Dear Constituents of House District 93,

Greetings! My name is Matt Krause and I am your state representative for House District 93.

It has been a pleasure to serve you in the Texas Legislature striving to make our great state even better. During the 84th Texas Legislative Session, my colleagues and I did just that and passed several bills into law, affecting our district and our state. We passed legislation covering a myriad of topics, notably fiscal issues, tax relief, 2nd Amendment rights, border security, and social issues. This newsletter serves to give you information on a few key bills that were passed into law so that you may be better informed on what your legislators did in the first half of 2015.

If you have any questions on this legislation or if you have ideas on how we can better serve House District 93, please contact our Capitol office at (512) 463-0562 or our district office at (817) 847-4900.

Sincerely,

Matt Krause
State Representative, House District 93

Committees: Corrections • Land and Resource Management
Bills Passed By Your Representative

House Bill 648 (HB 648) – This bill relates specifically to the Viridian Municipal Management District located entirely in Arlington. This district was created by the Legislature several years ago and serves to aid in the development of this community. HB 648 changes how the board of directors is composed, with some members being appointed by the Arlington mayor and city council and others being voted on by residents. This bill also provides a mechanism for the whole board to become elected by the residents upon 90% of the developable acreage being developed.

House Bill 2531 (HB 2531) – This bill was used to heavily amend another bill that ultimately was passed into law: HB 3994. This bill dealt with the judicial bypass court procedure, a process by which a minor can get an abortion without the consent of her parents, but instead by getting permission from the courts.

Judicial bypass was first allowed in Texas in 1999 and since then it has become apparent that the process is riddled with holes and opportunities for fraud. HB 2531 via HB 3994 shores up many of these holes and brings much needed accountability and integrity to the whole process. Major improvements to the judicial bypass process include:

- No more venue shopping. Minors originally could go to any of Texas’ 254 counties to get a judicial bypass. Now they can only seek a bypass in their home county or, if their county’s population is less than 10,000, an adjacent county.

- Information on the minors before the judge is confidential, not anonymous. This allows the judge to learn more information before giving a ruling, but is kept confidential from the public.

- Mandatory reporting of abuse: during the court proceedings suspicions of abuse may be revealed. This bill requires that those suspicions be immediately reported to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). Previously, with the minor’s information being kept anonymous, the requirement to report abuse was very unclear.

- Previously, a judge could refuse to rule and the bypass would automatically be granted. Now, a judge has to actively rule in the affirmative in order for a bypass to be allowed.

House Bill 2565 (HB 2565) – HB 2565 was amended onto HB 1396 and it creates a commission that will research all of Texas’ penal laws that lie outside the penal code. This commission will make recommendations to the Legislature on how to repeal unnecessary and insufficient laws. Since 1993, there has been no systematic attempt to create consistency
among offenses and the vast number of Texas criminal offenses has rendered the law unwieldy and sometimes unjust, with penalties often disproportionate to the severity of the crime. An example of this discrepancy is that harvesting oysters at night can be a felony, but hiding a dead body is only a misdemeanor. Other bizarre offenses that may end in incarceration that this commission will examine are lying in a fishing tournament, causing pecans to fall from a tree by any means, and mislabeling a box of citrus fruit.

House Bill 3376 (HB 3376) – This bill was amended onto SB 1139. It allows judges in Tarrant County’s family courts to select their own bailiffs. Family courts are often high-tension environments and these judges need to have bailiffs that they know they can trust and depend on to help effectively run the courtroom and keep all persons involved safe.

House Bill 3387 (HB 3387) – This bill gives statutory authority to the Board of Pardons and Paroles to require for those who are being released on parole to enroll in a sex offender treatment program if the inmate has been convicted of a sexual offense or is a participant in sex offender treatment before their release. The Board also has discretion, through due process, to impose sex offender treatment as a condition of release for releasees convicted of a sexual offense or required to register as a sex offender and not required to complete a sex offender treatment prior to release. They may also impose sex offender treatment if there is sufficient evidence that a sexual offense occurred during the commission of the offense for which the offender was convicted in the first place. This will help ensure that our communities are safe and that the individuals that need this treatment are getting the appropriate care.

Other Notable Bills

HB 1 – The Budget – The Legislature passed a balanced budget and I was happy to have supported it. The budget grows by less than 2% per year over the biennium and that growth is less than population + inflation - remaining beneath Texas’ constitutional spending limit. It ends diversions of the gas tax and for the first time in decades, all the money in the State Highway Fund will be used for transportation instead of getting diverted to other programs. It also more than doubles the resources for border security, providing funding for additional manpower and technology.
Tax Cuts

HB 32 – This bill cuts the business margins tax by 25% across the board, allowing entrepreneurs to invest more in their businesses and employees.

