



# DUSTIN BURROWS

STATE REPRESENTATIVE ★ DISTRICT 83



## 86TH LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

DISTRICT 83

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

The 86th session of the Texas Legislature ended in May, a session many have described as historic in terms of the bold action the House took on critical issues facing Texas and House District 83. As Chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, I joined my House colleagues in working with Governor Abbott and the Speaker of the House to pass conservative bills concerning school finance reform, teacher pay raises, property tax reform, increasing school safety, the state's disaster response capability and protecting the rights of the unborn.

Of particular interest to our West Texas farmers and ranchers was the Legislature's approval, with the 2020-2021 State Budget, of the Texas Tech School of Veterinary Medicine. For too long Texas farms and ranches have been without readily available and affordable large animal medical services. By the time you read this, ground will have been broken for the facility and the school preparing to welcome students.

House District 83 taxpayers came out as winners during the 86th session, with passage of bills affecting property taxes (SB2) and public school finance reform (HB3). The Texas Property Tax Reform and Transparency Act of 2019 gives taxpayers the tools to make informed decisions about their property taxes and empowers voters to stop higher property tax rates through an election. With skyrocketing property taxes across the state threatening homeowners and renters, the Legislature stood up for taxpayers. House Bill 3 provides transformational school finance reform to our public education system by investing billions of dollars into our schools and teachers. Specifically, the plan provides \$4.5 billion to student-centered education reforms, over \$5 billion in statewide property tax relief, and over \$2 billion in dynamic pay raises for teachers, librarians, counselors, and nurses. Inside this newsletter, both of these key conservative accomplishments are explained in greater detail, along with many other important bills sent to the Governor's desk.

Between now and the next legislative session, I look forward to visiting with you across the district, and listening to your concerns. To that end, several town halls and community meetings will be held during the next year. Advance notice of those events will be on my Facebook page and in your local newspapers. Please don't hesitate to contact my district office at (806) 795-0635 with questions and comments for me.

May God bless you and yours, and may God continue to bless the great State of Texas.



Rep. Dustin Burrows and Elisabeth Burrows with their children.

# ★ HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 86TH SESSION ★



Governor Abbott joins House and Senate leadership to sign the Property Tax Reform bill.

## Limiting Government

*Bills passed this session to keep government off your back:*

- ✓ Passed a balanced budget without raising taxes.
- ✓ Banned use of red light cameras
- ✓ Defended private property rights by ending forced annexation statewide

## Keeping Texas Communities Safe

*Bills passed this session protecting your life and property:*

- ✓ Dedicated roughly \$800 million to border security efforts
- ✓ Invested in human and child sex trafficking prevention, investigative units and anti gang squads
- ✓ Cracked down on illicit trafficking businesses and enhanced investigations and prosecutions
- ✓ Increased penalties for buyers of online sex trafficking

## Your Second Amendment Rights

*Bills passed this session strengthening Texan's right to bear arms:*

- ✓ Protected law-abiding gun owners from being penalized for accidentally carrying in an establishment where guns are prohibited
- ✓ Restored the rights of tenants to own and keep firearms and prohibited "no firearms" clauses in leases
- ✓ Allowed permitless carry for those evacuating from and returning to a disaster area
- ✓ Cracked down on inconsistent patchwork firearms ordinances at the local level

## Defending our Culture of Life

*Bills passed this session defending the rights of the unborn:*

- ✓ Dedicated over \$60 million for crisis pregnancy centers and alternatives to abortion
- ✓ Required physicians to treat babies who survived botched abortions with the highest degree of medical care in an attempt to save the life of the baby
- ✓ Prohibited government from conducting any transaction of goods or services with abortion providers
- ✓ Prohibited all abortion providers from receiving taxpayer money

## Fortifying your Constitutional Liberties

*Bills passed this session thwarting the undermining of your constitutional rights:*

- ✓ Prohibited governmental entities from using your tax dollars to deny contracts, loans, licenses or employment opportunities to a person or business over their religious beliefs
- ✓ Protected free speech on college campuses and prevented conservative students from being silenced for exercising their First Amendment Rights

