



February 11, 2021



The 87th Legislative Session began on January 12, 2021. I believe representative governing is dependent on good participation and great communication, and I appreciate the opportunity to share some of what I'm working on this week as your State Senator. I'm here to listen, learn, and lead for you!



COVID-19 VACCINE AVAILABILITY UPDATE

This week, the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) provided my colleagues and me with an update on COVID-19 vaccination allocations. According to the allocation data for the first eight weeks of vaccinations in Texas, Dallas County has received nearly 300,000 vaccines and Collin County has received nearly 96,000 vaccines. It is clear that suburban areas need additional vaccines allocated to meet the population needs.

The Texas Department of State Health Services has the weekly allocation charts available on their [website](#).

In addition, the federal government announced a vaccine allocation and distribution partnership with pharmacies beginning this week with the focus on making vaccines more convenient for those in the 1B vaccination priority category who would like have a vaccine. Please contact your local pharmacy for more information.

For Collin County, [click here](#) to schedule an appointment and join the vaccine wait list.

For Dallas County, [click here](#) for online vaccine registration.

I will continue advocating for additional vaccines for communities in Senate District 8 and am committed to ensuring that the vaccine process remains voluntary.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

Ending Taxpayer Funded Lobbying

The primary role of our government is to represent the will of the voters, and those who are elected should be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. Unfortunately, I have witnessed local governments using taxpayer dollars to lobby the Legislature on issues against taxpayer interests. Taxpayers should not have to pay for influencing legislators for a cause they do not support, such as tax rates increases.

Last legislative session, I voted in favor of [Senate Bill 29](#), which aimed to end the practice of local governments, including cities and counties, using taxpayer dollars to lobby the legislature, which passed the Texas Senate in 2019 by a 19-12 vote.

I am committed to ending the practice of using tax dollars to work against taxpayer interests.

Honoring our Disabled Veterans

As a way to thank our disabled veterans for their service, I filed [SB 465](#) to provide free access for all veterans with a service-connected disability to Texas' 89 state parks through the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department's Texas Parklands Passport Program.

COMMITTEE UPDATES

Education Committee

As a former educator, I am delighted to continue serving on the Senate Education Committee. Last session, we worked on historic school finance reform and property tax relief through House Bill 3. This session, one of the Committee's main focuses will be remote learning.

The current Texas Virtual School Network has limited providers and with schools moving to online options due to COVID-19, the committee will work on legislation to expand the number of providers and increase rigor, ensure that teacher certification curriculum includes teaching in online learning environments, and enable school districts that have the capabilities to operate their own virtual school platforms to do so.

Online schools are not the ideal learning environment for all children, but the technology and law need to be better aligned to ensure high-quality educational options in delivery and content for students, parents, and districts.

Select Committee on Redistricting Committee Hosts Hearing

I am honored to serve on the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting and am committed to a transparent, fair, and legal redistricting process. The committee will host [committee hearings](#) on February 12, February 19, February 26, and February 27. The committee will hear testimony about any region of the state, even though the hearings may be geared for invited testimony on specific regions. All testimony will be virtual and anybody wishing to testify is required to register by 9 a.m. on the day prior to the committee hearing to receive a secure zoom link.

You may also watch the [livestream of the hearing](#).