



# CAPITOL HALL — REPORT —



*Serving the counties of District 2: Fannin, Delta, Hunt, Hopkins, Rains,  
Rockwall, Kaufman, Van Zandt, and part of Dallas County*

## A Brief on the 84th Legislative Session

Everyone asks at the end of each legislative session, "Was it a good session?" And the Republican legislators often answer that question by saying, "It was a great session;" or "It was the most conservative session yet!" or "We passed lots of good, conservative legislation."

I want to answer that question by presenting to you some of the more significant bills so that you, the Texan, may judge the session. The goodness of the session lies in the eyes of the beholder, and the legislature is accountable to you. It is therefore your perspective of the session that is important. Do you think the proverbial policy needle moved to the right or left? From a constitutional and moral point of view, I would say the legislature did some good things but not nearly as much as it should have. Republicans out-number Democrats two to one in the House and the Senate, so one should expect to see more conservative legislation pass and less that favors socialism and liberalism.

The 2014 elections and the Republican Party Platform indicate that Texans were looking to their legislators to provide significant relief from policies that are,

- Inhibiting entrepreneurship
- Stifling our economy
- Displacing our constitutional rights with radical liberalism
- Leaving us vulnerable to the violence of the Mexican drug cartels

## Efficient, Moderate Government

### Not Passed

*SB 9, Protecting the Taxpayer Act* - While we passed a budget that grew by less than population plus inflation and has significant tax relief, we did not pass a bill that would have established a spending cap to protect the taxpayer revenue from the wasteful practice of spending our occasional surpluses in revenue. Unexpected surpluses should be saved for later years when we have unexpected shortages or to pay off debt. SB 9 would have established this wise saving practice and limited spending to a calculation of population plus inflation, but the bill was only passed in the Senate

*SB 447, English as the Official Language of Texas Act* - Left in committee, SB 447 would have established English as the official language of Texas, which would have saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of dollars that is currently spent on printing state and local government publications in numerous different languages. Not only is the practice costly, but also neglectful of the principles of assimilation, which have helped to facilitate unity between all immigrants and citizens in our nation since its beginning. *(Continued on next page)*



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## Transportation

### Passed

The budget we passed will designate \$1.2 billion to expedite road construction and improve roadways without raising taxes.

*SJR 5, A Constitutional Amendment* - Filed with the Secretary of State, SJR 5 will allow Texas voters to consider a constitutional amendment that dedicates a portion of the motor-vehicle-sales tax and state sales tax to fund non-toll roads, addressing critical infrastructure needs.

*HB 122, Sustaining the Texas Mobility Fund Act* - This bill will prevent TxDOT from assigning any new debt to the Texas Mobility Fund (TMF), which is often used to subsidize expensive and inefficient transportation systems, such as toll roads and mass transit. Additionally, part of HB 122 requires that the TMF be used only for non-toll roads.

### Not Passed

*SB 93, Liberty for Drivers Act* - This bill would have repealed the Driver Responsibility Program, which levies excessively punitive fines that are disproportionate to drivers' mistakes, is very costly to municipalities and is an unreasonable financial burden to people.

*SB 485, The Sunset Tolling Act* - This bill would have required that all current toll roads be adopted as part of the state highway system once the costs to build the toll ways are paid.

*SB 714, Ban Red-Light Cameras Act* - SB 714 was passed by the Senate but died in the House. SB 714 would have prohibited municipalities from issuing citations to vehicle owners via automated-traffic cameras, also known as "red-light cameras." By citing vehicle owners instead of drivers, cities are placing the "burden of proof" onto citizens, rather than bearing it as the government should. Intersection safety can come just as, if not more efficiently with other, non-punitive options. The bill also would have prohibited local governments from signing new contracts with red-light camera companies.

*SB 1045, Pilot Project for Building Only Non-Tolled Highways (Freeways)* - No legislation to end the building of toll roads was passed. Toll roads are a major waste of taxpayer dollars and allow unelected people to place a double tax on drivers in the form of tolls. According to a recent state-government study, Texas spends three times as much money to build one lane on a toll road as it costs to build one free lane on a freeway. Left pending in committee, SB 1045 would have established a pilot project to evaluate a new method of funding highway construction, without raising taxes or creating a new tax, that would eliminate tolls and significantly reduce the total cost of construction.

