



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
BROOKS LANDGRAF

DISTRICT 81
ANDREWS · ECTOR · WARD · WINKLER



FALL 2019 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
BROOKS LANDGRAF

Dear Fellow West Texan,

It was an honor and privilege to represent the hard working folks of Andrews, Ector, Ward and Winkler counties for a third legislative session. Thank you for your involvement in the process, encouragement, and prayers of support.

The voice of West Texas has never been louder in the Texas Legislature than it is today, and it has caught the attention of the entire state: from the governor to the urban state representatives and senators — everyone is finally listening.

This newsletter includes some of the highlights from the this year's session of the 86th Texas Legislature, including increased transportation funding for the Permian Basin, a balanced budget, along with major school finance and property tax reform. Additionally, you will find updates on successful legislation I filed, including "Monica's Law."

As always, aside from my faith and family, serving as your state representative is my top priority. Thank you to all of you who contacted the Capitol office during the session to share your thoughts on issues. Your input is crucial in helping me best represent you. With your help, I'll continue working to ensure that Texas remains the best state in the nation to live, work, and raise a family.



Rep. Brooks Landgraf and family

God Bless Texas,

Brooks Landgraf



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★ 2020 - 2021 STATE BUDGET ★

The state budget for the next two years passed by the Texas Legislature (House Bill 1) is a balanced budget under all spending limits and the rate of population plus inflation. This was accomplished while maintaining funding levels for the state's border security efforts and increasing funding for education and transportation.

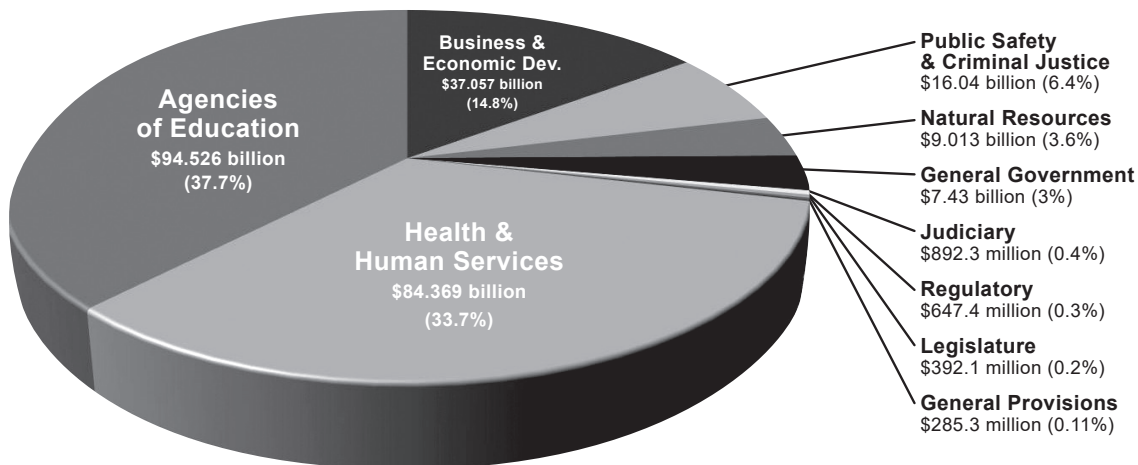
This bill includes \$200 million for school safety improvements including building renovations, added security personnel and technology, and emergency response training. The budget also provides \$210 million for the drivers license program to reduce wait times, improve customer service,

hire new employees, and add three additional drivers license offices. I was able to amend the budget to require the Texas Department of Public Safety to allocate \$500,000 for hard-to-fill positions, like those at the Midland-Odessa Mega Center, to help attract and retain employees, and reduce wait times.

This budget addresses several priority areas while still providing meaningful property-tax relief. Additional details about the state budget will be provided throughout the rest of this newsletter.

