



# JESSICA GONZÁLEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 104



## ★ 2023 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE ★

Friends,

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to serve you and House District 104 at our Texas Capitol for a third term! During the 88th Regular Legislative Session and following two Special Sessions, the Texas Legislature passed over a thousand bills. The Texas Legislature continued its assault on the rights of minorities, but we have been at the forefront of the fight to defend our constitutional rights and liberties.

This newsletter will look at some of our accomplishments during the 88th Legislative Session, highlight our work for House District 104, and provide helpful contact information for our office and state agencies.

Throughout the 88th Legislative Session, our team authored 28 impactful pieces of legislation addressing the issues that matter most to House District 104 residents. We introduced bills designed to expand affordable housing options, combat food insecurity, modernize our electoral processes, reform the criminal justice system, and broaden healthcare accessibility.

As legislators, we must hear from our constituents to be able to represent you accurately. We received thousands of correspondence from constituents via phone calls, emails, mail, and meetings. Thank you for expressing your positions with our office so we knew exactly how you felt on important issues.

I encourage everyone to get involved with your State Government and reach out to our District and Capitol offices anytime. You can visit our Official State House website at [www.house.texas.gov](http://www.house.texas.gov) and our legislation tracker at [www.capitol.texas.gov](http://www.capitol.texas.gov) to learn more about legislation, see committee information, or submit electronic public comments on bills.

If you have any legislation proposals you would like our office to pursue, or if there is any way we can help you, please do not hesitate to reach out. You can also stay up-to-date on everything our office is doing and important House District 104 news on our Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram pages. Our office is here to serve you!

Sincerely,

Jessica González  
State Representative  
House District 104



Representative Jessica González speaking on a bill under debate at the back microphone on the Texas House Floor.

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## COMBATING FOOD INSECURITY

During the 87th Legislative Session, our office passed an amendment to the General Appropriations Bill directing the Texas Department of Agriculture to conduct a study on increasing the number of grocery stores and stores selling fresh produce or other healthy foods in places with food insecurity in Texas. As parts of House District 104 are areas suffering from food insecurity, our office made it a priority to tackle this issue and ensure more Texans have stable access to nutritious food.

Prior to the start of the 88th Legislative Session, the Food Access Study was released by the Texas Department of Agriculture. Establishing a statewide Office of Food Security and Resiliency was heavily recommended as a simple and effective way to address food insecurity for Texas residents. Taking this recommendation, our office filed House Bill 2886, which sought to coordinate state resources and programs for food access industry professionals, ensure there is never a disruption in the food system in our state, promote the growth of agriculture, and develop regional food system security and resiliency planning. Additionally, the office would connect local governments to retailers and distributors to establish more localized food markets and expand food access areas across the state. Our office was proud to pass this bill through the Texas House!

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## AFFORDABLE HOUSING, RENTERS' RIGHTS, AND PROPERTY TAX RELIEF

Since my first session in the Texas Legislature, protecting access to housing has always been a priority. Our office has filed multiple bills in the House every session to help lower your property tax bills, expand access to affordable housing, protect renters' rights, and create more safeguards to prevent residents from being displaced from their community.

During the 88th Legislative Session, our office filed five bills specifically on housing. One of the bills was House Bill 3277, which aimed to tackle source of income housing discrimination. Our office has heard from constituents having trouble finding housing that will accept Housing Choice Vouchers or other types of governmental or charitable rent assistance. This bill sought to prohibit this discrimination and ensure everyone can find access to housing.

Our office also filed House Bill 3276 to protect renters from undisclosed fees from landlords. The bill would require landlords to disclose any recurring fixed fees to tenants before a lease is signed. If a fee was not disclosed, a tenant would not be required to pay it. When landlords fail to disclose recurring fixed fees, the consequences fall on the tenant, who may not have accounted for the additional costs in their budget. We were proud to pass this bill out of the Texas House!

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## SECURING FUNDING IN THE TEXAS BUDGET

In 2013, Texas began enforcing one of the strictest voter identification laws in the country. A decade later, many Texans, especially minorities and seniors, remain uneducated about Texas voter identification requirements and which forms of identification can be used to vote. Since 2021, our office has been in conversations with the Texas Secretary of State's Office on how we can better inform all Texans of these requirements.

In the 2024-2025 Texas Budget, our office secured \$5 million in funding for Voter Identification Education programs within the



*Representative Jessica González speaking with a colleague about House Bill 2886 to gather bipartisan support.*

Secretary of State's Office. The Secretary of State will be required to submit an annual report to the legislature on how these funds were spent.

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## PROTECTING YOUR RIGHT TO VOTE

Following the assault on our right to vote from the 87th Legislative Sessions, our office sought to provide clarity on voting laws and simplify voting procedures so voting can be accessible to all the citizens of House District 104. Our office filed seven bills relating to your right to vote and was proud to pass two into law!

