



Dear Friends,

It's been a beautiful and busy week in Austin and I've got a lot to update you on.

STAAR TESTING FIASCO

I've been openly critical of the state mandated STAAR test for quite some time and the technical problems our students and educators experienced this past Tuesday is just another reason that we need to do away with this awful test. As a dad, I'm outraged. Not only for my children, two of which were attempting to take the test on Tuesday, but also for the educators who, instead of teaching in the classroom, are trying to navigate technical glitches, console upset children and figure out what to do next. The anxiety and preparation leading up to the test is bad enough without having the whole system crash in the middle of test taking. Assessment is important – we can all agree on that. But there are better tools available and it's time we utilize them.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

HOUSE BILL 1239: Yesterday the House voted on and passed [HB 1239](#) by my good friend and colleague, Representative Scott Sanford. This important bill will ensure no church or house of worship is ever closed by a governmental entity again. It is unconscionable - and unconstitutional - for such actions to take place and I was happy to vote for this great bill. I encourage my Senate colleagues to quickly pass HB 1239 and send it to Governor Abbott to sign.

HOUSE BILL 5: The Texas House voted on and unanimously passed [House Bill 5](#) yesterday which will increase broadband internet access throughout Texas. Access to high-speed internet is a game changer for many Texans: Education. Jobs. Entertainment. Health care. The doors of opportunity are blown wide open when you give Texans reliable access to a vital resource like the internet. I am proud to support House Bill 5 and look forward to seeing this bill become law.

HOUSE BILL 2313: Wednesday I was able to layout [House Bill 2313](#) - the Every Mother Matters Act (EMMA) in the House Committee on Public Health. The goal of EMMA is to promote a culture of life in Texas. The majority of women who abort their unborn children

are young, uninsured and unemployed (or employed part-time). Data shows that 75% of women considering abortion would choose life if their circumstances were different or if they had answers or services offered to them. That's the purpose of EMMA...to come alongside women and help them navigate assistance available to them via public and private entities such as employment, housing, health benefits, pre and post-natal care, mental health assistance and more. This woman will receive support assistance for two years regardless of pregnancy outcome. All at her own choice and at no cost to her.

HEALTHY FAMILIES, HEALTHY TEXS PLAN: Also introduced this week was the Healthy Families, Healthy Texas Plan - a bi-partisan legislative package to ensure healthcare is accessible and affordable to all Texans. This plan encompasses bills that provide solutions to the many problems we are seeing today. Such as expanding telehealth, addressing maternal mortality, reducing drug prices for the uninsured, and expanding access to vaccines for vulnerable Texans. I have heard loud and clear from my constituents the importance of affordable and accessible healthcare and I believe the bills in the Healthy Families, Healthy Texas Plan will go a long way to meeting that goal. You can learn more about each individual bill included in the plan [here](#).

CONSTITUENT SERVICES

As always, my staff and I stand ready and available to help you in any way we can. If you need help navigating state agencies such as:

- Texas Workforce Commission
- Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
- Texas Department of Insurance
- Texas Behavioral Health Council

Please call our office or reach out via email. If we don't know the answer, we'll reach out to someone who does and are happy to be your advocate as you navigate these often-time complicated agencies.

TRACKING BILLS IMPORTANT TO YOU

I encourage you to visit [Texas Legislature Online](#) and follow the steps to help track bills you are interested in during the Legislative Session. By signing up for legislative alerts, you have the opportunity to receive real-time updates as bills move throughout the lawmaking process. It is an incredibly useful tool available to the public and is one that we highly recommend to constituents.

COME VISIT YOUR TEXAS HOUSE

While this session has certainly been different, I'm thankful when I'm able to step off the House floor to visit with friends and constituents. Yesterday I was able to quickly chat with a great group of folks from Plano and Frisco. It's always encouraging to see people interested and taking part in the political process!



Have a great weekend friends!

All My Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeff Leach". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jeff Leach

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