ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE
60TH LEGISLATURE
[Ben Barnes]

A few weeks ago the Regular Session of the 60th Legislature became history, and it is a pleasure for me to report to you that I believe it wrote a record all Texans can regard with pride.

In recent years, there has been a good deal of talk about how state governments are failing to meet their responsibilities and how the federal government is assuming by default more and more powers which rightfully belong to the states.

I do not deny that there has been a strong trend in this direction. Yet I think Texas has done an unusually good job of meeting its responsibilities in recent years.
In my opinion, the 60th Legislature which met this spring was one of the most constructive in the history of the State. I think we dealt realistically with the urgent problems which were before us -- and they were many -- and I do not think we shirked any of our major responsibilities.

When the session convened in January, the 150 House members and 31 Senators were faced with one of the broadest, most far-reaching legislative programs that any session has ever had to consider. Most of us went to Austin to begin our work in January with more than a little trepidation.

-- We were faced with what I consider the number one area of concern in our
State: How to develop and solve the financial problems of Texas' 22 metropolitan areas.

-- The revised Code of Criminal Procedure which had been passed by the 59th Legislature was again before us.

-- We were asked to provide pay raises for public school teachers and to continue the coordination and financing of higher education, particularly for junior colleges and vocational-technical education.

-- We were challenged to provide Texas with its first industrial safety act.

-- We were asked to take new steps to further combat the growing problem of air and water pollution.
-- We were faced with finding some way to reduce the growing number of traffic fatalities -- (over 3,400 in 1966) -- recorded in Texas each year.

-- Shortly after the Session began, we were faced with a judicial mandate to further apportion Texas' 23 Congressional districts and the legislative districts of the State House of Representatives to comply with the "one-man, one-vote" standard set forth by the U. S. Supreme Court.

Almost every agency and service of our State government was asking us to provide more money to make more services available to more people.

When my colleagues honored me by electing me Speaker again this session,
I pledged my best efforts to seeing that these issues and the many others before us were dealt with in an efficient and constructive manner. Thanks to an able, hard-working, and cooperative membership, we faced our problems and went to work immediately.

This session handled a record volume of legislation, with more bills introduced, reported from committee, considered, and passed than has been the case in any recent Regular Session of the Legislature.

This session saw the introduction of 2,100 bills and joint resolutions proposing amendments to the Texas Constitution -- 1,367 bills and 64 joint resolutions in the House and 628 bills and
41 joint resolutions in the Senate. About 42% of the House bills and 40% of the Senate bills were passed by both houses. In dealing with this great volume of legislation, I feel that we faced the issues squarely and discharged our obligations in a statesmanlike manner.

**URBAN AFFAIRS**

Now I would like to talk to you a moment about what I consider to be the new frontier in Texas. The frontier of which I speak today is the new urban frontier.

About 2 out of 3 Texans now live in the 22 metropolitan areas in Texas. The transition from a rural to an urban state is not easy or cheap. While Texas has been making this urban transition, her cities' taxing powers have remained rural in character.
This past session took a big step toward easing this tax problem when, for the first time in the State's history, the cities were given the chance to broaden their tax bases. Cities in Texas now have the option to collect a one percent sales tax on vote of their citizens. This tax will cover only items included in the general state sales tax and will be collected by the State Comptroller and refunded to the cities.

What must be solved is not any lack of ability to produce consumer goods. What has not been solved are those problems which lie largely in the realm of public action -- bad housing, poverty, discrimination, polluted air and water, juvenile delinquency.
Lawmakers realized that counties and cities in Texas face situations they did not even envision 25 years ago and the time had come to face and adjust to these realities.

**CRIMINAL LAW CHANGES**

People in Texas are sick to death of the frightening rise of crime and the coddling of criminals.

Here in Texas we have the murder capital of the U. S., and recently the 101st homicide for the year was recorded -- 19 more than last year's record pace. While chalking up a record 202 slayings last year, this city did not record its 100th victim until July 6. Almost 3 million Americans will be targets of serious crime this year.
If statistical trends are any indication, about 5,700 will be murdered; 35,000 assaulted with a gun; and 70,000 robbed. Property losses will exceed $1 billion dollars.

The 1965 Code of Criminal Procedure was revised this session to aid law enforcement officers in the 24-hour battle against criminals. We restored the time a prisoner had to serve on his sentence before parole eligibility from 1/4 of his sentence to 1/3 of his sentence or 20 years, whichever comes first.

Above all, we must remember that crime will continue to pay until we as law makers and citizens take the profit out of crime.
EDUCATION AND TEACHER PAY RAISE

Education has always been my major interest in politics, and I am convinced that State money which goes into education is not so much an expenditure as an investment in the future.

It is an investment which will be returned many times over in the industrial and economic development of Texas. This legislature did not stint in providing funds for either the public schools or for higher education.

Of the $2.4 billion dollars we will spend during fiscal year 1968, about $1.13 billion dollars -- or more than 47 per cent of the total -- will go for education.

