



STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
**DeWAYNE BURNS**  
*House District 58*

STATE OF TEXAS  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



87<sup>TH</sup> SESSION RECAP

Dear Friends,

I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones in good spirits and good health. As you may know, your Texas Legislature convenes in a regular session for 140 consecutive days in each odd numbered year. This past January, we assembled for the 87th regular session which concluded on May 31st. Much happened during that time, and I want to take a moment to share it with you.

At the beginning of session, we quickly began deliberating on the unprecedented challenges brought by the pandemic and Winter Storm Uri, as well as other critical issues facing the state. We also received our committee appointments, where it was my honor to be named Chairman of the House Committee on Agriculture & Livestock.

Highlights include the passage of a balanced, fiscally responsible, state budget that stays below all constitutional spending limits and is \$13.5 billion lower than our previous budget. We were able to do this while staying true to our commitment to funding public education, delivering important funds for health programs, and increasing our commitment to border security. Additionally, we worked on critical issues facing the state such as eminent domain reform, protecting the unborn, and defending our 2nd Amendment rights.

In closing, thank you to everyone who reached out to our office to share thoughts and perspectives on matters facing the state, request assistance with a state agency, or extend prayers and well wishes. When you take the time to reach out to our office, it not only helps me better represent you, but it also improves our community and state as a whole. As always, we stand ready to serve you in any we can.

God bless you and God bless Texas,



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# REPRESENTATIVE DEWAYNE BURNS

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By the end of session, 1,073 of the 6,927 bills that were filed in the House and Senate were sent to the Governor resulting in a 15% bill passage rate. House District 58, however, had a notably productive session with 70% of my legislative package passing. These pieces of legislation were based on your input and ideas, and they covered a wide array of topics that provided meaningful change and support on several key issues this session. Here are a few examples:

### *Eminent Domain Reform*

After much perseverance, it can finally be reported that we passed legislation to protect private property across the state. For the past eight years, my staff and I have spent countless hours working to craft this significant piece of legislation. **HB 2730** levels the playing field for landowners facing the loss of land to a private entity using eminent domain authority to acquire property.

### *Public Education*

This session the Legislature increased our commitment to fully funding education, allocating \$46.5 billion to our schools. This includes funding to help students and schools impacted by COVID-19, supplemental services for special education, and allocating the federal CARES Act money that was delivered directly to schools statewide.

**HB 764** passed the House and made a bold statement about the necessity to drastically re-define or eliminate the STAAR test. Regrettably, it did not advance in the Senate. Thankfully, we were able to pass some other, much needed STAAR test reforms. For example, the STAAR exam will no longer affect advancement for 5th and 8th grade students. The bill also eliminates assessments that are not federally required.

We also increased the state's contribution rates to the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) to better take care of our retired educators.

In addition, we improved the state's ability to address chronically failing schools and provided them with an additional accountability pause for the 2021-2022 school year.

Finally, after filing the bill for the second time, we were able to pass **HB 750**, which assists school teachers in understanding and accessing school districts hiring policies.

### *Protecting the Unborn*

I was a co-sponsor of **SB 8**, also known as the Heartbeat Bill, which allowed us to further protect life by banning abortion once a heartbeat is detectable. Rather than leaving public officials to enforce protective legislation, this bill allows any private resident to file suit against anyone who "aids or abets" an abortion in violation of the law. This legislation was signed by Governor Abbott on Wednesday, May 19th, and takes effect September 1, 2021.

**SB 1**, our state budget, increases funding by 25% to the state's Alternatives to Abortion program.

**HB 1280**, which I co-authored, would ban abortion procedures in Texas if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns *Roe v. Wade*. Texas is paving the way for more pro-life wins by setting precedent to protect the lives of our most precious Texans.



Johnson County Judge Harmon and Representative Burns.



Representative Burns speaking from the front microphone on the House floor.

### *Fighting for Rural Texas*

The House Rules give the Committee on Agriculture and Livestock jurisdiction over matters primarily impacting Rural Texas. In the aftermath of Winter Storm Uri, we held a hearing to better understand the impact of the storm on agriculture and rural Texas in general.

Through our findings, I filed two bills in order to provide common sense solutions; **House Bill 4296** allows for the use of dyed diesel to operate a motor vehicle on public roads following a disaster, and **House Bill 4548** allows an oversize or overweight permit for vehicles transporting agricultural commodities during or preceding a disaster. I also authored an amendment to the budget which allows for hog & boll weevil eradication.

Some other major bills that will benefit rural Texas are: **House Bill 5** which expands broadband services to rural and underserved areas across Texas, **House Bill 3924** which authorizes the Texas Farm Bureau to offer a health benefit plan to its members, and **HB 1480** (a.k.a. "Ag Trespass") which will increase penalties for those who trespass on, and cause damages to ag facilities, and private property.



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*Representative Burns signaling to the House to support a bill on the House floor.*

### *2nd Amendment Rights*

This session there were numerous bills passed that defend our 2nd Amendment rights. **House Bill 2622** makes Texas a 2nd Amendment Sanctuary State as a protection against federal overreach. I also co-authored **HB 1927**, or “Constitutional Carry”, which allows law-abiding citizens to carry a handgun without a state issued license to carry.

