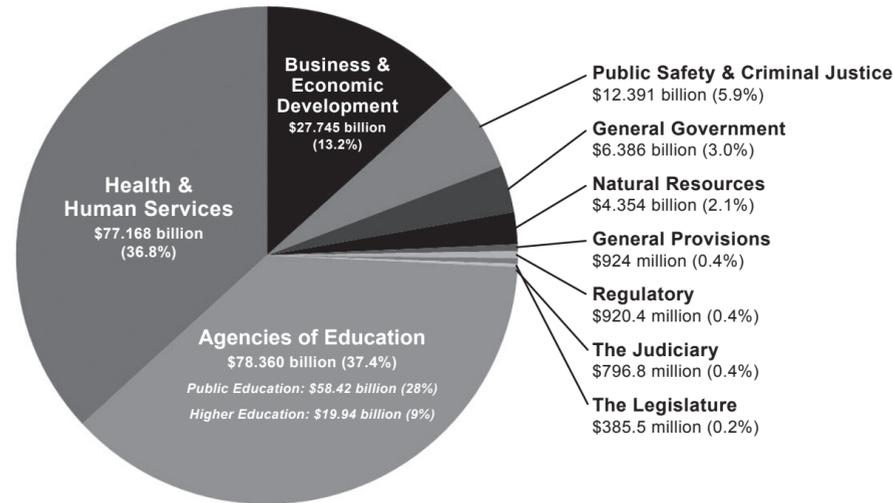


★ BUDGET BREAKDOWN ★

2016-17 BUDGET

Total: \$209.431 billion



NOTES: (1) Includes certain anticipated supplemental spending adjustments if applicable. (2) Excludes Interagency Contracts. (3) Biennial change and percentage change are calculated on actual amounts before rounding. Therefore, figure totals may not sum due to rounding.

The Legislature met to pass a strong, fiscally responsible balanced budget that appropriately funds the State of Texas and stays \$2.9 billion below the spending cap.

- Economic Stabilization Fund (Rainy Day Fund):** No appropriations from the Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF) are included in the 2016–17 biennium. The balance of the fund is estimated to be \$11.1 billion at the end of fiscal year 2017.
- Border Security:** The Legislature appropriated \$800.0 million in state funds is provided to fund border security initiatives at the Department of Public Safety (DPS). Including federal grant funds for Operation Stone Garden, the All Funds total for border security is \$839.6 million. These funds for border security will help law enforcement fund new technologies to monitor the border, reduce illegal immigration, prevent drug trafficking, and prevent human trafficking.
- Education:** The budget adds \$1.5 billion to public education over the required amount to fund student enrollment growth at current law.
- Teacher Healthcare & Employee Retirement System (ERS):** The Legislature allocated \$3.6 billion to address budget shortfalls in retired teacher healthcare and unfunded liabilities in the Texas employee retirement system.
- Correctional Officer Pay Increase:** This session, the Legislature funded an 8% pay increase for correctional and parole officers in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.



The recently crowned Miss Buna made a special visit to her State Capitol. During her visit she was able to tour the historic building and have a tour of the House Chamber

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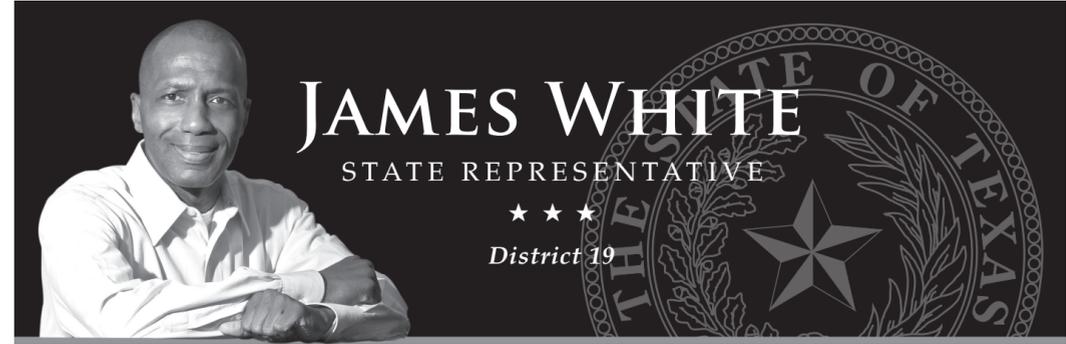


