



# Preparing for the 87<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session

## SILVER BULLETIN 18<sup>TH</sup> TSHL 1Q2021

### FROM THE TSHL SPEAKER:

Welcome to 2021!!!! As I reflect over the past few months, I realize that we have learned a great deal:

- We can adapt, and change, and adjust – even as we age!
- We can depend on each other for encouragement, support, and fellowship – even as we quarantine!
- We can continue to be productive and make a difference in the lives of older Texans – even in the face of a pandemic!

**Stay safe, stay healthy, and enjoy this issue of *Silver Bulletin*.**

-- Rhonda Rogers, TSHL Speaker

[www.txshl.org](http://www.txshl.org)

The 87<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature will convene January 12, 2021, and remain in session 140 days until May 31, 2021.

State leaders have already said they expect the upcoming session to be the toughest state lawmakers have seen in years. The state is forecasting billions of dollars in shortfalls to the state budget, which the coronavirus pandemic has fueled. On top of that, lawmakers are set to undergo the once-in-a-decade process of redrawing the state's political maps. Because of the impact COVID-19 has had on the census gathering, there is speculation that the redistricting efforts will extend into a special session and could go into the 2023 legislative session.

As of this writing, 972 bills have already been filed, and many more are anticipated. It should be noted that as you look at these there are 3 basic types of filings:

- Legislation Bill - proposes enacting new or revising existing statutes (SB or HB)
- Resolutions on Proposed Constitutional Amendments to go for state-wide vote
- Resolutions of Recognition - Recognizing Personal Achievements and Service of prominent Texans

The first two types are those that can directly relate to TSHL resolutions. For reference, there were a total of 10,878 bills introduced in the 2019 Texas Legislative Session.

There are two ways to lookup/track this legislation online: [www.capitol.texas.gov](http://www.capitol.texas.gov) and [www.legiscan.com/tx](http://www.legiscan.com/tx). Many TSHL members have already started tracking bills and submitting written testimony for bills in the House.

TSHL Capital Area delegation member, Carol Peters, reported that she spoke with Sen. Zaffirini's office and learned that it is anticipated that Senate testimony will be heard via ZOOM and will be limited to 2 minutes per person of evidenced-based factual information only. Thus, Sen. Zaffirini suggested having more than one person prepared to testify if more than 2 minutes is required to pass on all the information in the testimony.

As you work with your co-authors, area delegations, and fellow members of TSHL, please know that your efforts are appreciated and meaningful. Continue to watch for emails from your Legislative Action Committee regarding how you can help move our resolutions forward into legislation!

# It Bears Repeating: Following is a Report from Chair of Elections & Credentials

Committee which was first published in the 4thQ2020 *Silver Bulletin*:

The Texas Silver-Haired Legislature has 123 Representatives who are elected from across Texas. The Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) boundaries serve as the political boundaries for TSHL representation. In addition, the AAAs assist TSHL during the election process by serving as the local focal point for distribution and coordination of election notices and candidate forms, and the election itself. Twenty-two of the AAA regions can each elect 4 representatives. The remaining six AAA regions located in the metropolitan areas of Bexar County (6), Capital Area (6), Dallas County (6), Harris County (6), Houston/Galveston (5), and Tarrant County (6) can elect additional representatives as indicated in parenthesis.

There is great need for more older adults to become involved in TSHL. Currently, we have only 89 Representatives in TSHL. I hope that many of the current Representatives will return, though some may not be able to return due to personal reasons, family commitments, or poor health. A few of the AAA areas currently do not have any representatives: Golden Crescent, Middle Rio Grande, North Texas, and South Texas AAAs. Many of the other AAA areas have only 1 or 2 representatives. I call upon all of you to work on recruiting candidates from the underserved areas. I have asked the same of the AAA Directors across the state.

The TSHL Election Kit detailing the election process and forms, and candidate requirements, forms, and expectations has been revised for the 2021 election. Both hard copy and e-file formats of the TSHL Election Kit have been sent to the Directors of the Area Agencies on Aging.

**Just a reminder – all current TSHL members who wish to remain involved with TSHL must file for re-election for their current positions.**

## **Important Dates for Candidates for TSHL Election:**

January 4, 2021	AAA to post notice for TSHL Election
February 26, 2021	Deadline for candidates to file for election, turn in required forms to AAA
April 30, 2021	Election Day (if election is needed)
May 3, 2021	Elected and Appointed Candidates will receive required forms to complete
May 19, 2021	Deadline for members to submit the required forms
July 19 – 23, 2021	19 <sup>th</sup> TSHL Orientation Session ( <i>Come Austin or Bust!</i> )

## **TSHL Officer Election Information**

As a reminder, the requirements for candidates for TSHL Officers were amended this year, as follows. Candidates for the office of Speaker must be members in good standing of TSHL and must have served at least two full terms as a TSHL member. Candidates for Speaker must also have served one of these terms as a LIC or Administrative Committee Chair or TSHL officer prior to declaring for office of Speaker. Candidates for the offices of Speaker Pro Tem, Deputy Speaker Pro Tem, Secretary, and Comptroller must be members in good standing of TSHL and must have served at least one full term as a TSHL member.

June 30, 2021	Deadline for candidates to file for election to TSHL Office; forms sent to TSHL Secretary, Bobette Doerrie
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Please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Pat Gleason-Wynn, E&C Chair, with questions, requests, or comments related to the TSHL election. Phone: 817.680.2236 Email: [tshlpatgleason@gmail.com](mailto:tshlpatgleason@gmail.com).

