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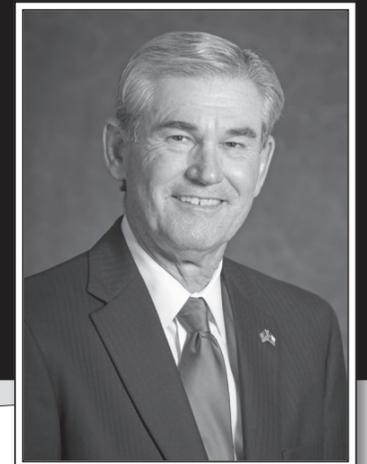
House Committee on Environmental Regulation • House Committee on Special Purpose Districts

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE ED THOMPSON



REPORTS TO DISTRICT 29
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FALL 2014

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ED THOMPSON

DISTRICT 29
BRAZORIA COUNTY (PART)

Dear Fellow Texan,

I hope this newsletter finds you well. The 83rd Legislature adjourned last August, and things have been busy in District 29 since I returned home. We are fortunate to be Texans, and it is a privilege to represent you in the Texas House of Representatives.

Please make note of the 2014 General Election that will take place on November 4th. Early Voting will be held October 20th through October 31st, and details on voting are on page 2 of this newsletter, including information on Proposition 1: a transportation funding measure.

Between the legislative sessions, state legislators are tasked with finding workable solutions for many of our state's challenging issues. Every committee in both the House and the Senate has specific topics to research, including education system reforms, transportation infrastructure, budgeting needs, and many other vital functions of state government. Serving on the House Environmental Regulation Committee and the House Special Purpose Districts Committee has been rewarding work, and you will find details on the issues we are working on during the interim on page 3 of this newsletter.

The 84th Legislative Session is gearing up to start on Tuesday, January 13th, and I look forward to continuing to represent the hardworking people of District 29 next session. Please use me as a resource, and feel free to contact us anytime.

Rest assured that I am committed to continuing to make our state government more responsive and more responsible for you and your fellow Texans.

Thank you for reviewing this newsletter, and thank you for the opportunity to serve as your State Representative.

All the Best,

Ed Thompson
District 29

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HELPFUL NUMBERS & WEBSITES

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ED THOMPSON ★ DISTRICT 29 ★ (512) 463-0707 ★ WWW.CAPITOL.STATE.TX.US

Texas Dept. of Aging and Disability Services
(800) 458-9858 • www.dads.state.tx.us/index.cfm

Texas Dept. of Agriculture
(800) 835-5832 • www.TexasAgriculture.gov

Office of the Attorney General • www.oag.state.tx.us
• **Child Support Enforcement** • (800) 252-8014
• **Consumer Protection** • (800) 621-0508
• **Crime Victims** • (800) 983-9933
• **Consumer Protection Hotline** • (800) 621-0508

Texas Education Agency
(512) 463-9734 • www.tea.state.tx.us

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
(512) 239-1000 • www.tceq.state.tx.us

Texas Dept. of Family and Protective Services
(800) 252-5400 • <https://www.dfps.state.tx.us/>

Texas Health and Human Services Commission
www.hhs.state.tx.us

Texas Dept. of State Health Services (DSHS)
(888) 963-7111 • www.dshs.state.tx.us

Texas Dept. of Insurance
(800) 252-3439 • <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/>

Texas Legislature
www.capitol.state.tx.us; Website for kids: www.kids.house.state.tx.us

Texas Office of Public Utility Counsel
(877) 839-0363 • www.opc.state.tx.us

Texas Parks and Wildlife Dept.
(800) 792-1112 • www.tpwd.state.tx.us

Texas Dept. of Public Safety
www.txdps.state.tx.us

Texas Public Utility Commission
(888) 782-8477 • <http://www.puc.texas.gov/>

Texas Department of Transportation
(800) 452-9292 • www.dot.state.tx.us

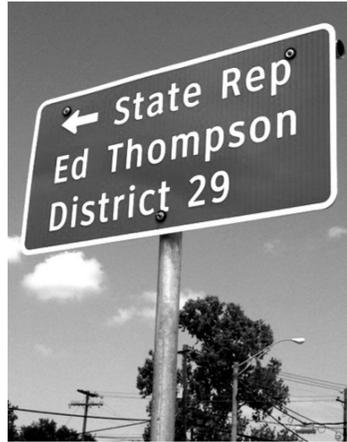
Voting and Election Information
(800) 252-8683 • www.dod.state.tx.us

