FROM THE TSHL SPEAKER:

What a joy to see everyone at the Orientation Session of the 19th Texas Silver-Haired Legislature in Austin last July. Sixty-nine of our 88 delegates were present and sworn in by the Honorable Brian Hughes, Senator from District 1. Those delegates who could not be present are being sworn-in by local/area officials (related story, p4.)

We have 23 new delegates this term, and this Freshman class is without a doubt one of the most energetic and enthusiastic that we’ve had in a number of years!

Our theme for the 19th Session is “Moving Forward for Older Texans,” and we are off to a great start. On behalf of all of the Officers who were re-elected for a second term, please accept our thanks for your confidence and your dedication to/support of TSHL. We look forward to working with each of you on behalf of the older citizens of Texas.

-- Rhonda Rogers, TSHL Speaker

19th TSHL Session

The 19th TSHL Session convened at the Marriott Courtyard & Conference Center, Pflugerville-Austin, Texas, July 18-22, 2021.

Officers for the 19th Texas Silver-Haired Legislature take the oath of office administered by Dr. Elise Brazier, President of the TSHL Foundation. Pictured (l to r) Barbara Adylett, Deputy Speaker Pro Tem (Heart of Texas AAA); Bobette Doerrie, Secretary (Panhandle AAA); Rhonda Rogers, Speaker (Ark-Tex AAA); Sherry Hubbard, Speaker Pro Tem (Concho Valley AAA) and Wayne Merrill, Comptroller (Concho Valley AAA).
Despite uncertain economic conditions and a pandemic, combined with significant legislative controversy on major initiatives, TSHL succeeded in having 15 resolutions influence enacted legislation to accomplish all or a part of each resolution.

**TSHL RESOLUTIONS THAT INFLUENCED BILLS PASSED INTO LAW IN 2021 STATE OF TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Bolded Resolutions were in the Top Ten TSHL Priorities, # in ()

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RES#</th>
<th>RESOLUTION TOPIC</th>
<th>AUTHOR(S)</th>
<th>BILL#/AUTHOR(S)</th>
<th>SPONSOR</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R016</td>
<td>Amend Texas Telemedicine Law to Include Teledentistry Services</td>
<td>James Rivers</td>
<td>HB2056/Klick, Guerra</td>
<td>Perry</td>
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<tr>
<td>R003</td>
<td>Prevent Financial Abuse of Older Adult Citizens (#5)</td>
<td>Dolores Garcia</td>
<td>HB1156/Thierry et al</td>
<td>Mendenez</td>
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<tr>
<td>R045</td>
<td>Strengthen Public Policy &amp; Initiatives to Expand Rural Broadband Infrastructure in Texas (#9)</td>
<td>Carol Peters, Joe Henderson, Barbara Williams</td>
<td>HB5/Ashby SB1/Nelson SB632/Buckingham HB3853/Anderson</td>
<td>Nichols Bonnen Buckley Perry</td>
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<td>R037</td>
<td>Simplify the Certification &amp; Recertification Process for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for Certain Persons Aged 60 and Older</td>
<td>Marlene Cohen</td>
<td>SB224/Perry, West</td>
<td>Walle et al</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R031</td>
<td>Allow Licensed Physicians to Legally Prescribe Medical Cannabis and Support Evidence-Based Testing of Cannabis (#1)</td>
<td>Paul Stempko, Sue Wilson, Linda Parrish, Mary Pat Smith, Betty Lee Streckfuss</td>
<td>HB1535/Klick</td>
<td>Schwertner</td>
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<td>R032</td>
<td>Supplemental Funding Plan for the State Employee Retirement System Pension (ERS)</td>
<td>Scott Christensen, Sherry Hubbard, Paul Stempko, Nancy Byler, Earl Wall, Johnny Waldrip</td>
<td>SB321/Huffman HB2/Bonnen SB1/Nelson</td>
<td>Bonnen Nelson Bonnen</td>
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<tr>
<td>R033</td>
<td>Reject Conversion of TRS Pension from Defined Benefit (DB) to Defined Contribution (DC) Plan (fully appropriate funds for current years of 2019 Plan)</td>
<td>Scott Christensen, Sherry Hubbard, Paul Stempko, Nancy Byler, Earl Wall</td>
<td>SB1/Nelson</td>
<td>Bonnen</td>
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<td>R034</td>
<td>Reform TRS-CARE by Increasing State’s Contribution Rate (Prior to any consideration of increasing retiree costs)</td>
<td>Scott Christensen, Sherry Hubbard, Paul Stempko, Nancy Byler, Earl Wall</td>
<td>SB1/Nelson</td>
<td>Bonnen</td>
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<td>R002</td>
<td>Amend Texas Penal Code to Include and Penalize Undue Influence</td>
<td>Jetta Roberts, Al Campbell</td>
<td>HB1156/Thierry, Leach, Bell, Keith, Crockett Co-Authors: Guillen, Lopez, Parker, Reynolds, Zwiener</td>
<td>Menendez</td>
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<td>R007</td>
<td>Enhance Criminal Degree and Fines for Those Who Perpetrate Internet Fraud Against Older Texans (#10)</td>
<td>Sherry Hubbard</td>
<td>HB1156/see above</td>
<td>Menendez</td>
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<td>R027</td>
<td>Increase Funding for the Texas Lifespan Respite Care Program</td>
<td>Sue Wilson, Barbara Aydlett, Mike Sandoval, Paul Stempko, Rose Timmer</td>
<td>SB1/Nelson</td>
<td>Bonnen</td>
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<td>R019</td>
<td>Require Criminal Background Check for CNAs and LVNs in NHs, Assisted Living, and Home Health Companies</td>
<td>Pat Porter, Rhonda Rogers, Barbara Aydlett, Jetta Roberts, Viola Hebert</td>
<td>SB271/Perry</td>
<td>Klick</td>
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<td>R039</td>
<td>Support Construction of New and Preservation of Existing Affordable Housing Units</td>
<td>Pat Porter</td>
<td>SB1679/Alvarado</td>
<td>Johnson et al</td>
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<td>R043</td>
<td>Increase Access to Healthcare for Older Adults via Telemedicine</td>
<td>Sherry Hubbard, Pat Porter</td>
<td>HB4/Price et al</td>
<td>Buckingham</td>
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<tr>
<td>R044</td>
<td>Improve Access to Healthcare in Rural Texas for Older Adults</td>
<td>Pat Porter</td>
<td>SB1780/Creighton</td>
<td>Burrows</td>
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It’s really quite a story — a good bit of the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature’s history that Dan Roberts brought with him from Tarrant County when he was sworn in as a new inductee at the State Capitol on July 19, 2021.

