



Senator Birdwell's Capitol Update (4-23-21)

Greetings from your Texas Capitol! The clock is ticking, and with only 38 days left in the regular legislative session, this is a critical time for many of the bills filed by the 181 members of the Texas legislature. I'm pleased to report that 8 of my original bills have already passed in the Senate, as have dozens of other good measures that I have jointly authored with individual colleagues. As always, however, we're aiming for quality—not quantity. Let me update you on a few of these issues below, but first, a bit of personal news!

Governor for a Day

It is an honor to share the news that I will serve as "Governor for a Day" on Saturday, April 24th. As you may know, the Texas Constitution states that whenever the Governor and Lieutenant Governor are out of the state at the same time or are otherwise unable to serve in their official capacity, the President Pro Tem of the Senate (a position I hold this session) assumes the duties of the Governor. Over the past 65 years, during each President Pro Tem's tenure, both top officials leave the state to allow a day where the President Pro Tem may serve as Governor. As "Governor for a Day," it is my intent to highlight the many acts of selfless service, volunteerism, and heroism that we have witnessed in Texas over the past year as we have battled COVID. On Saturday at 10:00 am, I'll be in Weatherford to highlight the Tarrant Area Food Bank (TAFB), which serves 13 counties and has two-thirds of their client food pantry's in SD 22, including Tarrant, Hood, Johnson, Somervell, Bosque, and Hill counties. To provide additional assistance, TAFB is building TAFB-West, a new 10,000 square foot building in Parker County. As "Governor for a Day," I will be visiting this new facility and participating in "Meals for Moms," the first delivery of food to citizens from this brand new facility currently under construction. After my morning event, I will head to Waco, where we are having an event at McLennan County Community College to recognize several citizens from around Senate District 22 for their acts of service to their respective communities. After that, I will head to Falls County to recognize another constituent for his dedicated service to Texas Veterans. Thank you for the honor of serving as State Senator and as "Governor for a Day" of the great state of Texas!

National Champions Baylor University Men's Basketball Visits the Capitol

It was an honor to recognize the NCAA Basketball National Champions the Baylor Bears Men's basketball team at the Capitol last week! Thank you to Governor Abbott, Lt. Gov. Patrick, and my colleagues in the Senate for helping to welcome them to the Capitol! Congratulations to President Livingstone, Coach Drew, and the entire team on this monumental and historic win! Go Bears!



SB 1025 and SJR 45 Pass the Senate

Last week, the Senate passed 30-1 two of my priority bills for this legislative session, SJR 45 and SB 1025. These bills will rebalance the legislative and executive responsibilities in times of disaster and emergency. The events of the past year brought to light several institutional inadequacies related to our state's statutorily prescribed disaster and emergency response. The Texas Legislature was the very last legislative body in the country to convene once COVID-19 reached our nation. This virus impacted all 254 counties of our state. While the pandemic claimed the lives of thousands of Texans and destroyed countless small businesses, our state legislature remained sidelined month after month, unable to be heard to speak on behalf of the citizens of our apportioned districts. In Federalist 51, James Madison stated (and I quote), "In republican government, the legislative authority necessarily predominates." Our Founding Fathers understood this idea to be axiomatic to republican government because the legislative branch, by design, is the most representative proxy for the will of the people. If the events of the last year are viewed in light of this principle, it follows that the people's will was generally silenced during some of the most turbulent trials our state has endured in recent history. I've spoken at length about what these bills do, which can be viewed [here](#). Overall, I believe the checks and balances offered by this legislation will fortify the constitutional principles needed to preserve our state in the years to come. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the House to get this legislation through the process.

