



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

Ernest Bailes

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

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85th Legislative Session

June 16, 2017

Dear Neighbors,

Since the end of session, it has been good to be home! Not only to be with Courtney and my boys, though also the working-class folks who elected me to go to Austin. It has been an honor to be our voice at the Capitol while in session though the work definitely doesn't end there!

Our Austin and District offices are still going full steam ahead. Wrapping up the business of session, getting ready for the upcoming special session, constituent work and interim charges for next session are all on the plate at hand. Regardless of the political climate at the state or national level, the most important aspect of my job is to be sure that the people of HD 18 are represented. Every tax payer, business, school and our kids are worth the commitment that this office takes.

I truly appreciate everyone who stopped by one of our offices, gave us a call, or took the time to write during session. Please don't hesitate to reach out if we can do anything to help...

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



Ernest

The 85th Legislature Adjourned.....until July 18, 2017

The 85th Legislative Session adjourned sine die, meaning "without a day," on May 29, 2017. The session accomplished much, such as maintaining border security, reforming the A-F school accountability system, and improving Child Protective Services (CPS), but more could have been achieved.

That is why on June 6th, Governor Greg Abbott called for a special session, something only the Governor of Texas can request. A special session can last up to 30 days and covers topics the Governor wants to address. Governor Abbott may call as many special sessions as he wants, but it does cost taxpayers a hefty sum, so we need to be fiscally mindful of the consequences.

Governor Abbott has called on the Legislature to reconvene in Austin on July 18th to address various issues, such as school finance and property tax reform, annexation reform, pro-life priorities, voter fraud, and increasing economic growth.

During the regular session,

Representative Bailes supported Governor Abbott's list of emergency items, including banning sanctuary cities and reforming CPS, but other high-priority bills did not survive the legislative deadlines. Calling for a special session has revived many of those bills thought to be dead.

Representative Bailes was a joint and co-author for many of the priorities Governor Abbott outlined when he made his announcement, and this special session will be no different.

"With several weeks to prepare, I look forward to working on the issues that matter most to House District 18. School finance and property tax reform, annexation reform, and advancing pro-life legislation will be just some of the topics I will be supporting. The legislative process is complex, and calling for a special session serves as a reminder to just how important it is to complete all the work that is requested by the people of Texas," said Representative Bailes.



Governor Abbott announcing his priorities for the 85th Special Session

Preparation for a Special

To be honest, I was not surprised that a special session was called. Rumors have been floating around all session and with the lack of progress in both chambers, it was evident that more work was needed.

Governor Abbott also announced his many priorities for the upcoming special session. A few of these priorities include

legislation I was proud to be a part of and will continue to whole heartedly work to pass.

A special session can last up to 30 days, and I just hope that is enough time to finish business left on the table.

Both my staff and I have continued full steam ahead and will continue to do so throughout the interim. My priority is to take care of the people who elected me to serve, and of the State of

Texas; that doesn't simply mean to act the will of a Speaker, Lieutenant Governor, or Governor, but doing what I know is right. With a strong sense of business and moral character to think for myself, it helps make the tough votes easier, without sacrificing my beliefs.

Please don't hesitate to call if you have concerns about special session or if we can do anything to help! eb4

85th Legislative Wrap-up from Start to Finish

HB 1028: Josey Scott Memorial Highway

HB 1028 was the first bill Representative Bailes filed as a legislator. The bill would have designated Farm-to-Market 2666 in San Jacinto County as the Josey Scott Memorial Highway, to promote “hit and run awareness.” The bill was heard in the House Committee on Transportation in April. Rep. Bailes, along with the family of Josey Scott, testified in support of the bill. It was extremely emotional for the family, having to recall what happened to their daughter, but we are incredibly grateful to them for coming to Austin and giving their support. The bill was then placed on the Local & Consent calendar in May and passed the House without opposition. The bill was then referred to the Senate committee on Transportation, though was not heard in committee before the regular session ended.

HB 1469: Requirements for Teaching Vocational Classes

Rep. Bailes passed HB 1469, which focuses on teaching requirements for non-core, vocational instructors at the Gulf Coast Trade Center in Walker County. The issue was an unintended consequence from a law passed in the 84th Legislature, requiring all charter school teachers to hold a 4-year baccalaureate degree. The bill was referred to the Public Education subcommittee on Educator Quality and received a hearing in March. Superintendent Dale Underwood and Principal Will Gollihar came to Austin to testify in support for the bill. With their help, the Public Education committee unanimously voted out the bill and sent it to the General Calendars committee. From there,

the bill was voted on in the House in April, with legislators praising Rep. Bailes for bringing this legislation forward. HB 1469 was then fast-tracked to the Senate Education committee and placed on the Senate's Local & Uncontested calendar, a calendar designed for non-controversial bills. The bill was sent to Governor Abbott in May, where it was signed and became effective immediately.

