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CONTACT

Angie Flores at 361.695.2048

Rep. Hunter Delivers Coastal Bend Wins in Legislative Session

State Rep. Todd Hunter delivered victories in the recently completed legislative session that will make the future brighter and the economy stronger for the Coastal Bend.

An experienced legislator who is deeply respected by members of both parties, Hunter, R-Corpus Christi, helped stop proposals that would have been harmful to coastal residents while using his strength and know-how to enact legislation reflecting many priorities of our community.

It's often said that one of a legislator's most important responsibilities is to prevent bad ideas, and with a compelling, impassioned speech to fellow lawmakers, Hunter helped stopped the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association (TWIA) Board of Directors from raising rates on coastal property owners. Hunter told his House colleagues that TWIA rates were forcing some residents to pick up and leave the coast, and that a rate increase would be especially punishing for a region still working to recover from Hurricane Harvey.

In addition, Hunter helped passed House Bill 1900, requiring insurance companies to pay for reinsurance that TWIA purchases for a 1-in-100-year storm. Previously, those costs have been paid by coastal property owners. The bill also enacts a commonsense requirement that the TWIA board hear public input on proposed rate increases.

Perhaps the signature measure that Hunter passed into law this year was House Bill 1300, which will allow Texas to finally engage in cultivated oyster mariculture. The bill will provide a new local source for farm-grown half-shell oysters, which Texas restaurants have previously had to import from other states. The arrival of oyster mariculture will create jobs, bring more locals and tourists into coastal restaurants, and create a demand for this product in other parts of the state and country.

Of course, a diligent legislator like Hunter goes well beyond economic issues when addressing local priorities. Late last year, in response to widespread local concern, Hunter convened a conversation with students, veterans and mental health professionals about suicides. Based on what he heard during that conversation, Hunter authored and passed House Bill 3980, which will require the collection of key data regarding suicide rates in Texas. This data will help the state develop needed, comprehensive strategies to prevent suicides, which have been climbing steadily in Texas. Hunter also ensured continued public attention on the tragedy of suicide by passing a resolution designating September as Suicide Prevention Month in the State of Texas.



Another serious concern among our community is the horrific crime of human trafficking. Hunter successfully sponsored Senate Bill 1801, which will allow more victims of human trafficking to obtain orders of nondisclosure for crimes, such as compelled prostitution, that they may have been forced to commit. He also sponsored Senate Bill 1802, making it easier to prosecute human trafficking and enhancing penalties for would-be traffickers.

Similarly, Hunter helped pass House Bill 1590 to create a Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force within the Governor's office. The task force will allow the state to better coordinate assistance for sexual assault survivors — both children and adults — and it will recommend ways to better investigate and prosecute sexual assaults in Texas.

Also, Hunter passed House Bill 3616 to create a faith-based organization task force within the Texas Division of Emergency Management. The purpose of this task force will be to more effectively marshal the compassion and generosity of faith-based groups when natural disasters strike — and hopefully eliminate some of the confusion that can frustrate well-meaning individuals and groups during those trying hours. Our region knows how powerful it is when faith-based groups step into a disaster zone to help. This task force will ensure that those generous efforts are not wasted.

This year's session ushered in plenty of change at the state Capitol. The House was led by a new Speaker and many new committee chairmen, and there was more balance between the political parties than in recent years. But one constant was the effectiveness and commitment of Rep. Todd Hunter. Once again, he listened to his constituents and delivered results on priorities that will impact our community for years to come.

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About Rep. Todd Hunter

Todd Hunter is the state representative for Texas House District 32 in Nueces County, TX. He is a member of the Criminal Jurisprudence Committee, which addresses important issues pertaining to criminal law, as well as a member of the State Affairs Committee, which deals with significant matters of state policy, ranging from the administration of the state government to cybersecurity.