

GETTING READY FOR SUMMER City maintenance worker Chano Soliz cleans the pool surface.

Staff are preparing to open the Brownfield Family Aquatic Center in about two months.

Weather Whys

Q: You often hear of "the Dust Bowl." What was it?

A: It was the worst and most severe combination of drought and wind erosion that has ever occurred in the United States, says Brent McRoberts of Texas A&M University. The Dust Bowl started in the early 1930s and lasted almost the entire decade and hit the Great Plains states the hardest. "The Dust Bowl stretched 400 miles north and about 300 miles to the east and west," says McRoberts, "and covered large parts of Kansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico and Texas, about 150,000 square miles in all. Droughts occur frequently in this region, but never before had there been the combination of drought and wind erosion as occurred in the 1930s. The cost of the drought in 1934 alone amounted to onehalf of the U.S. costs in World War I, and by 1936, farm losses had reached \$25 million per day and more than two million farmers were drawing relief checks.

Q: Just how bad did it get?

A: The period of 1934-36 was perhaps the worst time of the Dust Bowl, McRoberts adds. "Many agree that the worst hit on April 17, 1935 when a 200-mile wide storm produced a black dust cloud that reached more than 1,000 feet into the air blowing at 60 miles per hour," he explains. "The dust was so bad that some towns in Kansas were in total darkness for three hours. Newspapers reported that the dust from this storm reached Washington, D.C., and even to ships hundreds of miles at sea. Such storms were called 'black blizzards' and left many homeless, inspiring John Steinbeck to write his famous book Grapes of Wrath. Poor agricultural practices didn't help much as farmers kept plowing and plowing, but nothing would grow and there was no ground cover to stop the dust. The federal government, by decade's end, stepped in and began planting trees throughout the area to reduce wind erosion and promoted more scientific farming methods.'

Neugebauer Bill would prevent funding for referrals in schools

WASHINGTON -- US Dist. 19 Congressman Randy Neugebauer (R-Lubbock) introduced legislation on Thursday that will ensure taxpayer dollars aren't funding abortion ad-

vocacy in public schools. H.R. 1122, the Protecting Life in Funding Education (PRO-LIFE) Act restricts funding to school districts that contract with third party "school-based health centers" unless they certify they won't perform abortions and they won't provide abortion referrals or materials to students.

"Our school health cen-

ters should be a place of healing and education for students," Neugebauer said. "They shouldn't be used as a tool to advocate for abortion, and certainly not with federal taxpayer dollars. School districts in California, Oregon, New Jersey, and New

York are now partnering with Planned Parenthood, the country's largest abortion provider, to provide health services to students.

Some of these schools are located only a few blocks from full Planned Parenthood centers.

We know that Planned Parenthood rarely encourages alternatives to abortion," Neugebauer explained, referring to statistics that show that between 2009-2011, Planned Parenthood performed nearly one million abortions while providing only four thousand adoption referrals. "With this sort of track record, I was alarmed to learn that they are setting up clinics in public high schools. I'm very concerned that these centers will encourage pregnant students to seek abortions at nearby abortion clinics with little or no parental involvement.

Neugebauer introduced similar legislation in the 112th Congress. The bill has 43 original cosponsors.

"I'm grateful for this support, and I look forward to working to get this passed," Neugebauer said.





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