HB 1479: Small School Districts Unfair Penalty

HB 1479 is a bill multiple rural legislators filed in response to an outdated policy negatively affecting school districts smaller than 300 square miles. The bill was referred to the Public Education committee in March, but never received a hearing. However, with the help of HB 21, the public school finance bill filed this session, similar language from our bill was attached as an amendment. After a long debate, the bill passed through the House, but unfortunately died after the Senate added school vouchers to the bill and refused to appoint a conference committee to work out the differences.

HB 2184: Walker County Court at Law

HB 2184 was filed in February with the help of Presiding Judge Tracy Sorensen in Walker County. The bill amended the operations and administrative procedures for the Walker County Court at Law. The bill was referred to the House Committee on Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence where it was reviewed and considered a “local, cleanup bill.” Legislators from all over Texas filed their own County Court at Law bills only to be added to this session's judicial omnibus bill, SB 1329 by Senator Joan Huffman. SB 1329 was ultimately approved by both chambers

and was signed by Governor Abbott on June 15th.

HB 2386: Outdoor Burning

Currently under Texas law, certain plant debris collection businesses are permitted to burn brush and plant growth, as long as there is supervision from a paid fire department. In many rural counties, the majority of fire departments are manned with volunteer firefighters, which are unpaid. HB 2386 fixes this technicality by authorizing volunteer firefighters to supervise these burning activities. The bill was heard in the House Committee on Environmental Regulation in March, passed out of the House in April, and passed out of the Senate in May. The bill was signed by Governor Abbott on June 9th and will become law on September 1st.

HB 435: Protection for EMS Personnel

Currently, volunteer emergency services personnel, who carry handguns, may be required to remove their firearm before they can enter a certain location to perform their duties, which can result in an even more dangerous situation. Standing with our rural emergency services personnel in HD 18, Representative Bailes joint authored HB 435, a bill that will protect volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel by providing them with legal protections for carrying a handgun in an emergency situation. The bill was signed by Governor Abbott on June 15th and will become law on September 1st.



Team Bailes' office joined members of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce on June 1st, at their monthly business luncheon. The lunch focused on “productivity” with a keynote presentation given by Mark Struczewski.

Pictured on the left

On June 7th, Rep. Bailes attended the weekly Huntsville Rotary Club meeting. Alongside members of the Rotary Club was speaker Zach Holland for the Bluebonnet Groundwater Conservation District.

Pictured on the right



85th Legislative Wrap-up from Start to Finish, Cont.

HB 2567: Forest Pest Control

Working alongside the Texas A&M Forest Service, Representative Bailes filed HB 2567 to update the State's outdated Natural Resources Code, dealing with pest control in our forests. The bill received a hearing in the House Committee on Agriculture & Livestock in March, garnering support from several agricultural associations. The bill received unanimous approval from the House in May and was sent to the Senate's Agricultural, Water, & Rural Affairs committee. After passing through committee and the Senate chamber, the bill was signed by Governor Abbott on June 15th.

HB 3290: Public School Accountability

In collaboration with the Superintendents throughout the district, Representative Bailes filed HB 3290 to address the need for an enhanced A-F public school rating system. When the Texas Education Agency (TEA) released their initial grades for school districts in January, it was met with immense disapproval. The legislature's response: reform the A-F rating system. The bill was referred to the Public Education committee, but did not receive a hearing. Instead, we worked with the chairman of Public Education and ultimately found an opportunity to add language from our bill into HB 22. Representative Bailes was successful in adding an amendment in May that requires TEA Commissioner, Mike Morath, to provide school districts, parents, and students, with a simple and accessible matrix that explains the accountability rating system. HB 22 successfully passed in the House and Senate and was signed by Governor Abbott on June 15th.

HB 200/SB 8: Pro-Life

One of Governor Abbott's priorities this session was prohibiting partial-birth abortions. What he received was a much stronger, more pro-life bill than imagined, and Representative Bailes is proud to have been a joint author and joint sponsor. HB 200 would have outlawed the practice of partial-birth abortions and the sale of human fetal tissue, but the bill did not receive a vote in the House before the May 11th deadline, so SB 8 was the Senate version replacement. SB 8 banned partial-birth abortions, and several amendments were added to make the bill stronger, including banning dismemberment abortions, defining certain types of pregnancies, and increasing transparency requirements by doctors that perform abortions. The bill was signed by Governor Abbott on June 6th and will become law on September 1st.

