

Into the 3rd week!!

BOB TURNER RURAL ISSUES CONSULTING

Voss, Texas

cell text 325 669 1717

Austin, Texas

Already 23 days into the 86th Texas Legislature. Only 117 more days to go. Speaker Bonnen has made his committee assignments. This is a bit earlier than we normally expect to know them. Overall – I am pleased with the assignments. In a few instances- committee chairs were appointed who had no institutional knowledge on the subject matter covered. I will list a couple such instances:

Rep Dustin Burrows – of Lubbock was named as chair of the powerful Ways and Means Committee – which is the “tax” committee of the House. He had not served on the committee before. Rep Terry Canales – was named chair of the House Transportation Committee – but had no prior legislative experience in transportation issues.

This does frequently occur – and usually works out fine. Other members of the committee do have experience in the topic concerned. Both of these individuals are exceptionally capable individuals and I believe will exhibit outstanding leadership qualities in their new assignments.

A few issues always occur when a new Speaker of the House is named. Other members who also sought the Speaker’s position – are usually penalized by receiving lesser committee assignments – when they fail to win the speaker’s chair. Normally - even those who vocally support the winner’s opponent spend time in the penalty box. This action is a very COMMON and usual practice. The state legislature is a big-boys

and girls game. Most of the members realize the risk they run when they challenge or cross the powers that are.

The Senate's brotherly love went very well the first week. After the first few days or weeks -the agitation level increases – and the love affair usually diminishes – quite dramatically. There are dozens of ways to go wrong or make a wrong move – but very few by which you can promote your cause - or – your legislation. Remember – if your elected Representative or Senator does not have the backing and support of leadership – the probability of their effectively being able to represent you is severely diminished.

As of this morning – there have been 1437 bills filed in the House – while over in the Senate -there have been 620 filed. They cover issues completely across the spectrum – and deal with lots of different topics. They cover issues from - - Legal Use of Marijuana – to Definition of Public Waters when identifying “navigable” Texas streams. A few bills that deal with change in state tax code are always filed. The average total number of bills filed – both House and Senate – normally in the neighborhood of 6,500 – to - 7,000 bills. This is only legislative bills – and does not include House and Senate resolutions – etc. There will be several thousand of these resolutions filed – in addition to the actual bills. Keep in mind – on your computer or phone – you can go to Texas Legislature on Line – and see all bills filed - individually - by member.

One blessing is that only about 18% of these bills and proposals passed during the 85th legislature. THIS IS A GOOD THING! I recently heard a fellow talking about this issue. His comment was – there aren't too many of these bills proposed – which we couldn't do without for two more years. His thought was – we have survived without a lot of these all these years – and might be able to survive – even if they don't pass.

A major portion of my job – representing you – is to insure that the bad legislation does not become a law of the state.

Keep in mind there is very little that is constitutionally required to pass. The primary bill that MUST pass - of course - is the bi-annual budget.

The next few weeks activities will be centered around these bills which are filed. They now must be referred to the proper committee for consideration. There they may – or may not be presented and debated and passed out to the full House and Senate for floor debate.

SO – studying the introduced legislation – to determine if it is helpful – or – harmful to us becomes my number one priority.

IN CLOSING - - I recall Former Lt. Governor – Bob Bullock’s closing EVERY public speech with the statement – “GOD BLESS TEXAS”.

This year being no rare exception - - Texas and the United States certainly needs God’s blessing as we progress forward into 2019.