

From the office of
Texas State Representative - Dan Flynn

THE FLYNN REPORT
Legislative Newsletter
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Greetings Constituents, Supporters and Friends:

These are exciting times at the Texas State Capitol in Austin and I am honored to serve you as Representative. This week the House passed landmark legislation and it reminded me of one of the reasons I wanted to run for public office. It is my belief that most people run for elected office because they want to make a difference. But, realistically, most never have the opportunity to make a real difference or for that matter to make meaningful change. The issue of meaningful medical malpractice reform and lawsuit reform are issues that many believed would not be passed this session. But it did happen this week when House Bill 4 and House Joint Resolution 3 were passed, and with this act this legislature will make a meaningful difference for all Texans.

In my report last week I reported that at the conclusion of House business it was decided that HB 4 would be taken down off the Floor due to a point of order inquiry that effectively canceled out the previously recorded debates and votes on the various amendments. The bills were then set by the Calendars Committee to reset the Floor debate on HB 4 for this week, and as you can imagine the temperature was heated and the atmosphere in the House chamber electric as the opposition continued their efforts to again kill this important piece of legislation.

Many of us in the Legislature understand that we must provide relief for doctors in the medical profession before the present trends lead more of them to leave or just stop their practice altogether. We felt that the best way to enact this needed legislation was embodied in House Bill 4 by Rep. Joe Nixon of Houston. The trial lawyers in office who were opposed to this plan submitted over 300 amendments and with nearly 600 pages for debate. The vast majority of the amendments were submitted in an effort to disrupt the proceedings. Few had merit and sadly the efforts became personal with political attacks on those that worked to pass this important reform.

The good news this week is HB-4 did pass at 12:06 AM on March 28th and HJR-3 passed many hours later giving Texans what they have been saying they wanted, much needed tort reform. This action will provide the most significant economic development measure seen in recent memory. By passing this bill the legislature is reforming the civil justice and medical liability statutes which will benefit the Texas economy. The U. S. Chamber of Commerce and many leaders in the business and medical communities have said that Texas civil justice system has harmed the state economy and the livelihood of Texans.

The passing of this bill will give us a balanced litigation system that means plaintiffs, consumers, small business and large business will all enjoy and have access to a civil court system that is fair, stable and predictable. You can be sure that corporate officials in Texas and across the nation who make expansion and relocation decisions have been closely following the progress of HB-4. With its passage, I believe Texas will shine as a beacon state for economic opportunity. It is our hope that the Senate will concur as the bill now moves to their Chamber.

With all the work on this bill precious time has passed, but committees have been working on critical issues that remain before the legislature. The House will now switch to the important issue of public school finance reform, and balancing the state budget.

The House Committee on Public Education was honored to host world-renowned, Dr. Milton Friedman, at their committee hearing. Former Secretary William Bennett will be before the committee in the near future. Dr. Friedman shared his opinions to an enraptured audience and put forward some rather provocative ideas. One of these was his approval of a school choice program involving the type of system proposed by Representatives Kent Grusendorf, R-Arlington, and Ron Wilson, D-Houston. I am certain that we will see some movement on this issue during the regular session, as there is a desire from the urban areas of the state for relief and to provide a choice for their children.

This week has seen an increase in hateful and threatening emails, letters and phone calls from those that have been inflamed by special groups. On the contrary, strengthening public education, a strong healthcare environment and watchful care over our children and elderly is the focus entirely and these legislators are willing to endure to that end.

With the federal tax-reporting deadline fast approaching, House Appropriations members are working furiously to produce a balanced budget without enacting a spending increase. The budget bill is scheduled to hit House printers on April 8, but the final product may be a while in finally taking form. A tough debate is sure to ensue and I continue to be confident we will have a balanced budget without raising taxes at the end of this Session.

I am a co-sponsor on House Bills 15 by Frank Corte, Jr., of San Antonio, (informed consent to an abortion), 246 by Ray Allen, of Grand Prairie, (wrongful death of a fetus) and 38 by Warren Chisum, of Pampa, (DOMA) The House Committee on State Affairs heard these two Pro-Life bills and the much talked about Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). I sit through much of the debate and as you might imagine there were people who represented all points of view on the subjects and the testimonies were at times insightful and informative. I anticipate these bills passing out of committee in the next week or two and believe we might have the votes on the House floor to pass them. Of course, only time will tell.

I anticipate the conservative agenda that Texans have mandated will continue to be under attack as the opposition will move with their agenda to obstruct the process using procedural rules, media attacks and attempts to embarrass the conservative leadership by

their continued efforts to delay positive solutions to age old problems. With the victory we enjoyed this week we will see a renewed commitment to continue to work towards meaningful reforms in our state government.

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