

T E X A S S T A T E S E N A T O R

KEVIN SPARKS

89TH CAPITOL REPORT



An Open Letter to the Constituents of Senate District 31

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The Senate of Texas

KEVIN D. SPARKS

DISTRICT 31

Dear Fellow Texans,

The 89th Texas Legislature has officially concluded, and I can say with confidence that this may have been the most successful session for West Texas in our state's history. Together, we fought to defend conservative values, protect taxpayers, and safeguard our district's way of life. I'm proud to share real wins that matter for your faith, family, business, and community.

Serving you in the Texas Senate is the privilege of a lifetime. Throughout this session, we stood firm for our shared values—defending your freedoms, protecting your hard-earned dollars, and putting West Texas first. Guided by my faith in Jesus Christ, every bill I carry and every vote I cast is rooted in one truth: I work for you. This report reflects the results we've delivered on your behalf.

During the 89th Legislative Session, I served on five Senate committees: Water, Agriculture & Rural Affairs; Natural Resources; Health & Human Services; Nominations; and as Vice Chair of Economic Development. Additionally, I served on the Sunset Advisory Committee, where we helped oversee the operations of 12 state agencies and authorities. Over the course of the session, I attended more than 75 committee hearings, engaging directly with stakeholders, experts, and constituents to shape policy decisions. I participated in more than 70 Senate floor proceedings, contributing to debates on bills, resolutions, and constitutional amendments. In committee, I considered over 450 bills, and on the Senate floor, I cast more than 1,500 consequential votes, reflecting a consistent and active engagement in the legislative process from start to finish.

On the legislative front, I filed 86 bills addressing a range of district and statewide priorities, of which 20 bills were signed by Governor Abbott, which is the 11th highest bill passage count in the Senate and 14th highest out of all 181 Texas legislators. Additionally, I formally supported 154 measures, and sponsored 19 House bills that successfully passed. Among the bills passed includes the following:

Panhandle Wildfire Response – SB 767, SB 868, and SB 34—paired with \$192 million to clear the volunteer fire department equipment backlog, \$257 million to build a permanent firefighting aircraft fleet, and \$44 million for new grants—expand fire resources, establish a statewide equipment database, and strengthen coordinated wildfire preparedness.

Permian Basin Oilfield Theft – HB 48, SB 1806, and SB 494 establish a DPS theft prevention unit, enhance criminal penalties, and create a Railroad Commission task force, with \$2.3 million dedicated to DPS for investigating and dismantling oilfield theft.

Rural Healthcare Access – HB 2038 and HB 2254 expand the physician workforce and promote value-based care models, easing shortages and improving access in underserved areas.

Preserving Texas Agriculture – SB 1035 and HB 43 strengthen legal protections for farmers while creating a \$100 million agricultural loan and grant program to help producers modernize operations and withstand economic challenges.

West Texas is blessed with abundant resources, but our greatest strength is our people. Across the High Plains and Permian Basin, I'm convinced I represent the finest people in Texas. Your visits and engagement shaped our priorities and ultimately led to significant victories for West Texas, the rural way of life, and Senate District 31.

On behalf of my wife, Jill, and our family, thank you for trusting me to serve as your state senator. I am often reminded of what the Apostle Paul wrote in Galatians 6:9: "Let us not grow weary in doing good, for in due season we will reap if we do not give up." Let us press on and continue to guide Texas toward a strong future.

