businesses, valued under \$5 million.
- Added three elected, nonpartisan members of appraisal review boards in counties of 75,000 or more to give you more control over appraisals.
- Increased state funding to ensure that school districts are adequately funded to offset potential revenue losses.

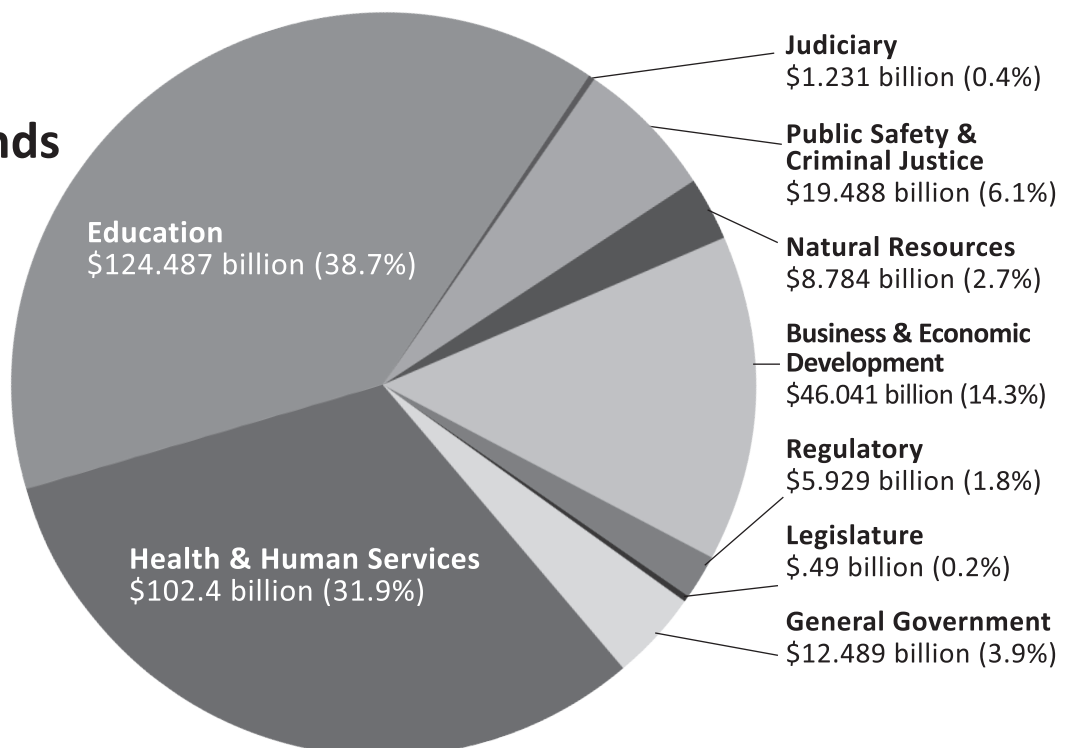
## The Texas Budget

The Texas Budget uses our state’s historic surplus to fund essential programs in a fiscally responsible manner. Here are some highlights:

- \$17.6 Billion for property tax relief
- \$50.4 Billion for public education
- \$5.1 Billion for border security

### 2024-25 All Funds

Total: \$321.34 billion



# LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## Save Women's Sports Act

SB 15, the "Save Women's Sports Act," protects college-level female athletes by prohibiting biological males from participating in female-only competition or taking a female spot in mixed-sex competitions. The bill provides legal relief for athletes who are affected by a violation of the law and adds language to ensure that cheer and dance teams are also protected.

*Rep. Swanson rallying at the Texas Capitol with Riley Gaines*



## Swanson Bills Passed into Law

- SB 15 (Swanson Sponsor) protecting college female athletes by preventing biological males from participating in female-only sports and female-only positions on mixed-sex teams.
- HB 44 prohibits physicians and medical networks from refusing treatment to Medicaid or CHIP patients based solely on vaccination status.
- HB 63 ensures due process and proper use of state resources in child abuse cases by prohibiting anonymous child abuse reports and requiring caller info to remain confidential. This bill also ensures that parents are notified of their rights and their identity is protected.
- HB 246 creates a program to establish future requirements for recording activity in ballot counting stations to ensure integrity in the ballot counting process.
- HB 255 updates the law relating to notaries public to allow for fair compensation and provide additional fraud protections. This bill was brought by a constituent of District 150.
- HB 266 and HB 785 together streamline the process for guardianship proceedings in probate courts by providing easier pathways to communication.
- HB 282 creates specialty license plates to honor decorated veterans of the Texas Military Department and streamline the process for adoptive Gold Star families to receive honorary Gold Star plates. This was another fantastic bill brought by a Constituent!
- HB 1217 standardizes early voting hours across the State and provides funding for rural counties to keep their polling locations open, ensuring all Texans have equal access to the ballot box.
- HB 2708 prohibits state prison facilities from denying eligible inmates with in-person visitation options. This is important to help families remain connected, reduce recidivism, and reintroduce inmates to society.



*Rep. Swanson joins accomplished female athletes for the signing of the "Save Women's Sports Act" with Governor Abbott*

# DISTRICT 150 SURVEY

Your opinion is very important and will help guide me on policy next session. Please fill out the survey, fold the paper into thirds with the mailing label facing outward, then tape it shut and drop it in the mail with a stamp. You may email your answers to **District150.Swanson@house.texas.gov**.

## I look forward to hearing from you!

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

1. The Legislature should continue supplementing border security operations if the federal government refuses to act.  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Unsure  Disagree  Strongly Disagree
2. The Legislature should implement parental school choice, a system wherein school funding follows the child so that parents may use state funds to place their child in a public, private, or home school system.  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Unsure  Disagree  Strongly Disagree
3. The Legislature should permanently institute a cap on year-to-year appraised value increases on all real property (homesteads currently have a 10% cap).  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Unsure  Disagree  Strongly Disagree
4. The Legislature should prohibit vaccine mandates imposed by private companies.  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Unsure  Disagree  Strongly Disagree
5. The legislature should give elected State Representatives greater authority to halt government-subsidized, low-income housing projects.  
 Strongly Agree  Agree  Unsure  Disagree  Strongly Disagree



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PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE





State Representative ★ District 150  
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*Committees: Corrections • Elections*

**2023 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**

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**VALOREE SWANSON**  
*State Representative*



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**Constitutional  
Amendment  
Election Day:**  
**Tuesday, November 7**

**Early Voting:**  
Monday, October 23  
through  
Friday, November 3