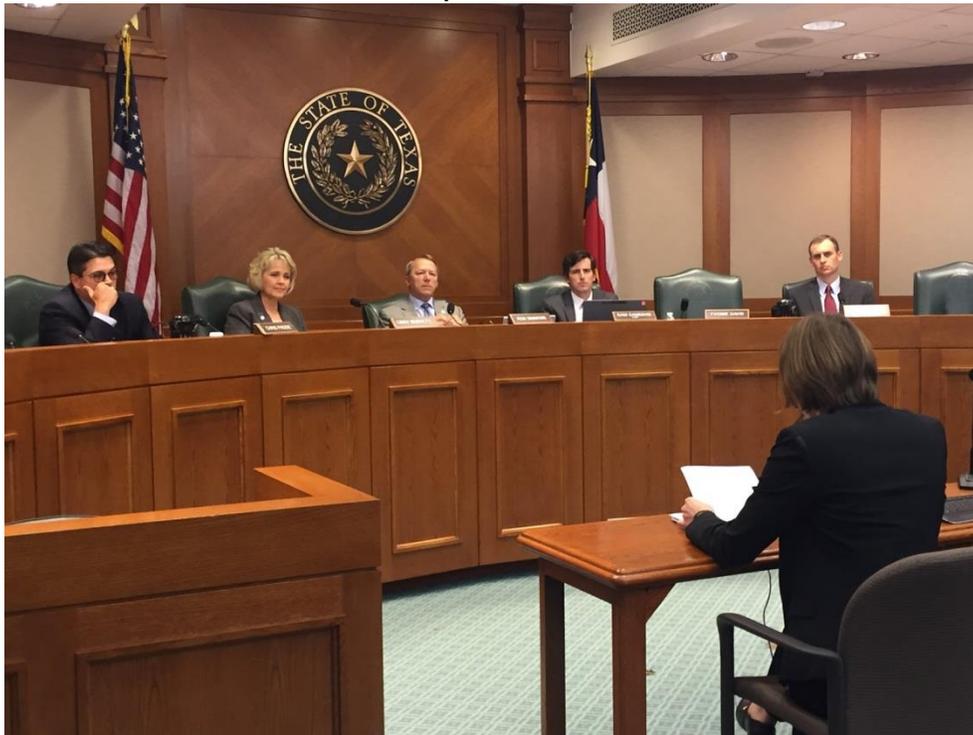


Capitol Comments

May 27, 2016



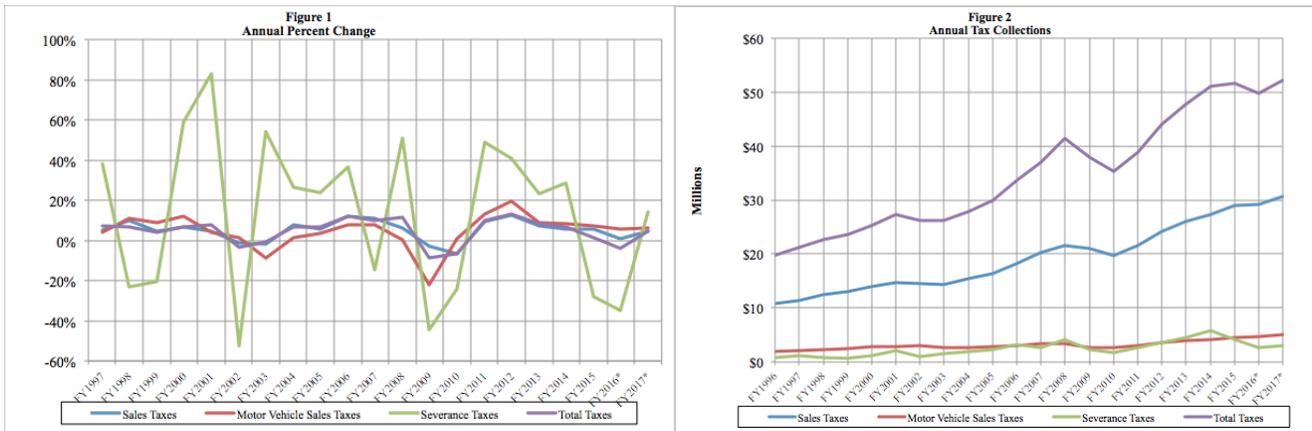
Capitol News

Transportation Committee Meetings

Interim committee work continued last week with two Transportation Committee hearings to discuss Texas' transportation challenges. The House Transportation Committee and the House Transportation Subcommittee met to address interim charges and examine other important developments in transportation. Interim charges are policy areas given to each specific committee to research, hear testimony on, and give policy recommendations for in advance of the next legislative session. For a full list of the interim charges assigned to the Transportation Committee, click here: <http://bit.ly/1sdAw4O>

As Chair of the House Transportation Sub-Committee on Long-Term Infrastructure planning, I am honored to represent the people of House District 65, and to continue examining ways to improve how we spend a large number of your tax dollars. Comptroller Glenn Hegar provided a financial forecast relating to transportation funding- highlighting tax collection revenues and how the state's collections

will look in future years. Graphs below demonstrate annual tax collections (Figure 2) and their percent changes (Figure 1).



The subcommittee examined interim charge #3, “Review the state’s statutory and budgetary requirements for design-build contracts, including cost and quantity restrictions, and consider the effect of removing those restrictions” and also heard testimony from the Texas Transportation Institute on the methods of transportation financing done by other states.

The full Transportation Committee examined utility relocation issues on state right-of-way construction and maintenance projects from the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT). The Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV), also updated the committee on their efforts to incentivize online vehicle registrations to save the state money and reduce wait times in local registration offices. As my district office is located in the Sandy Jacobs Denton County Government Building, I have witnessed first-hand how long these waits can get!