Texas Workforce Commission
(800) 832-2829 • www.twc.state.tx.us





PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT: PROPOSITION 1



Texas voters will weigh in on this proposed amendment on November 4, 2014. The proposition will be Number 1 on the ballot and will be displayed as follows:

The constitutional amendment providing for the use and dedication of certain money transferred to the state highway fund to assist in the completion of transportation construction, maintenance, and rehabilitation projects, not to include toll roads.

HISTORY

Economic Stabilization Fund: Article 3, Section 49-g of the Texas Constitution establishes the Economic Stabilization Fund, which was originally ratified by voters in 1987. The fund, also known as the Rainy Day Fund, receives general revenue equivalent to 75 percent of any oil or natural gas production tax revenue that exceeds the net amount collected in fiscal year 1987. Additionally, the Comptroller must transfer one-half of any unencumbered balance remaining in the General Revenue Fund at the end of a fiscal biennium to the Rainy Day Fund.

State Highway Fund: Also known as Fund 6, the State Highway Fund receives money allocated by law to promote public road construction and maintenance, and to police the state highway system. The Highway Fund revenues from motor vehicle registration fees and taxes on motor fuels and lubricants are used only to acquire rights-of-way, construct, maintain and police public roadways, and to administer the state traffic and safety laws on such roads.

PROPOSITION 1

If adopted, the proposed Amendment's enabling legislation would direct the comptroller to allocate to the state highway fund one-half of the general revenue currently transferred to the Rainy Day Fund. These funds are required to be allocated throughout the state by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) consistent with existing formulas adopted by the Texas Transportation Commission.

The Comptroller would be required under this proposed law to reduce or withhold allocations to the highway fund as necessary to maintain a sufficient balance in the Rainy Day Fund. The sufficient balance would be determined by a select committee of members appointed by the Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor, with the first committee appointed as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date. The committee would include five members each from the House and Senate appointed by the speaker and lieutenant governor, respectively, and would determine a sufficient balance based on:

- the history of fund balances;
- the history of transfers to the fund;
- estimated fund balances for the fiscal biennium;
- estimated transfers to the fund to occur during the fiscal biennium;
- information available to the committee regarding state highway congestion and funding demands; and
- any other information requested by the committee regarding the state's financial condition.

A majority of members in both houses could adjust the sufficient balance determination by approving a resolution to this effect within the first 45 days of the regular legislative session. According to the Comptroller's 2014-2015 budget certification revenue estimate, the proposal would transmit approximately \$1.4 Billion into the highway fund in its first year of operation. With this transfer taken into consideration, the Rainy Day Fund is expected to end the biennium with an \$8.07 Billion balance, the largest in the Fund's history.

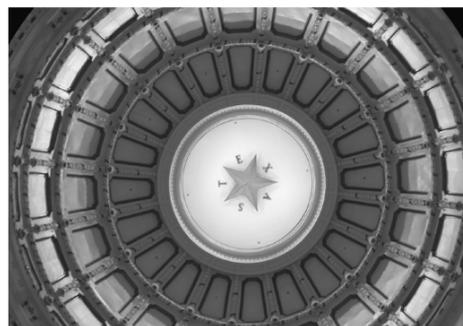
ELECTION DAY AND VOTING INFORMATION

Election Day is **Tuesday, November 4th, 2014**. Early Voting will take place October 20 – October 31st. Please visit the Brazoria County Clerk's website, www.brazoriacountyclerk.net and click on "Elections" to get more information on when and where to vote.

Items on the ballot will include state legislators, U.S. congressmen, various judicial officials, and statewide leadership including the offices of Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Agriculture Commissioner, Land Commissioner, Comptroller, and Railroad Commissioner.

The ballot will also include the proposed Constitutional Amendment concerning Texas transportation infrastructure funding (see section above for details). Additional information on Proposition 1 can be found through the House Research Organization website: www.TLC.state.tx.us/const_amends.htm.