## Reducing economic burdens/reducing the burden of occupational licensing

*Bills passed this session that keep the heavy hand of government off occupational license holders:*

- ✓ Provided reciprocity and expedited licensure for spouses of military service members who are licensed for an occupation in another state
- ✓ Prohibited a default on student loan payments from being used to disqualify individuals from obtaining an occupational license
- ✓ Ensured local governments cannot impose more stringent licensure requirements for holders of a state occupational license
- ✓ Ensured that persons with a criminal history are not automatically disqualified from obtaining an occupational license if they otherwise satisfy the licensure criteria and their criminal history does not relate to the occupation



Speaker Bonnen presents House Ways and Means Chairman Burrows with ceremonial gavel.



*Burrows and El Paso Rep. Joe Moody (a Texas Tech Alumnus), Raider Red and the Masked Rider celebrate TTU Vet School*

## THE TEXAS PROPERTY TAX REFORM & TRANSPARENCY ACT:

### PROTECTS PROPERTY OWNERS, SLOWS RATE GROWTH, EMPOWERS VOTERS

Across HD83, the number one issue brought to my attention is the need for property tax reform. To that end, I authored a bill providing taxpayers the tools to make informed decisions about their property taxes, and empowers voters to authorize higher property tax rates. The legislation also Improves transparent communication between taxing units and taxpayers, adds real-time tax notices that allow taxpayers to timely engage in the rate-setting process. The bill requires taxing entities to inform taxpayers who has proposed a rate increase, by how much, and when and where to protest. Taxing entities must also provide an online form for taxpayers to communicate their position on proposed rates and submit it to the appropriate taxing unit. Of particular help to taxpayers is a requirement of taxing entities to expand opportunities to protest or appeal appraisal values. Finally, and most importantly, this legislation enables you - the voter - to make your voice heard when local governments want to raise property taxes. This bill reduces the burdensome requirements that force voters to gather signatures to petition for an election and automatically triggers a November election when taxes are raised above 2.5% in a given year.

## THE TEXAS PLAN FOR SCHOOL FINANCE REFORM: PROPERTY TAX RELIEF, RECAPTURE REDUCTION, EDUCATION REFORM

Reforming how Texas funds public education was a top priority of the 86th Session. House Bill 3 promises to transform the lives of students, taxpayers and educators across HD83. The legislation prioritizes student success by investing \$4.5 billion in classrooms. Students will have access to full-day Pre-K, dyslexia identification, summer programs and other benefits. Schools and Educators will be incentivized (\$452 million available) to deliver outcomes, such as graduates entering college or the military, and evaluated based on performance. The bill also provides \$5 billion in property tax relief, reduces recapture by 47%, increases the state share of public education spending from 38% to 45% and caps at 2.5% ISD tax increases. Many educators will see pay raises because of HB 3. Teachers, librarians, counsellors and nurses will see a direct salary increase of \$1.6 billion, with another \$400 million available in merit and incentive pay. A veteran teacher may receive up to a \$4,000 increase in pay.



*Governor Abbott visits with Chairman Burrows during House deliberations on Property Tax Reform Bill*

## TEXAS FIREFIGHTERS - FIXING A BROKEN SYSTEM: WORKERS COMPENSATION REFORM FOR TEXAS FIREFIGHTERS & EMTS

Texas State Association of Firefighters (SAFF) President John Riddle said it best: “We thank Rep. Burrows, Sen. Hinojosa and Rep. Longoria for their recognition of and commitment to help fix problems with the workers’ compensation system. Their leadership and the passage of SB 2551 is an important step forward.” SB 2551 is the first real workers compensation reform since 2005 when the state cancer presumptive act for fire fighters and EMTs was enacted. SB 2551 allows recovery of attorneys’ fees from a city or risk pool should a covered first responder prevail in a legal claim over denied coverage, it holds cities and risk pools to the same regulatory standards as private insurers, it clarifies the claims approval process, and it replaces the language referencing the IARC as the decider of which cancers are covered with a list of 11 cancers commonly contracted by firefighters.



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