



## BORRIS L. MILES

STATE SENATOR • DISTRICT 13

COMMITTEES: AGRICULTURE, WATER, & RURAL AFFAIRS • HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES • NATURAL RESOURCES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT • NOMINATIONS

January 24, 2019

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of Texas  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711

RE: The Bodies of State of Texas Forced Laborers found on the Old Imperial Sugar Farm

Dear Governor Abbott,

I am disappointed by the State of Texas' response to the bodies of ninety-five men who died laboring in Fort Bend County for the State of Texas as punishment for crimes committed and probably not committed. Thankfully, history has advanced, and we just celebrated the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as a national holiday a few days ago. I am writing you to help resolve this situation in Fort Bend County.

Years ago, the State of Texas offered manual labor to companies as a service by the Department of Corrections. The practice, as history has revealed, was highly discriminatory, incredibly deadly for the laborers, and something many would rather not talk about.

Recently, the Fort Bend Independent School District, a subdivision of the Texas Education Agency, an agency you oversee, found the remains of almost one hundred laborers driven to death by the State of Texas' old prison labor system. Driven to death without consequences nor apparent care as their bodies were not even buried in the Old Imperial Cemetery but rather in unmarked graves.

Unfortunately, Fort Bend ISD is fighting the Texas Historical Commission, an agency under your watch, over who should be responsible for the cost of DNA testing and notification of interested parties as required by the Health and Human Safety Code. The State of Texas, as the original "cemetery organization [who operated] the cemetery" is responsible for these individuals, not only legally but morally, and must take action.

The School District and the Official Guardian of the Old Imperial Farm Cemetery have both publicly stated support for burying these Texans at the Old Imperial Farm Cemetery. However, I know others in the community have expressed reservations with this proposal. I am asking that you resolve the

**CAPITOL OFFICE:**  
P.O. Box 12068  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711  
(512) 463-0113  
FAX: (512) 463-0006  
DIAL 711 FOR RELAY CALLS

**CENTRAL HOUSTON OFFICE:**  
5302 ALMEDA ROAD, SUITE A  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77004  
(713) 665-8322  
FAX: (713) 665-0009

**NORTHEAST OFFICE:**  
3300 LYONS AVENUE, SUITE 301  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77020  
(713) 223-0387  
FAX: (713) 223-0524

**FORT BEND OFFICE:**  
2440 TEXAS PARKWAY, SUITE 110  
MISSOURI CITY, TEXAS 77489  
(281) 261-2360  
FAX: (281) 261-4726

issue among your agencies, listen to the community, and deploy the resources of the state to right the historic wrongs committed during a different time.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you or your staff need more information.

Keep the faith, Keep the Fight!,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Borris L. Miles', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Senator Borris L. Miles  
Texas Senate District 13

cc:

The Honorable Lois W. Kolkhorst, Senate District 18