



04 June 2015

## Sine Die!

**As the 84th legislative session came to an end this week, I wanted to highlight some of our accomplishments for you.**

### **Commitment to Fiscal Discipline**

The legislature passed a balanced budget that will increase by less than 2 percent per year, which is less than population plus inflation. We stayed beneath the constitutional spending cap and left more than \$11 billion in the state's rainy day fund. Additionally, we approved more than \$4 billion in tax relief. This included a 25% reduction in the business margins tax as well as a \$10,000 increase in the homestead exemption.

### **Securing the Border**

With the passage of House Bill 10, the state will take new steps to fight and eliminate human trafficking. House Bill 11 provided hundreds of new state troopers along the Texas-Mexico border while strengthening efforts to fight and prosecute border related crimes. Also, the budget provides a historic amount of funding - more than \$800 million for border security.

### **Commitment to Education**

The legislature provided more resources to education and broadened the criteria used to evaluate public schools. Additionally, we approved a plan to more effectively reform schools that repeatedly fail to meet academic standards. In higher education, we provided funding for the construction of needed facilities at universities and created the Governor's Research Initiative to recruit nationally recognized scholars.



### Addressed Transportation

In the past, the state has used some of the money in the State Highway Fund (largely funded by the gas tax) for programs other than building and maintaining roads. The legislature ended that diversion this year, which will allow for an additional \$1.3 billion to go towards transportation. Additionally, we also approved at least \$2.5 billion in sales taxes for transportation every two years.

### Provided for Budget Transparency and Accountability

For decades the state has collected fees for one purpose but has failed to use them for their stated purpose. In many cases these funds were being used to certify the rest of the budget. The House has reduced that practice over the last two sessions, decreasing hundreds of millions of dollars in fees and using more taxpayer dollars for their intended purpose. More of these resources will now flow into transportation, trauma care and state parks.

**Thank You for allowing me to serve you in the Texas House!**



*Linda Koop*

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