



Brian Birdwell  
Texas State Senator

### ***Texas Must Lead at the Border***

On Wednesday Governor Rick Perry, Lieutenant Governor David Dewhurst and House Speaker Joe Straus directed the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to immediately increase its efforts to secure our porous southern border. In an expansion of the successful ‘Operation Strong Safety,’ the DPS will implement a widespread surge of law enforcement along the Texas-Mexico border in an effort to halt those seeking to illegally enter the United States.

This is an issue about which I am extremely passionate. Contrary to recent news reports, what we are seeing on our southern border is not new—and it is not simply a humanitarian crisis. The federal government has knowingly refused to uphold its constitutional obligation to secure our borders and enforce the law. Furthermore, it has created an incentive for tens of thousands of non-citizens—largely women and children—to cross illegally into Texas, knowing that our policy is to simply release them with an unenforceable “notice to appear” before an immigration judge. While this issue is deeply troubling in its own right, I am even more concerned about the inability of our overwhelmed Border Patrol agents to stop the entry into Texas by those who wish to do our citizens harm.

The status of our border puts Texans and other Americans at risk. While I refuse to accept that the management of the Texas-Mexico border is now solely in the hands of our statewide law enforcement—and on the backs of Texas taxpayers—I know that we cannot sit idly by while the shameful inaction of our federal government allows the situation to deteriorate further. Therefore, as the DPS proceeds swiftly to staunch the flow of dangerous drugs, violent criminals and illegal aliens into Texas, they will continue to have my firm and vocal support.

It is my duty to look at all issues through the lens of the taxpayers whom I represent and the Constitution from which the Legislature is granted its authority. As we approach the 84<sup>th</sup> legislative session, I look forward to the opportunity to review the detailed costs and benefits of this new surge, thus determining whether it is in the best interest of all Texans to expand, contract or maintain this operation. Until then, it is imperative that we continually urge the federal government to uphold its sworn obligations to secure our borders and enforce our laws, and just as importantly, that we pray for the Texans putting their lives on the line to do the job that the federal government will not.

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