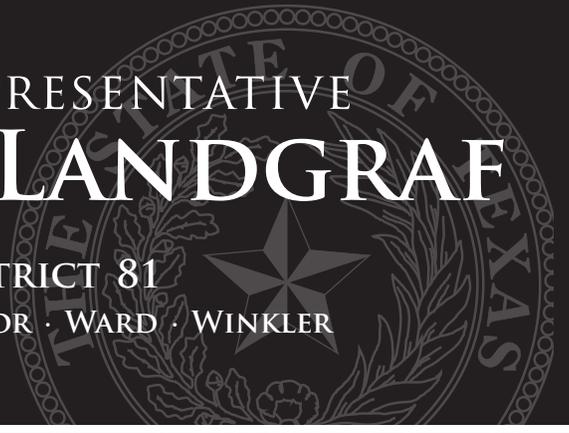




STATE REPRESENTATIVE
BROOKS LANDGRAF

DISTRICT 81

ANDREWS · ECTOR · WARD · WINKLER



85TH LEGISLATIVE INTERIM UPDATE



STATE REPRESENTATIVE
BROOKS LANDGRAF

Dear Fellow West Texan,

Thank you for taking the time to read this annual newsletter. You will find that this update covers a few of the very important things that our state is working on and will address during the upcoming legislative session, which begins the second Tuesday in January 2019 at the Texas Capitol.

It is important to balance our state budget, just like households in West Texas have to, and the current trajectory of our economy is promising.

As your state representative, my work on your behalf focuses on doing what's best for Texas, but also fighting to ensure that the specific needs of Andrews, Ector, Ward, and Winkler counties are addressed in our state government.

In this newsletter you will find some developments in what I would like to focus on during the next legislative session, like public education, energy, and transportation.

Like last year, there is a short survey where you may share your thoughts and a summary of the results from last year's survey is included.

As always, aside from faith and family, serving as your state representative is my top priority, and the feedback that you provide will greatly assist in serving West Texans in the next legislative session. With your help, I'll continue working to ensure that Texas remains the best state in the nation to live, work, and raise a family.



Rep. Brooks Landgraf and family

God Bless Texas,

Brooks Landgraf



DISTRICT 81 – ANDREWS, ECTOR, WARD, AND WINKLER COUNTIES

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★ EDUCATION ★

The commitment to our state's next generation began in the earliest days of the Texas Revolution and continues through a mandate in our state's constitution. More than one third of the state budget (\$80.433 billion) is dedicated to fund public schools in Texas.



Representative Landgraf tutors students at Zavala Elementary



Representative Landgraf meets with constituents in Odessa

“A general diffusion of knowledge being essential to the preservation of the liberties and rights of the people, it shall be the duty of the Legislature of the State to establish and make suitable provision for the support and maintenance of an efficient system of public free schools.”

Texas Constitution, Article 3, Section 1

In 2016, the Texas Supreme Court ruled that while the current school finance system is constitutional, it is “undeniably imperfect, with immense room for improvement.” One of the greatest priorities of the 85th Legislature was to reform our school finance system, and that reform will be one of the greatest priorities of the 86th Legislature as well.

Texas schools aren't serving students or taxpayers as well as they should and there are two large reasons. Under the “Robin Hood” recapture system, local tax dollars are shifted to other parts of the state. It's no secret that this scheme has had a detrimental effect on many schools across West Texas. Due to the minerals and resources that the Permian Basin is blessed with, House District 81 school districts have been labeled as “property wealthy,” a designation which has caused our local property taxes to be recaptured and sent to Austin for bureaucrats to redistribute in accordance with an outdated formula. While it is important to ensure that students across the state have the opportunity to learn regardless of their financial circumstance or their geographic location, it is also important to allow mineral abundant school districts to benefit from resources they provide. I proudly introduced legislation to repeal Robin Hood, but we simply didn't have the votes to get it passed during the 85th legislative sessions.

While the Robin Hood repeal fell short, we were able to make incremental improvements in school funding, particularly for West Texas schools. A \$150 million hardship grant related to the Additional State Aid for Tax Relief program will be distributed across the state, and many of the school districts in the area will benefit from those funds.