Senate Bill 13 Passes the Senate (Oil and Gas Investment Protection Bill)

Last week, I passed SB 13, a priority bill for myself and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, as indicated by the low bill number. Oil and natural gas represent nearly a third of Texas' GDP and funds more than 10 percent of the state's budget. Last year alone, oil and gas contributed nearly \$14 billion to our schools, roads, and Rainy Day Fund. The energy discrimination movement is denying capital to our responsible, hard-working energy businesses, which means the energy we need will be less affordable and less secure — and everything we do will be more expensive. SB 13 prohibits Texas state agencies from investing in companies that boycott energy companies. Specifically, it requires the Comptroller to prepare and maintain a list of all publicly traded financial services, banking, or investment companies refusing to deal with or otherwise taking any action that is, solely or primarily, intended to penalize a company because the company engages in the exploration, production, utilization, transportation, sale, or manufacturing of fossil fuel-based energy. This list, compiled by the Comptroller, is then provided to the state agencies that invest funds for the state, who in turn send a letter to the listed companies informing them that they are subject to divestment if they do not stop boycotting energy companies within 90 days. If the financial company does not stop boycotting energy companies, the state agency must sell, redeem, divest, or withdraw all publicly traded securities of the financial company unless the holdings are indirect holdings managed by investment or private equity funds. In other words, the state does not have to divest if the state is invested in something akin to a mutual fund or hedge fund and that mutual fund or hedge fund is invested in a financial company that is on the Comptroller's list. Further, if evidence shows that the state agency will suffer a loss in the value of the assets under management by the state agency due to having to divest from listed companies, the state agency can cease divesting. SB 13 further states that a governmental entity may not enter into a contract with a company for goods or services unless the contract contains written verification from the company that it does not boycott energy companies and will not boycott energy companies during the term of the contract. Investment and pension managers who invest based on political trends undermine their fiduciary duty and threaten our workers' and retirees' futures. This bill sends a strong message - if you boycott Texas energy, Texas will boycott you.



Pictured here with (L-R) City of Granbury Councilmember Tony Mobly, Mayor Nin Hulett, and City Manager Chris Coffman. I enjoyed speaking with them about issues going on in my hometown of Granbury.

SB 1261 Passes the Senate

This week, the Senate passed my legislation, SB 1261, which ensures that the state has exclusive jurisdiction over the direct regulation of greenhouse gas emissions in the state of Texas. The bill clarifies that a municipality or other political subdivision may not enact or enforce an ordinance or other measure that directly regulates greenhouse gas emissions. Regulation of greenhouse gas emissions includes permitting and otherwise authorizing or prohibiting the emission of greenhouse gasses. The state regulates greenhouse gas emissions only to the extent that is required by federal law, and this bill ensures that cities and counties do not go beyond what the federal government requires. Greenhouse gas regulation cannot be piecemeal or political, as Texas businesses need regulatory certainty.

Support for House Bill 1927 (Permitless Carry)

Over the last week, I have received hundreds of calls and emails asking me to support House Bill 1927, which is now in the Senate. I support HB 1927 as it came out of the House, and I will be voting in favor of the legislation as it makes its way through the committee and onto the Senator floor. I am proud of my record as an ardent and lifelong supporter of the second amendment, and I have worked tirelessly to ensure citizens' rights to keep and bear arms are not infringed on by our state government. HB 1927 is the next step to ensuring all law-abiding citizens can keep and bear arms without a state-issued License To Carry (LTC), which further guarantees a citizen's 2nd amendment rights. I look forward to working with my Senate colleagues to help get this bill out of the Senate.

Senate Passes the Fair Sports for Women and Girls Act (SB 29)

In recent years there has been a steady increase of biologically born males competing in female sports. As a result, many students, parents, coaches, and school administrators have raised concerns for the safety of female athletes that have been required to compete against biologically born males. Athletes born biologically male often have significant physiological advantages over their female opponents, and the inclusion of biologically born male athletes in female sports puts female athletes at greater risk for injury. SB 29 by Charles Perry (R-Lubbock) prohibits UIL athletes born biologically male from competing in female-only sports and prohibits biologically born females from competing in male-only sports. However, the bill allows female athletes to compete in male sports if a corresponding female sport is not available and the interscholastic team provides for it. This legislation will go far in protecting girls' sports in the state of Texas.



I'm pictured here with County Commissioner Lane Grayson from Ellis County. Commissioner was in Austin to testify on a piece of legislation.

As always, I hope our Capitol Update is informative and that you'll share it with your friends, family, and colleagues in Senate District 22, who may subscribe to the Capitol Update [by clicking here](#).

God bless,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Birdwell".

Brian Birdwell

State Senator, District 22

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