

# Glenn Hegar

## 80th Legislature In Review

*Dear Friends,*

*I would like to thank you for the privilege of allowing me to be your State Senator and voice in our State Capitol. Hopefully you will find this legislative update helpful. It covers many of the major issues addressed in the 80th Legislative Session as well as bills that I authored on behalf of our senate district. Some of the issues discussed have state-wide impact, while others are more specific to our 19 county senate district that consists of 16,302 square miles, 1,323 county bay shoreline miles, and over 700,000 residents.*

*As you know, the Texas Constitution requires that the Texas Legislature meet every odd-numbered year for 140 consecutive days. Accordingly, the 80th Legislative Session concluded on May 28, 2007. Overall, this past session was very successful for Texas taxpayers and the families of Senate District 18.*

*Even though all legislative sessions share many similarities and issues, each session also has a personality of its own. The diverse issues that confront the State of Texas set the tone and agenda as much as does the changing membership of the 150 Representatives and 31 Senators who each bring unique experiences and backgrounds. Quite often the most pressing issues, as well as any internal distractions, have an impact on the productivity of an entire legislative session. Much of the 80th session was driven by a disruption within the Texas House of Representatives, including a bitter fight among the members over who should serve as Speaker of the House. Additionally, important issues such as the financial mismanagement at Texas Southern University, the terrible sexual abuse of children at the Texas Youth Commission, and the efforts to ensure that Texas electric ratepayers would not be negatively impacted by the sale of TXU to a private equity fund, found themselves at center stage during the session.*

*Despite the distractions and major issues that had to be handled within a short 140 days, I firmly believe that the 80th Legislative Session was successful in limiting government spending, increasing our individual liberties, and promoting traditional family values. Please take a few moments to review this legislative update. As your State Senator, it is important that I hear from you about issues that are of interest. My staff and I are here to assist, so please call or write my office with any questions or concerns.*

*Thank you again for the honor of serving you and your family in the Texas Senate.*



*Senator Hegar and his wife Dara are pictured during opening ceremonies of the 80th Legislative Session.*



*Sincerely,*

*Glenn Hegar*

# 2007 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

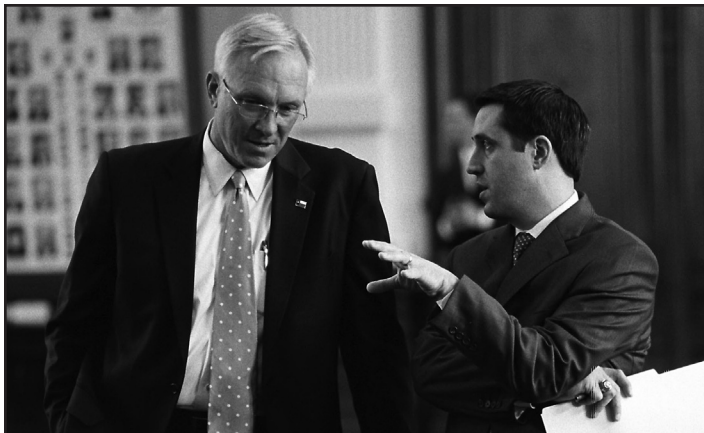
## State Budget

Texas is a great place to call home and if Texas were its own nation, it would be the tenth largest economy in the world. In the last two years, our population has increased by almost 9%; however the new state budget will grow by only 2.65% per year over the previous state budget. The new budget places a tremendous emphasis on improved government efficiency, funding the state's basic needs, as well as one of my top priorities—property tax reduction. Texans will receive a record \$14.2 billion in school district property tax reduction in the new budget. Additionally, taxpayers gained another victory with the elimination of the Telecommunications Infrastructure Fund tax—providing Texans over \$200 million a year in savings. Most importantly, this was the first state budget in which a surplus was not used to grow government. Instead, \$2.5 billion was left un-appropriated to help fund future property tax reductions and lawmakers left another \$4.3 billion in the State's rainy day fund.

Ninety-four percent of the new state budget is comprised of four major funding areas, including 40% for public and higher education, 34% for health and human services, 6.4% for public safety and criminal justice, and 13.3% for transportation and economic development. The remaining needs of the state, including natural resources, general government, judiciary, regulatory, and all the other obligations of state government make up the remaining 6% of our state budget. In total, 33% of the budget comes from federal tax dollars returned back to the state for various programs, including transportation, health care, and community development grants. All together, counting both federal and state dollars, the two year state budget is a remarkable \$152.5 billion dollars.