DFPS Holds Stakeholder Meeting

The State of Texas allocates funding for every state agency on a biennial basis (every two years) in the all-important appropriations bill passed every session by the legislature. Each agency makes a request for funding, called an allocation request, which includes plans for the usage of funds. This week, the Department of Family & Protective Services, which houses the Child Protective Services in Texas, met to take public input from stakeholders regarding funding needs to plan their allocation request to be submitted to the legislature later on in the year. Foster parents, caseworkers, adoption non-profit workers and many other associated with DFPS made requests to ensure the safety and well-being of children in the care of the State.

Testimony included requests for more funding to recruit and maintain quality caseworkers to decrease the heavy workloads reported by workers for better outcomes for foster children. Interested parties also requested that the education requirements for caseworker employment not be lowered to only having to have received a high school diploma, citing the essentialness of critical thinking gained in college to be an effective caseworker. Other concerns included making sure CPS offices keep pace with fast-growing counties across the state and the investment in education programs to ensure children in the state’s care have a future after aging out of the system. My office and I will continue to remain up to date on this important process to ensure the protection of Texas’ most vulnerable citizens.

District News

Students' Corner

Students from our district continue to be great ambassadors for our communities even after graduation. While the school year for K-12 students is drawing to a close, college students have already been enjoying their summer vacations for a few weeks! Below are outstanding college students honored for their academic achievements by their colleges who've graduated from schools in House District 65.

If you know of any outstanding students from our district and would like to have them recognized by our office, please email district65simmons@house.texas.gov !

