



Texas Eagle Forum

December 2017

Dear Friends,

Texas Eagle Forum is known for its bi-annual scorecard and diligent volunteer presence in Austin. Past leaders and volunteers have done a fine job of working on conservative issues such as education, life, and religious liberties, as well as fiscal issues. My goal this session was to continue that legacy.

Preparation for the 85th session began in 2016. We attended many meetings with coalitions and legislators to discuss our religious liberty concerns, pro-life issues, protecting privacy bills, etc. We went to Austin for an interim hearing on our bill, American Law for American Courts, as early as September 2016. That commitment to work together, I believe, saw the bill finally passing this session. One particular moment that stands out to me during that hearing was the question posed by **Rep. Mike Schofield** to an attorney who has battled us on this bill for a number of sessions. Rep. Schofield exposed a conflict in the witness answer, which became the turning point in passing the bill.

During this preparation time leading up to session, Texas Eagle Forum worked with other strong conservatively-principled grassroots groups. Coalitions continued to form during the session as well. These coalitions focused on particular issues, but we covered more ground when we worked together. It was a blessing to sit in our coalition meetings with some of these stellar leaders and strategize on how we could work together to help get all our goals accomplished. I am especially grateful for the work and wisdom of **Texas Right to Life** for helping us with the many pro-life issues on the table.

Dana Hodges, the Texas director of Concerned Women for America, and **Cindy Asmussen**, Director of the Texas Ethics and Religious Liberty Committee for the Southern Baptists, and I became what we called the “**Mom Caucus**.” We shared what we were doing on different bills and worked together throughout the session. You might have seen some of our video updates on Facebook. I am so thankful for the friendship and fellowship of these two sisters in Christ.

Another caucus I am thankful for is the newly-formed **Texas Freedom Caucus**, led by **Rep. Matt Schaefer**, and made up of House conservative legislators, who, despite much abuse from moderate Republicans and pro-abortion Democrat members of the House, stood strong and did not give up. Please thank them at www.freedomfortexas.com.

After my limited experience working during three sessions, I would like to share my approach to Christian leadership; the way I keep peace within my own heart:

- **Treat people the way you want to be treated.** (Yes, legislators count—they are human, too!)
- **Be the solution—not the problem.** It is important to be informed on your subject in order to be a credible voice. Be willing to work with other groups, or even defer to them when it is obvious they have the strategy, people, resources, wisdom, and more. Politics should be teamwork, not a blood sport. (I can dream, can't I?)

(over, please)

- **Relationships and trust mean everything.** There is always more to the story than what we hear on the surface!! Politics isn't earth-shattering, but people sometimes forget to keep it in perspective. It is not about what you know, or even who you know, as much as it is about how you handle the responsibility of leadership and the information and tools you have been given. This makes all the difference in the world.
- **Be teachable and willing to learn from others,** especially those who have worked hard at relationship-building over the years and have credibility. This can make your job so much easier. No one person has all the answers. Use tools from other groups that vary in content and information. They can be so helpful.
- **Prayer is the #1 political strategy.** Again, we are dealing with people and relationships as well as a process. Be engaged and work hard, but also let the process take its course and be careful not to try to manipulate and control the outcome. Pray for our state leaders and their families—especially the “hard to love” folks. God's timing is critical, and honoring Him and reflecting how we work in politics makes an eternal difference.

We had some great victories this session, and I choose to focus on those instead of our losses. Without your phone calls, emails, and prayers for our Texas legislature, we wouldn't have accomplished anything. I cannot thank you enough. Together, we made a difference for Texas!

As the year comes to a close, Texas Eagle Forum wishes you and your family the many blessings of the Christmas season as we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ!

Pressing onward,



Trayce Bradford
President of Texas Eagle Forum

P.S. Texas Eagle Forum cannot do what we do without your support. If you have appreciated the Top 5 Action Alerts this session, our blog posts, devotional articles, #FreedomFriday posts, my updates, and everything else that we have worked on this year, we would greatly appreciate your ongoing financial support for what we believe to be an incredible statewide organization of activists and leaders.

You can make a gift to TEF, our 501(c)4 organization (which is not tax-deductible), or our Texas Eagle Education Fund, our 501(c)3 educational organization (which is completely tax-deductible). Please go to www.texaseagle.org to make a one-time gift, or to set up a monthly gift. To make a gift by check, please mail it to: Texas Eagle Forum or Texas Eagle Education Fund (TEEF) at P.O. Box 795354, Dallas, TX 75379.

Thank you in advance for your generous support!