



## **Senator Brian Birdwell's Capitol Update (5-10-21)**

Greetings from your Texas Capitol! We're down to the wire, and though the legislature will not formally adjourn *sine die* until May 31st; several critical deadlines for the passage of bills will arise in the next couple of weeks, so things are busy on all fronts. Many key issues remain unfinished; however, the House and Senate are working together to finish our important business and accomplish key objectives.

Now, on to the Update...

### **Senate passes Permitless Carry (H.B. 1927)**

The Senate passed House Bill 1927 sponsored by Senator Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown) on Wednesday after a nine-hour debate.

House Bill 1927 is a permitless carry proposal that allows law-abiding citizens to carry a handgun without a state-issued License To Carry (LTC). The function of House Bill 1927 is to ensure that Texans who are lawfully able to carry a handgun can do so for personal protection and the protection of their family.

This bill asserts the right of all law-abiding citizens age 21-and-older to carry a handgun. With the passage of H.B. 1927, you will be able to carry a handgun in a holster in public places where it is not otherwise prohibited. Below is a more detailed breakdown of what the bill does.

#### **Upholds Current Prohibitions on Purchasing and Carrying**

- People who are prohibited from possessing a handgun will still be prohibited from possessing a handgun.
- Sensitive places where the unlicensed carry of a handgun is prohibited will still be prohibited.
- The prohibitions for places like public schools or bars will not be changed, and carrying on college campuses will remain the same as current law, where you must have an LTC and you must carry concealed if you want to go into a building on a public university campus.
- H.B. 1927 has nothing to do with the purchase or transfer of a firearm.
- Background checks will still be required when you purchase a gun at a retailer.

#### **Enhances Penalties for Unlawful Carrying of a Handgun**

- It will now be a 2nd-degree felony with a five-year minimum in prison if a felon is caught carrying a handgun, elevated from a 3rd-degree felony.
- Enhances penalty for family violence offenders from a class A misdemeanor to a 3rd-degree felony
- Reinstate's the criminal offense to carry your weapon while intoxicated (I offered the amendment on the Senate Floor), which is a Class A Misdemeanor.

#### **Protecting the Rights of Businessowners**

- All business owners and private property owners will still have the right to exclude handguns on their property in the same manner they do today.

In addition to these changes, the bill also requires the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to create a free, online training course that is available on their website for anyone interested in taking the training. A responsible gun owner must understand how to operate a handgun and the laws that regulate the carrying of a handgun, which is why I highly recommend taking an LTC course. I have always been an ardent supporter of the 2nd Amendment. I believe H.B. 1927 is the next step to ensuring all law-abiding citizens can keep and bear arms without a state-issued License To Carry (LTC), which further guarantees a citizen's 2nd amendment rights. The bill is now back in the House, where they will either vote to concur with Senate amendments or choose to go to a conference committee to work out the differences between the two bills.

### **House Bill 17 (Energy Choice for Consumers) Passes Senate**

This week, the Senate passed H.B. 17, authored by Rep. Joe Deshotel, which I sponsored in the Senate. The bill is now on its way to the governor's desk! H.B. 17 will help to preserve the rights of Texans to have access to energy choices. The bill prevents political subdivisions from discriminating against different utilities in issuing building permits and making zoning decisions. More specifically, H.B. 17 will not allow political subdivisions to pass codes, impose fines, or create ordinances that could have the effect of restricting a person's or entity's ability to use the services of a utility provider. Texans deserve energy options and policies that mandate a single energy source for home and businesses takes away choices and raises prices for all customers. I'm proud to have this legislation be my first bill to make it to Governor Abbott's desk!