Along with fighting for our districts, my colleagues and I worked to revise the A-F rating system through House Bill 22 during the 85th Legislative Session. After the preliminary roll out, and after my own town hall meeting in February, we came to the decision that standardized testing should be less of a factor in determining school ratings. Furthermore, the bill will reduce the number of domains from five to three so that we can return to focusing on the important basics of education. The accountability domains moving forward include Student Achievement, School Performance, and Closing the Gaps. The bill was signed by Governor Abbott and was made effective immediately upon his signing.

My goal for the 2019 legislative session is to enable school districts to determine what to do with their taxpayer's money, teachers to teach the way they see best fits their students, and students to focus on learning rather than testing alone, while also ensuring accountability for our tax dollars spent on education. School finance reform that is pro-student and pro-taxpayer can be a big win for the future of Texas.

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

★ TRANSPORTATION ★

An increase in oil and gas production is always a good thing for Texas and for our country's national security, but with it comes serious challenges to infrastructure here in the oil patch. There is a significant strain put on our roads that create huge repair costs and public safety concerns. Transportation infrastructure is consistently brought up as one of our region's most pressing needs. I agree with my constituents, and am proudly voicing these concerns at the Texas Capitol.

We've all seen it. Crumbling roads, over-sized trucks striking overpasses, traffic congestion and fatal traffic accidents are all troubling effects of the oil and gas boom that only promises to get bigger as traffic increases (and the roads deteriorate) more and more with each passing week.

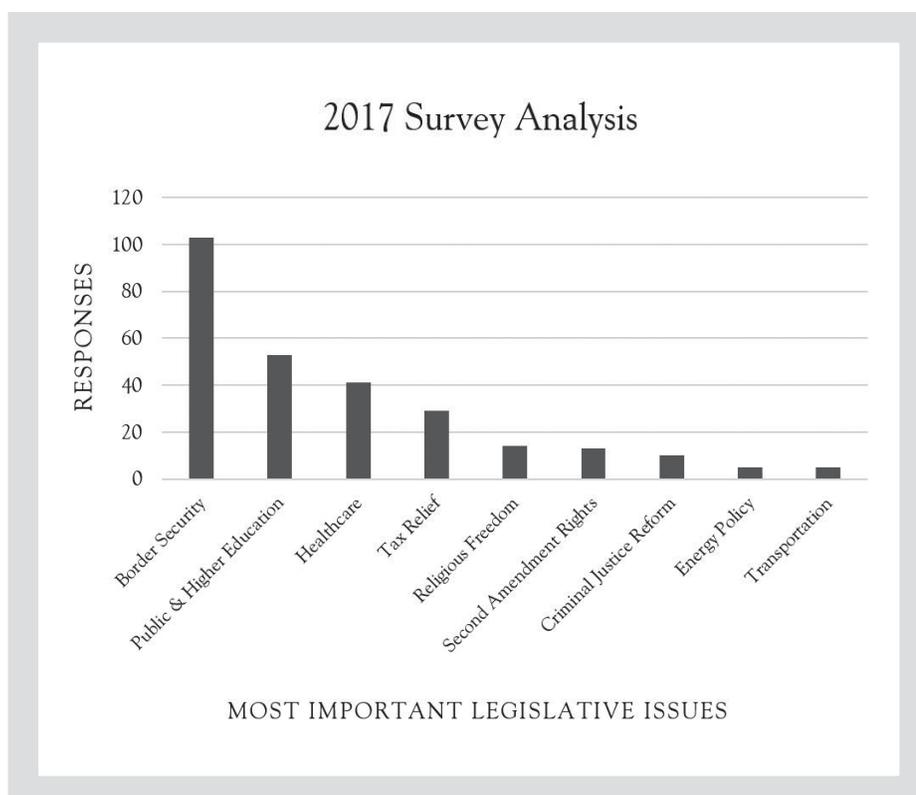


Representative Landgraf speaks at the Monahans Veteran's Day Celebration

That's why I requested that the Texas House Committee on Energy Resources evaluate the evolution of frac sand mining in the Permian Basin and how it may impact county infrastructure and oil and gas development. The House Energy Resources Committee convened a special hearing right here in West Texas this last December so that I could show my colleagues the condition of our highways in West Texas and the heavy burden that our roads bear with booming oilfield traffic. Additionally, the Texas House Committee on Transportation is investigating the impact energy exploration and production have on state and county roads.