Currently, Texas Election Code allows an election officer to deliver a ballot to a registered voter at a polling place entrance or curb if they are physically unable to enter the polling place due to disability or health concerns. Our office had heard from constituents having difficulties accessing their ballot at the curbside of established polling places due to unclear instructions or inconsistencies. House Bill 386 requires a parking space at each polling place to be designated and clearly marked for voters unable to physically enter the polling place. This bill passed out the Texas House but was amended into a broader bill to be signed into law and is currently in effect!

Another complaint our office heard from election officials was that election judges and clerks are not allotted enough time to set up polling locations. Many election judges and clerks in Texas are older and have difficulties setting up polling locations with voting machines in only one hour, resulting in polling locations having a delayed start. House Bill 703 would increase the time that an election judge or clerk can be paid to set up before a polling location opens from one to two hours. The Senate companion of the bill, Senate Bill 1052, which I sponsored in the House, was signed into law and went into effect on September 1st, 2023.



*Representative Jessica González laying out House Bill 386 in the House Committee on Elections and testifying to the benefits it would provide disabled and health-compromised Texans.*

# ★ 88TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION ★

## EXPANDING ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE

Over 5.2 million Texans do not have access to health insurance, making Texas the most uninsured state. Our office was proud to support numerous bills this session to help make healthcare more accessible for all Texans. Our office co-authored House Bill 12, which will expand Medicaid coverage for women following pregnancy for 12 months, ensuring essential postpartum care. We co-authored House Bill 916, which will allow women to get a 12-month supply of contraceptive drugs, helping expand access and preventing unintended pregnancies. We co-authored House Bill 242, which will encourage the donation and distribution of feminine hygiene products to individuals in need. Finally, we co-sponsored Senate Bill 379, which will exempt family care items, such as menstrual products, from sales and use taxes. All of these bills were signed into law!

Additionally, our office supported efforts to accept federal Medicaid expansion funds. Accepting these funds would bring in almost \$5 billion annually to provide healthcare coverage for millions of Texans. Unfortunately, this did not pass this session.

## SUPPORTING OUR PUBLIC EDUCATION EDUCATORS AND STUDENTS

It is an honor to represent Dallas ISD and Grand Prairie ISD in the Texas House. The 88th Legislative Session had the largest budget surplus in Texas history, however, state lawmakers were unable to provide more resources for our schools and ensure our teachers are compensated fairly for their service. Instead, passing school vouchers was a focus of the state legislature. I was proud to vote against and help stop school vouchers from passing during the Regular Session to ensure our tax dollars do not leave our public schools and go to non-accountable private schools. Additionally, I vow to fight against vouchers in any Special Session called on school finance. Every child in Texas deserves access to quality education at our local public schools.

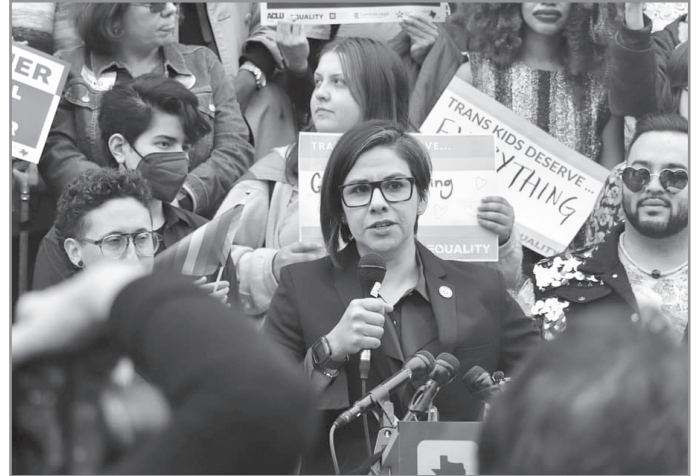
Our universities also came under attack with bills aimed to prohibit diversity, equity, and inclusion programs and tenure for professors. While our office voted against these measures, they were signed into law by the governor. However, the legislature was able to pass important measures, such as House Bill 8, which I co-authored and was supported by Dallas Colleges, which will help provide more funding for community college districts by laying out additional performance tier funding. Additionally, the Legislature proposed creating a new Texas University Fund, which will provide additional state research dollars to the University of North Texas, the University of Houston, Texas Tech University, and Texas State University.

Lastly, the Legislature also approved a 13th check for retired teachers who are at least 75 years old, and a cost-of-living adjustment to eligible retirees who retired before December 31, 2021.

## EXPANDING CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS

I was proud to file House Bill 1012 in the Texas House, a bipartisan, comprehensive, nondiscrimination bill that would protect all Texans - including LGBTQ Texans - from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodation. This bill would have established equal protections based on race, color, disability, religion, sex, national origin, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, or status as a military veteran. Our office will continue advocating for this important piece of legislation so that no Texan experiences discrimination while trying to earn a living, find access to housing, or participate in their community.