## Knowing Where Your Tax Dollars Go

In an effort to ensure that Texas government is open and visible to all the taxpayers, I sponsored legislation to create a detailed database of state expenditures, contracts, and grants utilizing the State Comptroller's website. For the first time, taxpayers will have true transparency and will be able to see just how their hard earned tax dollars are being spent. The database can be viewed at: <http://www.window.state.tx.us/comptrol/expendlist/cashdrill.php>.



Senator Hegar discusses the state budget with Senate Finance Chairman Steve Ogden.

### The Governor's Mansion

[www.txfgm.org](http://www.txfgm.org) or (512) 463-5516

### The Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum

[www.thestoryoftexas.com](http://www.thestoryoftexas.com) or (512) 936-8746

### Texas Capitol/VisitorsCenter

[www.tspb.state.tx.us/CVC/home/home.html](http://www.tspb.state.tx.us/CVC/home/home.html)  
or (512) 305-8400

## Governor's HPV Vaccine Mandate

This past session, I led the fight in the Texas Senate against Governor Perry's executive order mandating that all 11-12 year old girls be vaccinated against the human papillomavirus (HPV) prior to entering sixth grade. The Governor's executive order was an unfunded and unnecessary mandate that intruded on the private lives of Texans. While I am committed to the prevention of cancer and to saving lives, I was greatly concerned that the vaccine was untested and would lead young people to the false belief that the vaccine would prevent cervical cancer in all cases. I also believe that the mandate violated parental authority. By overturning the Governor's executive order, HB 1098 allows Texas parents to fully consider the medical consequences of the HPV vaccine and to exercise their parental rights by making medical decisions for their daughters.

## Transportation

The Trans - Texas Corridor (TTC) dominated a large part of debate this past session and, as a result, the legislature established a statewide moratorium on the TTC and comprehensive development agreements for two years. This moratorium gives Texans affected by the consequences of the TTC some breathing room, protects against any abusive agreements, and allows for an in-depth study of all policy implications.

In recent years, local toll road authorities and the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) have been at odds over who should build and operate local toll roads. In response to this conflict, the legislature gave local toll road authorities the first option to complete pending toll projects and extensions of existing projects. Furthermore, any excess revenues generated by a toll project can now be spent in the local areas on free road projects.

Finally, TxDOT was provided with \$3 billion in additional bonding authority to fund highway improvement and safety projects, however, this money cannot be spent for any purpose related to the Trans - Texas Corridor.

## Private Property Rights

Legislation was passed by the Senate and House and sent to the Governor that would significantly increase the private property rights of the average Texan. Unfortunately, Governor Perry needlessly vetoed this extremely important private property rights bill because he said it would cost the State too much money. I strongly disagree with his decision for several reasons, the most important being that landowners should be fairly and adequately compensated when their property is taken by the government. I will continue the fight to enact these needed reforms, because government should not be allowed to cheat people out of their property.

## State Park Funding

An additional \$182 million dollars is being spent to increase staffing, update needed equipment, and make important repairs to Texas' 600,000-acre park system. To better ensure the efficient expenditure of these tax dollars, the legislature required the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission to implement several processes designed to improve the agency's operation of the State's park system. Additionally, eighteen historical sites were transferred from the control of the Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission to the Texas Historical Commission so that they could receive the benefits of federal historical preservation and private grant funds.



Visitor & Tour Information





# 2007 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

## Public Education

In recent years, teachers and students alike have become overburdened with high-stress testing. To attain meaningful reform, Texas will phase-out the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills (TAKS) test and move towards end-of-course examinations in the four core subject areas of English/language arts, math, science, and social studies. With these reforms, Texas students will be required to earn a cumulative score within each subject area equal to 70 points and exam scores will be considered as 15 percent of a student's overall course grade. This will enable students and teachers to focus on learning course content, rather than spending time teaching to a single, high-stress test.

In an effort to provide students with greater course diversity, students can now use the Virtual School Network. This initiative promotes the use and access of online courses from some of the state's top-performing school districts. This program will allow many Texas students to attain greater skills and become more competitive in today's economy.

Two other important measures were passed that protect our student's religious freedoms. The first allows school districts to establish an elective course for high school

students on the Bible and its impact on the history and literature of Western Civilization. The second, the Religious Viewpoints Antidiscrimination Act, protects a student's voluntary expression of a religious viewpoint by allowing students to openly discuss their religious beliefs in homework, artwork, and in any other form of written and oral assignments at school and at school-sponsored events.