If you aren't sure if you are registered to vote, or if you want to find out how to register to vote, please visit www.VoteTexas.gov, a great resource from the Texas Secretary of State's office.



HOUSE COMMITTEE WORK

I proudly serve on the House Environmental Regulation Committee, as well as the House Special Purpose Districts Committee. These committees are of great importance to the residents of District 29, and I have enjoyed weighing in on discussions and making decisions that directly impact our area of the state.

Several important issues affect residents of District 29 in the Environmental Regulation Committee, including:

1. Study the environmental permitting processes at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), specifically the contested-case hearing process at the State Office of Administrative Hearings (SOAH) and the timelines associated with the process. Study the economic impact that the state's permitting processes have on Texas manufacturing sectors and how neighboring states' and the federal permitting processes and timelines compare to those in Texas.
2. Study the rules, laws, and regulations pertaining to the disposal of high-level radioactive waste in Texas and determine the potential economic impact of permitting a facility in Texas. Make specific recommendations on the state and federal actions necessary to permit a high-level radioactive waste disposal or interim storage facility in Texas.
3. Review the Environmental Protection Agency's newly proposed Clean Power Plan to determine the potential impact the proposed federal rule would have on Texas. Specifically, the Committee should examine how the proposed emissions reductions would impact the reliability of the state's electricity generation, the potential impact on the price of retail electricity and its affordability, and the potential impact on the economic development of the state. Additionally, the Committee should review the state's renewable energy and energy efficiency standards to determine if they are capable of contributing to meeting any proposed emissions reductions and determine what changes, if any, to these policies could help facilitate meeting the proposed emissions reductions.

The Special Purpose Districts Committee has jurisdiction over the creation of a variety of districts, including those for emergency services, hospitals, libraries, municipal utilities, and other local districts that can charge a tax or fee for a specific purpose. Here is the issue we will investigate:

Conduct a comprehensive review of existing special purpose districts in the state. Study how special districts interact with other local governments and local taxpayers during and after their creation. Examine circumstances under which special districts are accountable to local taxpayers and make recommendations on ways to increase spending transparency among districts.

We will meet several times between now and the beginning of next session to make legislative recommendations for the 84th legislature.

DISTRICT 29 ADVISORY COUNCILS

Last year, we created six Advisory Councils, each consisting of men and women from District 29 who have relevant knowledge or interest in a variety of state government issues, along with tangible ideas on how to reform state government.

Members of these councils either submitted interest or were recommended to join any of the following groups:

- Education Council
- Business & Commerce Council
- Local Governance and Water Council
- Transportation Council
- Health & Human Services Council
- Insurance Council



We are grateful to everyone who has given their time and talents to discuss meaningful issues and ultimately provide their findings, suggestions, and recommendations for the 84th Legislature next year. If you are interested in joining a future Advisory Council meeting, please email me at District29.Thompson@house.state.tx.us.

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Constituents of House District 29 are welcome to contact my Capitol and District offices for assistance. We can help with legislative information, visits to the State Capitol, and issues with state government agencies. Please contact us with any questions you may have. We are here to serve you. The Capitol Review is a newsletter I send via email to folks who want to stay informed on state issues. The email is sent monthly during the interim and every other week during the Legislative Session. If you are interested in signing up for this newsletter, please email me at District29.Thompson@house.state.tx.us and let me know. Please include your full name, mailing address, as well as your preferred email address to ensure delivery.

HONORARY PAGE PROGRAM

Each member of the House has the opportunity to host Honorary Pages during the legislative session through the Texas House Honorary Page Program at the Texas Capitol. Students, ages 8 to 18 years old, may serve as honorary pages for half of a workday shift and witness the excitement of the legislative process from inside the Capitol. Honorary Pages are granted floor access and have the opportunity to visit with Representatives, meet the Speaker of the House, and experience the legislative process firsthand. Honorary Pages will also work with the Sergeant-at-Arms office to assist with the delivery of messages and documents around the Capitol. If you or someone you know is interested in being an Honorary Page during the 84th Legislative Session, email us for more details.