

Share the TFRW Vision!

Think Before You Act

My name is Barbara Larson and I am honored to be the new VP of Legislation. My goal is to make sure that everyone is informed about important legislation. I plan to do this in three ways. First, I will send out notices about important legislation. Second, I will teach you how to navigate the web to do your own research on legislation, and I will have more articles in later issues on researching legislation. The third issue that I want to address today is ensuring that you only forward correct information on legislation.

We live in an age of instant communication. We have all received e-mails telling us about some impending legislation and directing us to call our representatives or senators. How do you know whether these e-mails are accurate?

In the last several months I have received e-mails with incorrect information on the November 2009 constitutional amendments, e-mails asking me to vote for constitutional amendments that the sender thought were on the ballot in 2009 when they were actually on the ballot in 2007, and e-mails asking me to call my Senator to express my opinion on immigration legislation that was defeated two years ago.

In checking the accuracy of an e-mail, I first look at who is sending the e-mail. You can rely on e-mail sent from the National Republican Party, the Texas Republican Party, or your Senator or Representative. Very informed staffers write these e-mails and I have found the information to be accurate. Generally, e-mail from TFRW is accurate and timely because several people look at the e-mail before it goes out. But how do you check on information if you are receiving it from a source that you are not sure about?

I always start out with web sites that I am familiar with. Some of the ones that I routinely check are:

National Republican Party	http://www.gop.com/
Texas Republican Party	http://www.texasgop.org/
Texas Legislature On-line	http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/
The Library of Congress Thomas	http://thomas.loc.gov/

It can be somewhat tedious if you go and try and read the actual language of proposed legislation. It is much easier and I encourage you to read the summaries of the bills. Texas Legislature On-Line and The Library of Congress Thomas post excellent summaries. You can also call friends that you know are involved with legislative issues and ask their opinion. And don't forget both your US and Texas Representative and Senator. They would much rather you call and obtain clarification on legislation rather than disseminate inaccurate information. To find out who represents you, go to <http://tfrw.org/links.html>. This site also has a whole list of sites to visit to obtain more information.

Next month I will write on how a bill becomes law and provide guidance on how to follow the process. Call me at 713-870-5834 if you have any questions or if you need help navigating any of the above web sites.

Barbara Larson, VP Legislation