



Texas Eagle Forum

September 2019

Dear Eagles,

Our **2019 Legislative Scorecard**, with bill descriptions and how your legislators voted, is now available on our website, www.texaseagle.org. Please note, we used several unanimous votes to give praise where praise was due, and, as a result, scores may be higher than other conservative scorecards. We do ask if you have questions regarding how your legislators voted, please contact them and share your concerns!

Here is my wrap-up of the lackluster **86th Legislative Session**:

Soon after the session began, it became clear the grassroots were going to have a difficult time having their voices heard when we learned the Governor's staff discontinued the position of Grassroots Outreach Director. Whether intentional or not, the message was sent that the Governor's office was not concerned with what any of the grassroots groups had to say.

In addition, Speaker of the House Dennis Bonnen had an agenda, and it didn't include addressing our concerns. His top priorities, not surprisingly, aligned with those of the Governor's: property tax relief, school finance reform, and school safety, with room for little else. As a result, good bills died in committee or never saw the light of day.

Texas Eagle Forum had a list of priorities going into the session, including human trafficking, LIFE issues, free speech on college campuses, and securing the electric grid. Unfortunately, those were eclipsed by a deluge of mental health bills that fundamentally change how we view "normal" behavior in children, and the role of parents and educators. We believe there are real mental health concerns today, and school safety should be addressed, but there needed to be a counter to the massive push of bills on this issue.

Conservative state leaders had plenty of opportunities to push back or help narrow the overreach. If you received our weekly emails, you saw just the tip of the iceberg regarding the data and information we, and other groups, collected and shared with legislators, grassroots organizations, and activists. Unfortunately, few legislators responded or addressed our concerns. Even more disturbing, was the lack of robust debate around significant pieces of transformative legislation, including the mammoth changes accompanying the passage of the mental health bills.

We have yet to see any data proving these programs even work. One of the "premiere" examples given by the Governor was the Telemedicine, Wellness, Intervention, Triage, and Referral Project (TWITR Project, which has not proven effective and comes with a steep cost of nearly \$11,600 per student. (See "Prompted by mass shootings, Texas poured \$5M into unproven mental health program," *Houston Chronicle*, 8/6/19.)

In the end, legislators rushed headlong into the nationwide push for "school safety," ignoring the rights of parents, and paving the way for school mental health clinics with "threat assessment teams" ready to give kids subjective mental health labels that will follow them all their lives.

(over, please)

Mental Health legislation was not the only area with significant problems that should have been “checked” by our small-government, fiscally-conservative, legislators. Where was the fight for election integrity, or blocking unions from automatically collecting dues from paychecks, or against taxpayer-funded lobbying? And what about the Heartbeat bill, or Second Amendment rights...?

There were a few highlights of the session: Senators Brian Bettencourt, Bob Hall, and Angela Paxton stopped the increase-sales-tax ploy in committee to protect taxpayers. Senator Brian Hughes fought hard on election integrity, while Senator Brandon Creighton authored a bill to protect our Texas monuments.

In the House, the Born Alive Act, authored by Rep. Jeff Leach, passed, and Rep. Jonathan Stickland was victorious in his bill removing red light cameras. A “secure the grid” bill passed, as well as a “campus free speech” act, but both were much weaker versions of stronger bills authored by Senator Bob Hall and Rep. Briscoe Cain, respectively.

As a result of this disappointing session, the **Lone Star Agenda**, an 11-point policy plan, was engineered to improve the state, excite the electorate, and protect the state’s Republican majority. Over 250 grassroots leaders have endorsed the agenda at this writing. Be sure and read the agenda in our September *Torch* and pass the information onto your friends and family. **Let’s work together to keep Texas red!**

Looking back over this session, I am more convinced than ever, we have to stand firm and fight for our foundational principles. **Texans, we must rise up and truly lead by humbling ourselves, holding leaders accountable, and praying without ceasing!**

Thank you for your prayers, calls, emails, and personal visits with legislators during the session. We are honored to serve you through Texas Eagle Forum.

Pressing Onward,



Trayce Bradford
President of Texas Eagle Forum

P.S. Texas Eagle Forum cannot do what we do without your help. Please consider a generous financial gift as we go into the upcoming 2020 election season. Thank you in advance for your faithful support!