



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

# Ernest Bailes

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

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Dear Neighbors,

The past few weeks have been non-stop and very productive. I am thankful for the long days of debate on the House floor, with many days extending to well after midnight. These long nights are paying off in a positive way.

If you wonder why it takes so long to get things done in Austin, especially on polarizing issues, consider this: When 150 strong willed people come together, all with different values and life experiences, it takes time to reach a consensus.

And, it appears, a handful of members consistently choose to exercise their right to wait until a bill makes it to the floor to start asking questions.

As the clock ticks toward the end of session, I encourage you to stay in touch. Some really positive things are happening in Austin that will not only impact HD 18 in a good way, but our entire state as well.

**God Bless You All and  
God Bless our Great**



*Ernest*

## Pro-Life Bills Progressing Through the House

Several pieces of pro-life legislation have been filed in the Texas House this session. The bills currently moving look promising for passage.

Two of the pro-life pieces being heard are joint-authored by Rep. Bailes. HB 200 (Burkett/Bailes/Laubenberg), which relates to certain prohibited abortions, will shut down trafficking of baby body parts in Texas and ban partial birth

abortions. HB 200 has been placed on the General State Calendar.

HB 434 (Simmons/Workman/Bailes) prohibits wrongful birth lawsuits and protects every child's right to be born, regardless of potential disabilities. HB 434 has been sent to Calendars.

Rep. Bailes also joined other pro-life Representatives in co-authoring HB 844 (Klick), which prohibits the perfor-

mance of dismemberment abortions. At this time, HB 844 has been referred to State Affairs.

"While each pro-life bill filed this session has differences, there are also similarities. Some will make it onto the general calendar and some will not. Regardless of who filed what bill, everyone's goal is to protect life. Working together we can bring about positive change," said Representative Bailes.



**In support of pro-life legislation, Representative Bailes was honored to stand with the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops, Texans for Life Coalition, Texas Alliance for Life, the Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission, and other strong pro-life State Representatives.**

### Legislating Common Sense?

What does it say about us as a society when we need to be told what NOT to do?

As a legislator, I often think about the difference between "common sense legislation" and attempting to "legislate common sense."

Recently, the Texas House voted 114-32 on HB 62 to tentatively approve a statewide ban on texting while driving.

The issue of texting while driving isn't new to the Texas Legislature. In 2011, Governor Rick Perry vetoed similar legislation,

saying it would, "micromanage the behavior of adults."

He had a good point. But, if we are honest about it, we have a lot of laws on the books which, seek to, "micromanage the behavior of adults," especially when it comes to operating a motor vehicle. We have speed limits, seat belt requirements, and licensing guidelines.

When you break down HB 62 to the very basics, it is about saving lives and reducing accidents caused by distracted driving. I applaud that effort.

Distracted driving is a serious problem. I voted in favor of the

bill even though my conscious made me question why, as a society, we need such a bill.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates that every day in the U.S., more than eight people are killed in crashes that involve a distracted driver. For many of us, those statistics hit very close to home.

So, what is the answer when it comes to distracted driving and texting while driving? I would hope common sense would be the answer, but sometimes we take other routes to achieve a means. In this case, it is HB 62.

Something to think about. eb4

## A Quick Glimpse...

### Bailes Passes Bill to Protect Forest Land

Of the 1,667,840 acres in HD 18, approximately 62% is forested.

In February, Representative Bailes filed HB 2567 to address serious issues concerning forest pest control.

In March, the bill was read and referred to the House Committee on Agriculture and Livestock. Beginning in early April, public hearings were held and testimony was taken.

HB 2567 will help mitigate and control pests threatening forest land, protect and conserve our ecological resources, and enhance the health and maintenance of our forested land while promoting stability of forest-using industries.

On April 20th, Representative Bailes passed the bill on the House floor. Texas is blessed to have beautiful timberlands, and this bill is a win-win for Texas' natural resources, and especially for HD 18.

### HCR 129 Filed in Support of a Presidential Library at SHSU

On April 21st, San Jacinto Day, Representative Bailes filed HCR 129, a concurrent resolution that calls on the Texas Legislature to support the creation of a presidential library at Sam Houston State University.

If approved, the Sam Houston Republic of Texas Presidential Library would be the 4th presidential library in Texas. Not only would it increase tourism to HD 18, it would honor one of the most famous and influential Texans in our state's history.

