

Subject: Response to March 31st Public Information Request
Date: Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 6:44:53 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Suzanne Bowers
To: AO Records
Attachments: 03.31 American Oversight Request.pdf, Response to MAR 31, 2021 American Oversight Public Information Request.pdf

EXTERNAL SENDER

Dear Ms. Lewis,

Thank you for your March 31, 2021 request under the public information law, which you can find attached to this email. After a diligent search, we are pleased to provide the attached information. Please note that our response to your email consists entirely of a few editions of Representative Noble's weekly newsletter, the Noble Report, which our office sent using a bulk email service.

Some of the information responsive to your request consists of constituent communications and memoranda of such communications. However, Sections 306.003(a) and 306.004(a), Government Code, make confidential communications between residents of this state and members of the legislature. Furthermore, memoranda of constituent communications with Texas residents are also considered confidential under Chapter 306. These protections encourage Texas residents to communicate freely with members of the legislature without fear of intimidation or the unintended public release of personal information, and the attorney general has determined that information that falls within the scope of these provisions is not subject to the public information law. Accordingly, we have not included any of these types of information in our response.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out at the number below.

Thank you,
Suzanne

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Well, fresh off the press: committee assignments for the 87th Legislative Session were announced yesterday afternoon. I was once again appointed to the House Committee on Human Services and the House Committee on Ways & Means. Additionally, I was newly appointed to the House Committee on Resolutions Calendars. The House Committee on Human Services hears bills that affect our neediest and most vulnerable Texans. The House Committee on Ways & Means is tasked with matters of state and local revenue. The House Committee on Resolutions Calendars sets the schedule for honorary resolutions to be heard in the House Chamber.

I am grateful to serve the citizens of House District 89 and the people of Texas on three such important committees in the Texas House. As we address the tasks ahead and deliver real results for Texans, I am honored to continue the work we accomplished last session on the Human Services and Ways & Means committees. Serving on Resolutions Calendars is a new opportunity for me and I look forward to being a valuable member of this committee in the days ahead.

On Monday night, I had the great honor of watching Governor Abbott's State of the State on Zoom with my fellow representatives. Typically, the Governor gives this address in the House Chamber during a joint meeting of the Texas House and Senate. It certainly was different this time around but just as historic as in other years. I am excited to get started on the Emergency Items Governor Abbott announced. As I wrote to you last week, we are allowed, under the Texas Constitution, to begin working on bills addressing these emergency items immediately. Now that committee assignments have been announced, these bills will be among the first ones to be sent to committees for consideration.

access in rural areas. This pandemic has highlighted the need to close the digital gap, from children being able to attend school, to meeting virtually with a doctor, and for those who are working from home. Governor Abbott also prioritized permanently expanding access to telemedicine (believe it or not, there are still Texans using dial-up internet). Even after this pandemic passes, I believe that our Texas economy will only grow stronger as we get more connected.

Governor Abbott also announced the Damon Allen Act, which will fix Texas' bail system and keep violent criminals off the streets. Damon Allen, a dedicated DPS Trooper, was heartbreakingly gunned down and killed during a traffic stop by a vicious criminal out on bond. This emergency item will not only help reform our justice system but will also better protect our families in Texas.

Along the same important lines, Governor Abbott declared preventing cities from defunding the police an emergency item. I am looking forward to working with my colleagues to pass legislation that will protect citizens who need help from law enforcement and ensure that tax dollars continue to be used to provide and protect.

The promise of free and fair elections are the heart of our democracy, which is why I am so glad that election integrity is also an emergency item for this session. We all deserve to have full faith and confidence in the outcome of our elections. I am looking forward to both hearing and carrying legislation that will resolve concerns about our voting system.

Finally, Governor Abbott declared civil liability protections for individuals and businesses that safely operated during the pandemic as an emergency item. I know that so many businesses in Texas went above and beyond to reduce the risk of spreading Covid. Those who have operated in good faith and worked tirelessly to keep Texans working should not have their livelihoods destroyed by frivolous lawsuits.

Beyond these emergency items, Governor Abbott addressed several issues that are near and dear to my heart. First, Governor Abbott wants to strengthen civics education in Texas classrooms. As a mother, a grandmother, and a former teacher, I know that our children will benefit from learning foundational truths about both Texas and America.

