

10/14/2017

Greetings Fortieth District!

We are now in my favorite season of all, but it is certainly a busy time of the year. Last weekend there were four fall festivals in my district alone and these wonderful community events keep me in touch with those who I represent.

Hopefully, you and your loved ones have been able to enjoy the great outdoors, a sandy beach, or even your own backyard while we have been on Fall Break from school.

School Visits

When my tenure began in 2009, I began doing an annual school tour so that I can take time and personally speak to principals, teachers, and students. This helps me to better understand what works and what needs improving which is vital for me to do my best on The Full Education Committee when we resume session in January of 2018.

Constitution Awareness Day was September 17 and since then we have been taking new flags and pocket constitutions to the classrooms. Our public schools have gone through some major changes in the past 8 to 10 years. Some of these changes have been for the betterment of our education system, and others, I am not so sure of.

Many schools are grateful for the decrease in the amount of testing our children have been tasked to do in the past. Time for creativity and P.E. has actually brought some much-needed fun back into learning.

A big concern that has been brought to my attention is attendance. When will parents start being held accountable for their children's attendance, behavior, and academics? In addition to trying to do their jobs and teach, teachers are the ones who are being held responsible when students don't show up or do their homework and when they misbehave. Teachers are having to take the responsibility for it all, and truthfully that is why so many of the good ones are leaving.

I know we don't live in a "Leave it to Beaver" kind of world, but until parents are taking the initiative, then we are all being set up for failure. We can't just allow families to settle. Our children deserve better.

We must provide stable and safe homes for our children so that they can thrive and reach their full potential. Strong loving families are becoming the minority and everyone is paying the price.

I applaud the strong men and women who love and teach our children. They certainly do not do it for the pay check.

Speaking of teacher's paychecks, until Congress will repeal and pass a real affordable health plan that actually deals with the COST of healthcare, premiums will continue to increase.

Here in Tennessee, school districts will see an average hike of 7% with some individual market consumers will be facing hikes as high as 40 percent! Higher premiums are being passed down to teachers and most school systems are not absorbing the cost. One teacher informed me that her family plan will increase 79% causing her salary to be less this year than when she first began teaching many years ago.

Until Tennessee can cross state lines for competitive quotes and cheaper insurance rates, we will be held hostage to these insane costs. Obamacare must be repealed because it is NOT affordable!

Opioid Epidemic

The opioid abuse epidemic continues to ravage our state bringing record high deaths in Tennessee. Our state ranks number 2 in the opioid prescription madness and the 11th with the highest rate of deaths in the country.

We must hold the prescribers accountable first, followed by the manufacturers of these highly addictive drugs.

There has been much discussion from the municipal, county, and state camps considering legal action against pharmaceutical companies. And the discussions must turn into action. Constituents, I will continue to fight this.

2018-2019 Budget

Every Fall the various departments or agencies produce a budget for the upcoming year that is presented to the Governor. Then, Governor Haslam will review the budget given and his staff uses that information to recommend a budget to the legislature. This is accomplished by February each year.

Ultimately it is the job of the legislature to finalize the budget but with a 37.1 billion budget for the 2017-2018, much time and discussion will be required to get it passed.

I value the opportunity to attend district events and discussion on possible legislation for 2018. All this and fundraising in the district certainly keep me hopping!

Thank you for the honor to work for you. Never hesitate to contact me.

You can always catch me at one of my Coffee Conversations each Friday, call, or email me.

Blessings,
Terri Lynn Weaver