God Bless Texas,

Kevin D. Sparks

Texas State Senator, District 31



SENATOR SPARKS LEGISLATION

Panhandle Wildfire Response

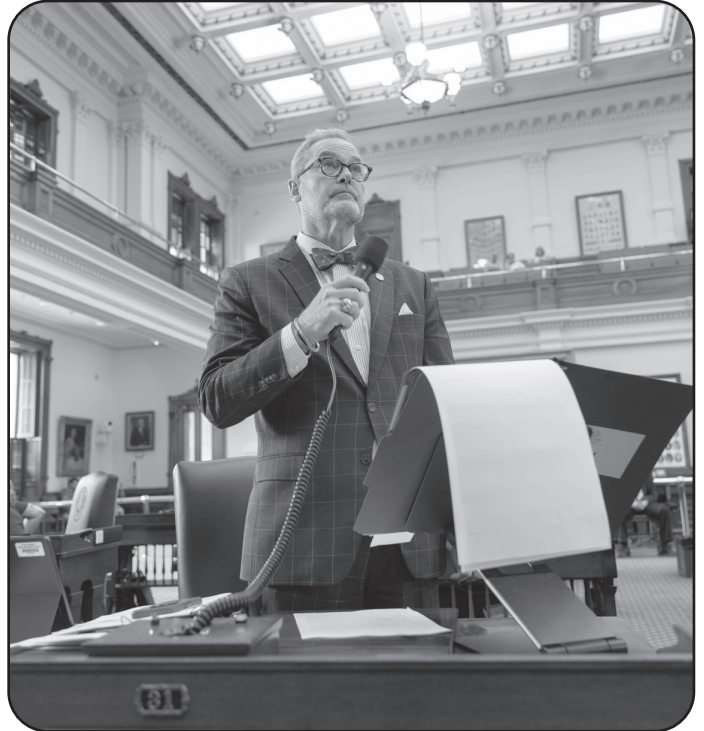
SB 767 requires the Texas A&M Forest Service to create and maintain a real-time, statewide database of firefighting equipment—complete with details, locations, and contact info—accessible by all fire departments to enhance wildfire response coordination. SB 868 amends the Rural Volunteer Fire Department Assistance Program by mandating that at least 10% of annual appropriations go to departments in high-wildfire-risk areas—such as the Panhandle. SB 34 strengthens wildfire preparedness and response by boosting funding for volunteer fire departments, improving emergency communications, and promoting a coordinated, statewide strategy—including efforts to assess wildfire risk factors like “fuel loading.”

Child Welfare Reform

SB 513 launches a pilot program for Region 9 (Permian Basin/Concho Valley) to transition foster care services to a community-based model. SB 855 allows certain foster care parents to cover out-of-network medical care costs to avoid delays. SB 500 enhances transparency and access to adoption records. HB 2789 eases regulations by exempting Single Source Continuum Contractors from obtaining child-placing licenses, streamlining foster care under community-based care.

Permian Basin Oilfield Theft

HB 48 establishes a specialized Organized Oilfield Theft Prevention Unit within the Texas Department of Public Safety to investigate, prevent, and coordinate responses to thefts of oilfield equipment and petroleum products, with requirements for public outreach and biennial reporting. SB 1806 broadens and strengthens criminal regulations around the handling of petroleum products, oil and gas equipment, and related waste by creating new offenses



and enhancing penalties for their inspection, purchase, sale, storage, transport, and disposal. SB 494 directs the Railroad Commission of Texas to appoint a Theft of Petroleum Products Task Force to study and recommend strategies to curb such theft, including law and policy reviews, economic impact analysis, and enforcement coordination.

Physician Shortage & Healthcare Access

HB 2038, the DOCTOR Act, reduces barriers of entry for unmatched medical school graduates to practice primary care and provide international physicians a pathway without repeating residency. HB 2254 allows health plans in Texas to enter into voluntary, capitated or risk-based payment arrangements with physicians, expanding access to value-based care models.

Preserving Texas Agriculture

SB 1035 protects Texas farmers and ranchers by providing stronger legal defenses for agricultural operations against certain nuisance claims and other challenges that could disrupt production. HB 43 strengthens the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority by restructuring its board, expanding financial assistance programs, and removing certain eligibility restrictions from the farmer interest rate reduction and agricultural grant programs. It increases loan and grant caps, reduces matching fund requirements, and allows funding for a wider range of agricultural businesses.



Additional Legislation

I-27 Advisory Committee Additions: HB 2775 adds Odessa, Ector, Schleicher Counties to the committee.

Rural Water Definition Clarity: SB 971 redefines rural water utilities to ensure grant distribution.

West Coke County Hospital District Banking Fix: SB 499 removes burdensome banking requirements for district.

Rural Jury Flexibility: HB 4749 allows the reconstitution of jury wheels to expand eligibility in rural counties.