Advances in sand-based hydraulic fracturing, horizontal drilling technologies and a steady rise in crude-oil prices have resulted in increased oilfield production and record truck traffic across the Permian Basin. Our region has two percent of the state's population, but we have ten percent of the fatal automobile accidents.

In more urban parts of the state, an increase in vehicle traffic triggers a funding formula that leads to more transportation dollars going to that particular area. However, the oil patch has a problem under the rules as they exist today. Our roads are chronically underfunded compared to more urban areas because oilfield traffic is mostly regional, and is frequently not counted as heavy interstate freight traffic. The freight traffic count is an important component in the transportation funding formula.



While most of us here in West Texas are aware of this problem, many policymakers across the state are not. That's why I requested the committee to come out to the Permian Basin to see for themselves and hear directly from our local experts who provided testimony and supporting data.

As a result of the Energy Committee hearing in West Texas and the additional committee hearings held in Austin, we have developed some avenues to solve the problem by better accounting for oilfield traffic in the funding formula. My goal is to make these adjustments so that the necessary funding can be delivered to West Texas to improve our roads, making them safer for drivers and families and more accommodating for businesses that create jobs and drive our economy. Both committees will soon be making recommendations about how to improve highways in energy-impacted areas like the Permian Basin.



★ CHRIS KYLE MEMORIAL HIGHWAY ★

In 2016, the Odessa community dedicated the Chris Kyle Memorial Plaza near the veterans' clinic off Highway 191. The plaza itself is a source of pride for Odessa. Its centerpiece is a 15-foot statue of our hometown hero, Chris Kyle, the U.S. Navy SEAL sniper who was born in Odessa in 1974. His impressive statue stands atop a 24-ton base of Texas limestone, which is surrounded by a ring of trees that have been transplanted here from President George W. Bush's ranch in Crawford, is a reminder of his courage and sacrifice.

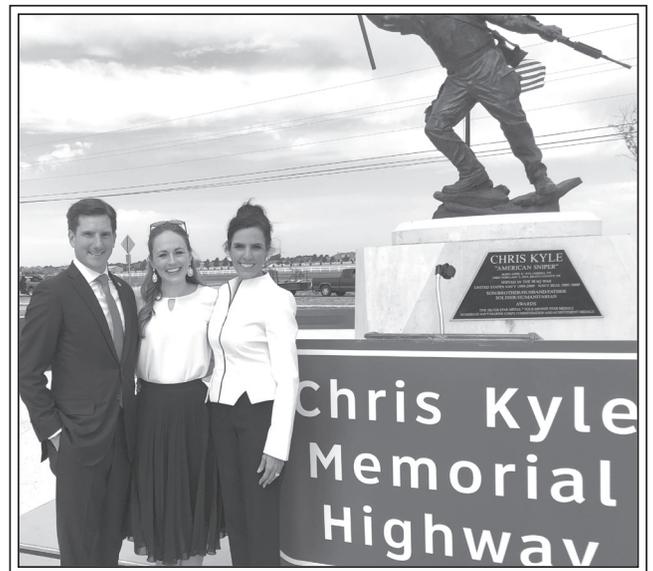
Chris Kyle's life story was portrayed in the film "American Sniper." Kyle is considered one of the most lethal snipers in U.S. history, with 160 confirmed enemy kills. This plaza is a fitting tribute to a man who, as a U.S. Navy SEAL, skillfully served our country to protect our interests by fighting in dangerous and foreign lands. The countless brave acts that he committed on our behalf are, in and of themselves, worthy of our eternal gratitude and praise. Equally admirable, Chris Kyle devoted his time after his Navy service concluded, to help his fellow veterans readjust to life as a civilian. Unfortunately, Chris Kyle's life was cut short by a man he was working to help.

