



My five cents...

A weekly column from Sen. Robert Nichols
by Sen. Robert Nichols, Senate District 3

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We have less than 50 days left in the 87th legislative session and the pace is picking up rapidly. Just this week, the Senate unanimously passed the Texas Consumer Privacy Act Phase 1, a bill I authored to ensure that the data the state has on private citizens is protected. Protecting consumer privacy is a priority for the Senate this session and I was proud to author this bill and see it pass unanimously through the Senate. Now, on to the House!

Here are five things happening around your state:

1. Vehicle title and registration waiver ends

This week the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles is reminding Texans that the temporary waiver for certain vehicle title and registration requirements ended on April 14. If you're overdue for your vehicle registration or title, it's time to renew. The requirements were waived last year by Governor Abbott due to the COVID-19 pandemic. There are three ways to renew your vehicle registration. You can renew online at www.TxDMV.gov or www.Texas.gov, this is the quickest and least expensive way to renew. You can renew by mail by sending the bottom portion of your registration renewal form, payment, and other required information to your county tax assessor-collector. Lastly, you can renew in person by visiting your county tax assessor-collector's office. Before renewing your registration, Texans will need to obtain a passing vehicle inspection.

2. Texas sues Biden administration to reinstate "remain in Mexico" policy

Attorney General Ken Paxton filed suit against the Biden administration in an attempt to restore a Trump administration policy that required migrants who passed through Mexico on their way to the United States to remain in Mexico while their claims were processed. Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt joined Paxton in the suit. The program, known as the Migrant Protection Protocols program, was first implemented in January of 2019. After President Biden took office, the Department of Homeland Security announced an end to the policy and program. In the months since, the border region has seen a large increase of migrants, so much so that the federal government's migrant housing facilities are overwhelmed and overcrowded. Paxton's suit aims to get the court to reinstate the policy, arguing it was an "arbitrary and capricious decision."

3. Texas Senate passes bill preventing cities from defunding police

The Texas Senate passed Senate Bill 23 this week, which would prevent local governments from cutting police budgets without voter approval. The bill, authored by Senator Joan Huffman, would require cities or counties to hold an election before reducing police funding from the previous year, lower the number of officers, or reduce funds per officer for training and recruitment. If a municipality has a tough fiscal year they won't be penalized or required to hold an election as long as the percentage of the municipalities budget spent on law enforcement doesn't change. The bill passed the Senate on a bipartisan vote of 28-2.

4. Baylor Men's Basketball team honored in the chamber

This week the Senate had the honor of hosting the Baylor Men's Basketball team on the floor to congratulate them on their National Championship win. The Baylor Bears entered the March Madness tournament as the number one seed for the south division. They dominated in their side of the bracket and led in the final game against Gonzaga from start to finish. It was Baylor's first men's basketball national championship win in university history. The team and coach Scott Drew came to the Capitol on April 13 and were recognized on the Senate floor and on the House floor for their accomplishments. The Bears are the first men's basketball team from Texas to win a national championship since 1966. Congratulations to Baylor Men's Basketball for a great season and a legendary win!

5. Trinity Valley Community College cheerleaders win national title

The Trinity Valley Community College cheerleaders won the national title at the National Cheerleaders Association College National Championship in Daytona Beach, FL this month. This is the team's 12th national title, the most of any athletic program at TVCC. They beat their rivals Navarro Junior College of Netflix's *Cheer* fame in the final round. Last year, the competition was cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so the team worked diligently in the off season to prepare for this year's championship. Their hard work paid off and they're taking home yet another trophy to add to their cheer legacy. Congratulations on a great win to the TVCC Cardinals!

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