During the 88th Legislative session, we fought hard to stop the passage of a record 150+ anti-LGBTQ bills. While we were able to defeat a majority of these bills, legislation to limit drag performers, access to life-saving healthcare for transgender youth, and the ability of transgender students to participate in collegiate sports were passed and signed into law. Our office will work diligently to continue opposing attacks against the LGBTQ community, reversing anti-LGBTQ bills that have passed, and working towards full equality under the law.



Representative Jessica González speaking at a rally on the front steps of the Texas Capitol about the importance of fighting for equality for the LGBTQ community.

## CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

Ensuring equity in our criminal justice system in Texas has always been a priority for our office. During the 88th Session, our office filed House Bill 352, which would ensure indigent defendants with a habeas corpus claim have access to an attorney to represent them and investigate their claim. Our office was proud to pass this bill through the Texas House.

Our office also filed House Bill 1937, which would have decriminalized cannabis in Texas and allowed local governments to legalize the retail sale of cannabis. A new tax would be imposed on these cannabis sales to help fund our public schools and decrease our reliance on property taxes in Texas. Our office will continue to support measures in the Texas House to decriminalize cannabis, expand the availability of medicinal cannabis, and move toward legalization.



Representative Jessica González in the Rotunda of the Texas Capitol after passing House Bill 352 and House Bill 386 out of the Texas House!



## COMMITTEES

This session, the Speaker of the House appointed me to serve on the House Committee on Business & Industry and the House Committee on Urban Affairs. It was an honor to serve on these committees and offer a unique perspective using the values I learned growing up in House District 104, along with my educational and professional background.

The House Committee on Business & Industry focused this session on consumer protections, data security, and workers' compensation for first responders. The House Committee on Urban Affairs focused on affordable housing, specifically cleaning up Public Facility Corporation (PFC) laws to provide even more availability of affordable housing.



Representative Jessica González after laying out House Concurrent Resolution 71 before the House Committee on State Affairs. House Concurrent Resolution 71 would name a new state building in honor of former State Representative Irma Rangel, who was the first Mexican-American woman elected to the Texas Legislature in 1976.



Representative Jessica González speaking with her colleagues and gathering support to defeat a bill that would disproportionately affect minority communities.

## ★ UPCOMING ELECTIONS ★

### Tuesday, March 5, 2024 - Primary Election

| SUNDAY | MONDAY                            | TUESDAY                         | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY   | SATURDAY |
|--------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------|----------|--|----------|
| 4      | 5<br>Last Day to Register to Vote | 6                               | 7         | 8        | 9  | 10       |
| 11     | 12                                | 13                              | 14        | 15       | 16   | 17       |
| 18     | 19                                | 20<br>First Day of Early Voting | 21        | 22       | 23<br>Last Day to Apply for a Ballot by Mail (Received not Postmarked) | 24       |
| 25     | 26                                | 27                              | 28        | 29       | 1<br>Last day of Early Voting  | 2        |
| 3      | 4                                 | <b>5</b><br>Election Day        | 6         | 7        | 8  | 9        |

### MAKE A PLAN TO VOTE!

Visit [www.DallasCountyVotes.org](http://www.DallasCountyVotes.org) for voting information such as polling locations, operational hours, and to view your sample ballot in Dallas County, or [www.VoteTexas.gov](http://www.VoteTexas.gov) to find statewide voting information. If you have any questions regarding your ballot, call the Dallas County Elections Department at (214) 819-6389.



## ★ IN THE DISTRICT ★

### THE CITY OF DALLAS

In the State Budget, the City of Dallas was able to receive more than \$300 million in funding to promote regional training facilities for police, broadband expansion, next-generation 9-1-1, arts organization grants, and more. One big appropriation was for the Dallas State Hospital, which will be a new Psychiatric Hospital in the Medical District, bringing 296 mental-health treatment beds to our community. Additionally, our office co-authored an amendment to give a \$5 million grant for the development of Phase II of the Southern Gateway Deck Park, a park building over I-35E near our District Office.

After the Regular Session concluded and I returned home to Oak Cliff, I testified before the Dallas City Council in favor of new rules banning short-term rentals (STRs) in single-family neighborhoods. Everyone in Dallas deserves the right to live in peace and not get priced out of their homes because of private interests. When City of Dallas data showed that 50% of STRs were divided between 3 Council Districts, including North Oak Cliff, and with STRs being documented as a new form of gentrification, our office knew we needed to be a voice at Dallas City Hall for our Oak Cliff neighborhoods that many of us grew up in and love. Whether at your Texas Capitol or City Hall, I stand committed to protecting homeowners, renters, long-term residents, and our beloved neighborhoods.



