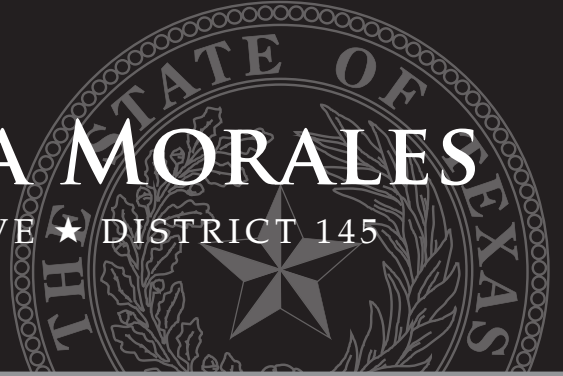




# CHRISTINA MORALES

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 145



## CAPITOL UPDATE

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



DISTRICT 145

Constituents of House District 145:

As your State Representative, I am writing to you about many exciting developments in our district and communities. To begin, it is a pleasure to welcome the new neighborhoods that have joined the district. You are now a part of the #HD145 family and are welcome in our District and Capitol Offices at any time. We are here to serve you and if there is any way we can help, please reach out.

We have made considerable progress as a community since our last update. In Harris County, 77.23% of the population age 5+ has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine. Though we have flattened the curve and protected those most at risk from infection, we will continue to push for greater resources to support the community as the pandemic continues. More access to testing, vaccinations, and masks will only make us stronger.

2021 was a difficult year, with 3 Special Legislative Sessions following the 87th Regular Legislative Session at the beginning of 2021. We fought for voting rights, Medicare expansion, women's reproductive rights, and the needs of our community. I am proud to say that I passed two bills and Joint Authored 12 bills, including addressing concrete batch plants and bills that increased the state's resources for victims of human trafficking. We have already started the process of preparing legislation for the next Legislative Session. If you have input or ideas for future bills, please contact our District Office.

Serving as Vice Chair of the International Relations Economic and Development Committee is a true honor, with the committee process being core to the legislative system. Additionally, I am proud to serve on the Local and Consent Calendar and the Culture, Recreation, and Tourism Committee.

We continue to live in unprecedented times, yet our community has grown stronger and came together to support each other. The fight will continue and we remain open to answer your questions and assist you in any way we can. It is with great pride to have the privilege of representing HD145 and the community that we share.

Sincerely,

Rep. Christina Morales  
Texas House of Representatives  
House District 145

# ★ 87TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION - STATEWIDE HIGHLIGHTS ★

## EDUCATION

- **SB 1** fully funds the provisions of HB 3 from the 86th legislative session.
- **SB 1102** establishes the Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE) program to allow businesses and institutions of higher education to provide credentials to underemployed workers with the skills needed to fill high-demand industry jobs in the workforce after COVID-19.
- **HB 1525** makes improvements to the state's school finance system by directing over \$2 billion to public schools to address the costs of COVID learning loss and winter storm Uri. HB 1525 also adjusts the small and mid-sized Career Technology Education (CTE) allotment to ensure smaller ISDs are not penalized for providing CTE instruction.

## HEALTH CARE

- **HB 133** provides for six months of Medicaid coverage for new moms.
- **SB 827** caps an enrollee's shared cost on prescription insulin to \$25.
- **HB 1935** expands access to lifesaving medications by giving pharmacists the authority to dispense a 30-day emergency supply of insulin and diabetic supplies.
- **HB 4** expands access and the cost effectiveness of telehealth and telemedicine services to Texans across the state. *(Coauthor)*
- **HB 797** allows for the administration of vaccines in the home for the medically vulnerable and elderly.
- **HB 428** improves prevention and early detection of ovarian cancer by expanding minimum health coverage for ovarian cancer screening requirements. *(Coauthor)*
- **HB 1802** will deliver a study of alternative therapies for treating PTSD. *(Coauthor)*
- **SB 454** implements requirements for local and regional officials to coordinate and improve the delivery of mental health services.
- **HB 18** increases access to affordable prescription drugs by establishing a new drug savings program for certain uninsured individuals.

## SEXUAL ASSAULT AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING

- **HB 21** extends the limitations on a sexual harassment claim filed with the Workforce Commission from 180 to 300 days.
- **HB 1706** authorizes the commissioners court of a county to establish a sexual assault victim services court program to provide victim services in sexual assault cases.