Kevin Ramirez Vasquez Highway: HB 1708 designates part of State Highway 302 in honor of fallen DPS Trooper.

Rural Workforce Development: SB 2448 allows new rural workforce programs in the Texas Workforce Commission.

Moore County Juvenile Justice Board Change: HB 3513 restructures the county board for efficiency.

City of Midland Hotel & Convention Center Program: SB 529 makes Midland eligible for the listed program.

City of Canyon Alcohol Annexation Fix: HB 4449 allows annexed areas in Canyon to adopt the city's alcohol rules.

2024 Odessa Chemical Fire Response: HB 3866 adds safety measures in response to the recent chemical fire.

STATEWIDE LEGISLATION



Property Tax Relief

SJR 2 and SB 4 increased the homestead exemption from \$100,000 to \$140,000, and \$200,000 for seniors. HB 9 expanded business personal property tax exemptions, and tax rate compression saves homeowners about \$500 annually.

Education Reform

HB 2 delivers the largest funding increase in Texas history, including teacher raises and expanded bonuses. SB 2 creates the largest school choice launch in America. Additionally, SB 12 removes DEI programs and strengthens parental rights, SB 13 improves parental access to records, and HB 6 updates discipline rules to reduce suspensions and support positive behavior.

Water Supply & Grid Reliability

HJR 7 allocates \$1 billion for water development and reforms water sourcing. SB 7 expands the Texas Water Fund for future water demands needs. SB 6 sets standards to manage large electrical loads, improve ERCOT grid reliability, and protect residential consumers. SB 75 establishes the Texas Grid Security Commission to enhance grid resilience against threats.

Bail Reform & Border Security

SJR 5 bans bail for certain violent felony suspects. SB 40 prohibits local governments from funding nonprofits that pay bail for defendants. SB 8 mandates county sheriffs to cooperate with ICE for immigration enforcement; SB 36 creates a Homeland Security Division within DPS to better coordinate border and internal security efforts.



Texas DOGE

SB 14 creates the Texas Regulatory Efficiency Office to streamline government. SB 1038 strengthens Medicaid fraud enforcement. SB 3070 dissolves the Texas Lottery Commission, transferring duties to the Department of Licensing and Regulation.

Second Amendment

SB 706 requires Texas to honor all valid out-of-state carry licenses. SB 1596 legalizes short-barreled firearms (federal laws still apply). SB 1403 protects firearm privacy for foster parents. SB 1718 includes NRA meetings in the Major Events Reimbursement Program. SB 1362 bans enforcement of “red flag” laws.

Protecting Texas Land

SB 17 restricts the purchase of real property in Texas by foreign entities and individuals from countries deemed a national security risk. The bill will protect Texas land and resources from potential adversaries.

Sanctity of Life

SB 31, the “Life of the Mother Act,” clarifies when doctors can perform abortions in life-threatening situations, allowing them to act before a threat becomes imminent and protecting them from legal repercussions when exercising reasonable medical judgment. SB 33 prohibits governmental entities from using taxpayer money to fund or support abortion services, including travel and logistical support, and allows citizens to sue entities violating these provisions.



BUDGET & FUNDING

Senate District 31 Funding Accomplishments

Historic Water Investment – The Legislature approved a record-setting \$2.5 billion initial investment, plus a \$1 billion annual commitment, to build and secure Texas’ long-term water infrastructure, expand supply sources, and strengthen drought resilience for communities statewide.

Panhandle Wildfire Response – Following devastating wildfires, lawmakers allocated \$192 million to clear the Rural Volunteer Fire Department equipment backlog, \$257 million to create a permanent fleet of firefighting aircraft, and \$44 million for new VFD grant requests over the biennium to prevent future resource shortages.

Permian Basin Oilfield Theft – To crack down on the rising wave of oilfield fuel & equipment theft in West Texas, HB 48 provides \$2.3 million to the DPS Organized Oilfield Theft Prevention Unit to investigate, deter, and dismantle theft rings impacting the Permian Basin’s energy economy.

Agriculture Financing – HB 43 creates a \$100 million agricultural grant and loan program to help Texas farmers and ranchers invest in equipment, modernize operations, and withstand economic and weather-related challenges.