Abbott is dedicated to designating Texas as a Second Amendment Sanctuary State. We will pass legislation to prevent any government entity from infringing on our gun rights. I fully support the Constitutional right guaranteed in the Second Amendment and I am ready to work with other Representatives to protect these and our other God-given Constitutional rights.

Speaking of Constitutional rights, in response to the pandemic, Governor Abbott called for legislation to be filed that will prevent any government entity from shutting down religious activities in Texas. I agree that churches are essential and that our freedom to worship should be safeguarded in our Texas Constitution just as it is in our US Constitution.

Governor Abbott importantly prioritized the goal of ending abortion in the state of Texas. As Governor Abbott said on Monday, no child should be targeted for abortion, especially based on sex, race, or disability. As you know, being Pro-Life is a deeply held conviction for me. I strongly support and value all human life at any age, so creating and supporting Pro-Life legislation is a critical priority of mine. This session I have already filed HB 1173. HB 1173 will stop governmental entities that have found a way around the law by funneling taxpayer dollars to organizations that provide logistical support toward abortion. I'm proud to stand for life. I will continue to do my absolute best to protect innocent Texans' lives.

I've had a busy week in Austin working on bills. I've met with constituents, Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar, Texas Inspector General Sylvia Hernandez Kauffman, Texas Elections Administrator Keith Ingram, and many others. I'm focused on drafting and filing legislation that will not only be passed into law, but when passed into law, will accomplish the purpose for which it was intended. It's not a quick process, but it is one that I really enjoy.

The Texas Federation of Republican Women were in Austin yesterday for their Legislative Day. I really missed our usual sea of red in the House Gallery this year (we didn't meet on the House Floor as a body yesterday), but I was delighted to see so many friends in Austin. Representative Jeff Leach, Representative Matt Shaheen, Senator Bryan Hughes, and I participated in a mock committee hearing to help train the ladies on testifying before a legislative committee. It was great fun.

Candy Noble



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Although there was not much action on the House Floor again this week, I have been hard at work in Austin preparing and filing legislation. I have already filed seven bills that I am honored and excited to carry through the legislative process. In today's Noble Report I'm going to fill you in on just a few of those bills. Many other bills are in the process of being drafted, so I'll cover them in a future edition, including bills safeguarding Election Integrity and others that protect life and liberty.

As a limited government girl, you may remember that I only carried seven bills last session. Five of them made it into law, another one I was able to accomplish through an agency rule change, which only left one bill that didn't make it across the finish line. I'm pretty proud of that average, and I am looking forward to working just as hard this session on your behalf.

I'm going to start with one bill that has already gotten the attention of the press. Here's the fundamental question you need to ask yourself: who gets to decide my medical decisions for me? In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the emergency FDA approval of the vaccine, I have filed HB 1687. This bill prohibits employment discrimination based on Covid-19 vaccination status. In simple terms, an employer cannot fire, refuse to hire, or discriminate against an employee if he or she has not received a vaccination. While I am thankful that we have vaccines becoming available for those who choose to receive them (I plan to get one at some point), I feel strongly that an employer mandating a vaccine would infringe on our constitutional rights. The choice to receive a Covid-19 vaccine is and should remain an individual's own decision. Your personal health options are between you and your doctor, and no one can or

job if he is not vaccinated. Clearly, this legislation needs to move through the process as quickly as possible to protect him and others like him in Texas.

Last session I carried Senate Bill 22 in the House. SB 22 protects taxpayers from funding abortion providers and their affiliates. Here's the exciting news: we now know of several contracts that have been canceled as a result of the passage of this bill, saving taxpayers millions of dollars that were going to abortion providers. SB 22 has accomplished what we intended: it has saved lives and saved tax dollars! While this bill was passed and signed into law by Governor Abbott, at least one taxing entity has found a loophole in the law and is still indirectly funding abortions by providing free transportation, hotel rooms, food, and even childcare so women can get abortions. This is not an ethical nor responsible use of taxpayer dollars. In response, I have filed HB 1173. This bill will ensure that our tax dollars will not be used to provide logistical support for abortions. On Wednesday, Senator Campbell filed an identical bill in the Senate (SB 650) and I am excited to join forces with her once again to tackle this critical issue together. As you know, being Pro-Life is a deeply held conviction for me. I strongly support and value all human life at any age so creating and supporting Pro-Life legislation is a critical priority of mine.

