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Sit-Rep: The 89th Legislature Delivered for All Texans

🕒 July 7, 2025 👤 [Contributing Author \(https://georgetownviewarchive.com/author/contributor/\)](https://georgetownviewarchive.com/author/contributor/)

The 89th Legislature Delivered for All Texans

By Colonel Terry M. Wilson, US Army (Retired) Representative for TX House District 20

In January, as I was sworn in as a member of the 89th Texas House, our state was facing numerous issues that had to be addressed during this legislative session. From securing our critical resources and infrastructure from foreign threats to easing the burden of property taxes and investing in educational opportunities—I am proud to say the legislature came together and truly delivered for Texans.

Now, with the regular session behind us, here are a few of the many highlights from the 89th Legislature. Each of these areas will be receiving their own future in-depth articles, but it is always good to start with a broad look at the whole picture first.

Property Tax Relief

This session, Texas has dedicated \$51 billion in total property tax relief. Of that total, \$40

billion comes from continuing the tax relief passed in the 86th, 87th, and 88th legislatures. The \$11 billion in new tax relief comes in the form of raising the homestead exemption from \$100,000 to \$140,000 (\$200,000 for seniors) and from allowing businesses to exempt up to \$125,000 on items used to produce income—freeing up funds they can then reinvest in their business or hire more employees. Both changes will require voter approval in November, and I hope you will find them worthy of your support at the ballot box.

Enhancing Education

Since the founding of our state, Texans have placed a priority on providing quality education to our children. Quality education requires quality teachers. I am all for saving money where we can, but when we do not pay teachers a competitive salary, we are cashing out their desire and passion to take on a hard job at extremely low pay. This session, the Legislature dedicated an historic \$8.5 billion in new funding to Texas public schools, the largest increase in state history, including record teacher pay raises and targeted reforms.

Lawmakers also passed legislation that empowers teachers with greater authority to discipline or remove disruptive students from the classroom. We enacted substantive improvements to law enforcement's approach to responding to school safety incidents. We took measures to ensure instructional material will be of the highest quality, and that every student receives an education in personal finance before graduation, encouraging wise financial decision-making as they become adults.

But one size does not fit all. Some students have needs that require stepping outside the public education system, and a child's ability to succeed should not depend on the ability to pay for his or her education. To make sure every student is provided a quality education, the Legislature also invested in the creation of education savings accounts, boosting opportunities and resources for students who might otherwise slip between the cracks.

Infrastructure and Water

As Texas grows, so do the demands on our critical infrastructure. Securing our state's water future was a top priority this session. If given final approval by voters this November, a new dedicated revenue stream will fund much-needed water supply projects across the state for years to come.

I was honored to have sponsored one portion of this investment, dedicating funds for the Bureau of Economic Geology's Texas Imperative. This initiative utilizes the investments Texas has made into building state of the art supercomputers toward turning the mountain of data our state has collected over 50 years of data into real, useful, and actionable information available to the public.

We also bolstered the reliability of our power grid by establishing standards for connecting large electric loads like data centers. Texas is now on its way to becoming a national leader in nuclear energy with legislation that supports advanced nuclear energy projects.

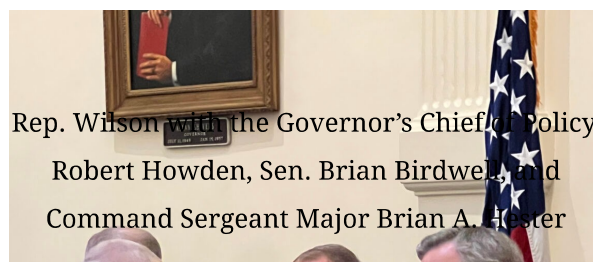
Protections for Minors

This session, we took significant steps to protect young Texans in an increasingly complex world. New measures will require mobile app marketplaces, such as social media sites like Instagram, to verify users' ages and obtain parental consent. Additionally, K-12 students will be restricted from using cell phones and similar devices during school hours to support a more focused learning environment. The Legislature also criminalized explicit sexual content involving children, including AI generated images, and banned the use of nondisclosure agreements in sexual abuse cases. We secured increased funding for child abuse prevention grants and strengthened laws to improve the reporting and handling of abuse cases.

Increased Security

Texas is increasingly targeted by foreign antagonists, but this session, we enhanced protections for our sovereignty and critical assets. This session we took decisive action to strengthen our state's defenses. I supported legislation to block governments, businesses, and agents tied to countries like China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia from buying land in Texas. We also cut off state investments in companies controlled by these regimes and banned lobbying efforts on their behalf. To protect our infrastructure better, we established Texas Cyber Command, a new statewide unit focused on countering cyberattacks and securing critical systems.

There are also major reforms to make our communities safer. I helped pass legislation ensuring judges will now have greater authority to deny bail to high-risk defendants, stopping violent offenders from committing new crimes while out



on bail.

Additionally, we put a stop to nonprofits using taxpayer dollars to post bail.

Higher Education

As chairman of the House Higher Education Committee, I am proud of the work we did this session to strengthen the future of higher education in Texas. Whether you are a first-generation college student, a working parent going back to school, or a veteran preparing for the next chapter, the changes we made are about meeting Texans where they are. We made historic investments in our campus infrastructure, especially for regional universities that are growing fast but often overlooked.



We expanded support for military students, streamlined transfers, and gave students more choices in the admissions process. We also took major steps to protect the integrity of our research, improve campus governance, and launch tools like the new My Texas Future portal to make college more accessible and transparent. At the end of the day, our goal was to build upon a higher education system that works for Texas families—efficient, accountable, and built for the real world.

What's Next

The bail reform and property tax relief legislation mentioned earlier are proposed constitutional amendments, requiring both a bipartisan 2/3rds majority in each chamber and the approval of the voters in the upcoming November elections as well.

On June 22, Governor Abbott announced he will call the Legislature back to Austin for a 30-day special session beginning July 21 to address issues with several bills the House and Senate initially agreed upon, but which were later found to contain problems that necessitated a veto.

Comparing that to the 88th Legislature, where the House and Senate's inability to come

together on multiple major policy areas required four special sessions before an agreement could be reached, gives an excellent picture of just how much things have improved over the last two years.

These changes to the fundamental structure of our government in Texas cannot happen unless we come together across multiple divides to make them a reality, and I look forward to seeing the people of Texas do just that this fall.

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