



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Ernest Bailes

Serving House District 18:
Liberty, San Jacinto, and Walker Counties

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Dear Neighbors,

As we work to address the issues impacting HD 18 and the State of Texas, I remind myself that every decision has consequences, and, perhaps even more importantly, every indecision has consequences.

Right now, we are dealing with the fallout of both decision and indecision.

There are no easy fixes to the issues we are tackling. As we gather information, analyze data, meet with stakeholders, assess the pro's and con's, and consider solutions, we are making headway.

There is a lot of work to be done and we thank each of you for sharing your insight with us.

Continue to reach out and let us know what issues are impacting you. Keep in touch!

**God Bless You All
and God Bless our
Great State of Texas**



Ernest

Growth and Private Property Rights-Hot Topic in HD 18

As the population in Texas grows, private property rights are front and center on many people's minds. Certainly, that is the case in Plum Grove, a community in HD 18.

Plum Grove is a rural area in northwestern Liberty County, and is served by Cleveland ISD. In 1968, Plum Grove incorporated 7.3 square miles, and by 2014, the estimated population was 622.

Things look much different today. The area has been transformed as thousands of new lots (9,000+) have been carved out of rural farm and timber land around Plum grove, resulting in an unprecedented population surge.

Consequently, city, county, and public school services are strained. Cleveland ISD has experienced significant increases in enrollment and has called for an \$80 million bond election on May 5, 2017.

Representative Bailes is ag-

gressively working on issues concerning Plum Grove. He overwhelmingly supports reasonable land use regulations while upholding the rights of private property owners. He also strongly supports proactive measures to insure the future growth throughout HD 18 protects everyone involved.

"Private property owners have the right to own, control, and sell their private property

as they see fit as long as they are not violating any laws. As HD 18 grows, we need to be prepared. I applaud our elected officials in Liberty County and others in our communities who are working to ensure responsible growth in the future. We can't just sit back and wait. We must get it right in the beginning because it is virtually impossible to go back and undo what has already been done." said Representative Bailes.

In January 2017, a Notice of Intent to Introduce a Bill was published concerning the proposed creation of the Plum Grove Municipal Utility District No. 1.

The legal notice was authorized/published on behalf of Colony Ridge, the company developing the land in Plum Grove.

There are important issues to understand about such notices.

—The Texas Constitution allows for the creation of several types of special districts, including, but not limited to, Municipal Utility Districts (MUD) and Municipal Management Districts (MMD).

—These districts, their creation, and how they are legally operated are laid out in the Texas Constitution.

—Before a district may be formed there are processes which must proceed through either the TCEQ and/or the Texas Legislature, AND property owners impacted must approve.

If you will be impacted by, or have an opinion on, the formation of such a district, we want to hear from you.

Thoughts from Ernest...

In February, in an effort to control the feral hog population, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller announced the approval of Kaput Feral Hog Lure, a product laced with warfarin. Warfarin is the drug commonly found in rat poison.

Proponents of poisoning cite statistics showing the 2 million+ feral hogs in Texas cost over \$50 million a year in damage to Texas agriculture. Although there are no hard estimates on damages to yards and green spaces, the damage is significant. Opponents to poisoning prefer hunting and trapping as a control method. They cite concerns about non-target species, cross contamination of other animals, and negative impacts on the ecosystem. They also believe the use of Kaput Feral Hog Lure will impact their ability to safely harvest feral hogs for meat in home consumption.

So, where do I come down on the issue? On one hand, I am an agriculturist. I understand the damages feral hogs do. When you're plowing or baling hay in fields that have been rooted up, you want to see them gone! On the other hand, for years I have hunted and trapped wild hogs and enjoy the sport as well as the meat. Like most things in life, this one has no easy answers. We will see how it plays out. eb4

A Quick Glimpse...

Pausing in Prayer

On 02/15, Liberty County Pct. 1 Constable, Justin Johnston, was seriously injured when he was struck by a pickup on Hwy 146. Justin and his family need our continued prayers.

We are thankful for his fellow officers and everyone in the community that has stepped up for this officer in need.

New CDL Skills Standards Impact HD 18

In 2011, the federal government enacted new standards for issuing Commercial Driver's License's (CDL), deeply impacting Texas and more specifically, HD 18.

Before the regulations were implemented in 2016, Texas had over 175 locations to administer CDL skills testing. Now, there are only 25. The Huntsville location was one of the closures, leaving no testing locations in HD 18.

Working with the Texas Department of Public Safety, Representative Bailes has been reviewing information on CDL test sites and supports reopening the testing location in Huntsville.

What Does 4% Mean to TDCJ?

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) has been instructed, as have all state agencies, to submit budget plans for the 2018-2019 biennium reflecting a 4% reduction target. For TDCJ, that would significantly slash its annual operating budget of \$3 billion.

In looking for answers in programs that reduce recidivism rates, Representative Bailes recently sat down with representatives from Lee College to better understand the important role they play in educating TDCJ inmates. (Lee College has offered college courses for credit to TDCJ inmates since 1966.)

