



# State Representative Yvonne Davis

## Focus Report

### Housing • Census • Student Scholarship

#### **Committee on Urban Affairs sets hearings across the state to study housing program**

In November 2009, Speaker Joe Straus released interim committee charges for the Texas House of Representatives. The House Committee on Urban Affairs, chaired by State Representative Yvonne Davis, met on January 26th to outline its interim schedule and voted to hold hearings in Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and South Texas. The committee will consider a number of issues relating to affordable hurricane relief programs and the state's weatherization program.

The committee will form recommendations based on expert testimony heard on the various topics. The recommendations will form the basis for legislation for the 82nd Legislative Session in 2011. Following is an outline of the topics to be considered by the committee. The actual dates and times will be determined by the committee in the upcoming weeks. If you wish to be notified of the date/time of the hearings, please contact Rep. Davis' District office.

committee to concentrate on the following:

a) Evaluate the programs administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs aimed at veterans. Review and evaluate the various local, non-profit, state and federal strategies in place to mitigate homelessness among veterans, and explore opportunities to coordinate efforts for maximum impact.

b) Evaluate the Housing Tax Credit Program to determine the feasibility of including social measurements such as the proximity of the proposed housing development to respective employment sites and community social/health service centers in the allocation of Housing Tax Credits.

c) Study the impact of the current housing tax credit award cap on the number of developers participating in the program, whether the state's objectives are being met, and whether changes are appropriate.

d) Review the current area medium gross household income (AMGA) residence requirement for qualified tax credit development under the Housing Tax Credit Program and examine the need to increase the qualifying level to allow individuals or families who earn slightly more than 50% or less of AMGA to qualify.

e) Review all programs administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs and other state agencies to meet the housing needs of Texas. Determine the feasibility of eliminating duplication of programs and services and promote fiscal constraint by consolidating programs under the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.

f) Study and compare the housing needs of rural, suburban and urban cities and the need to develop a comprehensive housing initiative designed to meet the housing needs of the state collectively.

#### San Antonio Hearing

The Urban Affairs Committee will examine the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' regional allocation formula policy (RAF) and determine methodologies that could enhance equitable distribution. The policy is used to measure the affordable housing need and available resources across the state. The committee consider the following:

a) Develop a better regional objective methodology that would enhance equitable distribution based more on factors such as service population, need, housing availability and income parameters.

b) Examine the feasibility of creating a pilot program to establish a regional housing board to provide greater local participation and influence in allocations, awards and oversight while reducing state responsibilities and involvement in political subdivision initiatives.

c) Examine the Regional Allocation Formula, and its effectiveness in allocating funds statewide, also identify any necessary changes to provide flexibility and/or speed delivery in responding to needs.

#### Houston Hearing

The committee will travel to Houston to evaluate the current method used to distribute federal hurricane relief funds and the need to enhance and streamline distribution of federal aid.

#### Dallas/Ft. Worth Hearing

The Dallas hearing will focus on evaluating an array of programs administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs. This critical hearing will allow the

#### South Texas Area Hearing

The committee will review the Weatherization Assistance Program, administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, and their effectiveness at reducing residential energy cost. The committee will evaluate the methodology used by the agency to distribute funds in wake of increased funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. In addition, the committee will explore the feasibility of a housing initiative that promotes independence and prevents unnecessary institutionalization of eligible populations.

## Census 2010: Time to be Counted

The Texas population exceeds 24 million and is second only to the population of California. The Texas Department of State Health Services predicts that Texas will surpass 25 million during 2010. According to the US Census Bureau, 10 of the 25 fastest-growing counties are Harris, Tarrant, Bexar, Collin, Dallas, Travis, Fort Bend, Denton, Williamson, and Hidalgo. The official counting of the U.S. population will occur this year.



In March 2010, Texas residents will receive Census forms in the mail. The form should only take 10 minutes to complete. All information will be kept confidential and will not be shared with the IRS, law enforcement, welfare, FBI or immigration officials. Everyone living in the household should be included when completing the form.

Census Bureau workers will also personally deliver Census forms to homes located in remote areas with hard to find street names or house numbers.

The effect of not being counted can be costly to our state and community. According to the Texas State Demographer, each person not counted in Texas will result in a loss of \$13,500 in federal funds over the next decade to Texas state and local governments. The 2000 Census figures influenced the distribution of 85 percent of federal obligations in grants to state and local governments, according to the US General Accountability Office. In addition, the population number derived from the Census count are used to draft congressional, state legislative, county and local districts.

### Census 2010 Timeline

#### March

Census forms are mailed or delivered to households. Census Bureau will run media advertising focusing on encouraging citizens to complete and return the forms.

#### April

National Census Day is April 1st - the deadline to return the census forms. After April 1st, the Census Bureau will send Census takers out to begin visiting households who did not return a census form by mail.

#### May - July

Census takers continue to visit households that have not yet returned a census form.

#### December

By law, the Census Bureau delivers population information to the president for purpose of apportionment of seats in the U.S. House of Representatives. **(Population data will be delivered to states in 2011.)**

### **Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program**

The 81st Texas Legislature created the Texas Armed Service Scholarship Program to encourage students to participate in Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC) programs at colleges and universities. A student must meet specific eligibility requirements in order to receive an initial scholarship award. In addition to the eligibility requirements, the student must enter into an agreement requiring a four-year commitment as a member of the Texas Army National Guard, member of the Texas Air Force Guard, or a commissioned officer in any branch of the armed services of the United States. A maximum of 185 students may be appointed statewide. The appointments will include two students selected each by the governor and the lieutenant governor, one student selected by each state senator and each state representative. A student may receive up to \$10,000 for the 2010-2011 academic year and may receive up to four years of scholarship awards if funding is allocated to the program.

#### **Eligibility for Nomination**

A student must meet **two** of the following **four** academic criteria at the time of submitting the application in order to be considered for the scholarship:

- ♦ Is on track to graduate high school with the Distinguished Achievement Program (DAP) or the International Baccalaureate Program (IB);
- ♦ Has a current high school GPA of 3.0 or higher on a 4.0 scale;
- ♦ Achieve a college readiness score on the SAT (1590) or ACT (23);
- ♦ Is currently ranked in the top one-third of the prospective high school graduating class.

Please contact Rep. Davis' District office for additional information and scholarship application. **Deadline for submitting the application is March 3rd.**

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