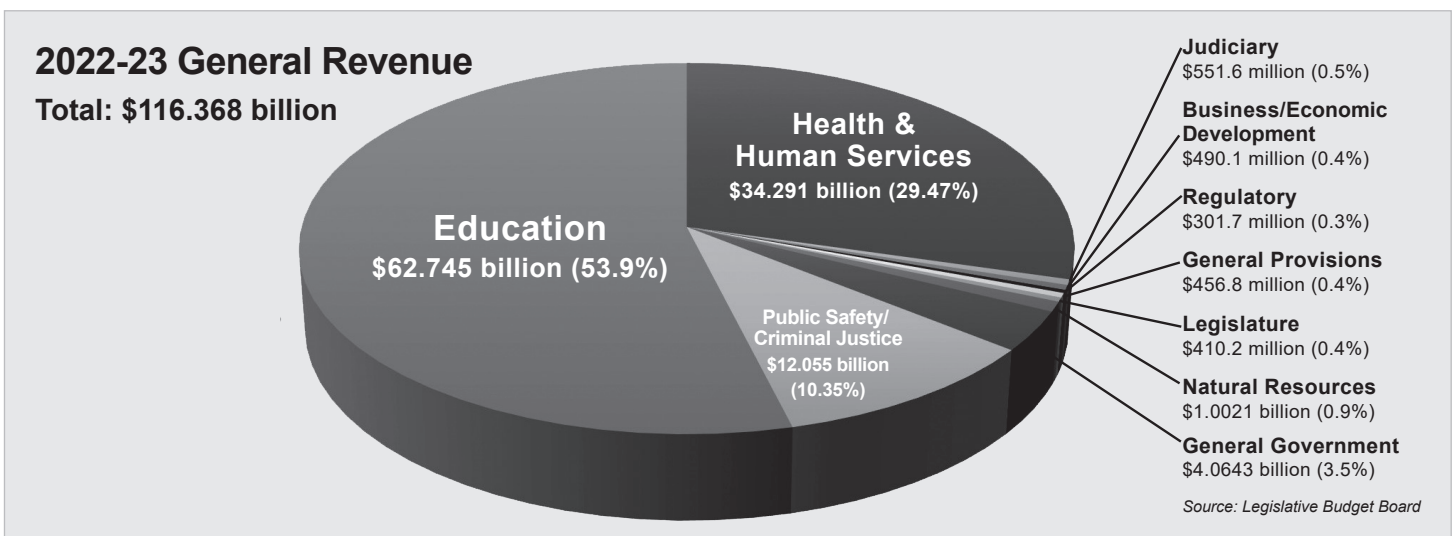
- **HB 390** requires employees of commercial lodging establishments to complete an annual human trafficking awareness and prevention training program.
- **HB 1540** implements several recommendations of the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force including measures to better protect victims and strengthen law enforcement's investigatory and prosecutorial tools for addressing human trafficking and related crimes. *(Joint Author)*
- **HB 3721** requires certain licensees to post signage and notices displaying the national human trafficking hotline number or other information regarding assistance for trafficking victims.

## ERCOT/PUC

- **HB 16** protects consumers from sky-high electric bills by banning the sale of wholesale indexed products to residential customers, which can leave them vulnerable to extreme fluctuations in electricity prices.
- **HB 1520** provides securitization financing for gas utilities to recover extraordinary costs from Winter Storm Uri and requires a study of measures to mitigate similar future costs.
- **SB 2** reforms the governance of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT), requiring every member of the governing body to be a Texas resident.
- **SB 3** helps ensure the reliability and resiliency of the ERCOT Grid, making certain Texas is better prepared for future extreme weather emergencies by addressing some of the key issues that arose during and after Winter Storm Uri.

## OTHER IMPORTANT ITEMS

- **HB 5** expands broadband to underserved areas across Texas. *(Conference Committee Conferee and Coauthor)*
- **HB 1518** allows the sale of wine and beer at 10AM on Sundays by holders of the applicable permit, in addition to authorizing hotel bars to sell alcohol to registered guests at any time.
- **HB 1195** protects small businesses by not taxing them for receiving Paycheck Protection Program loans.
- **HB 1276** increases Texans' access to food and allows restaurants to generate additional revenue by allowing these establishments to sell unprepared food directly to consumers.
- **SB 969** improves the collection and dissemination of data related to a public health emergency, requiring the Department of State Health Services to make all available health data publicly available on its website in an easy-to-read format.



## ★ 87TH LEGISLATION BY REP. CHRISTINA MORALES ★

I proudly authored 12 bills in the 87th Legislative Session, addressing important issues in our community such as healthcare access for students, air quality at schools, access to Ethnic Studies courses, and bills honoring Vanessa Guillén.

### Four bills passed the Texas House and two bills were signed by the Governor (HB 2110 and HCR 51):

- **HB 1135** - Relating to the terms and conditions of a standard possession order in a suit affecting the parent-child relationship.  
*Ensuring divorce decrees have terms for pandemics and force majeure to return children to custodial parents.*
- **HB 1504** - Relating to adding Ethnic Studies to curriculum requirements.  
*Changing ethnic studies from electives to courses counting towards graduation requirements.*
- **HB 2110** - Relating to the automatic transfer of manufacturer's warranties on air conditioning systems conveyed with residential real property.  
*Attaching HVAC warranty to units and not individuals, removing the need for individuals to transfer warranty policies.*
- **HCR 51** - Urging the United States Congress to pass the I am Vanessa Guillén Act.  
*Calling on the United States Congress to honor Vanessa Guillén and pass federal legislation in her memory in the I am Vanessa Guillén Act.*

### Was honored to have sponsored and passed:

- **SB 1185** (Sen. Carol Alvarado) - Relating to the designation of a portion of State Highway 3 in Harris County as the Vanessa Guillén Memorial Highway.