The bill is making its way to the Local Calendar.

"I am extremely honored to file HCR 129. This Presidential Library would be a fitting tribute to General Sam Houston, as the first and third President of the Republic of Texas," said Representative Bailes.

### HB 22: Public School Accountability

On May 3rd, HB 22, the bill that seeks to reform the A-F public school rating system in Texas, was passed in the House.

Highlights of the bill would change the current five-domain to a three-domain model and would postpone implementation until 2019 to prevent a repeat of the problems that existed in the roll-out of the current system and requires two models prior to implementation.

Representative Bailes was successful in adding an amendment to provide parents and students with an easy to understand document to explain the new A-F rating system in Texas.

### Liberty Co. MUD/MMD

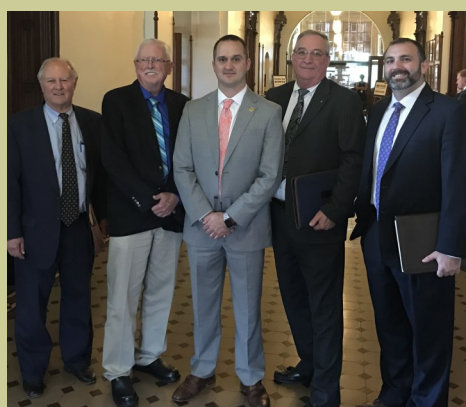
After months of work and collaborative efforts, Rep. Bailes has hammered out details for a MUD and MMD in Plum Grove, Liberty Co.

"Of the many issues we've worked on this session, this issue by far has consumed the most time. We can't go back and undo what has already been done. Within the law, private property owners may do what they please with their land, and if there are no local restrictions, there is not an avenue for recourse. As part of the MUD and MMD, there will be guidelines put in place," said Representative Bailes.

Brief recap/restrictions/guidelines:

- Create a 5 member Board of Directors: 4 appointed by entities in the county, 1 by the developer.
- Elections for permanent BOD in a staggered local election.
- No Eminent Domain Power.
- Binding agreement for transfer of land for emergency services and school facility sites.
- Enact Zoning/Building Codes.
- Road Standards must meet local compliance if within the city/county jurisdiction.
- Any tax dollars collected from the district would be under the approval and direction of BOD, not the developer.

*(For a candid dialogue about this issue, visit Rep. Bailes' discussion dated 05/03 on his facebook page: Ernest Bailes for Texas.)*



On May 5th, at the TDCJ Fallen Officer's Memorial in Huntsville (Walker Co.), attendees paused to pay tribute to fallen Texas Correction Officer Mari Johnson and other Correction Officers who lost their lives in the line of duty this past year.

Rep. Bailes had the pleasure of meeting with Liberty Mayor Carl Pickett, Councilman Dennis Beasley, City Manager Gary Broz, and City Attorney Brandon Davis.

Happy Mother's Day to all of the mothers in HD 18! Thank you for your constant love and support. We truly appreciate everything you do.



Honored and proud to stand with firefighters who came to their State Capitol to hear debate on important legislation that will impact their retirement. eb4

## HD 18 SPOTLIGHT of SERVICE—WE SALUTE *Firefighters*

**Across HD 18, in every community, there are men and women who serve as firefighters.**

**Many work in surrounding cities as professional firefighters and then bring their skills and talents back to their home communities and fill the desperately needed positions as volunteer firefighters.**

**Often, these dedicated men and women are the bridge between life and death in rural areas such as our communities in HD 18.**

**To both the professional firefighters and the volunteer firefighters, we thank you for your service.**

**You are Appreciated!**



Col. Dennis Beal, Windham Workforce Development Administrator, looks on as Mike Temple, Director of Gulf Coast Workforce Board-Workforce Solutions, and Dr. Clint Carpenter, Windham Superintendent, sign agreements for the new program designed to improve employment among TDCJ parolees.