2020-21 All Funds

Total: \$250.652 billion



Notes: (1) Amounts estimated or budgeted for the 2018–19 biennium include supplemental spending adjustments in Article II for Medicaid and foster care, but do not include adjustments from Senate Bill 500. (2) Contingent funding of \$11.5 billion for House Bill 3 has been moved from Article IX to Article III, Public Education, for the purposes of this comparison. (3) Excludes Interagency Contracts. (4) Biennial change and percentage change are calculated on actual amounts before rounding. Therefore, figure totals may not sum due to rounding.

Source: Legislative Budget Board

★ TRANSPORTATION ★

I was honored to serve as vice chairman of the House Transportation Committee during the 2019 legislative session. The committee must consider the transportation needs of the state as a whole. However, any objective observer will tell you that what takes place in the Permian Basin is of extreme importance to transportation funding for the entire state of Texas.

In the last five years, the state tax on oil and gas production has provided more than \$5 billion for transportation projects across the state. I have fought to ensure the Permian Basin receives its fair share of transportation dollars since day one. I am proud to report that the state's leadership is now listening; there has been a collective realization that meeting the infrastructure needs of the Permian Basin is in the best interest of Texas.

On August 29, the Texas Transportation Commission approved a plan I supported to add \$2 billion in highway funding for our Odessa-based TxDOT district.

With the increase in discretionary funding, along with increases in other TxDOT funding categories, the Odessa TxDOT district is projected to receive more money from the state over the next several years than ever before. Expenditures in 2020 and 2021 are likely to exceed all funds provided to the district collectively between 2011 and 2017. A complete rebuild of I-20 between Odessa and Midland is one of several projects that would not be possible without this increase in funding.

Additionally, we have provided \$250 million dollars for county roads that have experienced significant degradation due to oil and gas production. The goal of all of this highway funding is to make our roads in the Permian Basin safer. Countless lives will be saved as a result of these efforts.

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

★ SCHOOL-FINANCE REFORM ★

I was proud to coauthor House Bill 3, which provides almost \$5 billion in property-tax relief by increasing the state's share of public education funding. This means that the state of Texas will not pass the buck to pay for schools on down to school districts and property taxpayers the way it has done in the past.

HB 3 also reduces Robin Hood payments by \$3.6 billion over the next two years. This 47% reduction will increase equity within the school finance system and give many West Texas school districts the ability to keep more of the money they receive from local property taxes.

Additionally, I amended HB 3 to allow school districts subject to Robin Hood recapture to make a single annual payment, rather than monthly payments, to allow districts to gain interest on the total recapture amount. The amount gained on interest will help some of our West Texas school districts hire new teachers and increasing school security.

Finally, HB 3 provides more than \$2 billion for dynamic pay raises for teachers, librarians, counselors, and nurses. This is a big step forward for public education in Texas.

★ PROPERTY-TAX REFORM ★

Senate Bill 2, which I cosponsored, and Governor Abbott signed into law, reforms the property-tax system to make it more transparent. SB 2 provides real-time tax information to inform property owners about who is proposing to raise their rates, by how

much, and when and where they can go to protest. Importantly, SB 2 lowers the voter approval rate to 3.5% for cities and counties, triggering an automatic election for voters to approve the increase when it exceeds this voter approval rate.

★ STATE INCOME TAX PROHIBITION ★

As a believer in limited government, I am fundamentally opposed to a state income tax. That is why I coauthored House Joint Resolution 38, which proposes a constitutional amendment to prohibit Texas from ever adopting a state income tax.

You have the opportunity to vote on this matter in November in the form of Proposition 4, the ballot proposition that would authorize the constitutional amendment offered by HJR 38.

It is important to note that if Prop. 4 fails to pass it does not mean Texas will all of a sudden have a state income tax. Prop. 4 would simply amend the constitution to prohibit a state income tax. Current law, which requires a constitutional amendment to authorize a state income tax in Texas, will remain the same if Prop. 4 fails.