Senator Hegar confers with Lt. Governor David Dewhurst during the Legislative Session.

## Teacher Retirement System

The legislature raised the state's contribution rate and authorized an increase in active teacher contributions to the Teacher Retirement System to ensure the fund is financially sound well into the future. Most importantly, retired teachers will receive a well deserved annuity increase or "13th check" this year.

## Higher Education

Legislation was approved to reform the Texas Tomorrow Fund, so that students and their parents have a more viable option to pay for college. In Senate District 18, Prairie View A&M University and the University of Houston at Victoria were successful in gaining approval for the majority of their requested budget items. In particular, UH at Victoria received the full appropriation of \$1.1 million to help fund a new nursing program.

## Water Planning in Texas

Clean water is the world's most precious resource, however only one percent of the world's water can be used as drinking water. Historically, Texas has been blessed with an abundance of fresh water, nevertheless, as our state continues to grow in population, our ability to maintain a lasting supply of fresh, usable water becomes even more vital. Planning is critical if Texas is to meet its future water needs.

To help meet our state's water needs, my colleagues and I addressed several issues relating to the conservation of our water sources, maintenance of in-stream river flows to the Gulf of Mexico, and the designation of unique reservoir sites. Providing for our population's water needs, as well as ensuring that water continually flows



Senator Hegar discusses SB 3 with Senate Natural Resources Chairman Kip Averitt.

to our bays and estuaries, is imperative for Texas and Texans. Meeting the needs of local communities also means maintaining a sustainable balance between our groundwater, reservoirs, and river supplies in the future.

*"I truly believe that we must work together to solve complex and contentious water issues. We must develop the science to answer these critical water questions and everyone needs to be at the table as we develop scientific based strategies and ultimately implement solutions."*

## Edwards Aquifer/Guadalupe River

The Edwards Aquifer is a unique groundwater resource that provides water to approximately 1.7 million Texans and is critical to the daily existence of many communities, agricultural operations, and industries, as well as being the sole water source for several threatened and endangered aquatic species.

For years, many thought that the Edwards Aquifer would provide a never-ending supply of drinkable water, however, many years of drought, increased population growth, and greater demands for water tell us otherwise. A prolonged drought could prevent the aquifer's water from flowing down the Guadalupe River for almost two years, which, in turn, would devastate the western portions of the senate district. Recognizing the importance of the aquifer and the growing level of distrust

among the many users of the aquifer, I crafted legislation to place stricter pumping limits on San Antonio during drought conditions to ensure that downstream users will have water in the future. This legislation also established timelines for a voluntary, multi-stakeholder initiative to balance the needs of all users, including the needs of the aquifer's federally designated endangered species. These deadlines are important to ensure that a long-term plan is put in place before downstream users are devastated by a prolonged drought.

# 2007 LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

## *Energy Needs and Clean Air*

Balancing our future needs for electricity with the value of protecting a healthy Texas environment is delicate and will be an issue that will continue to be studied by future legislatures. Currently, our state's energy consumption is increasing by roughly 2.5% per year and will only continue to increase in the coming years as Texas grows from its current 23 million citizens to an estimated 40 million citizens by the year 2040. Greater electric generation and increased energy efficiency are needed to help avoid the rolling blackouts during peak demand that have been experienced by residents of other states. Legislation was passed to encourage the investment in, and installation of, ultra-clean energy technology. Additionally, legislation to support energy efficiency and conservation measures in Texas was passed.

The State of Texas is required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to improve air quality in our major metropolitan areas, even though the federal government prohibits state governments from controlling the emissions of airplanes, ships, and trains. In many ways our hands are tied because these three conveyances are major contributors to air pollution. I believe that instead of overly burdensome regulation at the state and/or federal levels, Texans would benefit from a common sense, incentive-based approach for the removal of older vehicles from our roads. By revising both the Texas Emissions Reduction and the Low Income Vehicle Repair Assistance programs, we moved closer to meeting the federal mandates with a less intrusive approach for taxpayers.

