

# Rep. Williams votes to fund VA choice

## Staff Reports

Dripping Springs' Congressman Roger Williams (R – Austin) released the following statement Thursday after the House passed S. 114, the VA Choice and Quality Employment Act. "Today, Congress passed the Veterans Affairs (VA) Choice Program that authorizes and appropriates the necessary funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs. This funding will give the VA the ability to authorize 28 major medical facility leases across the country as well as allow our

veterans who are enrolled in VA health care to receive services in their community from private providers. VA Choice takes the critical steps to enhance recruitment, retention and the training of the VA workforce. Our vets have made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation and are more than deserving of quality health care. I am proud that we could come together and pass the VA Choice program for them." Williams also represents Fort Hood, one of the largest United States military installations in the world.

# Dripping Springs Area Chamber of Commerce ribbon cuttings



## New flex-space expected to draw the attention of local creative imaginations

What if? What if Dripping Springs had a community space for self-starters, start-ups, creatives, artisans and dreamers? A space that advocates, supports and promotes the self-employed, the entrepreneur, the self-published, the new candidate, the organizer, the individual or group that is willing to take a risk on a new venture. Sententia Vera Cultural Hub is a community space for cultured bibliophiles, coffee aficionados and innovative entrepreneurs and students. SV Cultural Hub is that space. The Texas Hill Country now has a community space to launch and scale your business, your innovation, your experiences and your knowledge. SV Cultural Hub is a no-frills, creative environment equipped with the essential spaces and office equipment. Located at 4002 E. Hwy. 290,

the community hub is nestled in the Texas Hill Country at the entrance of a friendly neighborhood. The 1.5 acres provides for 4000+ sq. ft. of indoor community space, as well as half an acre dedicated to an outdoor patio and natural work environment. SV Cultural Hub has a bookshop filling up with books by local authors and self-published writers, as well as art and gifts by local artisans. Its online bookshop carries all mainstream and bestselling titles ready to ship within 24 hours direct to your home. The coffee bar serves organic coffee from two local roasters, Third Coast Coffee and Greater Goods Coffee, along with a growing snack menu. Finally, the creative environment houses a private consultation office, a training classroom, a conference boardroom, and a general coworking area, all available to members and the public at reasonable

and competitive rates. Drop by for a coffee and a tour or visit its website at [www.Sententia-Vera.com](http://www.Sententia-Vera.com) and schedule your next event, meeting, study group, training, workshop, or simply come work in the creative energy that is the SV Cultural Hub. Don't forget your favorite mug, for the BYOM \$2 cup of coffee. Owner, Teresa Carbajal Ravet, is also available at 512-633-4327. As the first green building constructed in Dripping Springs by a collaborative team of green building professionals and eco-friendly volunteers over 20 years ago, SV Cultural Hub strives to be a professional, sustainable community by creating a collaborative culture to reduce and minimize its eco-footprint, while mentoring our next generations.

## Special session ends over impass on property tax reform bill

AUSTIN — Gov. Greg Abbott gave legislators 20 must-pass items, but the lawmakers delivered only 12 bills to his desk during the first called session of the 85th Texas Legislature. Both the House and Senate gavelled to final adjournment on Aug. 15, the 29th day of the 30-day session, after deadlines left negotiators without enough time to resolve differences in Senate Bill 1, the property tax reform bill. The House adjourned first, leaving the Senate to accept its substituted version of SB 1 or let it die. The Senate adjourned and the bill died. Another measure that died was SB 3, the so-called bathroom bill. The legislation attempted to codify who does and who does not belong in restrooms, showers and changing facilities intended for use for a particular gender. SB 3 was promoted and supported by Abbott and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, but opponents testified that the legislation was unconstitutionally discriminatory and would have negative effects on the economy. The Senate passed SB 3 with all Republicans in favor and all but one Democrat against. When SB 3 moved to the House, Speaker Joe Straus, who sided with a list of prominent businesses that registered in opposition, kept it from advancing any farther. The list of bills Abbott did sign into law includes: - HB 7, to restrict municipal regulation of the removal of trees on private property; - HB 13, to establish re-

porting requirements for certain physicians and health care facilities regarding abortion complications; authorizing a civil penalty; - HB 21, to amend public school finance, and to increase funding for recruitment and retention of teachers and support of participants in the public school employees group insurance program; - HB 30, to transfer certain appropriations to the Texas Education Agency and the Teacher Retirement System of Texas and adjust appropriations for public school finance; - HB 214, to create new restrictions for health plans concerning elective abortion and to allow health benefit plan coverage for elective abortion; and - HB 215, to create new reporting and certification requirements for certain physicians regarding certain abortions. Also: - SB 5, to create a criminal offense and increasing criminal penalties in fraudulent actions committed in the conduct of an election; - SB 6, to increase transparency and property owner participation in the municipal annexation process - SB 11, to amend general procedures and requirements for certain do-not-resuscitate orders and to create a criminal offense; - SB 17, to require a study trends, rates and disparities in pregnancy-related deaths, severe maternal morbidity and postpartum depression; - SB 20, to extend the

**CAPITOL HIGHLIGHTS**

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functions of certain agencies subject to the Texas Sunset Act; and - SB 60, to repeal certain unnecessary contingency riders for the Texas Medical Board and the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists. **Maps violate voting law** A three-judge panel of the San Antonio-based U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas on Aug. 15 struck down two congressional district maps that were drawn by the Texas Legislature in 2011. The panel, in *Perez v. Abbott*, unanimously ruled that District 35, represented by Lloyd Doggett, D-Austin, and District 27, represented by Blake Farenthold, R-Corpus Christi, were drawn with discriminatory intent and are in violation of the U.S. Voting Rights Act. The panel scheduled a Sept. 5 hearing to consider remedial plans, and ordered parties to the lawsuit, in preparation for the hearing, to consult with their experts and map-drawers and prepare statewide congressional plans that remedy the violations found in the district maps, yet minimize the effect on adjoining districts. Also, the panel directed

the parties to confer and address objections and concerns, to the extent possible, prior to the hearing. If both sides agree upon a remedial plan, they are required to notify the court, but the hearing will nevertheless proceed so the parties can present the plan on the record. **TEA releases 2017 ratings** The Texas Education Agency on Aug. 15 released its 2017 state accountability ratings for more than 1,200 school districts and charters. Districts, campuses and charters receive one of three ratings under the accountability system: Met Standard, Met Alternative Standard, or Improvement Required. Nearly 95 percent of school districts and charters achieved the rating of Met Standard. The ratings include more than 8,700 campuses. In addition, the number of individual campuses achieving either a rating of Met Standard or Met Alternative Standard increased again this year, while the number of campuses receiving a rating of Improvement Required continued to decline. Ratings can be accessed at the web address, [tea.state.tx.us](http://tea.state.tx.us).

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Dripping Springs, TX**

**Dripping Springs  
Century-News**

*The official newspaper of the city of Dripping Springs*

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**Hours**  
Monday-Friday  
8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

The Dripping Springs Century News (USPS 18035 ISSN Number 1047-0301), is published weekly on Thursdays in Hays County by San Marcos Publishing L.P., 101 FM 3237, Suite A, Wimberley, Texas 78666. Periodicals Postage Paid at Wimberley, Texas. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: PO Box 732, Dripping Springs, Texas 78620.

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