Much of this increase will be used to improve vocational and technical education,
to extend State aid for public junior colleges into areas other than direct instructional costs, to improve libraries to promote research, and to expand facilities to meet the tremendous influx of students at all levels. Public supported junior colleges will increase from 32 to 38 this year, and expenditures will increase 58% to provide for their expansion and growth.

Vocational-technical education rapidly is becoming an indispensable part of higher educational planning. About 60% of our young people, for one reason or another, will not have the benefit of a college education. We have to provide some type of educational training to fill this void, some type of vocational and
technical training to provide these young people with some skill with which they too can become productive citizens.

To provide for these needed skills, we increased appropriations so that the James Connally Technical Institute in Waco will be able to expand its present enrollment of 450 to over 1,000 students by 1968. We increased expenditures for vocational and technical educational training in junior and senior high schools.

We have provided an increase of almost $71 million dollars -- a 28% increase over 1967 spending -- in appropriations for higher education to continue the strong campaign for general excellence in Texas education beyond the high school.
One significant measure passed creates an optional retirement program for faculty members of our colleges and universities. The purpose of establishing this retirement program is to further improve the higher education available to our young people, realizing that the quality of higher education is dependent upon the quality of college and university faculties. This beneficial program will, we hope, help attract the top scholars and college teachers to our State.

Demonstrations, mass murder, and riots have in the last year turned many college campuses across the nation into miniature battlegrounds.
Under the guise of "freedom of this" or "freedom for that" young people have violated rules, defaced and, many times, destroyed property and disrupted classes to demonstrate their "rights."

Alarmed by this rising trend, this legislature passed a law designed to provide for the protection, safety, and welfare of both students and employees on our colleges and universities.

Public elementary, secondary, and specialized education will also get a big increase in State funds -- nearly 21 million dollars more -- for the next year. Public school enrollment in Texas grew by
nearly 42% from 1960 to 1966, the 16th fastest rate in the country. Our school enrollment of 2.5 million in the fall of 1966 was the nation's third largest.

Of course, the largest share of the increase will go for State aid to local schools to help care for the expected average daily attendance of 2.6 million pupils in 1968.

In addition, the State will spend another $48 million dollars for its share of the teacher pay raise. Thanks to the perceptiveness and hard work of many legislators, the Governor, and representatives of the teachers, we were able to agree on a bill that provides an average pay hike of $554 dollars for our 125,000 Texas school teachers.
It is my sincere belief that the plan we have adopted will keep the best possible teaching talent in the classrooms of our public schools. It will provide salary increases of $630 dollars per year for beginning teachers and for teachers with up to 10 years experience, with a smaller increase going to teachers with 11 or more years experience.

While the more experienced teachers received a greater increase in 1965, this bill gives a more sizeable pay hike to our young people just entering this profession. Texas began the 1966 school year with a 10,000 teacher shortage and it is hoped this new pay increase will help reduce this shortage when school doors
open this September. Of the $60 million dollars which is the estimated cost of the plan, local districts will bear about $12 million dollars.

**HIGHWAY SAFETY**

I come to an area of legislation now which probably will affect more Texans than any other area -- those of you who own automobiles, trucks, or motorcycles. If the present rate of destruction continues on our highways, one out of every three Americans will be killed or injured driving their car, motorcycle or pickup truck sometime during their lifetime.

Texas recorded over 3,400 deaths in 1966 -- our worst year in history -- and deaths in 1967 are running 15% higher than
last year. This favorite device of Texans -- the automobile -- has become this State's most lethal weapon.

Between 1961 and 1965, accidents slaughtered 4 times as many of our servicemen as have been killed in Viet Nam to date.

In light of these sobering facts, the Legislature this spring made a bold new beginning in working to reduce this carnage.

-- A statewide traffic safety program will be created and administered by the Governor to study methods of reducing the deaths.

-- The State Health Department now has authority to investigate the medical aspects of traffic safety, especially where drugs and alcohol are involved.
-- Driver education schools will be licensed and regulated by State law.

-- Motorcyclists will have to take a driving test on a motorcycle and will have to have a license to drive it. Beginning in January, everyone riding a motorcycle--driver or passenger -- must wear a Department of Public Safety approved helmet.

-- Licenses themselves will change. Tamper-proof lamination and colored photos will be used. Also they will cost $6 dollars for 4 years rather than $3 dollars for 2 years.

Because drivers in the 14 to 24 age group create the major part of the problem in the area of human driving error.
-- All drivers under 21 will be licensed on a provisional basis, giving the Department of Public Safety authority to suspend violator's licenses.

-- The minimum age for licensing was changed to 16 with completion of driver education, and 13 years of age without.

Other laws provide stiffer penalties for those who drive with an improper or revoked license, increased fines for racing or reckless driving, and a new vehicle inspection law. It is hoped that these new measures will successfully halt the senseless loss of life on our highways.