*SB 1238, Protection of Freeways Act* - This bill would have prohibited TxDOT and other authorities from converting existing free lanes into toll roads or managed lanes.

*SB 1595, A Study of Efficient Transportation Spending* - This bill would have directed the Comptroller to study how Texas could fiscally sustain itself if removed from the federal highway program. As permitted by federal law, it would have directed the Governor to then remove Texas from that program. The state prospectively could gain from this maneuver by retaining our dollars lost in federal gas taxes, some of which are dispersed to other states.

*HB 1838, The Ending Toll Roads Act* - This bill would have mandated that all toll roads become freeways by the end of thirty years.

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## Border and State Security

### Passed

*HB 10, Stop Human Trafficking Act* - This legislation will help the state prosecute child-traffickers and increase our law enforcement presence on the border. HB 10 removes certain limitations that prevent the judicial system from imposing criminal and civil consequences on child-traffickers. It also requires the Governor to establish a Child Sex Trafficking Prevention Unit and requires the Texas Education Agency to develop a mandatory reporting policy that helps prevent child-trafficking.

*HB 11, Funding Border Security Act* - This bill authorizes approximately \$848 million dollars to be spent on several border security objectives for Texans, including measures to build a training facility, to give DPS more flexibility for regulating trooper work hours, and to allow DPS to work 10 hour shifts and hire more troopers. It also authorizes DPS to acquire additional assets such as aircraft and communications and surveillance equipment. However, without the ability to actually enforce the federal laws that the illegal aliens are breaking, this bill is not much more than a huge spending bill.

### Not Passed

*SB 185, Ending Sanctuary Cities Act* - This bill would have prevented municipalities in Texas from adopting the radical anti-security policies of the Obama administration. These policies forbid officers from questioning detainees about their immigration status, which prevents them from sharing information with federal authorities. This policy and those like it ensure that federal immigration laws are not enforced in Texas cities, creating a haven for the lawless.

*SB 1252, Interstate Compact Authorization for Border Security Act* - This bill would have authorized the Governor to draft an interstate compact for border security. Had SB 1252 passed, it would have given the Governor the tool needed to effectively counter illegal-alien criminal activity without dependence on the federal government. This bill would have allowed Texas to join with one or more states in a compact to secure the border with Mexico, filling the void left by the Obama Administration. Without this compact, all Texas can do is watch the federal government continue to catch and release illegal-alien criminals.

## Electrical Grid Security

Our bill, SB1398, to harden the electric grid was passed by the Senate but died in the House.

SB 1398 would have begun the process of protecting the Texas electric grid from the real threat of an EMP-attack (electro-magnetic pulse) or a natural GMD-event (geo-magnetic disturbance). The security of our state's electric grid has been left totally vulnerable to an EMP-attack by terrorists and other international enemies. Texas' independent, electric grid is our state's lifeline and must therefore be protected from all threats. So many lives and functions depend on the grid that the small cost to secure it is completely justified. EMP technology has been available for decades and is accessible to the rest of the world. Unfortunately, the very powerful lobby for electricity companies was able, through deception and misrepresentations, to ensure that SB 1398 was blocked in the House.

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## Economic Prosperity

*HB 32, Franchise Tax Reduction* - To help facilitate economic prosperity for Texans, we passed HB 32 which will reduce rates of the franchise tax by 25% for businesses. My hope is that we eventually eliminate it altogether because it discourages entrepreneurship by placing a steeper threshold for people to overcome when they start a business. It also discourages businesses from expanding, hiring more workers, and donating to charities. Unfortunately, the liberty-minded Senators did not have sufficient support in either the House or Senate to completely eliminate the franchise tax by phasing it out over several years.

*HB 565, Limiting Eminent Domain* - Economic prosperity is not attainable without protection for private property, and HB 565 was intended to protect that fundamental right to own and keep property. It was originally intended to prohibit private companies from using eminent domain to build toll roads. Unfortunately, a last minute amendment, which originated from a private company, made the bill impotent.