Senate Joint Resolution 1 (SJR 1) – On November 3rd, 2015 voters had a chance to vote on SJR 1. Should it have passed, the Texas Constitution will have been amended to increase the residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation for public school purposes by $10,000 from $15,000 to $25,000. This reduction in property taxes means homeowners will keep more of their hard earned dollars.

Border Security

This session the Legislature addressed the dire situation at our border through several bills.

HB 10 – This bill seeks to prevent and ultimately eliminate human trafficking by enacting the recommendations made by Texas’ Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force (created in 2009) in their 2014 report.

HB 11 - Strengthens efforts to combat crime at the border. It enhances the penalties related to human smuggling, allows the Public Safety Commission to establish a reserve officer corps of state troopers, and improves communication among various law enforcement agencies.

HB 12 – It establishes the Border Prosecution Unit, which will facilitate cooperation among prosecutors, provide investigative assistance, and develop best practices for the investigation of crimes on the border.

Transportation

Senate Joint Resolution (SJR 5) – Voters will have a chance to vote on SJR 5 in November 2015. Should it pass, it will constitutionally dedicate the first $2.5 billion of the existing vehicle sales, use, and rental taxes to General Revenue (GR). It also constitutionally dedicates the next $2.5 billion each year to the State Highway Fund (SHF). Any excess revenue past that will be split 50/50 between GR and SHF each fiscal year. This will help give TxDOT a predictable revenue stream and aid the Department in meeting our state’s transportation needs as they continue to increase in the years to come. These funds may not be used for toll roads.
2nd Amendment

HB 910 (Open Carry) – This bill allows for the licensed open carry of modern handguns in Texas so long as the handguns are carried in shoulder or belt holsters. As with concealed carry, property owners may forbid open carry from their property by providing oral or written notification to license holders as they enter their property. This bill takes effect January 1, 2016.

SB 11 (Campus Carry) – This bill allows for the concealed carry of a handgun by an individual who is a concealed handgun licensee (CHL) on public or private institutions of higher education. Private institutions may establish rules or regulations prohibiting CHLs on their campus only after consulting with their students, faculty, and staff. Public institutions may not impose administrative bans or sanctions, but may establish rules and regulations governing the storage of the handguns by CHLs and post that athletic events and sporting venues are off-limits to CHLs. Locations that are normally off-limits to CHLs are also off-limits for those on college campuses. This law takes effect August 1st, 2016 for public institutions and August 1st, 2017 for public junior colleges. Private institutions may adopt their rules and regulations before August 1st, 2016.

Social Issues

SB 2065 (Pastor Protection Bill) – This provides protection for religious leaders and religious organizations by allowing them to refuse to participate in any part of a marriage or celebration of a marriage without fear of legal action if it would violate a sincerely held religious belief. A refusal to participate as described above can't be the basis for a civil or criminal cause of action, or any other cause of action by the state or a political subdivision of the state, including withholding benefits or privileges, tax exemptions, or government contracts, grants, or licenses.

Office Services

As always, my office is here to serve you – on the House floor and off; during the Session and the interim. Whether you need assistance in dealing with a state agency, have questions about state services, want to talk about past and potential legislation, or you are looking for help and you don’t know where to start, my office is ready to serve. Please feel free to contact us at any time!
District 93 • How Can We Help?

CAPITOL OFFICE:  P.O. Box 2910, Capitol Room E2.212
Austin, Texas 78768-2910  (512) 463-0562  (512) 463-2053 fax

DISTRICT OFFICE:  6624 N. Riverside Drive, Suite #330
Fort Worth, Texas 76137  (817) 847-4900  (817) 847-4902 fax

Matt.Krause@house.state.tx.us

REPRESENTATIVE MATT KRAUSE

Representing Tarrant (part) County  •  84th Legislative Capitol Update  •  Fall 2015

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Better serving House District 93, please contact our Capitol office at (512) 463-0562 or our district office at (817) 847-4900.

Sincerely,

Matt Krause
State Representative • District 93
P. O. Box 2910 • Austin, Texas 78768-2910

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Committees:
- Corrections
- Land and Resource Management
- Natural Resources
- Transportation

Social Issues

- SB 2065 (Pastor Protection Bill)
- HB 1845 (Religious Freedom)

Issues of the day.

Matt Krause
State Representative • District 93
P. O. Box 2910 • Austin, Texas 78768-2910

District 93 Map

MATT KRAUSE
State Representative

FALL 2015