Region 9 Community-Based Care Pilot – SB 513 funds a \$4.1 million pilot in rural Region 9 to test new community-based foster care models that prioritize local placement and support networks for children in the state’s care.

West Texas A&M University – \$4 million funds a Behavioral Health Workforce Initiative to recruit and train mental health professionals for the new Amarillo mental health facility, addressing workforce shortages in the Panhandle.

University of Texas Permian Basin – \$2.7 million supports the creation of a Workforce Education Center to prepare students for high-demand careers in the region’s growing industries.

Ector County Water Infrastructure Facility – \$17 million from the Texas Water Development Board funds a new facility to expand water storage and delivery capacity for Ector County and surrounding communities.

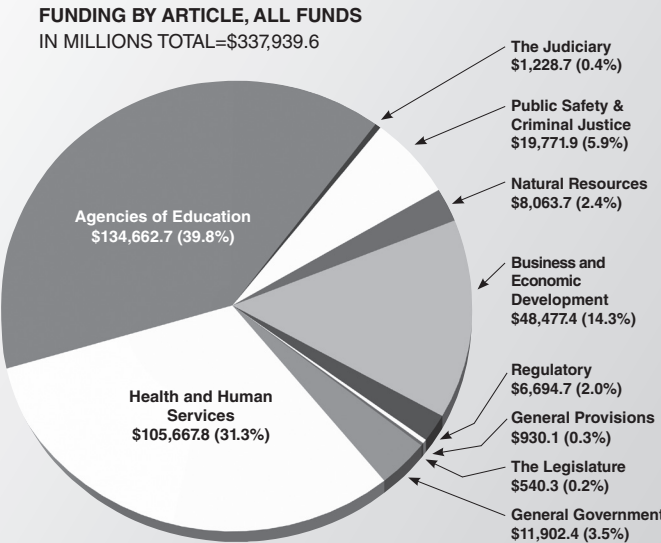


State Budget

The Texas 2026–27 budget totals \$338 billion, a 1.2% increase from the last biennium, with the largest shares going to Education (\$134.7B), Health & Human Services (\$105.7B), and Transportation (\$39.9B). Public education funding includes \$75.1B for Foundation School Programs, \$1B for universal school choice, \$8.5B for school finance reform and special education, \$6.4B for teacher retirement, and targeted funds for instructional materials, active shooter communications, and restricting classroom cell phone use. Major infrastructure spending features \$2.5B for water projects, a \$1B annual commitment to new water sources, \$39.9B for TxDOT with \$35.8B for highway construction, and \$465M for rail grade separation. Tax relief totals \$51B through rate compression and homestead exemptions. Healthcare allocations include \$82.6B for Medicaid, \$6.5B for CHIP behavioral health, and rural hospital support. Other highlights: \$9.7B for corrections (with officer pay raises), \$10.8B for higher education formulas, \$3.3B for border security, \$5B for dispatchable power grants, and supplemental funds for dementia prevention, the Alamo, semiconductors, cybersecurity, and 467 new DPS troopers.



GENERAL APPROPRIATIONS ACT, 2026–27 BIENNIUM LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD



NOTES:
(1) Substantive items funded in the Conference Committee Report for Senate Bill 1, Article IX, for the 2026–27 biennium are allocated to the prospective articles and agencies.
(2) Excludes Interagency Contracts.
(3) Biennial change and percentage change are calculated on actual amounts before rounding. Therefore, totals may not sum due to rounding.

LEGISLATIVE BUDGET BOARD ID: 9306



CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Texas Constitutional Amendments - 2025 Election Results

Texas voters approved a comprehensive package of constitutional amendments in the recent election, bringing significant changes to state law and policy.

Proposition 1 (SJR 18) - The state established the permanent technical institution infrastructure fund and the available workforce education fund to support the capital needs of educational programs offered by the Texas State Technical College System.

Proposition 2 (SJR 18) - The state prohibited the imposition of any tax on the realized or unrealized capital gains of individuals, families, estates, or trusts.

Proposition 3 (SJR 5) - Bail must now be denied under certain circumstances to persons accused of certain offenses punishable as a felony.