## The Right to Life

The most fundamental right of all humans is the right to have and keep the life that God gives you. Without it, no other right is useful. Unfortunately, very little was done in the fight to defend the right to life. Only one bill was passed that will protect defenseless hospital patients, HB 3074. This bill will protect the right of patients who are terminally ill and on life support to receive food and water when they request it. However, four other much-needed, right-to-life bills did not pass.

Only one truly meaningful bill to advance the protection of the life of an unborn child passed, HB 3994. This bill made changes to the judicial by-pass process to protect young, pregnant women from attorneys that work to impair their parents' consent as to whether they have an abortion. The budget limits the flow of taxpayer dollars to fund abortion, but we did not pass a bill that would completely end the subsidizing of that barbaric practice of abortion.

## Self Defense

### Passed

*SB 11, Campus Carry* - Advancing the rights of self-defense, SB 11 will allow law-abiding citizens who have a concealed-handgun license (CHL) to carry their handgun concealed when they are on the campuses of public universities or colleges.

*HB 910, Open Carry* - This law will allow CHL holders to carry their holstered handgun openly if they choose to do so. It leaves in place current restrictions that are applied to CHL holders and does not apply to carrying a handgun on a public university or college campus.

### Not Passed

*SB 438, Check on Radical Gun Laws Act* - This bill would have protected Texans from federal-gun-control laws that exceed the limitations established by Texas law. Radical gun control only benefits violent people and the fantasies of unrealistic ideologues.

*SB 439, Property Owner Permission Act* - This bill would have clarified the law to ensure the rights of property owners to allow their visitors to carry handguns. In setting boundaries for the lawful carrying of handguns, current law creates an offense for those who carry a handgun on someone else's property, without regard for the property owners' consent.

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*SB 342, Constitutional Carry Act* - This bill would have provided more freedom to law-abiding Texans by removing the requirement that Texans obtain a license to carry a handgun. Had the bill passed, all current restrictions on who may carry a handgun would have remained, so that those who meet the current legal requirements to carry a handgun would have been allowed to carry their handgun openly or concealed.

## Religious Freedom and Marriage Protection

### Passed

*SB 2065, Pastor Protection Bill* - This bill will protect pastors and ministers from being required to participate in wedding ceremonies that they believe violate their sincerely held religious beliefs. It will also prohibit a plaintiff from using of the pastors beliefs as the basis for civil, criminal, or any governmental action.

### Not Passed

*SJR 10, the Religious Liberty Amendment to the Texas Constitution* - This bill would have required no signature from the Governor but ratification of the people of Texas in the fall election. The purpose of the bill was to put into our Texas Constitution the intent of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act passed by the legislature in 1999 and signed by then Governor Bush. That act reiterated the rights of the people to express their sincerely-held, religious beliefs in any venue where secular beliefs are expressed. In today's contentious society, Christians are finding themselves persecuted and silenced for following the dictates of their consciences.

*SB 531, Family Rights Protection Act* - This bill and several other similar bills, would have protected citizens from the abuse of Texas judges who refuse to adjudicate and enforce the United States and Texas constitutional protections when challenged by conflicting, foreign-contract law. This bill was limited to marriage dissolution and child custody cases where the victims are usually disadvantaged women and children. The purpose of this bill was to ensure that Texans are only judged by the laws that their elected officials create and to ensure that international contracts do not alienate a Texan from his or her constitutional rights. This bill was held in House committee.

*SB 673, The Marriage Protection Act* - This bill would force issuers of marriage licenses in the state of Texas to follow the rule of law with regard to issuing marriage licenses in the state. The Texas Constitution only recognizes marriage as a union between one women and one man.

*SB 831, The Anti-Coercion Act* - This bill would have strengthened anti-abortion-coercion laws.

*SB 1155, The Protection from Rogue City Ordinances Act* - This bill did not even receive a hearing. This bill would have prohibited a county, municipality, or other political subdivision from creating new protected classes of citizens that are not defined by state law. They would have prevented what we have seen in Plano, Houston, San Antonio, Austin and other cities where ordinances have been passed that allow people to use the bathrooms and dressing-room facilities of the opposite sex.

