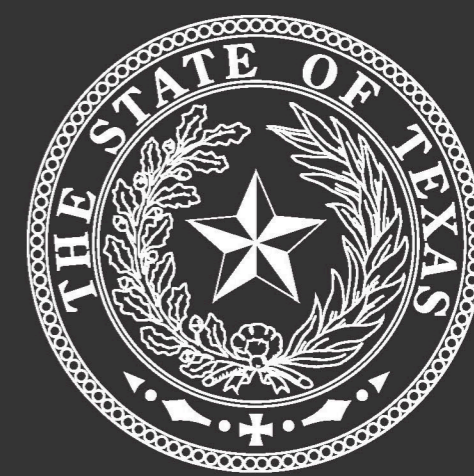




STATE REPRESENTATIVE



JOHN FRULLO



DISTRICT 84 ★ FALL 2015

84TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION & CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT INFORMATION



JOHN M. FRULLO
STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 84

Dear Friends,

It is an honor to serve you in the Texas House of Representatives. During the 84th Legislative Session we addressed a number of core issues including border security, education, transportation, and tax reductions. With the work we accomplished, Texas will continue to lead the way.

I kept my commitment to fiscal discipline by supporting and passing a balanced budget for 2016-2017 that grows less than 2 percent per year (which is less than expected inflation and population growth). This still allows for approximately \$4 billion in tax relief. The budget provides additional resources for public education, higher education, transportation, and border security while still leaving \$11 billion in the Rainy Day Fund. Texas Tech University and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center received additional funding to address growth and continues to make headway in the pursuit of excellence!

We took great strides to ensure the protection of our Second Amendment rights. We also made important education reforms that broaden the accountability system used to evaluate schools and limit the role of standardized tests.

Securing the border with Mexico is on the hearts and minds of all Texans. Because the federal government fails to act, we added additional law enforcement and approximately \$840 million to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and other state agencies to help protect the border.

At the beginning of the 84th Legislative Session, Speaker Straus appointed me as the Chairman of the Insurance Committee. The Insurance Committee has the responsibility of oversight for the insurance market in Texas, the 10th largest insurance market in the world! It is a great honor to serve you in this capacity as the committee continues to work through the interim. The Insurance Committee addressed a number of pressing issues that are mentioned in this newsletter.

Inside this newsletter you will find highlights from the session, an overview of legislation I passed, and the constitutional amendments you will see on the ballot in November.

Thank you to all of you who contacted my office during the session. Your input in the legislative process is very important and I appreciated hearing from you. If we can ever be of service to you, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,

John M. Frullo
State Representative, District 84

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FRULLO'S BILLS OF THE 84TH SESSION



★ LEGISLATION AUTHORED OR JOINT AUTHORED BY REPRESENTATIVE FRULLO ★

HB 905	Eliminates the patchwork of confusing local knife laws
HB 1535	Streamlines the electricity ratemaking process to reduce legal costs
HB 1793	Strengthens the tools law enforcement have to recover missing children
HB 3028	Prohibits dishonest business practices in the discount healthcare industry
HB 168	Allows Distinguished Flying Cross medal recipients to be exempt from state and local parking meters
HB 188	Continues the Human Trafficking Task Force
HB 1447	Provides more protection for victims of continuous human trafficking
HB 2145	Establishes a provisional license for insurance agents, allowing the agents to begin work while their license is being processed
HB 2290	Designates January as the Human Trafficking Prevention Month
HB 2291	Enhances the penalty for repeat child pornography offenders
HB 2813	Requires certain Texas health benefit plans to cover an annual blood test for early detection of ovarian cancer
HB 3823	Changes the PACE (program for all-inclusive care for the elderly) reimbursement methodology to ensure program sustainability

