

The Capitol Ledger



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Want to schedule a meeting?

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The Beginning of Session

The Texas Legislature opened the 87th Session on January 12th. This session has not been like any other, with a lot of challenges presented by COVID and the severe winter storm we recently experienced. Many of our meetings have become virtual and there are a lot of unknowns in how we will conduct our legislative business. Despite the uncertainty, our office has worked diligently to make sure we prepared our legislation to move forward.

I am excited to return to the Business and Industry Committee for a third session. I will also return to the Ways & Means Committee this session. The House Committee on Business & Industry focuses on manufacturing, wages, the regulation of businesses, oversees the Workforce Commission and Worker's Compensation. Ways & Means focuses on state revenue that includes local government taxes, general taxation issues and fees, central appraisal districts that administer the property tax system and oversees the State Comptroller's office.

Our office has filed legislation regarding the administration of the central appraisal districts, property tax issues that impact and support homeowners and businesses, disabled veteran taxation issues, ad valorem tax assessments to include exemptions, discounts and penalties, an education funding formula that funds total public school enrollment rather than average daily attendance, protections for public servants such as police officers, voluntary annexation enhancement, and local legislation that supports Bell County initiatives.

Committees have been organized, held their first orientation meeting this week and will begin hearings on legislation next week. Many of our property tax bills have been assigned to the Ways and Means Committee and we will begin taking testimony on Monday.

Our office continues to work with local Bell County governmental entities, city leaders and businesses, and our school superintendents as we begin to consider legislation that has been filed. The local input we receive from community leaders and our constituents is valuable and greatly appreciated.

As a side note, we will continue to work closely with ONCOR on your behalf as we recover from the winter storm we experienced.

Thank you for the privilege and opportunity to serve you and our community in the state legislature.

Committee Assignments for HD 55

The House Committee on Business & Industry will focus on manufacturing, wages, and the regulation of businesses and is chaired by Representative Chris Turner (D-Tarrant). The House Committee on Ways & Means focuses on state revenue, local government tax and taxation issues and is chaired by Representative Morgan Meyer (R-Dallas). Our office has filed over 20 bills this session, more than half of which are related to property taxes and other taxation issues.

Shine has previous experience on both committees, having served the last two sessions on Business & Industry, and the 85th legislative session as Vice-Chair. Shine also served as Vice Chair of Labor & Employment (now Business & Industry) in the 70th and 71st legislative session, and on Ways & Means in previous sessions.

Behind the Scenes of Last Month's Outages



During the winter storm, our team worked hard to identify which houses were without power and to coordinate that information with ONCOR. We received over 3000 messages, calls and emails and worked around the clock. Our team worked hard to map out which neighborhoods were out of power to save time and coordinate for faster service with ONCOR. Debbie and I share in your frustrations, we lost livestock due to the freezing temperatures, our family went without power for many days and suffered property damage from burst pipes. We know this was an incredibly difficult time for many of you.

Please follow our Facebook page for insurance resources and updates as we have them at www.facebook.com/shinefortexas

House Bill 5 - Increased Broadband Services

Our office joined with over 30 legislators to coauthor House Bill 5. Highlights of the upcoming legislation includes the creation of a 'Broadband Development Office' within the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts, the formation of a broadband development program, the establishment of a broadband development map to be updated regularly and published by the office, and the development of a statewide broadband plan within one year of House Bill 5 becoming law on September 1, 2021.

Rogers ISD has been a strong proponent of the legislation. "With the increase in digital learning, which is only expected to increase moving forward, having high-speed internet available in our students' homes is vital for their success. Currently, many of our students and staff use district-issued hotspots for internet at home because it is faster than the service available to them. Unfortunately, in some of our homes, cell phone coverage does not even allow hotspots to work effectively" said Rogers ISD Superintendent Joe Craig.