



Capitol Update (1-25-23)

Greetings from your Texas Capitol! Last week, I was honored to attend the inauguration of Governor Greg Abbott and Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick. They both spoke about their vision for what the priorities are for the 88th Legislative Session which included expanding parental rights including parent empowerment, providing lasting property tax relief, continuing to defend our border, and strengthening our grid by adding more firm, reliable, and dispatchable generation. I agree with these vision statements and look forward to evaluating the proposed legislation that comes through the committees and to the Senate floor. Let's dive right into this edition of the update.



I'm pictured here with some of my Senate colleagues at the inauguration of Governor Abbott and Lt. Governor Patrick.

Committee Announcements

One of the key functions of the Lieutenant Governor is appointing senators to serve on a number of standing committees which contemplate all legislation, broken up by subject matter, prior to bills potentially advancing to the Senate floor for a full vote.

Yesterday, Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick announced Senate committee assignments for the 88th Legislative Session. I was extremely pleased to continue serving as Chairman of both the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development, as well as the Senate Committee on Border Security. I was humbled to be appointed as Chairman of two standing committees this session. As Chairman of Natural Resources and Economic Development, I will continue the great work we have done in the past two sessions and to build on the countless efforts we put into the Border Security Committee this past interim.

In addition to these roles, I am excited about the high volume of critical work ahead of me as a member of a rigorous slate of committees. A list of those committees, including a brief description of their jurisdiction, is listed below.

Natural Resources & Economic Development, Chairman — The Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee is responsible for holding hearings and reviewing legislation relevant to oil and gas, environmental permitting and quality, workforce development, labor, and tools and programs authorized by the legislature to encourage economic development at the state and local level.

Border Security, Chairman — A new standing committee to the Texas Senate, this committee will craft, review and submit legislation focused on securing and managing the porous Texas-Mexico border, and through those steps, enhancing the security of all Texans. The failure of the federal government to fulfil its constitutional obligations of controlling our southern border has forced the State of Texas to take actions to stem illegal immigration; sex-, drug- and gun-trafficking; and the potential inflow of terrorists and dangerous criminals. I previously served as the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Border Security in the 2015 session, and then again when the Lt. Governor created the special committee this past interim.

Business and Commerce, Member — This comprehensive committee deals with critical legislation affecting Texas, including electric utilities, both property and casualty insurance as well as health insurance, banking, licensing and regulation of several industries under TDLR, alcoholic beverage regulations, and telecommunications. I have worked on several of these policy areas while serving as Chairman of the Texas Sunset Advisory Committee two interims ago, but this will be my first session serving on this committee and I look forward to this new assignment.

Education, Member — The Senate Committee on Education handles legislation pertaining to both K-12 education as well as Texas public university systems and community colleges, after the Senate Higher Education Committee was merged into it this interim. The committee focus will be on K-12 education issues, like teacher workforce, parent empowerment, and other aspects of K-12 student education and learning. Under the umbrella of the committee will be a Subcommittee on Higher Education that will focus on providing opportunities for Texans seeking higher education and workforce training, which includes both four year and two year institutions.

State Affairs, Member — As another comprehensive committee, the Senate Committee on State Affairs oversees legislation affecting Texas state government, including its interaction with state and federal entities. In addition, State Affairs has jurisdiction over topics such as the defense of constitutional rights and the government's proper role and function. Most recently, State Affairs held hearings throughout the interim over the following charges: Human trafficking, taxpayer lobbying, protecting the unborn, the second amendment, and personal property protection.

Special Committee on Redistricting, Member — The Special Committee on Redistricting has the critical task of redrawing our state's electoral maps based on data from the 2020 United States Census. The Legislature is responsible for drawing the United States House of Representative districts, the State House districts, the State Senate districts, and the State Board of Education districts. Simultaneously, local governments will be charged with drawing the local maps based on census numbers. The committee is currently holding regional hearings to receive public input. You can sign up to give input at one of these hearings [here](#).

You can read more about the Senate standing committees here: <https://senate.texas.gov/committees.php>.

Four Year Term

Every ten years the Legislature goes through what is referred to as the redistricting process. As described above in the description of the Redistricting Committee, the Legislature is responsible for redrawing our state's electoral maps based on data after it is received from the United States Census. This process was done during last session and the maps were finalized during the second called special session of the 87th Legislature. After the maps are re-drawn every district is open for election, meaning incumbents no matter where they are in their term must re-run for the opportunity to serve in the district's seat. In the Senate, once all the new senators are sworn into their district's seats, we draw lots to determine



Pictured here drawing the four year term.

if we will serve in a two or four year term to ensure staggered terms amongst the senators. I was very blessed to pull a four year term and am excited to continue to serve as District 22's Senator for the next four years.

Capitol Visits from SD-22

In just the past week alone, my team and I have enjoyed the honor of welcoming numerous constituents and elected officials from Senate District 22 at the Capitol! Citizens from Mansfield, Arlington, Waco, Stephenville, Falls County, and Hillsboro have made the trek to Austin to learn about the legislative process and voice their questions and concerns about Texas public policy. It is always my pleasure to see them and answer their thoughtful questions about the work of the Legislature, and to visit about the direct impact our work will have on them, the citizens we serve.



Pictured here with Hill County Judge Justin Lewis



Pictured here with several members of the Texas Police Chiefs Association, including several from the district and a few from outside it, arranged by Chief Dan Harris of Stephenville (to the right of me)

In closing, I want to thank you again for reading this update from 'Team Birdwell.' I hope you found it to be 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](#). And if you missed our last Capitol Update from Opening Day you can find it [here](#)!

God Bless,

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

Brian Birdwell
State Senator, District 22

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