



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
**JOE STRAUS**  
SPEAKER

May 15, 2017

The Honorable Dan Patrick  
Lieutenant Governor  
State of Texas  
P.O. Box 12068  
Austin, TX 78711

Dear Governor Patrick:

As we enter the final two weeks before Sine Die, I would like to thank you for the work that you and the Senate are doing. I also want to express my belief that we can successfully end the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislature on time and with a record of accomplishment on many important issues.

We are on track to have another highly productive session. Both chambers have worked diligently to pass the emergency items that Governor Abbott highlighted earlier this year: Child Protective Services reform, ethics reform, a ban on sanctuary cities, and language calling for a convention of states to propose amendments to the U.S. Constitution. The House is taking action on a number of bills you have prioritized, including pro-life legislation and property-tax reforms, and will continue to do so in the next two weeks. For example, last Friday, the House Ways & Means Committee approved Senate Bill 2.

The House wants to finish all of our work in the regular session, and we believe that this goal is well within reach. While I respect and defer to Governor Abbott's right to call a special session on any topic, I believe that such a session will not be necessary if we work together to pass two critical bills:

- **Senate Bill 1:** Senate and House conferees have worked together very productively in recent weeks. The conferees have made good progress so far, and I look forward to working with them and with you to put the final touches on a balanced state budget that reflects the priorities of both chambers.
- **Senate Bill 310:** As you know, this is the catch-all, or safety net, Sunset bill. If the Senate passes this legislation quickly and sends it to the House, we will work to promptly pass it as well. While time is short, this is the simplest way to make sure that state agencies keep functioning and continue to provide essential services to Texans.

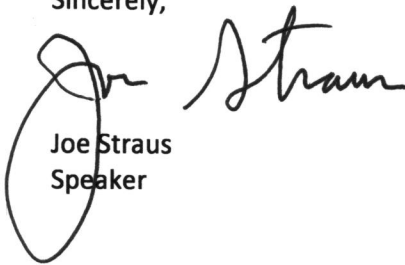
We appreciate Dean Whitmire's recent comment that Senate committees are working earnestly to consider House bills. The House is also hard at work and has referred most of the Senate bills to

committees. We certainly understand that some bills that are passed in one chamber will not have the support to move forward in the other. Still, as the House continues to pass priority Senate bills, I respectfully ask that the Senate also consider acting soon on issues that are priorities of the House, including public education, school accountability and testing reform, child protection, mental health, cybersecurity, and preserving health insurance for retired teachers.

There is ample time to address issues that matter to each chamber and, more importantly, matter to our constituents. However, it's worth noting that some key House deadlines are fast approaching. This Saturday, May 20, is the last day for House committees to vote out Senate bills, and May 23 is the last day for the House to consider Senate bills on second reading. House rules also strictly limit the scope of language that can be attached to bills through amendments.

I again want to thank you and the Members of the Texas Senate for your many hours of work and deliberation this year. I hope that we can continue to address priorities that matter to each chamber while also passing the bills that are most critical to finishing this Legislature's work on May 29.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Straus". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "J".

Joe Straus  
Speaker