## *Healthcare in Texas*

Currently, the State of Texas spends one-third of its budget on health and human services. Medicaid alone accounts for 26% of the entire budget. With such a large portion of the budget being allocated for Medicaid, it was critical that we enact meaningful Medicaid reforms to reduce fraud, improve efficiency, better control future costs, and improve the delivery of services. The reforms passed during the 80th Texas Legislature will improve our ability to control the administration of Medicaid dollars by encouraging both personal and fiscal responsibility, plus rewarding healthy outcomes and preventative health measures.

With our emergency rooms constantly facing severe financial losses due to uncompensated care, the State must find common sense solutions to reduce costs and reduce the number of uninsured. In an effort to save taxpayer dollars in the long-term, Texas is now spending additional dollars to add coverage for more than 127,000 eligible children under the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). Ultimately, taxpayers will reap the benefit because preventive care is much cheaper than having uninsured children using the resources of our emergency rooms (which are very expensive compared to regular doctor visits) when they are sick or injured.



*Senator Hegar is pictured with students visiting the Capitol from El Campo.*

## *Criminal Justice & Border Security*

Too many drug smugglers and violent criminals are taking advantage of our fluid borders. In response, the State is spending over \$110 million on border security operations to fund local law enforcement surge operations, additional Department of Public Safety troopers who will be stationed along the Texas/Mexico border, increased aviation support, and improved operation control centers.

The legislature also spent a tremendous amount of time working to overhaul and clean up the ills of the Texas Youth Commission (TYC), which had become plagued by the scandal of the sexual abuse of teenage prisoners. Some of the reforms enacted include the improvement of staff to inmate ratios, oversight by investigators to quickly investigate abuse claims, and a prohibition on courts from sending youths to state lockups for misdemeanors.

In our continuing effort to fight smarter against crime, the legislature increased the sentences of certain dangerous criminals, while also expanding drug courts and diversion programs. Crime diversion programs can save taxpayer dollars because they are less costly and reduce recidivism rates when compared to much more expensive alternatives such as incarceration in county jails or state prisons. Texas also joined with several other states in increasing penalties and allowing for capitol punishment of repeat child sexual predators.



*Freshman Senator Glenn Hegar discusses criminal justice issues with The Dean of the Texas Senate, Senator John Whitmire.*

## *Lawsuit Reform*

Senate District 18 has over 1,300 miles of coastal shoreline, much more than any other district in Texas. A vital part of our district and state's economy is our system of ports and coastal waterways. To keep this important part of our economy healthy, our ports and waterways must be constantly dredged of silt to remain open for ship traffic. In recent years however, Texas dredging companies have been under assault from overly burdensome lawsuits. Thus, the legislature enacted common sense reforms in order to protect this vital part of our Texas economy.

## *Castle Doctrine*

Texans now have the legal right to protect themselves in their homes, autos, and businesses against criminals who seek to do them harm. Law-abiding citizens are no longer required to retreat before defending themselves with deadly force against criminals.



# Select Bills Authored and Sponsored by Senator Hegar

The 80th Legislature considered more than 6,300 measures, ultimately passing 1,481 bills and 16 constitutional amendments. Senator Hegar was the primary author or sponsor of 149 measures with 112 of those measures eventually passing both the Texas Senate and House and ultimately became law, some of which include:



*Senator Hegar is congratulated by his colleagues as he passes his first bill as a member of the Texas Senate.*

★ **HB 438** - prevents residential tax values from increasing up to thirty percent a year. Previously, your home value could increase thirty percent in a single year if your value had not increased over the prior two years. Now, a taxable increase is strictly set at ten percent a year without an accumulative effect of the last three years. For this change to take effect, voters must approve a constitutional amendment on the November 6, 2007 General Election ballot.

★ **SB 1207** - gives County Commissioner's Courts the ability to remove their appointees to various boards when an individual engages in misconduct, such as theft or fraud. Previously, a person had to be indicted and convicted before the individual could be removed from an appointed office, even if the person admitted to criminal activity such as theft of taxpayer dollars.

★ **HB 3630** - stops appraisal districts from overvaluing a home-site by shifting value from a person's qualified agricultural use property onto the home-site acres; simplifies and improves public notice requirements to ensure that taxpayers have more knowledge before government raises their property tax rate; prevents residential properties in urban areas from improperly qualifying for an agricultural tax valuation; better ensures that homeowners receive notification on how to apply for residential homestead exemptions.

★ **SB 1440** - allows the Office of Rural Community Affairs to work with volunteer fire departments to improve their delivery of fire protection services, which in turn can help to lower home insurance rates in rural communities.