★ "MONICA'S LAW": HELPING TO PREVENT DOMESTIC VIOLENCE ★

I first filed "Monica's Law" during the 2017 session in honor of Monica Deming, an Odessa mother who was brutally murdered

in her home by an ex-boyfriend who had two protective orders against him for prior acts of domestic violence that were unknown to Monica or local law enforcement.



Mr. Jonathan Nielsen and Rep. Landgraf following committee layout of Monica's Law.

Sometimes it takes more than one session to pass a good bill. And that was the case with Monica's Law. After failing to pass the Texas Senate in 2017, Monica's Law received widespread support during the 2019 session and was signed into law by Governor Abbott on May 7, 2019.

Monica's Law establishes an online protective order database to allow the public and law enforcement to access an online registry that includes information on due process issued domestic violence protective orders. The goal of providing these entities and the public access to this information is to reduce domestic violence across the state.

Many thanks to all of those who helped get Monica's Law passed out of the House and Senate and signed by the Governor, especially her father, Jonathan Nielsen, who was with us every step of the way these last two sessions, and who deserves credit for developing the idea.



★ DEFENDING PREGNANT MOTHERS AND THE UNBORN ★

I filed House Bill 902 to increase the penalty for assaults against pregnant women. Prior to the passage of this bill, assaults against pregnant women were treated like any other assault.

As a result of this law, it is now a third degree felony to assault a pregnant woman, which is punishable by between two and ten years in prison.

This legislation creates a greater deterrent for assaults of this kind, protects both the pregnant mother and her baby, and reflects the fact that this heinous act is a crime against both the mother and her unborn child. This law went into effect on September 1, 2019.

★ HOLDING RECKLESS DRIVERS ACCOUNTABLE ★

In 2018, 82 bridges and overpasses in Texas were struck by vehicles exceeding posted height limitations: the highest number ever recorded for a single year. The costs of repairs for these damages exceeds more than \$20 million, and less \$3.6 million has been collected from the parties responsible for the damage.

I filed House Bill 799 to hold bad actors accountable and ensure the costly burden to repair these bridges does not fall to taxpayers.

HB 799 creates a Class B misdemeanor offense for operating a vehicle without the applicable license or permit and causing damage to a bridge or underpass because of the vehicle's height. HB 799 also holds the owner of the vehicle strictly liable for any damages. The wrongdoer, not the taxpayer, is now responsible to pay for the damages they caused.

This bill was signed into law by Governor Abbott on May 24, 2019 and went into effect on September 1.



Vice Chair Landgraf surrounded by members of the transportation committee.

★ STATE'S RESPONSE TO MASS SHOOTINGS ★

The attack that occurred in our community on August 31, 2019 shook the entire nation. We continue to pray for the victims and their families, and we hold a deep sense of gratitude to the first responders who acted on that day.

In response to the violence that took place in Odessa and also El Paso, Governor Abbott issued eight executive orders to help prevent additional mass shootings. Additionally, the House and Senate Select Committees on Mass Violence Prevention and Community

Safety were created to oversee the implementation of the governor's executive orders along with receiving testimony and making proposals to the Texas Legislature to help reduce mass violence.

The House Select Committee on Mass Violence Prevention and Community Safety will be holding a hearing in Odessa on the UT Permian Basin campus in November. Please feel free to contact my office or visit the website for more information on this unique opportunity to make your voice heard.



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TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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THE GROW TEXAS FUND



While there were many other successful pieces of legislation that are very important to West Texas, I must inform you about one notable legislative proposal that did not pass: the proposal to create the GROW Texas Fund through House Joint Resolution 82 and House Bill 2154.

HJR 82 and HB 2154 would have created the Generate Recurring Oil Wealth for Texas (GROW Texas) Fund to provide sufficient funding to address necessary infrastructure needs in regions of the state responsible for the highest oil and natural gas production.

