



NEWS FROM THE CAPITOL

REPRESENTATIVE JIM MURPHY

A Note from Jim...

House Bill 2581 was signed by the Governor this week. This is our first bill this session to become law. [HB 2581](#) will allow the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to provide unemployment insurance credits for a company that has been merged or acquired. This bill will save companies and our state money.

With only 12 days left in the 82nd Legislature, some "heavy lifting" bills are starting to be heard. The House has passed the "Sanctuary Cities" bills, approved the sunset bill for Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA), and reformed the election code to help prevent voter fraud.

This week, the Senate version of the fiscal matters bills will be discussed with public education funding as a top priority. Yesterday, Comptroller Combs updated her revenue estimate for the next two years and announced that there is an additional \$1.2 billion available for the upcoming budget. The Texas economy shows signs of strengthening. It is promising to see there will be additional funding for critical needs in our budget, including public education.

As we enter the home stretch of this legislative session, I will continue to do my utmost to represent House District 133 in the best way possible.

Legislation Update...

[Sanctuary Cities \(HB 12\)](#)

HB 12 was passed out of the House on May 11, with a vote of 100-47 and is now scheduled for a public hearing in the *Transportation and Homeland Security* committee in the Senate. This bill was declared an emergency item by Governor Perry in January and will prohibit cities, counties and other governmental entities from creating policies that prohibit law enforcement from inquiring as to the immigration status of a person legally detained or arrested. Entities that refuse to comply are at risk of losing state funds. This bill will end properties that allow criminal illegal aliens to have free reign, and it will protect Texas citizens and law enforcement officers affected by the violence on the border.

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ment officers affected by the violence on the border.

[Texas Windstorm Insurance Association \(HB 272\)](#)

Recently, the Texas Department of Insurance placed the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA) under administrative oversight due to numerous management problems plaguing the agency. The Travis County District Attorney's office also announced a criminal investigation into possible fraudulent activity related to claims from Hurricane Ike as well as the events surrounding TWIA management oversight practices.

House Bill 272, aiming to reform the troubled agency, will improve access to administrative legal remedies, provide access to local courts for adjudication, and increase the transparency of TWIA management. It also protects Texas taxpayers with respect to claims. HB 272 is currently in the Senate *Business and Commerce* committee.

It is imperative that TWIA be operating at maximum efficiency, that the Reserve Trust Fund be solvent and that the agency have adequate management measures in place to protect consumers and ensure that claims are paid in a timely manner. HB 272 is an important step in the right direction toward restoring public confidence in TWIA.

[Election Reforms \(HB 2817 and HB 804\)](#)

In an effort to substantively improve the integrity of the voting process, the House has passed several election reforms.

House Bill 804 would strengthen existing laws related to the criminal offense for non-U.S. citizens who commit voter fraud. House Bill 2817 contained a number of election reform measures including banning the practice of "vote harvesting" and creating voter registration quotas. Other election reform measures included:

- Requiring volunteer voter registrars to be registered voters in Texas
- Voter registrars must not have been convicted of fraudulent use of an ID
- Increasing the punishment for unlawful assistance of voter registration
- Allowing voters registered in the state and residing outside the US to vote a full ballot by mail

Both House bills are currently in the Senate *State Affairs* committee. Making sure that the public has the highest confidence in our elections is a top priority.

Legislative Deadlines...

May 20th – last day for the House to consider local House Bills on 2nd & 3rd reading

May 24th – last day for the House to consider 2nd reading on Senate Bills and Senate Joint Resolutions

May 25th – last day for the House to consider local and consent Senate Bills on 2nd & 3rd reading

May 27th – last day for the House to consider Senate Amendments

May 29th – last day for the House to adopt Conference Committee Reports

May 30th – last day of the Session (Sine Die)

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