At the unveiling of the new plaza, I asked Chris Kyle's widow, Taya, if she'd like State Highway 191 in Ector County, which passes directly by the Chris Kyle Memorial Plaza, the "Chris Kyle Memorial Highway." She was so excited about that idea that during the last legislative session I filed House Bill 1483 to do just that. The bill passed unanimously out of both houses of the legislature and was quickly signed by Governor Greg Abbott.

In May I was proud once again stand alongside Taya at the Chris Kyle statue to dedicate the new highway honoring her late husband.

Chris Kyle forever will have a place in Odessa, as motorists drive on a highway with his name and his bronze likeness stands proudly over West Texas. I'm proud that our community has undertaken this labor of love to honor such a deserving man. Odessa is a community that loves our state and nation, and we understand that our sovereignty and freedom couldn't exist without the courage and sacrifice of men like Chris Kyle. Who we choose to honor reflects our values as a community.

Now that we've dedicated the Chris Kyle Memorial Highway and Plaza, let us re-dedicate ourselves to the values that he spent his life fighting for, both as a veteran and a native son of West Texas.



Representative Landgraf, his wife, Shelby, and Taya Kyle at the Chris Kyle Memorial Highway Dedication



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MONICA'S LAW



I filed Monica's Law during the last legislative session where it was passed by the Texas House, but was stalled in the Texas Senate. It is my intention to re-file Monica's Law during the upcoming 2019 legislative session.

Monica Deming, the inspiration behind the legislation, was tragically murdered in an act of domestic violence. Monica, a 32 year-old mother, was shot and killed in her Odessa home by an abusive ex-boyfriend on November 29, 2015. In the aftermath of that heinous crime, Monica's young son lost his mother, and a family was forever shattered through this deadly act of domestic violence.

Sadly, the ex-boyfriend who killed Monica had two protective orders for domestic violence that had previously been issued against him. Unfortunately under current state law, he was easily able to keep them secret. Monica and her family were unaware of his abusive and violent past.

Not long after Monica's death, I met her father, Jon Nielsen, a former Odessa police officer. He told me about Monica and the circumstances of her death and he inspired me to file "Monica's Law."

The goal of "Monica's Law" is to prevent domestic violence through the power of information. The bill creates an online, searchable and public database listing protective orders issued by Texas courts as a result of domestic violence.

More specifically, the bill seeks to establish a statewide registry where certain redacted information can be accessed by the public, but also one where law enforcement and the courts have access to all of the information provided by protective-order applicants. Information is only available after due process has been given to the abuser in a judicial proceeding.

Although we cannot return Monica to her son and family, it is my hope that "Monica's Law" can work to put a process in place where individuals can determine whether or not their safety may be threatened by someone they don't know.

Nearly one-third of all Texans have been a victim of some form of domestic or family violence. It's clear that more can be done to prevent domestic violence. "Monica's Law" can help do that, by providing another resource to allow potential victims to avoid engaging in a relationship with someone who has a violent past.

In 2015, 157 other women joined Monica in death at the hands of intimate male partners, although there are many circumstances where men are victims as well.

"Monica's Law" cannot go back and return Monica to her son and family, but it is my hope that "Monica's Law" can work to put a process in place where individuals can determine whether or not their safety may be threatened by someone they don't know.

★ CONSTITUENT SURVEY ★

Name(s) of person filling out survey: _____

Age: _____ Gender: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Do you consider property taxes on your home and/or business to be too high?

Yes No

Do you support a repeal of the "Robin Hood" school funding plan that takes money from West Texas schools and redistributes it to other parts of the state?

Yes No

Would you support cutting property taxes while increasing the state sales tax to more efficiently fund public schools?

Yes No

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Secretary of State Election Information	(800) 252-8683	Texas Dept. of Transportation	(325) 944-1501
Comptroller	(800) 252-5555	Public Utility Commission of Texas Hotline	(888) 782-8477
Attorney General/Child Support Enforcement	(800) 252-8014	Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice Offender Status Line	(800) 535-0283
Consumer Protection Hotline	(800) 983-9933	Pardons & Paroles Victims Services	(800) 848-4284
Texas Crime Stoppers Hotline	(800) 252-8477	DPS Driver License Customer Services	(512) 424-2600
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