To do this, HJR 82 proposed an amendment to the Texas Constitution to dedicate 9% of the state's oil and gas severance tax collections to the GROW Texas Fund. HB 2154, the enabling legislation for the constitutional amendment, allocated revenue from the fund as follows:

- 40% for TxDOT to address transportation infrastructure needs in qualifying counties;
- 5% for port authorities and navigation districts engaged in oil or gas production, refinement, or export to reduce infrastructure bottlenecks; and
- 25% as discretionary, left up to the will of the legislature to address needs as they arise.
- 20% for the GROW Texas Fund Grant Program to provide grants to non-profits, political subdivisions, public universities, and junior colleges to meet first responder, emergency and trauma services, and workforce preparedness needs across the state;
- 10% for DPS to increase the trooper presence in qualifying counties in order to enforce CMV safety standards, prevent gang violence, and combat human trafficking;

While HJR 82 and HB 2154 were ultimately unsuccessful, we were able to build tremendous support in the Texas House from members from every part of the state for the GROW Texas Fund. HJR 82 received the necessary support from two-thirds of the House to amend the constitution and HB 2154 was passed on 2nd reading on the House floor without opposition.

Like Monica's Law, sometimes it takes more than one session for a really good idea to pass. My primary focus between now and next session will be to continue building on the momentum generated by GROW Texas so that we can pass meaningful legislation in 2021 that addresses the significant ongoing infrastructure and safety challenges facing the Permian Basin.

While we fought and won other victories for transportation, education and public safety in West Texas, I am looking to the GROW Texas Fund as a more long-term solution to making our region a better place to live, work and raise a family.

★ CONSTITUENT SURVEY ★

Your opinions are very important and we want to hear from you! Feel free to submit your responses to the questionnaire below by email to DISTRICT81.LANDGARF@HOUSE.TEXAS.GOV or by mail. Before mailing the questionnaire, fold and tape it, with the return address on the outside.

What issue or issues are most important to you?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border Security | <input type="checkbox"/> Domestic Violence | <input type="checkbox"/> Driver's License Offices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Human Trafficking | <input type="checkbox"/> Property Tax Reform | <input type="checkbox"/> School Finance Reform |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Second Amendment Rights | <input type="checkbox"/> State Budget | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation Funding |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ | | |

Given your response above, how pleased are you with the actions taken by State Representative Brooks Landgraf and the Texas Legislature in 2019?

- Very Displeased Displeased Neutral Pleased Very Pleased

Do you support the creation of the GROW Texas Fund to provide additional resources for infrastructure in major oil and gas producing regions of the state?

- Yes No

Additional Comments? _____

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COMMITTEES: Transportation - Vice Chair • Business & Industry • Mass Violence Prevention & Community Safety, Select

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★ PREVENTING HUMAN TRAFFICKING ★

I filed House Bill 888 and House Bill 1865 during the 2019 legislation session to help in the fight against human trafficking. I am proud to report that both bills were signed into law by Governor Abbott.

While it is certainly true that many victims are trafficked into Texas from foreign countries, it is also true that many Texans are victims of human trafficking and that the traffickers themselves are from just about every nation on earth including the United States. Sadly, children who end up in Child Protective Services (CPS), some of our most vulnerable Texans, are among the most susceptible to becoming victims of human trafficking.

HB 888 aims to prevent children from becoming victims of human trafficking by creating a Class B misdemeanor offense for a person who, with intent to commit a human trafficking-related crime, knowingly misrepresents a child as a family member to a peace officer or federal special investigator at a port of entry. This is necessary

because children are often kidnapped and used by traffickers to more easily cross international borders.

Other than escort services, no industry experiences more human trafficking crimes than the massage therapy industry, and Texas has the third most massage parlors of any state. For these reasons and others, the Texas Human Trafficking Prevention Task Force recommend statutory changes to the Massage Therapy Code. HB 1865 implements several of these recommendations, including aligning the permitting of massage therapy professionals with the barbering and cosmetology programs and requiring massage school students to have state-issued permits.

With the passage of these two bills, along with additional legislative action this session and in past sessions, Texas continues to be an international leader in the fight against human trafficking.