I authored **HB 854** which assures that Texans are not being unfairly punished for carrying a firearm. It decreases the penalty for carrying a handgun by licensed handgun owners in certain places. In the 84th Session, HB 910 reduced the penalty for criminal trespass by a license holder from a Class A to a Class C misdemeanor, along with a fine not to exceed \$200. Unfortunately, the penalty remained a Class A misdemeanor for some prohibited locations,

including hospitals, amusement parks, nursing homes, and governmental meetings. **HB 854** makes the penalty in these sections of the code the same. The penalty will now be a Class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$200 after personally given notice by oral or written communication.

### *Public Safety & Back the Blue*

As a co-author of **HB 1900**, we were able to provide corrective solutions for municipalities that do not appropriately fund their police. I worked with the Governor’s office to make sure that cities that defund their police departments correct their behaviors or are penalized. This is something we fixed to keep the citizens of Texas safe and secure.

**HB 1925** restores homeless camping bans on public lands, such as sidewalks and store fronts. This has been a growing problem in many communities, especially in urban areas. The bill creates a low-level penalty for violating the ban. Likewise, we criminalize the act of knowingly obstructing an emergency response vehicle as an act of protest.

Another major win for Texas was establishing the Texas Active Shooter System to alert citizens when violent threats are occurring.

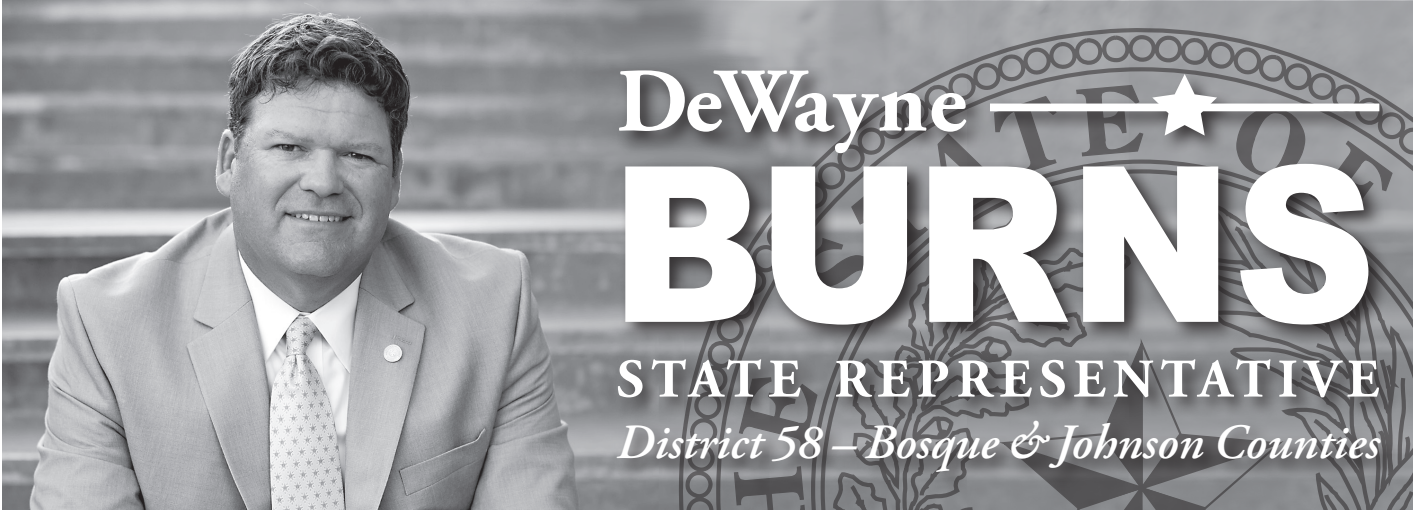
Finally, Cleburne Chief of Police, Rob Severance, and many others from the Cleburne Police Department, were looking for some common sense solutions to help our Police Dispatchers. Through these conversations, I passed **HB 792** which will allow for dispatchers within a municipality to adopt similar work schedules to those of their police counterparts.

### *Julia Wells Act Amendment*

In response to the tragic loss of 18-year-old Julia Wells, from Cleburne, **HB 985** establishes an innovative approach to educate teens about Human Trafficking and how to recognize the behavior of traffickers. This bill includes human trafficking prevention in the curriculum of driver education and driver safety courses in order to reach teens at a time when they’re most vulnerable. This legislation will save lives. Further, **SB 1** provides \$57.6 million to combat human trafficking, and we fulfilled all legislative recommendations made in the Texas Sexual Assault Survivors’ Task Force Report.



*Members of Representative Burns’ staff with the mother and sister of Julia Wells.*



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**★ HELPFUL NUMBERS ★**

- Aging & Disability Services, TX Dept. .... 512-438-3011
- Child, Disabled & Elder Abuse Hotline..... 800-252-5400
- Child Support Info & Payment Inquiry..... 800-252-8014
- Consumer Protection ..... 800-621-0508
- Crime Victims' Services ..... 800-983-9933
- Environmental Quality, TX Commission on ..... 512-239-1000
- Housing & Community Affairs, TX Dept. .... 512-475-3800
- Income Assistance & Food Assistance..... 877-787-8999
- Injured Workers' Hotline ..... 800-252-7031
- Legal Referral Service, State Bar ..... 800-252-9690
- Medicaid ..... 800-252-8263
- Medicare ..... 800-633-4227
- Nursing Home Complaints & Info ..... 800-458-9858
- Public Safety, TX Dept. .... 512-424-2000
- Roadside Emergency ..... 800-525-5555
- Workforce Commission (Unemployment)..... 800-939-6631