# TSHL LIMELIGHT – New Members!

I was born in Sheridan, Wyoming, at the foot of the Rocky Mountains. Although the countryside is breathtakingly beautiful, the climate is brutally cold and is quite foreboding during the dark, and what seems like never-ending, winter.



**The Honorable Bess Mitchell**

Capital Area Delegation  
[Bessmitchell@hotmail.com](mailto:Bessmitchell@hotmail.com)  
361-876-6534

As a first grader growing up in a bi-lingual household, I was somehow quick to comprehend English, and my love of language and the written word began.

By the time I entered the University of Denver, I had already spent summers during my high school years working for the local newspaper. My late mentor, the Editor and Publisher of THE SHERIDAN PRESS, had insisted that I learn the newspaper business from the top to the bottom, including learning how to operate a linotype machine in the press room.

Little did I know at the time how much this had set me ahead of the pack and prepared me for the rigors of the School of Journalism at the University of Missouri at Columbia where I did receive my BJ degree—along with my fellow graduates—the bonds of sharing an arduous curriculum lasting the duration of our lives.

We did stand and take an Oath on that day as we stood in our caps and gowns about to receive our Diplomas—the Journalist’s Creed, written long ago by the late Dean Walter Williams, and some of it at least continues ingrained in my memory:

“I believe that the public journal is a public trust, that all connected with it are, to the full measure of their responsibility, trustees for the public. “

My journey in journalism also has been a journey in the public trust. They are intertwined.

Now with the rare privilege of Membership in the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature, I am proud to be amongst those who have met those legislative stumbling roadblocks in dutifully advocating for Texas’ older citizens and have found a way to get around them.

I will do what I can to help. Bess Mitchell

## PLEASE ALSO WELCOME:

**The Honorable Michael A. Taylor of Colleyville**, Tarrant County AAA

Michael joins TSHL with a great resume in the financial, wealth management, and civic involvement arenas. His email address is: [miketaylor.nrh@gmail.com](mailto:miketaylor.nrh@gmail.com); and his phone number is: 817-366-5557.

## PANDEMIC MUSINGS...

(article contributed by the Honorable VaLita Waits, Communications Committee Vice Chair)

Our fearless **Speaker Rhonda Rogers** shared several musings - among them: She was forced to slow down and become even more reflective and deliberate; to move out of her comfort zone; challenged to learn Zoom and Free Conference Call (*didn't we all?*); to become more tolerant, and to appreciate the little things in life just to name a few.

“I appreciate the little things in life more. I have been complaining for the past few years about how mowing my almost 4 acres interferes with my travel schedule. This year, I have really appreciated my place. How grateful I am to be able to look out and see God’s land and nature; even the squirrels and the birds; a mother fox and (her) baby. I also saw 2 small, beautiful deer walking across my back yard...How lovely.”

**The Honorable Viola Hebert** (Beaumont) shared as she was getting in her daily exercise on the treadmill: “During this pandemic I became more introspective and my ‘eyes were opened’ in many ways. One of my eye opening experiences was: “I realized I was spending too much ‘screen-time.’ So, I began to read more and to hone my writing skills, which for me “was “a good thing.”

Now to my other TSHL cohorts: Get ready for the next “Pandemic Musings.” It just may be your musings we share! Watch your email for a survey or contact me if you would like to share: [valitawaits.tshl.etx@gmail.com](mailto:valitawaits.tshl.etx@gmail.com) Until next time.

Stay Safe!

VaLita F Waits, M.A., M.Div. J.D.

## THANKS AND CONGRATULATIONS

- ✚ SCOTT CHRISTENSEN has reassumed duties as Chair of the Legislative Action Committee following a temporary leave of absence for health reasons.
- ✚ Thanks to Paul Stempko and Sue Wilson for providing leadership in Scott's absence – and to the entire TSHL membership for your excellent work leading up to and during our virtual legislative session!



Speaker: Rhonda Rogers, Paris  
Speaker Pro Tem: Sherry Hubbard, Junction  
Deputy Speaker Pro Tem: Barbara Aydlett, Aquilla  
Secretary: Bobette Doerrie, Booker  
Comptroller: Wayne Merrill, San Angelo

## UPCOMING DATES FOR TSHL

**AAA post notice for TSHL Election – January 4, 2021**  
**Deadline for Candidates to file for TSHL – February 26, 2021**  
**Executive Committee Meeting – February 2021, Austin, TBD**  
**TSHL Election Day (if needed) – April 30, 2021**  
**Executive Committee Meeting – April 2021, TBD**  
**Executive Committee Meeting – July 18, 2021, Austin**  
**19<sup>th</sup> TSHL Orientation Session – July 19-22, 2021, Austin**

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## QUESTIONS ABOUT COLLABORATING WITH OTHERS --

Several have asked if our resolutions can be shared with other organizations, people, etc. The quick answer is YES! We want support! And we especially want support from legislators! So email your legislator, attach a copy of the resolution you want him/her to support, and advocate for the resolution.

We also want support from like-minded organizations. But we must keep in mind that we cannot collaborate with any organization classified as a "lobbyist," as that could have repercussions to our official advocacy status. We must remember that collaboration stops short of lobbying!

We must also remember that while we may speak against a TSHL resolution as an individual, we may NOT advocate against any of our resolutions while "wearing our TSHL hat." So, if you should find yourself advocating against one of our resolutions, please let your legislator know you are NOT representing TSHL in that matter.

If you have questions or specific concerns about collaborating with an organization or individual, please reach out to Scott Christensen, Chair of the LAC, Paul Stempko, Vice Chair of LAC, or to a TSHL Officer.