★ LEGISLATION SPONSORED OR CO-SPONSORED BY REPRESENTATIVE FRULLO IN THE HOUSE ★

SJR 22	Protects our rights to hunt and fish in Texas
SB 473	Enhances the protection for gun owners who carry firearms listed on the National Firearm Act
SB 724	Exempts a school district or public agency from certain motor vehicle sales and use tax
SB 783	Requires the Department of Insurance to develop an antifraud program
SB 784	Streamlines the data collection at the Department of Insurance
SB 876	Modernizes the insurance agent licensing process
SB 907	Updates the Texas Tech University System statute
SB 988 <i>(Holly Combs Act)</i>	Allows the Texas Funeral Commission to hold bad actors accountable for violating the law
SB 1008	Provides certain insurance companies with additional investment options
SB 1196	Creates rules related to guaranteed investment contracts
SB 2065	Provides legal protections for clergy members and church employees who declined to perform marriages that were against their sincerely held religious beliefs

★ LEGISLATION CO-AUTHORED BY REPRESENTATIVE FRULLO ★

HB 11	Increases the number of troops stationed on the border and enhances penalties for human smuggling
HB 21	Streamlines the process for terminally ill patients to receive investigational drugs
HB 910 <i>(Open Carry)</i>	Allows concealed handgun license holders to openly carry handguns
HB 1180	Provides parents more information about potentially unsafe child care facilities
HB 1492	Improves the fairness and transparency in asbestos or silica personal injury lawsuits
HB 1690	Establishes a more fair process for investigating and prosecuting elected officials
HB 2186	Requires employees of school districts that offered a suicide prevention training program to complete this training at least once annually
HB 2794	Streamlines the process for victims of identification abuse to obtain a delayed birth certificate
HB 3074	Reforms laws related to end-of-life care
HB 3994	Improves the protection for minors by reforming the judicial bypass system



CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT GUIDE



Election Day: November 3, 2015

Early Voting: October 19-30, 2015

★ PROPOSITIONS ★

AMENDMENT NO. 1 (S.J.R. 1)

Provides property tax relief by increasing the homestead exemption.

“The constitutional amendment increasing the amount of the residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation for public school purposes from \$15,000 to \$25,000, providing for a reduction of the limitation on the total amount of ad valorem taxes that may be imposed for those purposes on the homestead of an elderly or disabled person to reflect the increased exemption amount, authorizing the legislature to prohibit a political subdivision that has adopted an optional residence homestead exemption from ad valorem taxation from reducing the amount of or repealing the exemption, and prohibiting the enactment of a law that imposes a transfer tax on a transaction that conveys fee simple title to real property.”

AMENDMENT NO. 2 (H.J.R. 75)

Supports veterans and their families!

“The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a 100 percent or totally disabled veteran who died before the law authorizing a residence homestead exemption for such a veteran took effect.”

AMENDMENT NO. 3 (S.J.R. 52)

Allows statewide elected officials to reside outside of Austin.

“The constitutional amendment repealing the requirement that state officers elected by voters statewide reside in the state capital.”

AMENDMENT NO. 4 (H.J.R. 73)

Creates more opportunities for charities to raise money.

“The constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to permit professional sports team charitable foundations to conduct charitable raffles.”

AMENDMENT NO. 5 (S.J.R. 17)

Gives rural communities more local control maintaining their roads.

“The constitutional amendment to authorize counties with a population of 7,500 or less to perform private road construction and maintenance.”

AMENDMENT NO. 6 (S.J.R. 22)

Protects our rights to hunt and fish in Texas!

“The constitutional amendment recognizing the right of the people to hunt, fish, and harvest wildlife subject to laws that promote wildlife conservation.”

AMENDMENT NO. 7 (S.J.R. 5)

Ensures future funding for transportation needs across the state.

“The constitutional amendment dedicating certain sales and use tax revenue and motor vehicle sales, use, and rental tax revenue to the state highway fund to provide funding for nontolled roads and the reduction of certain transportation-related debt.”

*More detailed arguments for and against the constitutional amendments on the November 3, 2015 ballot are available online at www.hro.house.state.tx.us, view the report entitled, *Constitutional Amendments Proposed for 2015 Ballot*.*



Rep. Frullo listens to testimony in the Culture, Recreation and Tourism committee hearing.



Rep. Frullo discussing a prisoner visitation bill with Rep. Kuempel and Rep. Johnson.



