



Serving the counties of District 2: Fannin, Delta, Hunt, Hopkins, Rains, Rockwall, Kaufman, Van Zandt, and part of Dallas County

86th Legislative Session Update

My staff in the Capitol office is continuing to analyze the 7,437 bills filed in the 86th Legislature. The Senate is responsible for just under 3,000 of those, while our counterparts in the House filed an incredible 5,733 separate pieces of legislation. This does not include emergency bills that could be added later by Governor Abbott, Lieutenant Governor Patrick, or Speaker Bonnen.

Thus far, the Senate has taken a laid-back approach this session compared to the 85th Legislature. For example, senate standing committees held their first organizational meetings later in the timeline than last session. It seems thus far, the House of Representatives is moving at a faster pace than the Senate.

My top five priority bills for the 86th Legislature are:

1. Resilient Communities & Electric Grid Security (SB 1003)
2. Ending Taxpayer-Funded Lobbying (CSSB 29)
3. Election Security (SB 1410)
4. Repeal of Red Light Cameras (CSSB 653)
5. Repeal of Vehicle Inspections (SB 1599)

My other legislation ranges from education system reforms, cracking down on credit card skimmers, License To Carry (LTC) protections, and the historical truths told at the Alamo. Additionally, I'm carrying several bills that resulted from the Sunset Commission recommendations to reform and continue state agencies.

My Sunset bills include:

1. State Office of Risk Management (SB 612)
2. Texas Veterans Commission (SB 601)
3. Texas Military Department (SB 602)
4. Texas Funeral Service Commission (SB 620)
5. Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner (SB 603)

A highlight of the session occurred last week when I had the privilege of honoring the late former Congressman Ralph Hall by closing the Senate session in his honor. I knew Congressman Hall personally, and am grateful for his legacy of public service to our country and state. He was one of the last two World War II veterans to serve in the United States Congress, and faithfully carried out his duties throughout his prestigious career.

On March 6th, SB 83 was my first bill to pass a committee this session. SB 83 will name FM 1570 in Hunt County the "John L. Horn Memorial Parkway." The late Judge Horn was a dedicated servant of the people. He was instrumental in key transportation projects for the benefit of Hunt County; hence the introduction of SB 83 to name FM 1570 in his honor.

As Chair of Senate Agriculture, I'm please to report that the committee unanimously reported my bills on intrastate shipment of bees (SB 677) and creation of the Olive Oil Advisory Board (SB 743) to the full Senate on March 11th. SB 677 would reduce government regulation by repealing the requirement for beekeepers to obtain a permit through the Texas Apiary Inspection Service (TAIS) to transport bees across county lines. SB 743 would enable free market competition by establishing an advisory board to Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller on the rapidly growing Texas olive oil industry.





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86th Legislative Session Update *(continued)*

Last week, my first sunset bill was heard on the continuation of the State Office of Risk Management (SB 612). I'm especially excited about SB 612 because it relates to my top priority of the resiliency of the Texas electric grid. Among the other sunset bills that are certain to have a hearing in the near future are the Veterans Commission and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission sunset bill.

The five committees I serve on seem to run the entire gamut of legislative topics, especially State Affairs. Notable bills heard so far in that committee include consistent employment regulations (SB 15) by Senator Creighton and property rights protection (SB 421) by Senator Kolkhorst. SB 15 would prevent political subdivisions from restricting the liberty of private employers. I am a coauthor on both of the filed versions of these bills. The latter bill would add protections for landowners throughout an eminent domain proceeding.

Senate Education got off to a somewhat more methodical pace compared to last session. The most notable bill heard so far was school safety (SB 11) by Senator Taylor, a priority of Lt. Governor Patrick. It would enable and provide funding to school districts for implementing a physical school hardening that is unique to their needs.

During public testimony on SB 11, we had the privilege of hearing from Trustee Rusty Norman of the Santa Fe ISD. He offered emotional and compelling testimony about the aftermath of the tragic events in May 2018. Trustee Norman remarked that the presence of metal detectors are not the "end all be all" solution for school shootings. Dr. Rodney Cavness of the neighboring Texas City ISD concurred with him by stating that metal detectors can, in fact, make a shooting situation more dangerous.

Dr. Cavness agreed with me that removal of "gun-free zone" status on school campuses is the most cost-effective way to deter individuals that are determined to cause harm to students and teachers. I filed my school safety bill (SB 2146) that would accomplish this.

As your Senate District 2 legislator, I welcome your input on bills in the 86th Legislature. My staff and I anticipate movement of legislation to increase and accelerate significantly in the coming weeks. I invite you to participate in the process. Constituents are always welcome in my office, and we look forward to hosting you in Austin sometime soon.