As I am once again on the Human Services Committee, I have filed three bills that will greatly reform child welfare while reducing childhood trauma. HB 1317 redefines neglect to prevent unnecessary removals of children from their families. This bill will protect each family's right to allow their children to engage in independent activities as long as they are appropriate for each child's age and level of maturity. Believe it or not, what was considered normal outside play when I was a child (and what still happens in my neighborhood today) is now called "Free Range Parenting" and can result in parents being reported and investigated by CPS. The definition of "neglect" under the current Family Code is far too broad and can leave families under investigation for simple and reasonable parenting decisions. It is important to note that this bill will allow the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to take action in cases where the parents are putting their children in immediate danger. Currently, in code, there is a broad ambiguous category of "substantial risk" which is largely subjective and therefore dangerous. Our goal is, and will always be, to protect all children who are at risk, and to protect innocent families from government overreach.

for termination of the parent-child relationship. Just as any defendant who has an allegation brought against them in a courtroom, families should know the exact crimes or charges for which they are being accused when their child is being removed. I understand that this practice began as a way to save time on paperwork, in the event that the investigation showed additional charges. However, this has resulted in a “kitchen sink” approach to charges when accusing families under Child Protective Services investigation. In the past, this has led to blatantly inaccurate allegations, resulting in families being reluctant to cooperate as they feel that the system is stacked against them. HB 1318 will require DFPS to only make allegations on the petition or motion that they actually have facts and evidence to support, just as it should be in any other judicial proceeding.

Another Human Services bill I’ve filed is HB 1319. This bill would establish a deadline for the rendition of a final order in parental termination cases within 90 days after a trial has been commenced. As the Family Code currently stands, there is a one-year deadline on all child welfare cases. That deadline stipulates that if the trial on merits has not been commenced within one year, the court loses jurisdiction over the case and the suit is automatically dismissed. There is currently no actual deadline within which the trial must be completed once it has begun. This is a terrible thing for a child, and often those who dream of adopting them, to be left in limbo awaiting the court's final order. In one instance, a trial was drawn-out to three years by the court intermittently convening and recessing trial proceedings. Not only is this a burden on our Child Protective System, this is a major burden on a child-- living indefinitely in fear of the unknown. Those who rescue children, and the children themselves who have so many unknowns in these situations, should be able to count on a court to make a decision in a timely manner on their behalf.

My one bill that didn’t make it into law last session actually made it all the way to the House Floor Calendar to be heard on the last day we could vote out House Bills. Unfortunately, the clock ran out. I have once again filed my “Pet Chip Check” bill: HB 604. This bill requires that a pet be scanned for a microchip prior to being euthanized or adopted out by an animal shelter or animal rescue organization. HB 604 will help ensure that stolen or lost animals be rightfully returned to their owner before they are lost forever. While all good shelters and pet adoption groups always scan for microchips as a best practice, some in our state sadly don't even bother. The Humane Society, the American

organization or shelter in need of a universal scanner, so there is no cost in implementing this bill for taxpayers or needy organizations. This bill is important to me for two important reasons. First and foremost, I am passionate about protecting our families' most beloved companions. If you invest in a chip for your pet, you should be assured that it is being checked when your pet is lost or stolen. Second, this idea was brought to me by a constituent. There is no greater honor than being able to bring your ideas into law. I love hearing the issues that are important to you, and this one was a great idea.

The deadline for filing bills is rapidly approaching, so all my bills that are currently being drafted should return to me quickly. I'll keep you in the loop as more are filed.

On a personal note, my husband, Robert, and I met 40 years ago on Valentine's Day. He's such a blessing to me and I wouldn't be able to serve you without his support, wisdom, and encouragement every day. Valentine's Day is a good reminder for us all to show our love and appreciation to those who make our lives richer and sweeter. I want to take this opportunity to say that I am grateful to you for the honor of serving you in the Texas House, and am thankful for your friendships. Happy Valentine's Day!

Till next time...

Candy Noble

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