<u>First</u>	<u>Last</u>	<u>School</u>	<u>Hometown</u>	<u>Honor</u>
Emma	Paulson	Harding University	Lewisville	Dean's list
Taylor	Rouse	Oklahoma City University	Carrollton	Dean's Honor roll
Jocelyn	Flores	Oklahoma City University	Carrollton	Dean's Honor roll
Thomas	Steele	Emerson College	Carrollton	Dean's List
Hunter	Malcom	East Central University	Carrollton	President Honor roll
Chikako	Martin	East Central University	Carrollton	President Honor roll
Shiksha	Thakali	East Central University	Lewisville	Dean's Honor roll
Faith	Rolen	Southern Arkansas University	Carrollton	Dean's List
Rufus	Mason III	Central Methodist University	Lewisville	Lettered in Football

Denton County House Delegation Set

I want to congratulate Dr. Lynn Stucky who won the runoff for HD 64 replacing longtime State Representative Myra Crownover. He will face a Democrat in the November general election. HD 64 is a historically strong Republican district, so it is likely that Dr. Stucky will be joining Chairman Tan Parker, Representative Pat Fallon, and myself in representing Denton County in Austin this coming January.

TASSP Scholarship

Each member of the legislature has the privilege of nominating a student to receive the Texas Armed Services Scholarship, which was created to assist promising Texas students who are committed to education and service. It encourages young leaders to participate in the Texas Guard, Army National Guard, or Air National Guard, or to become commissioned officers in the United States armed services.

The scholarship will provide recipients with up to \$10,000 per academic year for up to four years (out of the five years allowed for graduation) toward undergraduate education at any Texas university with an active ROTC program. Students graduating from a high school in House District 65 in 2016 and attending a public Texas institution in the ROTC program starting in the 2016-2017 school year may apply for our

office's nomination for the scholarship. For any additional questions, you can contact District Director Ebony Wilson at ebony.daughtry@house.texas.gov .

Link to scholarship application: <http://bit.ly/1rKL9vy>

Link for general TASSP information: <http://www.texasarmedservicescholarships.com/>

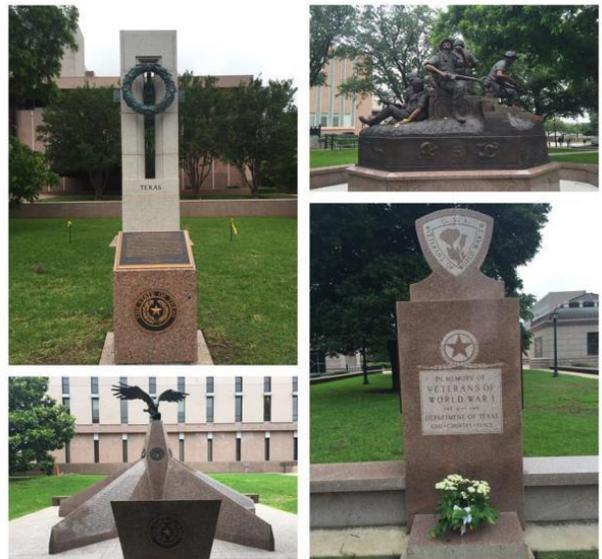
Deadline for application: Monday, August 15th at 12:00 PM

Ribbon Cutting: Code 3 ER Center in Carrollton

My District Director Ebony Wilson had the honor of attending the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new Code 3 ER Center in Carrollton. Code 3 Emergency Partners location in Carrollton features an emergency room, urgent care center, onsite lab and pharmacy. It is reassuring to know there is such a high quality emergency and urgent care center located in our community. My office also prepared a House resolution congratulating the clinic operators on their new establishment!

Memorial Day

This Memorial Day weekend, I want to honor all Americans who sacrificed their lives in service to this great country. The people of this nation are forever indebted to our fallen heroes and their families. As President Coolidge said, "the nation which forgets its defenders will itself be forgotten." If you and your family are in Austin this Memorial Day, I encourage you to attend the Fallen Heroes Art Exhibit located at the first floor of the rotunda in our beautiful state capitol building. Artist Ken Pridgeon will be presenting his portraits at 11:00am, and the Pasadena High School Choir will deliver a patriotic performance at noon. Also, make sure to visit the four monuments on the Texas Capitol grounds commemorating the fallen heroes of World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.



As always, it is an honor to serve you as your State Representative. Please let me know if I may ever be of service.

Best regards,

Ron Simmons
State Representative
House District 65