

COMMITTEES:
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES, CHAIR
FINANCE
NATURAL RESOURCES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
TRANSPORTATION
WATER, AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS

THE SENATE OF TEXAS



LOIS W. KOLKHORST

STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 18

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2021

Kolkhorst Supports Construction of Texas Border Wall

AUSTIN - Facing an unprecedented surge of contraband and human trafficking along the Texas-Mexico border, State Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) joined Governor Greg Abbott (R), Lt. Governor Dan Patrick (R) and Speaker of the House Dade Phelan (R) the State Capitol on Wednesday, to support the construction of the Texas border wall by the State of Texas.

Governor Abbott also announced several others initiatives to thwart the unprecedented human and drug smuggling, crime and illegal activity that has spiked during the Biden-Harris Administration.

"The federal government is charged with border security, but the Biden-Harris Administration has failed miserably," said Kolkhorst. "Where the federal government has stood down, Texas will step up. Having surveyed the crisis first hand in March, the border must be secured now and I support the Governor's new initiatives including finishing the Texas-Mexico border wall."

The Texas Facilities Commission will oversee the construction of the new Texas border wall with an initial \$250 million investment by the state. The Governor also signed a letter to President Joe Biden demanding the immediate return of any land taken by the federal government to build the border wall. Once returned, Texas will work with those property owners about the possibility of Texas using that land to build the wall. Additionally a donation page, www.borderwall.texas.gov, was launched where anyone can voluntarily donate to the construction of the Texas border wall. The fund will be maintained by the Texas Division of Emergency Management.

"Smuggling drugs such as Fentanyl is up 800% according to the Texas Department of Public Safety," said Kolkhorst. "As Governor Abbott explained, there is enough Fentanyl coming across the Texas border to kill 21 million people.

"This is about protecting our families and businesses in Texas and across the nation from ongoing threats crossing our border illegally every day. We must not back down; the Federal government's lack of action is a danger to all of our communities."

Last week, at the Border Security Summit, the Governor issued a new disaster declaration directing state law enforcement to begin apprehending those crossing the border illegally. Specifically, the disaster declaration will direct the Texas Department of Public Safety to enforce all federal and state criminal laws for criminal trespassing, illegal entry, smuggling, and human trafficking.

During the recent legislative session, the Texas Legislature appropriated a record \$1.2 billion for border security bringing the total appropriated Texas taxpayer dollars to \$4.4 billion since 2015.

In addition, Kolkhorst authored and passed SB 634 to protect landowners who participate in eradicating Carrizo Cane along the Rio Grande River. Human and drug smugglers often use these invasive Carrizo Cane thickets along the Rio Grande to hide people and contraband. ###