AIR AND WATER POLLUTION

The pollution of our air and water has reached the proportions of a statewide...
disgrace. It endangers our health. It hurts our business opportunities. It destroys recreation.

The 60th Session of the Legislature chose to provide the indispensable element of leadership to develop comprehensive plans to control this pollution. Our goal must be the fullest utilization of every drop and gallon of water in every river. Our goal must be to reduce exhaust fumes, industrial smoke, and furnaces as much as possible.

**AIR POLLUTION**

The simple truth is that in some portions of our State, people cannot breathe. They are slowly choking to death on pollutants in the air. Texans are choking because of air pollution from these sources:
-- 10,600 factories emitting pollutants.

-- 6 million motor vehicles -- which will more than double by 1985 to 14 million -- burning 4 billion gallons of gas a year and sending more than 1 million tons of pollutants into the air.

-- Agricultural operations across the State using 750,000 pounds a year of pesticides and other chemicals.

To clean up our air we passed the Texas Clean Air Act which will help set forth anti-pollution standards. A 9-member Texas Air Control Board will work with local authorities to establish stronger local pollution standards if necessary and will study the air pollution problem in all portions of Texas.
WATER POLLUTION

Also we must step up our fight against water pollution. We must stimulate construction of needed sewage treatment plants and prevent this further spread of water pollution.

Quite obviously, the best way to control or manage anything is to do it at the source, before it gets away from you.

To get at the source of this water pollution problem, we passed the Water Quality Act of 1967 and appropriated $2 million dollars to be used for construction and planning of regional
waste treatment facilities, to dispose of the polluted waste at the source before it is emptied into our rivers and bays.

A 7-member Texas Water Quality Control Board will prepare a general plan for water quality control in the State and will establish a State grant program for local governments in both construction of sewage treatment facilities and basinwide planning for water control.

REDISTRICTING

A major problem was dumped in our laps shortly after the session began when the U. S. Supreme Court ruled we again had to reapportion our U. S. Congressional districts and the State
legislative districts of the House of Representatives.

We passed a U. S. Congressional redistricting bill which does not force any present member into a race with another member. I believe both redistricting bills will meet future tests and requirements of federal court decisions on reapportionment. The development of all these redistricting plans was a long and tedious process. It required working, reworking, revising, and compromising. It was inevitable that some members of the Legislature would be less happy than others with the final products which passed both houses and went to the Governor for signature, but all of us tried to approach the
reapportionment task in the business-like manner which a task of this magnitude demanded.

**INDUSTRIAL SAFETY**

I am particularly proud that the House voted 143-0 in passing the first Industrial Safety Act in Texas' history. This new law creates an occupational safety board that will develop safety standards for the workers of Texas.

Texas' death rate in 1965 was the highest of the nation's 10 largest industrial states and nearly twice as high as the average rate for the other nine states. Over 34,000 new manufacturing jobs were added in Texas in 1966 along with 309 new factories,
and I hope this act will go far in reducing industrial accidents.

TOURISM

We increased funds for our State programs designed to attract tourists to Texas. We provided $5.5 million dollars for the construction of the Institute of Texan Cultures building at the HemisFair site in San Antonio. This will be a permanent structure, displaying the culture and history of Texas for years to come.

We created the new Guadalupe National Park in West Texas, and we authorized the Parks and Wildlife Department to acquire certain forts and missions to help in preserving our frontier heritage.
Next November, Texas voters will be asked to approve an amendment to the Constitution which will provide for the issuance and sale of $75 million dollars worth of bonds to create the Texas Park Development Fund.

The number and size of our 59 State parks have remained static bringing about over-use, crowded conditions, and abuse of State parks. This program would add 26 new areas and another 61,000 acres to the system. More leisure time and more affluence to enjoy that time demands action in this area.

**STATE_EMPLOYEE_PAY_RAISE**

We rewarded the long-suffering underpaid State of Texas employees with
a generous well-deserved salary increase. The salaries were raised nearly 13% on the average.

MENTAL HEALTH

In the important area of mental health, the 60th Legislature passed all 14 bills requested by the Department of Mental Health and Mental Retardation with an increase of $18.6 million dollars over 1967.

Our responsibility in this area is clear. Mental retardation affects 15 times as many persons as blindness; 10 times as many as polio and 8 times as many as cerebral palsy. One out of 10 Americans -- 300,000 Texans -- all are victims of some form of mental retardation.
One of the more significant of the 14 bills passed allocates $3 million dollars to finance the mental health community centers. This new approach enables the patient to stay closer to home while undergoing treatment at one of the centers.

I have touched on only a few of our major accomplishments. In the time available to us here, I could not possibly review all the work of the 60th Legislature.

But I do want to stress that, in the 140 days allotted to us under the Constitution, we accomplished what we set out to do, and we set out to do a great deal.
years and built some strong bridges to help our State pass into a new and more promising era than any it has ever known.

The bright and exciting future of this great and dynamic State demanded that we do no less.