HB 424/SB 715: A Voice in Annexation

Residents in HD 18 understand the time to deal with municipal annexation issues is before the problem occurs. In a proactive move, to protect future interests of his constituents in HD 18, Representative Bailes joint authored HB 424. Just like HB 200, the bill did not make it to the House for a vote by the May 11th deadline, so SB 715 was the replacement. Supporters of the bill say it protects those that do not want to join a city. Opponents argue that cities need the additional tax base to grow. Representative Bailes believes residents in areas under consideration for annexation should have a voice in the process. After a long, four hour debate, the House Chamber passed SB 715, 110-35 on May 22nd. Representative Bailes noted, "residents that choose to live outside the

city should have the right to vote on whether or not they are annexed." This bill would have limited cities greater than 500,000 the ability to annex outside their jurisdiction without resident approval. "The City of Houston continues to grow and expand towards HD 18, so it is imperative that we have a voice in the annexation process," said Representative Bailes. Unfortunately, SB 715 was the last bill to die in the 85th Legislative Session by a Senator from San Antonio that filibustered the bill for the remaining 2 1/2 hours left. Thankfully, Governor Abbott has named this bill as one of his priorities to pass during the special session. Stay tuned for updates this summer.

HB 3433: Agency Rules & Rural Communities

Living in a rural district, like HD 18, comes with its own unique challenges. One of those challenges is fighting back a big, intrusive government. That is why Representative Bailes joint authored HB 3433, a bill that requires state agencies that are considering adopting rules that will affect rural communities to submit paperwork to the Secretary of State and to each legislator that represents a rural community. The paperwork must include any adverse effects the new rules would have on small businesses, how it affects cities with a population of less than 25,000, and an economic impact statement. As a member of the House Committee on Economic & Small Business Development and a small business owner himself, Representative Bailes understands the importance of fighting unnecessary government regulations. He is proud to stand with rural Texans and looks forward to the bill becoming law on September 1st after receiving Governor Abbott's signature on June 15th.



On Memorial Day, the American Legion in Coldspring held a service for Sgt. Wade D. Wilson, a Marine who gave the ultimate sacrifice during Operation Enduring Freedom. Sgt. Wilson's father, Dusty Wilson, was presented with a Texas Flag flown over the Texas State Capitol, as well as an American Flag flown over Coldspring City Hall. *Pictured on the left*

On Thursday, June 8th, 2017 Representative Bailes attended a luncheon at the Premier High School in Dayton. This luncheon consisted of a presentation given by Campus Director, Suzanne Thomas. Mrs. Thomas informed the community of the school's goals and objectives. She spoke of how the school was there as an alternative option in the

area for students. *Pictured on the right*



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STAFF SPOTLIGHT



Jessica Hajvosky
District 18 District Intern

As a native to Liberty County, Jessica graduated from Dayton ISD as a distinguished graduate. She recently transferred from Blinn College to Texas A&M University in College Station, where she is pursuing a degree in Political Science. Following graduation she plans to continue working in politics.

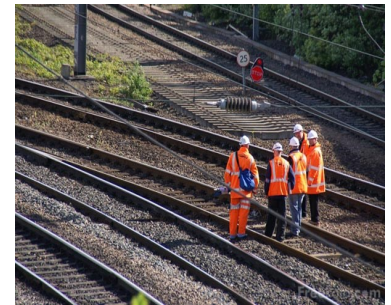
Jessica will be responsible for handling constituent inquiries, attending events, and learning about issues important to the district and state from various stakeholders.

In her free time, she enjoys working out, reading, and hanging out with friends and family.

Dayton Train Update

After several meetings, all the parties involved (BNSF, UP, CMC, and other stakeholders) with the Dayton Train project have agreed to a concept that will move the railroad crossing further to the west on US Highway 90. This was important because it not only made sense for them operationally inside the rail yard, but also will alleviate the congestion at the current crossing.

TxDOT is now in the process of developing a cost estimate for an overpass that would go over the new US 90 location. Stay tuned for future updates.



The first Presidential Triangle, creating the fourth Library in Huntsville!

Representative Bailes recently filed legislation, "expressing support for the creation of the Sam Houston Republic of Texas Presidential Library at Sam Houston State University." HCR 129 was filed on April 21, 2017—San Jacinto Day, then signed by Governor Abbot on June 12th.

In 1997, Texas designated the highway between Austin and College Station the Presidential Corridor, connecting the Libraries of Lyndon B. Johnson and George H. W. Bush. Now with the addition of the George W. Bush Library in Dallas, there was an opportunity to ask the Legislature to extend the designated corridor to Huntsville and Dallas, creating the Presidential Triangle. This would be unique to Texas and most likely could not be duplicated in another state.

"I'm very proud to support what will be the 4th Presidential Library in Texas. When the Sam Houston Republic of Texas Presidential Library is complete, not only will it increase tourism in our district, it will also recognize one of our greatest statesmen by giving him his rightful place in history," said Rep. Bailes.



Rep. Bailes works with local Walker County leaders on establishing the Sam Houston Presidential Library. Pictured (left to right) are sculptor Wayne Hyde, Judge Danny Pierce, Rep. Ernest Bailes, Mayor Andy Brauning, and Mac Woodward.