"The goal is not to build more prisons or to lock more people up, but to reduce the need for incarceration. We must look at prioritizing mental health services and rehabilitation, as well as education and meaningful employment," said Representative Bailes

On average, it costs Texas' taxpayers approximately \$20,000 a year to incarcerate one inmate, more than twice what we spend on average to educate one student in HD 18.

A Balanced Budget and New Legislation

Fortunately for all Texans, the Texas Legislature is required by the Texas Constitution to approve a balanced state budget.

Currently, legislators are busy filing bills. Many of them will be loudly hyped, but quietly die due to budget restraints.

In the 84th session (last session), the Texas Legislature proposed more than 6,000 bills, with less than half becoming law. This session, we will likely see much of the same—bills submitted that never reach Governor Abbott's desk.

Representative Bailes' challenge is to make sure the needs of our rural area are not overlooked in the budgeting process. In an effort to discern needs from wants, Representative Bailes takes a pragmatic approach to bill writing.

After examining the pro's and con's involved in new legislation, it often comes down to money. Can we afford it, and can we pass it? If we don't pass it, what will happen? Always mindful that to balance a budget some things will be left on the table.

Be it in Austin or back home in the District, my staff and I cherish the opportunities to work with the people of HD 18. Helping them find solutions to their issues, sharing in the educational process as they learn about their government, advocating for those most in need, or getting to celebrate our shining stars, it is always an honor.



Volunteers at the Walker County Emergency Personnel Annual Appreciation Dinner



The Hardin Lions Club Annual Chili Dinner



A Day at the Capitol, Celebrating 100 years of Vocational Education in Texas with Coldspring FFA Members and Leaders



Huntsville's Annual Wounded Warriors Banquet



Working with stakeholders and state officials to address issues with the Dayton train



Brady Wilson (New Waverly), won the Poultry Show at the San Antonio Livestock Expo

SPOTLIGHT of SERVICE
We Salute CASA Volunteers



When a child is removed from their home because the environment is no longer considered safe due to abuse or neglect, they are often appointed a CASA Volunteer to advocate on their behalf.

Volunteers truly embrace the motto, "I am for the child." If there is a shining light in a bad situation, these volunteers shine brightly.

Thank you to all CASA volunteers. We salute your service to others.

CASA Volunteers help create a brighter future for the children they serve, ensuring their best interests are addressed in court and other settings.

By going above and beyond for Texas' youth in their greatest times of need, these dedicated vol-



What an uplifting opportunity it was to welcome the dedicated volunteers of Liberty/Chambers Counties CASA to their State Capitol. Your calling to service as a CASA volunteer makes a life-long impact on children and families. Your love for others is evident in all you do and we are sincerely thankful. You make a DIFFERENCE!

Local Pastor Serves as "Pastor of the Day"

The long-standing and valued tradition in the Texas Legislature of opening each day in prayer held a special meaning for Representative Bailes on February 23rd. He was honored to introduce his own Pastor, Brother Dalton Currie, as the Pastor of the Day.

Brother Dalton serves as the Minister of Evangelism and Outreach at First Baptist Church in Coldspring, San Jacinto County, Texas.

Married to his loving wife, Linda, for 49 years, they are extremely proud of their 3 grown children and 9 grandchildren.



Brother Dalton's theme of his ministry is, "Come as you are and you will be loved!"

Miss Alissa Wion — Honorary Page for the Day

We were happy to welcome Miss Alissa Wion, Walker County, to her State Capitol on 02/16. Alissa served as an Honorary Page and enjoyed the opportunity to assist real House Pages and House Sergeants in their daily tasks, as well as explore and learn more about our State Capitol!

Miss Alissa is 9 years old and a member of the American Heritage Girls, where she has earned 26 badges and patches. She has also received 9 service stars, with each service star representing 10 hours of community service. Alissa takes ballet and belongs to the Huntsville Home School Organization. She is also very active in First Baptist Church in Huntsville, and is a member of Girls in Action and the Bible drill team.

Thank you Miss Alissa, we were honored to have you represent HD 18. Great Job!

(If you know a young person, ages 8-18, interested in serving as an Honorary Page for the Day, please give us a call. For details or to apply for this program, email our office at: nick.raymond@house.texas.gov)



Alissa gave the experience a big thumbs up. We thank her for her interest in Texas Government.

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STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Meet Sadie McLaughlin, District Director

Sadie is no stranger to HD18. Following her work in Austin during the 84th Legislative Session, she returned to Huntsville and completed her undergraduate studies, graduating Magna Cum Laude, with a Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science from Sam Houston State University.

Sadie joined the Bailes for Texas Campaign as a field worker and quickly made her mark. She now serves as Representative Bailes' District Director where she oversees the district office and constituent work.

The District office is located in Shepherd, San Jacinto County—the midway point of HD 18. Whenever you need help in the District, we encourage you to reach out to Sadie. She is an important part of our team and welcomes your calls.



District Director, Sadie McLaughlin

I VALUE and NEED YOUR FEEDBACK:

Please take a few moments to tell me about the issues that affect the lives of you and your family most.

(Your Name)

(Your Mailing Address)

(City, State, Zip)

(Your Email)

(Your Phone)

Issues or Concerns:

Complete and mail to Austin, mail/drop off at office in Shepherd,
or email to: District18.bailes@house.texas.gov