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★ LEADERSHIP SOUTHEAST TEXAS VISITING THE STATE CAPITOL ★



Representative White is always eager to host constituents and community leaders from Southeast Texas at the State Capitol. Constituents are always welcome to visit their State Capitol and staff will be happy to coordinate tours and pictures.



JAMES WHITE

STATE REPRESENTATIVE

★ ★ ★  
District 19

84<sup>TH</sup> LEGISLATIVE SESSION

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



JAMES WHITE  
DISTRICT 19

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

The 84th Legislative Session ended early in June. It is an honor to serve House District 19. Serving as the Vice Chair of Corrections and a member of the committees on Juvenile Justice & Family Issues and Emerging Issues in Texas Law Enforcement, I fought for Southeast Texas interests and values.

The Legislature met in Austin to pass strong commonsense legislation aimed toward supercharging our economy, lowering taxes, strengthening religious liberties, upholding our Second Amendment rights, and increasing governmental transparency. Alongside these reforms, the legislature also took a strong stance to pass a fiscally responsible and balanced budget. This budget funds our schools and promotes high academic achievement. It also funds our efforts to secure the border that will keep our Southeast Texas communities safe.

This newsletter will focus on the legislative efforts of the 84th Legislative Session. Legislators filed 6,476 pieces of legislation. Ultimately, the Legislature sent 1,323 bills to Governor Abbott. While he vetoed 41, the Governor signed 1,117 bills into law, and another 163 became law without his signature.

During the interim, I plan to meet with and listen to constituents like yourself, community leaders, local elected officials, teachers and school administrators, pastors, doctors and nurses, small business owners, and families regarding the needs and concerns that face our Southeast Texas communities. These are issues that the Legislature must address in order to ensure a bright and prosperous future for Texas.

It is a blessing to serve Texans in Hardin, Jasper, Newton, Polk, and Tyler counties. Both the Woodville district office and the Capitol office are open during the interim to any constituent that wishes to visit. I invite you to come visit and express your aspirations, hopes, and dreams for the future.

For God and Texas,

James White  
State Representative



Jasper student athletes and coaches met with State Representative James White after qualifying for the UIL State Track meet in Austin.

## PASTOR PROTECTION

State Representative James White was proud to support State Representative Scott Sanford (McKinney) on the passage of the Pastor Protection Bill (Senate Bill 2065). The mayor of Houston recently subpoenaed five pastors for discussions that included biblical interpretations related to marriage on church property. Many faith leaders in Southeast Texas are concerned about the threat of continuing government intrusion and infringement on the First Amendment rights of clergy, pastors, and churches. The legislation, which received overwhelming bipartisan support in both the House and the Senate, protects pastors from lawsuits or criminal prosecution if they refuse to perform marriages or engage in other actions that violate their sincerely held religious beliefs.

## SECOND AMENDMENT

The 84th Legislative Session proved to be a great success in regards to protecting and restoring the Second Amendment rights of all law-abiding Texans. State Representative James White originally filed House Bill 164 which sought to restore the right of citizens to openly carry a handgun. Ultimately, he joint-authored and supported a similar bill: HB 910. The Legislature passed HB 910 and the Governor signed it into law. HB 910 will allow law-abiding citizens who have acquired their concealed handgun license to openly carry.

In addition, the Legislature was also able to pass Senate Bill 11, which removes the restriction of law-abiding citizens, who have a concealed handgun-license, to safely carry their firearm on a college campus.



State Representative James White speaks at the annual POW WOW held by the Alabama-Coushatta in Livingston, TX.

