

ANTI-SANCTUARY CITIES

House Bill 12/Senate Bill 9 prohibits local entities from barring the enforcement of federal or state immigration laws. The bill allowed police officers to request the immigration status of individuals who have been lawfully taken into custody. Any entity that adopts a rule, order, ordinance, or policy that prohibits the enforcement of state or federal law relating to immigrants or immigration would be ineligible to receive state grant funds.

Although HB 12 passed out of the House, it failed in the Senate during the regular session. As a result, it was reconsidered in the special session. This time the Senate passed the bill but it stalled in the House committee. In a final effort to pass anti-sanctuary cities legislation, language was attached to a broad government funding bill, SB 1. Unfortunately, the Senate failed to adopt it and anti-sanctuary cities legislation was not passed.

While this was disappointing, legislation did pass requiring all persons holding a drivers license to present valid proof of citizenship upon renewal of their license. This legislation is a step in the right direction on the state level.

TRANSPORTATION SECURITY ADMINISTRATION (TSA) SEARCHES

House Bill 41 sought to put an end to invasive pat-downs at our airports. The House passed TSA legislation during the regular session, but the Senate failed to pass it. During the special session it again fell short, but we are gathering support for next session.



Rep. White offers the invocation to begin a House session.

HB 232

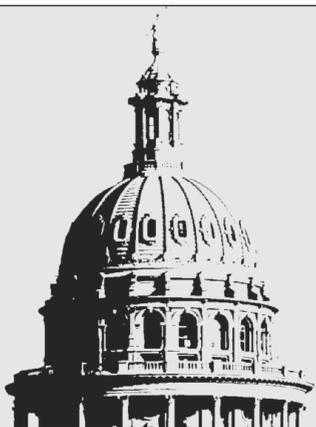
Texas property law previously laid out an extremely tedious and cumbersome process for homeowners in a subdivision to amend deed restrictions. After conversations with several East Texans having great difficulty amending strenuous deed restrictions, I offered and passed House Bill 232 which provides a less burdensome process for homeowners to amend deed restrictions.

JUVENILE JUSTICE RESTRUCTURING

In an effort to provide better services in our juvenile justice system, the legislature merged the Texas Youth Commission with the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission into a single agency - the Texas Department of Juvenile Justice. The new Department of Juvenile Justice will emphasize a research-supported statewide network of community-based treatment and rehabilitation programs and streamline the state's juvenile justice expenditures.

Visit Your Capitol!

You can learn more about your state Capitol by going on a free guided tour, which is offered every Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. and Saturday through Sunday from 9:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. For groups of 10 or more, call Capitol Information and Guide Services at (512) 463-0063 to make a reservation. And please drop by my office while you're in the Capitol.



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About Representative White

Representative James White lives in Tyler County, maintains a small cattle ranch, and is completing doctoral studies in political science at the University of Houston. Prior to joining the legislature, James taught American government and free enterprise economics and coached football and basketball at Woodville High School and government at Angelina College in Lufkin.

James attended public schools in Houston and graduated with honors from Prairie View A&M University with a degree in political science and military science. After being commissioned by the United States Congress as an officer of Infantry in the U.S. Army, he served throughout the world, most notably from 1987-90 in the Berlin Brigade.

James is a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and the Texas Farm Bureau and worships at Hillister Baptist Church in Hillister.



STATE REPRESENTATIVE **JAMES WHITE** DISTRICT 12 NEWSLETTER

The State of Texas
House of Representatives



FALL 2011

Dear Friends:

It is a tremendous honor to represent House District 12 in the Texas House of Representatives and to give a voice to the fundamental East Texas values of strong families, limited government, lower taxes, jobs and prosperity. The 82nd Regular Legislative Session and Special Session ended in June, and I thank each of you who took the time to share your thoughts and ideas with me over the course of the session.

In the 82nd Legislative Session, the Texas Legislature wrestled with some of the biggest issues facing our state. The budget shortfall and school finance may have been the most dominant issues in the headlines, but the legislature addressed many other challenging matters such as voter I.D., border security, redistricting, and eminent domain reform. Though much was accomplished, there still is much left to be done.

Inside this newsletter, please find highlights from this historic session and special session as well as an overview of my personal legislative accomplishments. I hope you find this information helpful. As your state representative, I will proudly continue to represent the unique needs of House District 12. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can ever be of assistance.

Sincerely,

James White

ANGELINA ★ SAN JACINTO ★ TRINITY ★ TYLER



Rep. White taking the oath of office

BUDGET OVERVIEW

Over the course of the 170 days of the Regular and Special Session, there were 5,796 bills filed in the House and the Senate. The Legislature passed 1,384 bills to the governor's desk for approval, of which 1,333 were signed. Many were widely discussed, but none more than the budget. Even in its relatively strong position, Texas has not been immune from the global economic recession. We are only now making our way out of the worst recession in decades.

threaten more programs in the future. Ultimately, I supported the final budget because it sets a disciplined fiscal roadmap that funds public schools, universities, and nursing homes, provides financial aid for college students, keeps substantial revenue in reserves, and avoids imposing new taxes.

WHERE THE MONEY WENT

In the final 2012-13 budget, the largest categories are public & higher education (43%), health & human services (31%), business & economic development (14%), and public safety & criminal justice (6.5%). The budget for most of our state agencies was decreased by 10.7%. On the whole, Health and Human Services funding was reduced by 17.2%, though funding for nursing homes was maintained. Below is a chart depicting budget categories (note: chart does not equal 100% due to rounding).

