



## *Capitol Comments*

### **Border Update December 3, 2014**

#### **ACTION TAKEN TO INCREASE SECURITY ALONG TEXAS-MEXICO BORDER**

On Monday of this week, the Legislative Budget Board (LBB) voted unanimously to expand law enforcement's presence along the Texas-Mexico border, adding significant manpower to security operations that state leaders approved last summer.

The Budget Board voted to spend an additional \$86 million on increased border-security efforts between now and the end of the current fiscal year on August 31. Most of that money will pay for additional overtime for Department of Public Safety (DPS) personnel. According to DPS estimates, this effort is equivalent to adding 640 more DPS personnel in the border region.

The additional resources will also fund additional equipment and technology, as well as more aircraft flight time.

The primary purpose of the 10-member Legislative Budget Board is the development of recommended legislative appropriations for all agencies of state government. The Board also provides the Texas Legislature with the recommended state budget, prepared by the LBB staff, at the beginning of each legislative session. The Board used its budget execution authority, provided only in times of emergency, to direct the additional funds to border-security efforts. The Legislative Budget Board is co-chaired by the Speaker and Lieutenant Governor, and also includes four Members of the House (Rep. Drew Darby, Rep. John Otto, Rep. Sylvester Turner & Rep. John Zerwas) and four Senators (Sen. Kevin Eltife, Sen. Craig Estes, Sen. Juan Hinojosa & Sen. Jane Nelson).

Governor Perry, Lt. Governor Dewhurst and Speaker Straus agreed to the border-security proposal before it went to Budget Board for approval. As many of you will recall, earlier this year the three state leaders directed more state resources to DPS operations in the border region.

This action increases our commitment to border security and provides the 84th Texas Legislature to come up with a long-term border security strategy. I look forward to the opportunity to work with my colleagues in the Texas House and Senate, as well as Governor-elect Abbott, to find a long-term solution for Texas.

Another interesting note from Monday's LBB meeting, the Board voted 10-0 to set a limit on state spending for the next two-year budget. The Texas Constitution requires that spending that is not constitutionally dedicated should stay beneath estimates of economic growth over the budget cycle. The Budget Board was given four projections of economic growth over the next two years and chose to set the spending limit using the most conservative growth projection.

#### **DPS NATIONALLY RECOGNIZED FOR EXCELLENCE IN HOMELAND SECURITY**

Last week I received an email from Commander Steven C. McCraw, Director the Texas Department of Public Safety, informing the legislature that DPS was nationally recognized for their public safety and homeland security work. The DPS Texas Joint Crime Information Center (JCIC) was named Fusion Center of the Year by the National Fusion Center Association. This is a big deal and well-earned recognition for the work DPS is doing to keep Texans safe.

As a member of the House Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee, which has jurisdiction over DPS, I am honored to have had a front row seat over the last two years overseeing the great work being done by McCraw and DPS. I have inserted the email below for your reference.

From: DPS Government Relations

Date: November 24, 2014 at 5:26:01 PM EST

To: DPS Government Relations

Subject: DPS News: Thanks to efforts by the Texas Legislature, DPS recognized nationally for public safety/homeland security

Honorable Members:

Today's dynamic public safety and homeland security threat environment makes it essential that law enforcement agencies work smarter to detect, assess, prioritize and collectively address criminal and terrorist threats to our citizens through informed and reasoned decision making based upon the analysis of data. These efforts are critical to combatting the increasingly sophisticated and adaptable criminal elements. New threats require new thinking. We must be ready to take pre-emptive action to protect our state. If we wait for threats to fully materialize we will have waited too long. We must take the fight to the criminal element, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge.

To that end, the Texas Legislature took action last session to provide funding and direction for the state's intelligence strategy, recognizing that timely and accurate intelligence is essential to proactive, preventive and effective law enforcement strategies and operations to combat crime and terrorism.

The department's intelligence strategy is comprised of 150 intelligence personnel who provide tactical and strategic analytical support to Troopers, Agents, Texas Rangers, as well as local, state and federal law enforcement officers. As you know, DPS' intelligence strategy currently encompasses essential programs, including:

- Multi-agency Joint Crime Information Center (provides around-the-clock analytical assistance to more than 1,500 local law enforcement agencies)
- Texas Ten Most Wanted Fugitive Program
- Texas Ten Most Wanted Sex Offender Program
- Analytical Strike Teams supporting major investigations
- Operation Drawbridge
- Missing and Exploited Children Unit
- Interdiction for the Protection of Children Program
- Texas Suspicious Activity Program (iWATCH)
- Direct case support for Texas Ranger investigations
- Direct case support for DPS cartel and gang investigations
- Direct case support for human trafficking and sex offender investigations
- State Intelligence Assessment Program
- Gang Analysis Section

- Counterterrorism Analysis Program
- Critical Analytical Response Teams
- Threats against elected officials
- Analytical support for tactical operations
- Critical Infrastructure and Key Resource Tracking and Assessment Program
- Risk Assessment Review Team (detailed risk assessments of sex offenders eligible for parole)
- Around-the-clock multi-agency watch center (statewide situational awareness)

I am pleased to share with you that the Texas Joint Crime Information Center (JCIC) was named Fusion Center of the Year by the National Fusion Center Association earlier this month in Alexandria, Va. DPS Intelligence and Counterterrorism Division Assistant Director (AD) John “JJ” Jones accepted the award on behalf of the department (see photo attached – AD Jones is pictured at the podium, and General Francis Taylor, Department of Homeland Security Undersecretary of Intelligence and Analysis, presented the awards and is pictured on the left in the foreground). The Fusion Center of the Year award recognizes centers that have provided exceptional services to their jurisdictions and exhibit outstanding best practices. [Fusion centers serve as focal points within the state and local environment for the receipt, analysis, gathering, and sharing of threat-related information between the federal government and state, local, tribal, territorial and private sector partners. There are 78 fusion centers located in states and urban areas across the country.]

Additionally, two DPS employees received individual awards. Emily Robertson, research analyst, was named Fusion Center Employee of the Year for her consistent dedication, advanced analytical capabilities, and her contributions to FBI terrorism cases and state and national homeland security efforts. This award recognizes an individual who has provided exceptional services to the national network of fusion centers. David Jackson, critical infrastructure planner, received The Michael Schooler Critical Infrastructure Protection Award for his efforts to promote the Texas Infrastructure Protection Plan and to increase private sector partnership within the program. This award honors individuals who have enhanced critical infrastructure protection related programs and improved the security posture of the jurisdiction and/or the nation.

There is no greater responsibility in government than protecting its citizens, and the Texas Joint Crime Information Center, and the men and women who support it, are indispensable in helping the state of Texas fulfill that duty. Thanks to your continued support of the department and these programs, the JCIC and division personnel continue to bolster public safety and security within Texas and throughout the nation.

Steven C. McCraw  
Director  
Texas Department of Public Safety

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As always, please stay in touch with me and feel free to drop by my District Office, follow me on [Facebook](#), or find me on the [House Website](#) to hear about upcoming events.

Thank you, It is truly an honor and a privilege serving you.

Best regards,



Ron Simmons

State Representative  
House District 65

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