Proposition 4 (HJR 7) - A portion of revenue derived from state sales and use taxes is now dedicated to the Texas water fund, with provisions for the allocation and use of that revenue.

Proposition 5 (HJR 99) - The legislature may now exempt from ad valorem taxation tangible personal property consisting of animal feed held by the owner for sale at retail.

Proposition 6 (HJR 4) - The legislature is prohibited from enacting a law imposing an occupation tax on certain entities that enter into transactions conveying securities or imposing a tax on certain securities transactions.

Proposition 7 (HJR 133) - The legislature may now provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a veteran who died as a result of a service-connected condition or disease.

Proposition 8 (HJR 2) - The legislature is prohibited from imposing death taxes applicable to a decedent’s property or the transfer of an estate, inheritance, legacy, succession, or gift.

Proposition 9 (HJR 1) - The legislature may now exempt from ad valorem taxation a portion of the market value of tangible personal property a person owns that is held or used for the production of income.

Proposition 10 (SJR 84) - The legislature may now provide for a temporary exemption from ad valorem taxation of the appraised value of an improvement to a residence homestead that is completely destroyed by a fire.

Proposition 11 (SJR 85) - The legislature is authorized to increase the amount of the exemption from ad valorem taxation by a school district of the market value of the residence homestead of a person who is elderly or disabled.

Proposition 12 (SJR 27) - Changes were made to the membership of the State Commission on Judicial Conduct and the tribunal reviewing its recommendations, with expanded authority for the commission, tribunal, and Texas Supreme Court to sanction judges and justices for judicial misconduct.

Proposition 13 (SJR 2) - The exemption of residence homesteads from ad valorem taxation by a school district increased from \$100,000 to \$140,000.

Proposition 14 (SJR 3) - The Dementia Prevention and Research Institute of Texas was established, along with the Dementia Prevention and Research Fund, which received \$3 billion from state general revenue to support research on and prevention and treatment of dementia, Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, and related disorders.

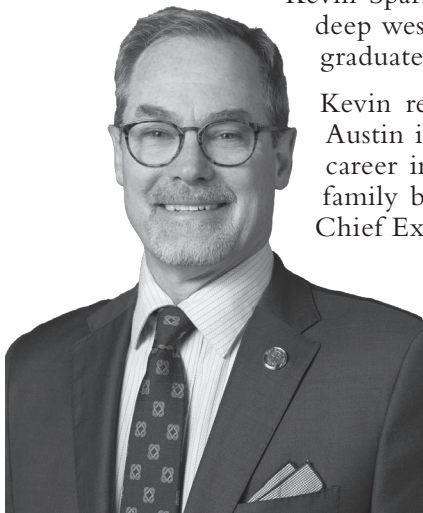
Proposition 15 (SJR 34) - Parents are affirmed as the primary decision makers for their children.

Proposition 16 (SJR 37) - Voters must be United States citizens, as now explicitly clarified in the Constitution.

Proposition 17 (HJR 34) - The legislature may now provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of the amount of market value of real property in counties bordering Mexico that arises from the installation or construction of border security infrastructure and related improvements.



ABOUT SENATOR KEVIN SPARKS



Kevin Sparks is a conservative businessman and community leader in Midland, Texas, with deep west Texas roots. Growing up in Midland, he earned the Eagle Scout award and later graduated from Robert E. Lee High School in 1982.

Kevin received a Bachelor of Business Administration from the University of Texas at Austin in 1985 and then returned home to Midland, where he began his nearly 40-year career in the oil and gas industry. Working for Discovery Operating, Kevin learned the family business first as a pumper and roustabout, and currently serves as the company's Chief Executive Officer.

Kevin and his wife, Jill, raised their four children in Midland and are enjoying their growing family, with the addition of multiple grandchildren. For over 30 years, the Sparks have served their community as Young Life and church leaders. Kevin and Jill are active Stonegate Fellowship members, where Kevin serves as an elder. The Sparks lead small-groups and mentor young couples bringing-up their own families.

Kevin has also served on the boards of High Sky Children's Ranch, the Texas Public Policy Foundation, and the Natural Gas Producers Association.



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