

The Senate of The State of Texas



BRIAN BIRDWELL

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SENATOR BRIAN BIRDWELL STATEMENT ON PASSAGE OF SB 500

Today, the Texas Senate, with a 31-0 vote, unanimously approved SB 500, the supplemental budget, authored by Senator Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound). This supplemental spending covers critical needs for the state, including Hurricane Harvey relief, school safety, healthcare needs, and funding to mitigate dilapidated buildings at Texas State Technical College, on which I worked closely with Senator Nelson. This supplemental budget keeps our current biennial budget well within the constitutional spending limit, keeps the growth of state spending under population plus inflation all while providing significant resources to help communities rebuild after the devastation of Hurricane Harvey and other one time expenses out of the Economic Stabilization Fund.

SB 500 provides \$6 billion in state dollars to cover supplemental needs, including:

- more than \$3 billion for Harvey-related expenses;
- \$2.1 billion to address the Medicaid shortfall;
- \$100 million for school safety, with an amendment that gives districts greater flexibility on the type of safety equipment they can buy;
- \$300 million to continue the Legislature's commitment to improve state hospital facilities;
- \$542 million to address pension liabilities for the Teacher Retirement System and provide retired teacher's a 13th check up to \$500;
- \$211 million to pay obligations of the Texas Tomorrow Fund;
- \$160 million to address the Correctional Managed Health Care shortfall; and
- \$100 million to refill the Governor's Disaster Fund to help rebuild from natural disasters.
- \$29 million for demolition and abatement of WWII Era buildings that contain asbestos and PCB's at Texas State Technical College - Waco Campus.

Out of the \$6 billion, \$4.3 billion comes out of the Economic Stabilization Fund. The bill now goes to the House for consideration.

I want to thank Senator Nelson for all her hard work to ensure the needs of the state are funded, while also maintaining a strong conservative budget.

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Brian Birdwell is a native Texan, decorated military veteran, lifelong conservative Republican, survivor of the 9/11 terrorist attack on the Pentagon, and a proud husband, father and grandfather. He currently represents the counties of Bosque, Ellis, Falls, Hill, Hood, Johnson, McLennan, Navarro, Somervell and Tarrant [partial] in Senate District 22.