## INCREASED PROTECTION OF LIFE

Last session, Texas proved to be a beacon of light for the rights of the pre-born. This session the Legislature worked to expand on these accomplishments. State Representative James White was proud to co-author House Bill 3994 which will strengthen the protection of minors who seek an abortion without the notification or consent of a parent or guardian. This legislation provides judges more tools to ensure the health, safety, welfare, and privacy of young girls making this very important decision. Overall, this bill strengthens parental rights, protects minors, and reduces abortions.

## TRANSPORTATION

The Texas population and economy are rapidly growing. This means that our state needs more roads, highways, and bridges to facilitate our safety and local economic prosperity. This session the Legislature addressed transportation without

raising taxes, fees, or tolls. The budget ends diversions from the State Highway Fund. This means all of the money in that fund will pay for transportation instead of other non-transportation programs.

## ENHANCING STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

House Bill 2398 is commonsense legislation that enhances student school attendance and academic achievement. This legislation decriminalizes truancy offenses for juveniles, but maintains the criminal offense for adults that contribute to truancy. HB 2398 also asks the Texas Education Agency and local school districts to identify strategies to enhance school attendance. This piece of legislation provides local judges

more tools to address the causes of chronic truancy. To limit negative impact in adulthood and enhance individual privacy, HB 2398 provides for automatic expunction of truancy records. Lastly, the legislation allows counties to set up a judicial trust fund to allow local courts to accept donations and distribute funds to assist families struggling with school attendance issues.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

State Representative James White highlights education as a high priority. It is the Legislature's duty to provide Southeast Texas parents, school board members, teachers, school principals, and taxpayers with the tools necessary to promote high academic achievement. Teachers are a vital part of the community and each session it is important to assess their needs to better help them teach our Texas school children. Children need a strong academic foundation to learn and excel in their future careers. This session public education saw a few victories but the Legislature still has many areas in which to improve during the next session.

One of the major pieces of legislation to pass out of the Legislature was House Bill 4 which created a \$130 million pre-K grant program to improve our early education opportunities and help our youth get a quality early start in their educational development.

HB 18 focused on secondary and postsecondary planning. Under the legislation, seventh and eighth grade students will receive instruction in preparing for high school, college, and future career choices. High school students will also see an increased access to dual credit access that helps them earn college credits while still in high school. As long as colleges approve high school faculty to teach these dual credit courses, students will have the opportunity to take an unlimited number of courses for college credit. School districts will also have access to funds from the Skills Development Fund, if the district has an agreement with a Texas State Technical College or a community college to support these dual credit courses.

In addition, House Bill 2804 increased accountability for public schools by establishing A-F ratings. With less reliance on standardized testing, the Legislature will move to a simpler A-F grading system for ranking our public schools. The grading system will provide two scores; one overall grade for

the school district and one for individual campuses. Parents and taxpayers will now have an easy way to assess where the schools their children attend stand academically.



The Jasper Lady Dawg Soccer Team visited their State Capitol following their playoff run in College Station. State Representative James White and staff met with them after they were recognized on the House Floor and enjoyed some ice cream in the Capitol Grill.

The Legislature also took action to address suicide prevention and awareness within the school system. During the session, State Representative James White met with stakeholders of HB 2186, which provides suicide prevention training to all new school district and open-enrollment charter school educators and to current educators. During an insightful meeting, the stakeholders noted that the Centers for Disease Control concluded that suicide was a leading cause of preventable death for middle school and high school aged youth. An overwhelming majority of students who attempted suicide gave clear warning signs. This new training will prepare educators to act and prevent deaths.

## HIGHER EDUCATION

The Texas Legislature passed a budget that increases the funding of higher education by 7.5 percent, providing an additional \$1.5 billion from the current two-year funding period. In addition, \$40 million was put into the Governor's University Research Initiative, a new fund created to attract top researchers to public universities.



State Representative James White meets with a group of teachers from Woodville ISD. These outstanding teachers are a vital part of Southeast Texas who go above and beyond to educate our youth.