RAINY DAY FUND

The value of the Economic Stabilization Fund (or "Rainy Day Fund") varies, like the value of any investment portfolio. Entering the legislative session, the value of the Rainy Day Fund was approximately \$9.4 billion. Due to revenue shortfalls in the 2010-11 budget, the Legislature utilized about \$3.2 billion of the Fund to satisfy already incurred financial obligations. This left \$6.2 billion uncommitted in the Fund. In order to make the current budget work, the state "deferred" about \$2 billion in payments to school districts, but that must be accounted for in the next budget cycle. Medicaid caseload growth is anticipated to require up to an additional \$4.5 billion by the 2013 legislative session, which also will have to come from the Rainy Day Fund. So of the \$9.4 billion Rainy Day Fund, all of it either has already been expended or is being reserved for very specific programs that are certain to occur in the upcoming two-year budget cycle.

Funding Public Education

SENATE BILL 1

The approved state budget provides \$1.6 billion more dollars to our public school system than the last budget. Although we were unable to fund growth due to the severe budget shortfall, our school districts are budgeted to receive \$29.2 billion in the 2012-2013 budget, up from \$27.6 billion in the previous two-year budget cycle. Education is the number one category of funding for the Texas budget, comprising over 43% of the overall state expenditures.

HOUSE BILL 400 & SENATE BILL 8

In an effort to provide increased flexibility to schools and help them to better navigate tough economic times, House Bill 400 was filed during the regular session. Although this bill did not pass, many of its provisions were included in Senate Bill 8 during the special session. I did not support either bill because both contained provisions that I do not believe are advantageous to East Texas educators. Despite my opposition, SB 8 ultimately passed and was signed by the Governor. I continue to believe there are better ways to increase efficiency and I will work between now and the next legislative session on these.



Rep. White offering legislation with support from other members



Rep. White at his desk on the House floor

VOTER I.D. & ELECTION REFORM

It is critical for the State of Texas to protect our election system. Senate Bill 14 ensures the integrity of our elections by requiring all voters to present a photo I.D. in order to vote. Also, House Bill 804 makes it a felony for a non-U.S. citizen to attempt to vote or actually vote in an election in Texas. By creating a felony penalty, this will deter voter fraud and prevent ineligible voters from casting a ballot. Lastly, House Bill 2817 passed containing a number of election reforms:

- ✓ Requires volunteer voter registrars to be registered voters in Texas
- ✓ Increases the punishment for unlawful assistance of voter registration
- ✓ Allows voters registered in the state residing outside the US to vote a full ballot by mail

Each of these measures is essential to maintaining the integrity of our electoral process and will help to ensure the public's confidence in our election system.

OTHER ELECTION PROTECTIONS

There have been reports of voter intimidation at polling places by special peace officers, who are appointed by election judges to monitor election day activity. There had been no legal credentials required to be hired as a special peace officer, which left a loophole for unqualified people to abuse this election day position. I authored and passed House Bill 1503 which requires that an election day special peace officer must be a licensed peace officer.

BORDER SECURITY

Securing our borders has become an absolute necessity and the legislature increased funding for state and local initiatives, fighting human trafficking, border prosecutions, and patrol and investigation overtime. All told, the legislature allotted \$219.5 million for border security in 2012-2013 (up from \$111 million in 2010-2011).

PROTECTED PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS

Private property rights fared well, as the government was further restricted from utilizing eminent domain by requiring any government entity to meet a much higher standard in order to use private property. The legislature also reaffirmed that landowners own the groundwater below their land.

2ND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

Senate Bill 321 ensures Second Amendment rights by protecting the jobs of hard-working Texans wanting a firearm in their vehicle for the commute to and from their workplace. Employees now may keep licensed firearms in their vehicles when parked in the parking area at work.

TORT REFORM

House Bill 274 provides defendants and courts with the tools necessary to cut down on frivolous lawsuits that can harm individuals and small businesses in Texas. The legislation ensures that if a party sues and loses, the court may require the losing party to pay legal costs for the party they sued. These changes will make the civil justice system in Texas more accessible, more efficient, and less costly.



Rep. White and Rep. Randy Weber (Pearland) discuss proposed legislation.



Rep. White and Rep. Sid Miller (Stephenville) prepare to speak on the House floor.

SONOGRAM

House Bill 15 requires a physician to provide a sonogram to each pregnant woman before performing an abortion. Not only will this allow pregnant mothers to make a more medically informed decision, it will also provide them with a better understanding of the gravity of their choice.

HEALTH CARE COST CONTAINMENT

Senate Bill 7 makes numerous changes to health care law in Texas in an effort to contain costs. The bill includes measures such as:

- ✓ Increased use of technology to prevent food stamp fraud.
- ✓ Incentives to increase preventative services and reduce emergency room visits.
- ✓ Defunding Elective Abortions.

SB 7 also includes a provision known as the Interstate Health Compact, which will allow Texas to enter into an agreement with other states around the country that would preserve each member states' ability to create a health care system that aligns with its own unique needs. While this compact is primarily concerned with Medicaid, it would allow Texas to choose which federal programs it wanted to suspend, and Texas could choose to keep popular programs in place, such as Medicare. The compact would give Texas flexibility and control to assure that all Medicare spending was appropriate and in the best interest of Texans.