This saga of independence began to unfold when three senior community activists from Tarrant County pioneered the pathway for a group of men and women to come together en masse, determined that their past and perilous efforts to wholeheartedly advocate for their older neighbors and friends across the State now, and in the future, would finally be heard and not be in vain.

To capture a Legislator’s attention, and unbeknown to but a few, the three activists—Harriet Griffin, Jeter Pruett, and Bob Gibbons—had begun this journey long ago when they had earlier traveled to Missouri to meet with other like-minded colleagues, seeking their counsel in the “Show Me” State. There a Silver-Haired Legislature was in full force.

Armed with an itinerary of knowledge and time-consuming research compiled over arduous hours of hard scrabble work, the three sought out the late Sen. Hugh Parmer (D-Tarrant) who already was well known as the champion of numerous humanitarian causes from his past crusades.

Dan Roberts was at work in Sen. Parmer’s Capitol office when the three pioneers appeared before him. (Dan was the District Manager and Legislative Assistant for Constituent Services and had been on board with the Senator since 1977 when he served as Mayor of Fort Worth.)

Roberts, with the three stalwarts now in tow, approached Sen. Parmer who accepted this undaunted challenge without added hesitancy. Words once scribbled down on pieces of paper became a vibrant reality as his legal staff drafted a Resolution which became SCR 37; it was then sponsored in the Senate by Sen. Parmer, and the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature was born in 1985 during the 69th Legislative Session. (Rep. Jerry Clark (D-Buna/Jasper) carried SCR 37 in the House of Representatives. It was approved with unanimous consent.)

Now it was mandated Texas law. “It was like a jailbreak,” Roberts recollected, “what do we do now?” Roberts didn’t have to ponder that very long. Sen. Parmer’s next words to him were, “Dan, you need to create the Texas Silver-Haired Legislature.”

Now given the reins of leadership, Roberts decided to call upon the Texas Department of Aging for assistance and inquired if they knew of active older citizens across the State who served on AAA Advisory Committees. They gave him some names.

A Steering Committee then was established to work on providing a permanent, structured framework for the operational development of the newly-formed organization as a “legislative body” with the key focus on advocating for older Texans—their health, safety, and wellbeing—wherever they called home across the State—large and small, rural and urban.

The Texas Silver-Haired Legislature was inaugurated in September of 1986, convening at the State Capitol for the first time on record.

It worked. History. It’s still being made.

Thanks to Dan Roberts for sharing the picture and his experience in the founding of TSHL with Communications Committee member, Bess Mitchell. And thanks to Bess for telling his story!
Other Awards presented at the Biennial Awards Banquet include:

Outstanding Freshman: Pat Gleason-Wynn, Tarrant County AAA
Members’ Choice Award: Linda Timmerman, Heart of Texas AAA
Executive Committee Performance Award: Joann Blackmon, South Plains AAA; Sharon Brazeal, Texoma AAA; Sue Wilson, Capital AAA
Leadership Award: Paul Stempko, Capital AAA
Speaker’s Commendation Award: Barbara Aydlett, Heart of Texas AAA; Scott Christensen, Brazos Valley AAA; Sherry Hubbard, Concho Valley AAA

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UPCOMING DATES FOR TSHL

19th TSHL Training Session, October 10-13, 2021, Pflugerville
TSHL Exec Comm Mtg., Jan/Feb 2022, Brownwood
19th TSHL Legislative Session, April/May, 2022, Austin
TSHL Exec Comm Mtg., July, 2022, TBD
TSHL Exec Comm Mtg., October, 2022, TBD
TSHL Foundation Gala, February 22, 2023, Bullock Museum
TSHL Exec Comm Mtg., February 23, 2023, Austin
Senior Day at the Capitol, TBD 2023
TSHL Executive Committee Mtg., April 2023, TBD

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Contributing Authors: Scott Christensen, Bess Mitchell, Rhonda Rogers