*SB 1935, The Protection for Religious Adoption Agencies Act* - This bill would have protected the religious liberties and rights of conscience for faith-based foster and adoption agencies.

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## Education Reforms

### Passed

*HB 2, The Budget* - In order to meet the rising demands on our education system, your legislature budgetary appropriations that will increase funding for the basic allotment per student, teacher retirement, and healthcare for retired teachers. These increases will equip the schools to educate our rapidly growing population and assist retired teachers with the increasing costs of healthcare and the inflation of the dollar.

### Not Passed

*SB 4, the Tax Credit for Charitable Businesses Act* - This bill would have allowed corporations to give tax-deductible money into a scholarship fund for needy children—a drop in the bucket toward real reform that gives parents viable options for their childrens' education. The bill died in House committee.

*SB 267, the Taxpayer Savings Grant to Texas Families Act* - This bill would have granted a Texas family the right to direct up to 60 percent of the state allotment monies for the education of their child to a private school of their choice with the remaining 40 percent remaining in the state budget to be allocated as the state determined. Sen. Larry Taylor called the bill for a hearing on March 26, 2015. After a lengthy debate with dozens of witnesses, this bill was left pending in committee.

*SB 391, the UIL-Homeschool Inclusion Act* - This bill, nicknamed the “Tim Tebow Bill,” would have allowed homeschool students to compete in University Interscholastic League competitions, sports, music, arts, debates, etc. in the district where they live. (Parents are not and would not have been exempted from school taxes because they homeschool their children.) In spite of rhetoric to the contrary, no additional regulations would have been required for homeschooling families. It simply would have given homeschooled children opportunities to compete for state and national recognition.

*SB 893, the Opportunities for Texas Teachers Act* - This bill would have given more control to local school districts by including teachers in the process of developing evaluation methods and equipping school districts to increase the salaries of those teachers who deserve it. School districts would have also been given the flexibility to choose different methods of evaluation from the current standard, and they would have been given more options for teachers to receive professional development, rather than the current one-size-fits-all approach.

### Interim Goals

During the interim I will be working on two security issues that I believe have placed Texans in a very vulnerable situation. Our unsecured border with Mexico places Texans at risk to the violence of the Mexican drug cartels and exposes us to the dangerous status quo of lawlessness that is propagated by illegal-alien criminals. I will be working with other members of the Legislature, the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and legislators of other states to improve our effectiveness at truly securing our border from illegal-alien criminals by enacting an interstate compact for border security.

Also, I will be using every available resource to overcome the resistance of the electric power companies so that we can protect the Texas electric grid from terrorists using EMP weapons. We know this is a real threat because it is confirmed by recent terrorist activities, and the US military has taken defense actions to protect certain domestic, military assets from an EMP. The power companies are putting Texans at risk of a catastrophic event because they refuse to take the same, meaningful action and deceived the legislature into indifference this past session. The Texas legislature must take decisive action to protect the people of Texas from this clear and present threat.

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Our office will also be working on a bill to make all new highway construction and highway expansion projects non-tolled roads so that Texas' economy can grow more freely in the future.

HB20 charged TxDot with evaluating and reporting back to the Legislature on several initiatives and charged the Senate with establishing a select five member committee to oversee TxDot's reports. I was presented with the honor of being selected for this committee.

### Upcoming Satellite Office Hours

My staff will be at the following location within the next six days to provide constituent services. Please feel free to visit us here. To better serve you, we will continue to periodically provide some satellite office hours. We look forward to getting to know you and serving the people in Senate District 2.

**Monday, July 13, 2015**  
**Hopkins County Courthouse**  
**1:00 pm – 3:00 pm**  
**118 Church St.**  
**Sulphur Springs, TX 75482**

Can not make that day? Stop by your Rockwall District Office anytime between **8:00a.m. and 5:00p.m. on Monday through Friday** for assistance.

In the service of Texans,



Bob Hall