### **Senate Passes Informed Patriotism Legislation (S.B. 2026)**

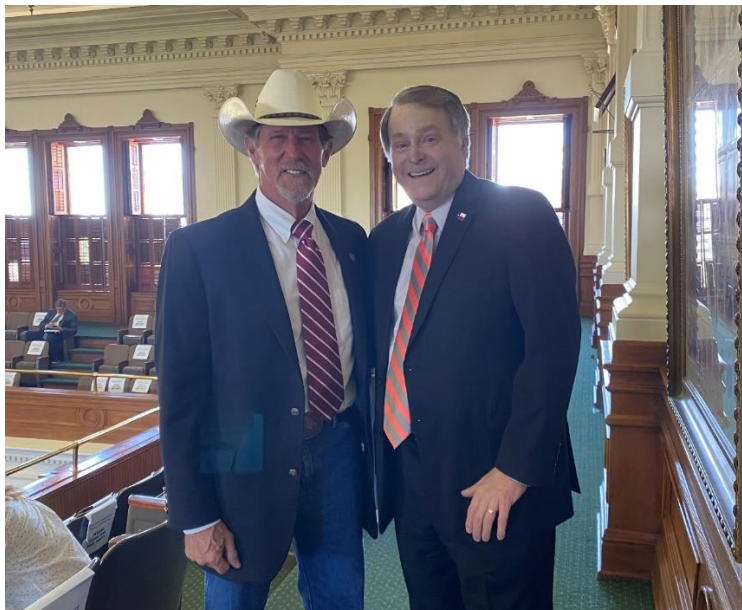
This week, the Senate passed S.B. 2026 by Sen. Larry Taylor (R-Galveston), of which I am a proud co-author! For nearly 250 years, our great nation has inspired freedom and liberty across the world. Our founding fathers had the foresight and wisdom to declare their grievances with tyrannical rule in writing the Declaration of Independence, making a clear and concise argument for freedom. Today, these writings make up the historical truths surrounding America's birth. The Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, the United States Constitution, and the Bill of Rights-and many, many more writings-preserve the firsthand struggles, triumphs, challenges, and beliefs by which our country was established. S.B. 2026 requires Texas public school students to receive an education rooted in informed patriotism or the study of America's and Texas's founding documents. The bill requires the adoption of instructional materials to include these documents for kindergarten through grade 12. In addition, the bill outlines a specific social studies curriculum for purposes of adopting essential knowledge and skills to develop students' civic knowledge in fundamental areas of American government. S.B. 2026 ensures that Texas schoolchildren have the opportunity to learn about our heroic forefathers who founded this great nation.



*Pictured here with Johnson County Judge Roger Harmon, who stopped by my office to discuss legislation important to the county. It was great to see him, and I always appreciate my discussions with my local elected officials.*

### **Recognizing Martin Grelle in the Senate**

It was my honor to join my colleague, Sen. Bryan Hughes, in recognizing my constituent Martin Grelle on the Senate floor. Martin is a very accomplished artist from Bosque County, and I'm so glad he could join us in Austin. Martin was born and raised in Senate District 22, but his artistic talents have taken him around the country. He has won competitions and received prestigious awards in places like Oklahoma, California, Arizona, and Wyoming. Among Mr. Grelle's many accomplishments is a membership invitation to the Cowboy Artists of America in 1995, the acceptance of which fulfilled a dream of his that began in the early 1970's. He is one of only seven artists to have won the Prix de West Purchase award twice, and while the remaining list of Mr. Grelle's accomplishments is too long to share in its entirety, I can assure you that his success in his field is rivaled by very few other artists. Mr. Grelle spends much of his time giving back to communities through artistic demonstrations, workshops, and donations of his work, including to Senate District 22's Bosque Arts Center in Clifton. I am thankful and proud to have a constituent so accomplished in his field and dedicated to providing resources and education to others in both his professional and local community.



*Pictured here with Martin Grelle in the Senate Gallery*

### **School Marshal Bill passes the Senate (SB 741)**

This past week, the Senate passed my bill, SB 741, which authorizes school districts to permit school marshals to carry a concealed handgun on their person. The bill provides local school districts, charter schools, private schools, and junior colleges with the discretion to decide whether their designated school marshal can keep a firearm on their person or stored in a locked and secured safe. The option to allow school marshals to conceal, carry or store their firearm in a locked and secured safe is very important to the safety of students and faculty. In the event that a situation arises that calls for a school marshal to access their firearm, the quicker they can access the firearm the better. However, my bill does not require schools to have their school marshals conceal carry. It simply affords school districts, charter schools, private schools, and junior colleges the ability to implement and deploy their school marshal program in the manner they see fit. This bill is now over in the House where my colleague Rep. Scott Sanford will work to get it through that chamber and on its way to the governor's desk.

As always, I hope our Capitol Update is informative and that you'll share it with your friends, family, and colleagues in Senate District 22, who may subscribe to the Capitol Update [by clicking here](#). You can follow us on Parler or keep in touch with legislative happenings via [www.capitol.state.tx.us](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us).

Thanks for your interest!

God bless,



Brian Birdwell  
State Senator, District 22

Austin: (512) 463-0122 // Waco: (254) 776-6225 // Granbury: (817) 573-9622  
[Brian.Birdwell@senate.texas.gov](mailto:Brian.Birdwell@senate.texas.gov) // [www.senate.texas.gov](http://www.senate.texas.gov)