### Additionally, I filed 8 bills that we introduced in the Texas House:

- **HB 802** - Relating to early voting by mail by any qualified voter.  
*Removes qualifying restrictions for voting by mail; allows all registered, eligible Texas voters to vote by mail.*
- **HB 846** - Relating to the length of the early voting period.  
*Extending early voting from 17 to 21 days.*
- **HB 1415** - Relating to automatically sending a ballot by mail in special election runoffs to those who voted by mail in the special election.  
*Changing the voting by mail runoff ballot system to opt-out.*
- **HB 2974** - Relating to requiring schools to change air filters and clean HVAC units following an explosion of a manufacturing or chemical plant that reduces air quality in the school's vicinity.  
*Requiring schools to clean HVAC unit and replace air filters after plant explosions.*
- **HB 1055** - Relating to requiring all public schools to have a registered or equivalent medical professional present on campus.  
*Requiring schools to have a nurse on campus at least half day.*
- **HB 1200** - Relating to the ability of cities and counties to adopt historic preservation programs to document and protect buildings, structures, objects, sites and districts of historic, architectural, archeological, cultural or scenic significance to the locality.  
*Permitting cities to establish historic preservation programs.*
- **HB 2639** - Relating to a study by the Public Utility Commission of Texas on the interconnection of electric transmission service facilities with the United Mexican States.  
*A study on electric interconnections between Texas and Mexico.*

## HB 1504 ETHNIC STUDIES

Ethnic Studies are an important tool we have in providing students with a broader and fuller view of world history. In the 2019-2020 school year, less than 1500 students in the entire state of Texas took an Ethnic Studies course. Efforts to expand Ethnic Studies had proven slow, pointing for a need to push for Ethnic Studies at the state level.

A champion of Ethnic Studies and professor of Mexican American Literature and Rhetorical Analysis, Tony Diaz, reached into the community of scholars, students, school administrators, and community members who wanted students to have access to Ethnic Studies in high school. After working with superintendents, educators, and students, we filed **HB 1504** to bring Ethnic Studies to students across the state.

After filing, the support rushed in. We received calls, letters, and visitors from those wanted to know how they could help. Many came to testify at the committee hearing and others wrote letters of support and sent them to the Public Education Committee. Rotary clubs, notably Ted Weisgal with the Rotary Club of Herman Park, started community campaigns and we worked with the State Board of Education to ensure that it would be effective and work in graduation requirements.



*Ethnic Studies Press Conference with Representative Morales, Representative Wu, Representative Allen, and Tony Diaz*

**HB 1504** was historic. It was the first Ethnic Studies bill to pass the Texas House of Representatives on May 11, 2021. It passed due to the hard work of people like Tony Diaz and all of the others who came to Austin and worked in their communities to support the bill. I look forward to continuing the fight and reintroducing legislation in the next session to ensure that all students can learn their history.



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*International Relations & Economic Development, Vice Chair  
Culture, Recreation & Tourism • Local & Consent Calendars*

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## VANESSA GUILLÉN

Being one of our own...The story of Vanessa Guillén began in 2020, when she was reported missing on April 23rd. This began a tragic uncovering of her brutal murder and the abuses of power that occurred at Fort Hood. Vanessa Guillén was not the first soldier to have experienced sexual assault, abuse, or to have been murdered. It was clear that there needed to be reform.

Our community felt the immense impact from losing Vanessa, with millions joining with the hashtag #iAmVanessaGuillen to call attention to the abuses occurring at Fort Hood. It opened the conversation about the need for military reform as well as greater protections for those serving our country.

Vanessa Guillén was a constituent and community member in House District 145. After discussing with the Guillén family, we began the process of drafting legislation to honor her and to ensure that this tragedy would never happen again.



*Mural of Vanessa Guillén by Donkeeboy and Donkeemom*

The Texas Legislature passed the following bills in honor of Vanessa Guillén:

**HCR 51 (Morales)** - Urging the United States Congress to Pass the I am Vanessa Guillén Act

**SB 1185 (Alvarado)** - Relating to the designation of a portion of State Highway 3 in Harris County as the Vanessa Guillén Memorial Highway

**SB 623 (Blanco)** - Relating to the investigation of certain sexual offenses, to protective orders issued on the basis of certain sexual offenses, to crime victims' compensation, and to the establishment of a state sexual offense prevention and response program for the Texas Military Department



*Press Conference on HCR 51 by Representative Morales with Rep. Hernandez, Rep. Perez, Sen. Blanco, Sen. Alvarado, Rep. Morales Shaw, Rep. Anchia, Rep. Neave, and Rep. Ordaz Perez*