*Representative Jessica González testifying before the Dallas City Council in favor of new rules banning short-term rentals in single-family neighborhoods.*

### THE CITY OF GRAND PRAIRIE

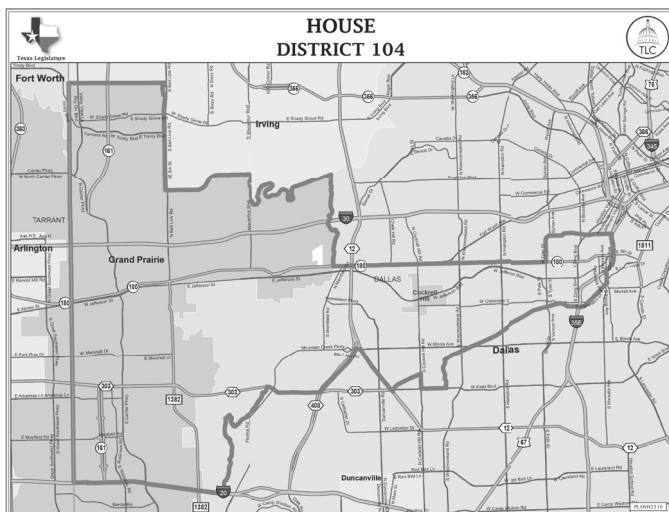
This session, our office was proud to host the Grand Prairie Chamber of Commerce for their Legislative Day at our Texas Capitol. The City of Grand Prairie has been undergoing a large amount of economic development, and it was great speaking with the chamber about their priorities and how the state can assist.

Furthermore, our office was honored to work closely with the City of Grand Prairie to pass important bills for the future of the city. Our office filed and passed House Bill 4805, which will add T20 World Cup Cricket and the International Cricket Council to the Major Events Reimbursement Program, giving the City of Grand Prairie needed resources to maximize economic benefits and ensure public safety with the new cricket stadium. Additionally, our office joint-authored House Bill 718, or known as the Brandon Tsai Act after a fallen Grand Prairie Police officer. This bill will eliminate the temporary paper license plate system in Texas to crack down on paper license plate fraud.



*Representative Jessica González after speaking with the Grand Prairie Chamber of Commerce during their Legislative Day at the Texas Capitol*

## ★ DISTRICT OFFICE ★



Our District Office is located at the Oak Cliff Tower on 400 S Zang Blvd, Dallas, TX 75208. Anytime our office can be helpful, please do not hesitate to contact our District Office at (214) 944-5441 or our Capitol Office at (512) 463-0408. You can also send us an email anytime at [District104.Gonzalez@house.texas.gov](mailto:District104.Gonzalez@house.texas.gov).

Also, keep up with our Facebook and Twitter Page to stay up to date on House District 104 news and events our office is hosting.

# JESSICA GONZÁLEZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 104

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P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, Texas 78768-2910  
(512) 463-0408



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400 South Zang Blvd., Ste. 1214  
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(214) 944-5441

*Committees: Business & Industry • Urban Affairs*

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**JESSICA GONZÁLEZ**  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE



## ★ HELPFUL NUMBERS ★

|                                   |                |  |                |
|-----------------------------------|----------------|--|----------------|
| Governor.....                     | (512) 463-2000 | Disability Issues .....                    | (512) 463-5739 |
| Lieutenant Governor .....         | (512) 463-0001 | Domestic Violence/Rape Crisis Hotline..... | (800) 656-HOPE |
| Speaker of the House.....         | (512) 463-1000 | Crime Stoppers .....                       | (800) 388-TIPS |
| Attorney General.....             | (512) 463-2100 | Employee Rights .....                      | (800) 832-2829 |
| Secretary of State.....           | (512) 463-5701 | HIV/STD Assistance .....                   | (800) 299-2437 |
| Emergency.....                    | 911            | Medicaid Information.....                  | (800) 252-8263 |
| Texas Workforce Commission .....  | (800) 558-8321 | Medicare Information .....                 | (800) 633-4227 |
| Child/Elderly Abuse Hotline ..... | (800) 252-5400 | Social Security Information.....           | (800) 772-1213 |
| Child Support Enforcement .....   | (800) 252-8014 | Suicide Prevention Hotline .....           | (800) 273-8255 |
| Consumer Protection.....          | (512) 463-2070 | Veterans' Information .....                | (800) 827 1000 |

## CONSTITUENT SERVICES

Our office can help with many different services, including: scheduling tours of the Capitol and other state buildings, requesting help with a state agency, and having a flag flown above the Capitol to commemorate a special occasion or to honor an individual or group. You can reach our office anytime by email at [District104.Gonzalez@house.texas.gov](mailto:District104.Gonzalez@house.texas.gov) or by calling our District Office at (214) 944-5441 or our Capitol Office at (512) 463-0408.