★ **SB 1951** - creates new district courts for Bastrop and Waller Counties.

★ **SB 500** - improves public safety by establishing a tow truck rotation system in Fort Bend County.

★ **SB 1180** - updated legislation for the DeWitt County Medical District.

★ **SB 1953** - clarifies the powers of the Aransas County Navigation District.

★ **SB 722** - enables law enforcement to destroy excess drugs and controlled substances without first obtaining a court order.

★ **SB 949** - ensures that private businesses have the option to contract with either a licensed security service or an off-duty peace officer to satisfy the requirements of a city's nuisance abatement plan.

★ **HB 3837 and HB 3838** - clarifies the powers of the Railroad Commission and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality with regard to uranium mining.

★ **HB 485** - authorizes law enforcement agencies to collect up to \$5,000 in restitution from a person who writes a bad check, which can significantly reduce the amount of time a business is required to wait to be reimbursed for the bad check.

★ **HB 1042** - protects the identity of crime victims against public disclosure.

★ **HB 1840** - increases the penalty on hit and run drivers to a third degree felony.

★ **HB 2112** - prohibits the use, or threat of use, of a firearm on school property.

★ **HB 3275** - requires TxDOT to study the need for increased funding to improve federally designated emergency evacuation routes near the South Texas Nuclear Project.

★ **HB 1717** - creates a statewide system for marking nonfunctioning fire hydrants.

★ **HB 195** - allows for the transfer of abandoned or forfeited property from a sheriff's department to other public tax entities.

★ **HB 610** - requires that cities provide landowners with a list of services and a schedule for providing the services when annexing someone's property.

★ **HB 1521** - establishes a system for the prohibition of off-premises billboards on certain roads in Austin County.

★ **HB 2368** - expanded the board membership of the Victoria County Navigation District.

★ **HB 4029** - allows for the creation of the Lavaca County Groundwater District.

★ **HB 4032** - allows for the creation of the Colorado County Groundwater District.



*Senator Hegar recognizes the 100th anniversary of the Blue Bell Creamery in Brenham, at the State Capitol.*



# Senator Glenn Hegar

Senator of the State of Texas  
P.O. Box 12068 Austin, Texas 78711

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Senator Hegar watches as his daughter Claire plays with his laptop at his Chamber desk during a break.

## Senator Glenn Hegar

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## About Senator Glenn Hegar

**Occupation:** Farmer

**Hometown:** Katy

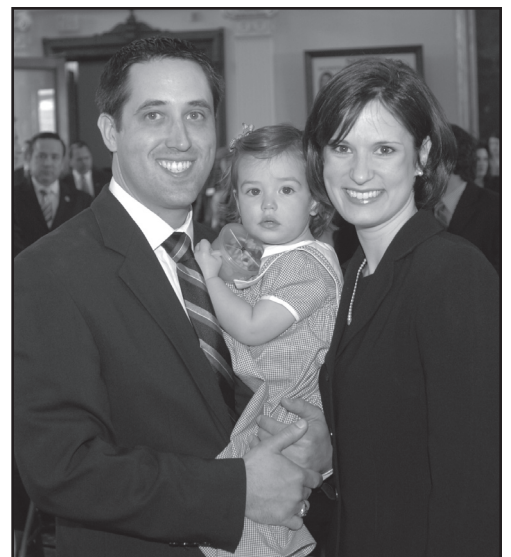
**Education:** BA-Texas A&M University, MA, JD-St. Mary's University, LLM-University of Arkansas

**Legislative Experience:** Served two terms in the House of Representatives from 2003-2007, and began serving as Senator in January of 2007.

**Committee/Appointments:** Vice Chairman, Committee on Government Organization; Committee on Natural Resources; Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Affairs and Coastal Resources; Committee on Criminal Justice; and Committee on Nominations.

**Honors and Awards:** Best Legislator and Rookie of the Year from Capitol Inside; Badge of Honor Award from the Texas Municipal Police Association; Legislator of the Year from the Texas Grain and Feed Association; and Smart on Crime Award from the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition.

**Senate District 18:** Aransas, Austin, Bastrop, Caldwell, Calhoun, Colorado, DeWitt, Fayette, Fort Bend (part), Goliad, Gonzales, Jackson, Lavaca, Matagorda, Refugio, Victoria, Waller, Washington, and Wharton counties.



Senator Hegar, his wife Dara, and daughter Claire are pictured on opening day of the 80th Legislative Session.