Lastly, HB 505, similarly to HB 18, expands and removes limits on how many dual credit courses students can take in preparation for attending a school of higher education. The legislation prohibits any administrative rules from limiting the number of dual credit courses or hours in which a student may enroll while in high school. Furthermore, it opens up dual credit courses at any grade level for high school students. Students will also be able to take unlimited courses at a public junior college that does not have a service area that includes the student's high school. This bill received overwhelming support by the Legislature that will enable students to get a head start on their undergraduate education.

## TAX RELIEF

State Representative James White proudly voted for Senate Bill 1, which provided Texas homeowners deserved tax relief. SB 1 increases the homestead exemption for school property tax. This bill helps hard-working Texas homeowners keep an estimated \$1.24 billion. SB 1 will increase state funding to public education so that school districts will not lose revenue.

SB 1760 added additional tax relief by changing the Property Tax Code to increase transparency and promote efficiency.

Local taxing entities will now require a 60% vote to raise any property taxes.

Texas businesses will also benefit thanks to the passage of HB 32. The bill gives qualifying businesses a 25% reduction in the state franchise tax rate, this represents a \$2.6 billion tax cut in the upcoming biennium. This will provide Texas entrepreneurs with the financial capital to pursue the American dream and create job opportunities for their fellow Texas citizens.

## JOBS

The State of Texas has had a great record of keeping unemployment down with an average of about 4.2%. The unemployment rate has remained at the lowest level since July 2007. In addition, Texas has added an estimated 287,000 jobs over the past year including a modest gain of about 1,200 jobs a month. This increase in jobs and low

unemployment rates are great steps for the State of Texas. However, many folks are still looking for good-paying middle class jobs in Southeast Texas. The state must continue to look at strengthening our Texas job growth and encouraging prosperity that can affect our private sector economy.



The Buna High School Academic Team was able to stop by their State Capitol to visit with State Representative James White during the State UIL Academic Meet.



State Representative James White meets with Rhonda Brown, Nancy Neel, and Tammy Droste of the American Cancer Society who advocated on behalf of cancer reduction choices and increased cancer research.

## HUMAN TRAFFICKING

The Legislature took great steps to fund border security in the budget for the next two years. The funding of border security goes a long way to help in the prevention of human trafficking. State Representative James White co-authored House Bill 416 which required personnel of abortion facilities to complete a training on human trafficking. This arose due to concerns that human traffickers are forcing many women to have abortions. This legislation will provide the tools for workers to identify these victims and take appropriate actions.

House Bill 10 is the omnibus human trafficking bill which stems from legislative recommendations made by the Texas Human

Trafficking Prevention Task Force. The bill requires the task force to identify and report to the Governor and Legislature on laws, licensure requirements, or other regulations that state and local officials can implement to curb trafficking using the internet and sexually oriented businesses.

In addition, HB 188 continues the operations of the Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force under the umbrella of the Office of the Attorney General. The Task Force will develop recommendations that address forced labor and sex trafficking of minors.

## BORDER SECURITY

An insecure border is a threat to safe communities in Southeast Texas and our national security. This session the Texas Legislature appropriated more funding for border security. These resources will enable the Department of Public Safety to put more boots on the border with the hiring of 250 new troopers. DPS will also employ cost-efficient technologies to monitor the border to a greater extent. In addition, the Legislature has mandated that state agencies use e-verify, which is a simple, but effective program to verify a worker's credentials to work in the United States.

Last year, the Texas Legislature directed DPS to work with federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies to combat the efforts by trans-national gangs to smuggle drugs and people across the Texas-Mexico border. This resulted in Operation Strong Safety (OSS). This operation involved coordination with various law enforcement agencies in land, air, and maritime saturation patrols on a 24/7 basis to eliminate trans-national gang activity in the Rio Grande Valley. During the 84th Session, DPS along with other key state agencies were directed to continue those efforts to secure the Texas-Mexico border between the ports of entry.