



KINNEY COUNTY ATTORNEY

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Lieutenant Governor, Dan Patrick,

I would like to thank you for your leadership in the Texas Senate, which has been tasked with shepherding some of the most important legislation Texas has seen in the history of our state. The border crisis touches each and every Texan, irrespective of where they live in our state. For Texans living on the border, words cannot adequately describe the conditions on the ground. Our homes are being broken into in the middle of the night. The main streets of our small towns are now the place of high-speed car chases with cartel operatives. Walking outside on our own property after dark is no longer safe. Texans who reside on our border no longer enjoy the comfort and safety of their own home. The violence and lawlessness occurring along the southern border is not sustainable for any sovereign state. The willful neglect of the federal government to enforce the laws of our nation has comprised the safety and security of Texans in a way never before witnessed.

Being a border resident myself who has prosecuted more than 5,000 cases under OLS, I can attest to the accomplishments and failures we have all experienced. While DPS is very effective in performing criminal interdiction within the state of Texas, Governor Abbott's stated mission centers upon the securing of the Mexican border itself. The simple truth is that the command structure and mission training of DPS is not suitable to undertake the task of securing the actual border. Touting the high number of arrests and drug seizures occurring within the interior of the state only gives evidence of our failure to secure the actual border and prevent it from traveling into the interior of Texas.

However, the accomplishments that were recently achieved by the Border Tactical Unit in Brownsville are a game changer in our mission to secure the border. This success is attributable to the Governor's Border Czar, Michael Banks, who performed this exact same mission for over 25 years with the Department of Homeland Security. Obtaining this same level of experience and knowledge through any existing state agency is impossible. Mr. Bank's experience and leadership enabled him to utilize the TMD and DPS to effectively stop all illegal crossings that would have continued to occur under prior strategies employed by DPS.

The magnitude of this crisis cannot be overstated. The legislative tools that are created to confront this border crisis will ultimately determine the fate of Texas. I therefore support the creation of a state agency within DPS that is specifically tasked with border security and overseen by someone with the requisite knowledge and experience to successfully accomplish that mission.

Brent Smith,  
Kinney County Attorney