

Capitol Update

SENATOR BRANDON CREIGHTON



84th Legislative Session

Under the Dome

State Budget (CSHB1): On Tuesday, the Texas Senate passed a conservative 2016-17 state budget. I'd like to commend Chairwoman Nelson and our Finance Committee members for standing strong for Texas taxpayers.

While serving as a four-term member of the Texas House and as Republican Caucus Chair last session, one of the toughest votes I had to cast was to oppose the budget. While there were many positives within that budget establishing strong priorities for the biennium, I had to oppose that effort because of the severe reductions in border security funding from the prior biennium, among other concerns.

Now, the Texas Legislature has taken a strong step forward toward regaining ground that was unnecessarily lost to transnational violent cartel activity. It has been a privilege to serve among my Texas Senate colleagues as leaders in this effort. Securing our border reduces drug traffickers, human trafficking, violent cartel activity, protects our economy and keeps Texans safe. It also complies with our oath of office which requires us to defend the laws of this state and nation and our Texas and U.S. Constitution.

As long as the federal government fails in this effort, Texas must stand ready to act to defend its border and its citizens.

I also want to highlight my support for passing a budget that in no way includes language that expands Medicaid in Texas. The Texas Legislature chose to reject Medicaid expansion and should continue to reject it until Texans, through the Texas Legislature, are allowed to submit a customized plan that works for our state and certainly only after the current Medicaid program is reformed or replaced.

Additionally, this budget proposal includes the largest tax cut of any budget in Texas history. We should all celebrate this very important milestone for our families and businesses along with proving that conservative solutions can be offered to solve the toughest challenges while showing fiscal restraint.

STATE BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

- The budget is (all funds) less than a five percent increase over the prior biennium;
- Within constitutional spending limits and below the growth in population plus inflation;
- Guarantees cuts in business and property taxes by \$4.5 billion;
- Strengthens border security with \$811 million fully funding DPS surge operation requests;
- Provides \$4.9 billion in additional transportation funding;
- Fully funds public education at current law, plus a \$1.5 billion to increase the basic allotment formula;
- Provides \$60 million for math and reading training for K-3 teachers;
- Adds \$25 million for career counseling for middle school students;
- Eliminates the Emerging Technology Fund;

- Adds \$60 million for Graduate Medical Education to provide sufficient funding for every Texas medical school graduate to have a residency in Texas;
- Increases mental health funding by \$258.8 million; and,
- Adds \$50 million for women’s health.

Creighton's Legislation Station

State Sovereignty (SCR 1): On Monday, SCR 1 passed the Texas Senate. Each legislator has taken an oath to uphold and protect our United States and Texas Constitutions. Monday’s historic Senate vote to reaffirm our sovereignty under the Tenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution is a powerful statement to the rest of the country and a victory for Texas. Many across the state are greatly concerned that our rights are being eroded by the federal government’s continual attempt to overstep its constitutional bounds. Silence on our part will only yield more authority to the federal government and remove the fate of Texas from our hands. SCR 1 is a strong assertion of our rightful place in our federal system.

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