INSURANCE COMMITTEE

★ *Everyone in Texas is affected by insurance issues!* ★

During the 84th session, Texas House Speaker Joe Straus appointed me as the Chair of the Committee on Insurance. The Texas insurance market is the 10th largest insurance market in the world; lots to cover in the committee! The committee is charged with reviewing all matters pertaining to the insurance industry including, health, life, home, auto, general liability, and many other types of insurance. It has oversight over the Texas Department of Insurance and the Office of Public Insurance Counsel.

One of the pressing issues facing the committee this past session was the issue of “balance billing”, which occurs when a patient is billed for a portion of medical expenses not covered by their insurance. SB 481 decreases the threshold from \$1,000 to \$500 to allow more policyholders to have the opportunity for mediation between the insurance company and the healthcare provider when balanced billing occurs from certain facility based physicians. One of the other issues we addressed was modernizing and improving the licensure registration process for insurance agents. I know many agents in my district were having a problem getting their license. In order to address this, we passed SB 876 and HB 2145 which creates a provisional license for agents so they can work as they complete their training and the paperwork is processed. Lastly, but of huge importance and far reaching effect, hailstorm lawsuit reform was before the committee. The Insurance Committee passed SB 1628 as a solution to curb lawsuit abuse related to hail damage. Unfortunately, the bill did not make it to the House floor for a vote. We will continue to work on this issue because the consequences of not doing anything could mean higher costs for consumers and reduced access to insurance for all Texans.

HUMAN TRAFFICKING

★ *We are making progress combating this awful crime that affects our communities!* ★

The Legislature took a lot of action this session in the fight against human trafficking. We have some very talented folks in the Lubbock area working on this issue and we are thankful for that. HB 1793 strengthens the tools law enforcement has to recover missing children who are at a high risk of becoming human trafficking victims. We have seen so many children in our foster care system fall victim to human trafficking and HB 1793 will help us identify more of those children to get them help.

HB 188 extends the Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force and requires local authorities to track any prostitution offense as part of their human trafficking data. It also requires the task force to develop recommendations for addressing demand for forced labor or sexual



Chairman Frullo with the Insurance Committee members in front of the State Capitol.



Rep. Frullo on steps of dias with (left to right): Councilwoman Latrelle Joy, Jay Jacobus, Councilwoman Karen Gibson, David Park, Beth Bridges, and Rep. Burrows

conduct involving victims of human trafficking. HB 2291 increases penalties for prior possession and promotion of child pornography and increases other penalties for offenses related to human trafficking. There are many bills we passed this session related to human trafficking; if you want to learn more about any of the bills we passed, please contact my office and we will be glad to provide you with a list.



KEY INITIATIVES



RELIGIOUS PROTECTION, PRO-LIFE LEGISLATION AND UNIFORM KNIFE LAWS

★ *Always working to move the ball forward on important legislation to protect life and liberty!* ★

SB 2065 protects the religious freedom rights of clergy, ministers, pastors, and churches in Texas. The bill ensures that the government may not force a pastor, a clergy member, or a church to perform a marriage or related ceremony that would violate their sincerely held religious beliefs. HB 3994 reforms the judicial bypass process for minors seeking abortions. These reforms will protect and strengthen parents' rights while increasing oversight of the bypass process. HB 3074 is another crucial bill passed by the House, it addresses the

end of life issues and requires artificial hydration and nutrition to be provided to patients in the natural process of death.

We also addressed a confusing patchwork of local knife laws. HB 905 brought much needed uniformity across the state so that knife rights are protected. For this work, I was very honored to receive the prestigious national Knife Rights' 2015 Freedom's Edge Award in recognition of successful passage of HB 905.

JOHN FRULLO

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Rep. Frullo, Rep. Burrows and Lubbock native Rep. Meyer with students from All Saints Episcopal School.



