



KIRK WATSON

TEXAS STATE SENATOR

Austin Capitol Office
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 463-0114

Kirk.Watson@senate.texas.gov

FOR THE GOOD OF CHILDREN

We have no greater responsibility than to take care of the children of Texas. But far too often, the adults in control of Texas have prioritized cutting spending over serving children.

Therapy for Disabled Children

In 2015, top budget-writers slashed the Medicaid rates paid to therapy providers that serve disabled children in order to trim costs by \$350 million. Parents worry the result will be fewer therapists to help their children.

Special Education

Students in need of special education have been denied services because the Texas Education Agency established a guideline in 2004 that effectively capped how many kids could be helped.

Child Protective Services

One of the most tragic examples is Texas' failure to protect children who are abused and neglected.

Texas is embroiled in a federal lawsuit in which the foster care system has been found unconstitutional because foster children face an unreasonable risk of harm while in the care of the State of Texas.

And we've all seen the heartbreaking stories about children who have died because Child Protective Services did not respond quickly. Those failures have shone a spotlight on the low pay and incredibly difficult working conditions of CPS caseworkers and investigators.

These children might finally get the attention they deserve. Last fall, I was appointed to a Senate Finance Committee work group that focused on stemming the turnover of CPS workers and ensuring children in need are quickly seen by a caseworker.

The most important dollars we could spend are those that prevent children from ever needing to enter the foster care system. Supporting families and keeping them together is best for everyone.

I'll do everything I can to ensure the Legislature this session does what is right and good for children.