### **TDCJ's Windham School Dist. partners with Workforce Solutions**

- The largest correctional education program in the nation, the Windham School District, is a non-geographical school district that serves offenders in the custody of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ).
- Windham currently has about 62,000 students (well over 2x the total enrollment in all public schools in HD18).
- Windham students average about a 5th or 6th grade reading level.
- Students take courses through Windham for 2 years. The goal is to ensure students at least leave TDCJ literate, and do math at about an 8th grade level.
- Windham is the largest GED granting program in the state.
- Windham focuses on academic, behavioral, and vocational training.
- The Windham School District recently entered into a collaborative agreement with Workforce Solutions in an effort to assist TDCJ parolees in finding meaningful employment upon their release.
- Gainful employment is the #1 aspect that reduces recidivism rates
- **To put the importance of reducing recidivism in perspective, every 1% reduction in recidivism saves the State about \$17 million a year.**



Congratulations to Huntsville ISD students on their graduation from the Huntsville Youth Leadership Institute. Huntsville Mayor Brauning joined representatives from the City of Huntsville to acknowledge the hard work of these future leaders. Good Job!!!



It is always enjoyable to welcome young people to their State House. These 8th graders from Devers ISD (Liberty Co.) were outstanding. A special thanks to their chaperones that saw value in making the trip to Austin.

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## STAFF SPOTLIGHT



**Taylor Pittman**  
District 18 Austin Intern

Taylor Pittman is one of the Legislative Interns in Representative Bailes' Capitol Office. When visiting the office, she is the first to greet you.

In May 2016, Taylor graduated Magna Cum Laude from The Woodlands High School where she served as Drum Major for the band and was active in choir, Rotary Club, and Honor Societies.

Taylor is currently a Freshman finance major at the University of Texas at Austin. As a member of Texas Kappa Delta, she has helped raise over \$50,000 for Prevent Child Abuse America. After graduation, Taylor hopes to attend law school.

When not at the capitol or in class, Taylor loves attending UT Football games, going to concerts, and spending time with her family and dog.

## A Brief Legislative Update:

- ◆ After many hours of debate, the House passed their version of SB 4, the “sanctuary cities” bill, 93-54. The bill would allow police to question the immigration status of people they legally detain. Governor Abbott signed the bill Sunday, May 7th.
- ◆ HB 25, passed the House 88 to 57. The bill would end the option for “one-punch” straight-ticket voting (voting straight Republican or straight Democrat). If the Senate passes the legislation and the Governor signs, the change would go into effect in 2020.
- ◆ 100% of House members voted in support of HB 3976 to address a \$1 billion shortfall of TRS-Care, the retiree health insurance program for Texas retired teachers. The vote will sustain TRS-Care for now, but future changes must be addressed.

## HD 18 Transportation Update:

*HD 18 has several major infrastructure projects in the works and our office has received many calls concerning the construction. Hopefully, this update will answer questions you may have about current and future projects. Let us know if you would like additional information or have other questions or concerns about infrastructure projects in your area. eb4*

### **US 59 and FM 2914 south of Shepherd (San Jacinto Co.):**

The overpass at the US 59 and FM 2914 intersection is nearing completion, coming in just under \$13 million. The second part of the project is constructing southbound frontage roads and reconstructing the US 59 main lanes from south of the Union Pacific Railroad in Shepherd to just north of FM 2914, estimated at \$9 million.

### **US 59 Project in Liberty and San Jacinto Counties:**

TxDOT is currently developing the schematic design for US 59 from south of FM 2914 in San Jacinto County to the Cleveland Relief Route in Liberty County. The project will upgrade approximately 5.1 miles of US 59 to meet interstate standards by constructing frontage roads and two interchanges. The estimated construction cost is \$115.8 million. At this time, no construction funding has been identified.

### **The City of New Waverly:**

TxDOT has scheduled a meeting with the City of New Waverly for June 16th. They are currently preparing a layout of existing conditions

and making site visits to study traffic flows. TxDOT will gather information to put together exhibits/aerial imagery with a goal/focus on working to create a plan with the city for moving forward in the area. Walker County Commissioner Henry is in discussions with TxDOT concerning the installation of turn lanes at SH 75 and FM 2793 just north of New Waverly. There are several trucking businesses that use the intersection and create traffic queues on SH 75 when a train is crossing FM 2793. Initial site visits have been made.

### **The Dayton Train:**

Local officials continue to work with the UPRR, CMC railyard and TxDOT to find a way to build a possible railroad overpass for the rail crossing at US 90 just west of Dayton. The current location has been problematic in that an overpass would require purchasing several businesses and closing Waco Street. The hope is that the rail line will be able to be moved further west from its current location so that a possible overpass could be constructed by TxDOT. There is no cost estimate on the project.