Rep. Frullo greets Lubbock visitors in the gallery, with Lubbock native Rep. Clardy, Rep. Springer, Rep. Stephenson, and Rep. King

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HIGHLIGHTS OF REPRESENTATIVE

TAX CUTS

★ *So glad we could pass a budget that gives close to \$4 billion back to the taxpayers!* ★

The legislature passed a number of bills to provide tax relief to Texans and business owners. HB 32 reduces the franchise tax rate by 25% and is estimated to provide a \$2.6 billion tax cut in the next biennium. Additionally, the legislature passed SB 1 which will help to reduce the burden of property taxes on all Texas homeowners. The bill will increase the homestead exemption from \$15,000 to \$25,000 and will effectively save Texas homeowners \$1.3 billion. Lastly, HB 7 repeals a licensing fee, essentially an occupations tax that is imposed on 16 different professions covering over 400,000 licensed professionals. This is expected to save these professionals approximately \$200 million over the biennium. The Legislature also passed a number of small tax cuts for taxpayers across various industries.

2ND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

★ *2nd Amendment rights are so important!* ★

We took a number of actions this session to ensure and protect our constitutional right to bear arms. I was proud to co-author HB 910, “open carry”. Additionally, with the passage of SB 11 a concealed handgun license owner is able to carry in certain public university buildings. We also passed SB 473 to enhance the protection for gun owners who carry firearms listed on the National Firearm Act.

BORDER SECURITY

★ *We will do whatever we can to protect our border!* ★

The federal government’s failure to secure the border meant that the legislature would need to take action in the 84th session. In response to the lack of federal help, we added close to \$840 million to the Department of Public Safety (DPS) and other agencies to help with border security. HB 11 allows the DPS to hire an additional 250 troopers for border security and establishes a transnational intelligence center on the border. The intelligence center will help fight crime on the border by analyzing crime data and serving as a real-time, around-the-clock intelligence hub for state and local law enforcement agencies. The legislature also passed SB 374 which will require state agencies and public universities to use the E-Verify system to protect against the hiring of those who are in the country illegally.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

★ *Continuing our commitment to give more flexibility in our testing system and enhance accountability* ★

The Legislature fully funded the expected increase in enrollment of 80,000 students in our public schools. On top of that, the budget will provide an additional \$1.5 billion in funding for public education. In response to Governor Abbott’s emergency item, we passed HB 4 which will provide up to \$130 million in new funding for high quality prekindergarten programs. Lastly, we passed HB 2804 which will reform the school accountability system by creating a new “A-F” rating system so everyone can more clearly understand their school’s performance. Most importantly, this bill will decrease the emphasis on state-mandated standardized tests and will incorporate locally designed measures of student and community engagement. It will also allow for a quicker and more effective process to reform schools that continually fail to meet the academic standards.



Speaker Straus and Rep. Frullo discussing legislation.

TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

★ *Texas Tech University and Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center are dynamic forces in Texas higher education* ★

In the General Appropriations Act, Texas Tech University (TTU) and Texas Tech Health Sciences Center (TTUHSC) will each see increases of over \$21 million for their base funding for the 2016-2017 biennium. TTU has grown by over 2,000 students and TTUHSC has increased enrollment by more than 10 percent. The state formula funding levels are finally catching up with the student growth. This is good news! HB 100 will provide the four institutions in the Texas Tech System with \$247.1 million of bond authority for construction of a number of projects system-wide. The projects include an Experimental Science Building II at TTU to house high-tech interdisciplinary research laboratories, research investigator offices, and support space to foster growing academic and research programs. Lastly, TTU and TTUHSC will be able to compete for the grants provided through the Governor’s University Research Initiative Fund to help recruit leading researchers to continue to elevate their standing as national research institutions. “The Texas Legislature made it clear that they are serious about higher education,” Chancellor Duncan said. “We believe it is an investment in making Texas nationally competitive. While others are making cuts, Texas is saying we want the best and the brightest faculty and students from all over the country to come to Texas.”



Rep. Frullo with (top row): Rep. Darby, President Brian May, Angelo State University, Speaker Straus, President Duane Nellis, TTU, Rep. Burrows; (bottom row): Rep. Stephenson, Rep. Keffer, Regent John Steinmetz, TTU