

STRONG BORDERS: DELIVERING THE MANDATE



2025

LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

TO SECURE OUR FUTURE

 **TEXANS for
STRONG BORDERS**

strongborders.org



Dear State Representatives and State Senators,

Congratulations on your election to the 89th Texas Legislature.

Our mission at Texans for Strong Borders is to educate voters on border security measures and immigration policies that put Texans and Americans *first*, advocate for these measures at the state and national level, and assist citizens in engaging with their elected officials.

In November, Texans delivered a historic mandate repudiating the Open Borders policies of the outgoing Biden-Harris administration. The State of Texas can and must secure our borders and put citizens first.

To secure our state's future, we've outlined ten legislative priorities for your review.

1. Create a State Department of Homeland Security with a Border Protection Unit to end the invasion at our border, repel illegal crossings, and combat the cartels
2. Mandate E-Verify for all employers to deter illegal immigration and protect American jobs
3. End all public subsidies for illegal aliens, including in-state tuition
4. Mandate local law enforcement participation in the ICE 287(g) program
5. Help finish the Trump Border Wall
6. Reform all state economic incentive programs, including the Texas Enterprise Fund, to prevent government subsidies for replacing American workers
7. Impose a state tax on remittances to Mexico and Latin America to disincentivize illegal immigration and wealth transfer out of Texas
8. Restore the original intent of the 14th Amendment by ending birthright citizenship for the children of illegal aliens and non-resident visa holders.
9. Protect Texas land from hostile foreign ownership
10. Reform higher education to put Texas students first and prevent espionage

If you are interested in learning more about border security and immigration policies that put Texans first, you can subscribe to our newsletter on our website, **StrongBorders.org**.

Thank you again for your willingness to serve our state. I hope you will join us in the fight to secure our southern border and help our government serve Texans and Americans first.

For Texas,

Christopher W. Russo

President, Texans for Strong Borders

Texas Department of Homeland Security

Over the past four years under the Biden-Harris administration, the State of Texas has experienced an unprecedented cartel-backed invasion, including millions of illegal border crossings into our state. Despite the appropriation of billions of dollars to border security measures, Operation Lone Star was not enough to secure the Texas border against invasion. It lacked both the personnel and the unified command structure necessary to protect our state while the federal government refused to do so.

Texas must create a state Department of Homeland Security with a Border Protection Unit tasked with repelling illegal border crossings, combating the cartels operating within our state, and helping the incoming Trump administration end the invasion at our border.

This Department must be equipped to immediately step into the gap if future presidential administrations refuse to secure our state against invasion, as the Biden-Harris administration did. The Border Protection Unit must be given statutory powers to repel illegal border crossings and remove apprehended illegal aliens back into Mexico under an Article I, Section 10 invasion declaration by the Governor.

A Texas Department of Homeland Security with a Border Protection Unit is a 2024 Republican Party of Texas Legislative Priority:

“Creating a Texas Department of Homeland Security to prevent illegal entry and trafficking, and to deport illegal aliens to Mexico or to their nations of origin.”

It is also a part of the 2024 Republican Party of Texas Platform Plank 240:

“We call for the Texas Legislature to create a Border Protection Unit with the authority to repel illegal crossings and deport apprehended illegal aliens”

This policy was supported by 91.3% of Republican Primary voters in the March 2024 Republican Primary in Ballot Proposition 2.

Example Legislation:

HB 20 (88R) by Rep. Matt Schaefer

HB 147 (88-3) by Rep. Ryan Guillen

Mandate E-Verify for All Employers

E-Verify is a web-based system through which employers can electronically confirm that employees are legally eligible for employment in the United States. The E-Verify system authenticates the information new employees are already legally required to provide on their I-9 form by comparing it to records available to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration, usually resulting in a response within a few seconds.

Texas requires all state agencies and state contractors to use the E-Verify system. However, it is voluntary for other employers in our state, including political subdivisions and private businesses.

The prospect of gainful employment is perhaps the strongest pull-factor driving illegal immigration into our state. Several states, including Florida, have passed comprehensive E-Verify bills for all employers and have seen significant reductions in illegal labor.

The Texas Legislature must pass a universal E-Verify bill for all employers. It should not include carve-outs based on the number of employees or for certain sectors of the economy.

Mandatory E-Verify is a 2024 Republican Party of Texas Legislative Priority:

“Requiring the use of E-Verify by all employers in Texas with significant penalties for business owners who violate this requirement.”

It is also part of the 2024 Republican Part of Texas Platform Plank 232:

“Texas shall require all employers to screen new hires through the free E-Verify system to prevent the hiring of illegal aliens and of anyone not legally authorized to work in the United States, and to protect jobs for American workers.”

This policy was supported by 89.9% of Republican Primary voters in the March 2024 Republican Primary in Ballot Proposition 3.

Example Legislation:

SB 1621 (88R) by Sen. Lois Kolkhorst

End Public Subsidies for Illegal Aliens

Public subsidies for illegal aliens are a massive pull-factor driving illegal immigration into our state. Instead of being spent on illegal aliens, our tax dollars should be devoted to serving Texas citizens in need or returned to taxpayers in the form of property tax relief.

A 2023 [study](#) by the Federation for American Immigration Reform (FAIR) concluded that the cost of illegal aliens and their children to Texas taxpayers, including both federal and state outlays, is about \$13.4B per year. However, these numbers do not account for the impact of millions of new arrivals under the Biden-Harris administration.

Texas taxpayers pay for subsidized education (both K-12 and in-state tuition subsidies for illegal aliens), subsidized health care, and other public benefits for illegal aliens.

The Texas Legislature must end all public subsidies and services for illegal aliens, including in-state tuition.

Ending Public Subsidies and Services for Illegal Aliens is a 2024 Republican Party of Texas Legislative Priority:

“Ending all subsidies and public services, including in-state college tuition and enrollment in public schools, for illegal aliens, except for emergency medical care.”

It is also part of the 2024 Republican Party of Texas Platform Plank 232:

“No tax dollars shall be provided for social or educational programs for illegal aliens. All existing laws providing for in-state tuition and non-emergency medical care shall be rescinded.”

This policy was supported by 87.63% of Republican Primary voters in the March 2024 Republican Primary in Ballot Proposition 4.

Example Legislation:

HB 133 (88-3) by Rep. Ellen Troxclair

HB 3280 (88R) by Rep. Terri Leo-Wilson (Ending In-State Tuition)

Mandate Participation in ICE 287(g) Program

The Immigration and Nationality Act, part of the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996 (IIRAIRA) established the 287(g) program, which is administered by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Under the 287(g) program, state and local law enforcement agencies can enter into written agreements with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and deputize law enforcement officers to perform select functions normally delegated to federal immigration agents.

These functions include determining the immigration status of criminal suspects, referencing DHS databases for information, and issuing detainers to hold suspects until ICE can take them into custody.

Many local law enforcement entities in Texas are participants in the 287(g) program, particularly with regards to jail enforcement. However, several urban counties have either refused to participate in the program or have withdrawn from the program.

The 287(g) program is vital to bolstering nationwide immigration enforcement efforts under the incoming Trump administration. These deputized local law enforcement officers will serve as a force multiplier that will aid ICE in removing criminal illegal aliens from our nation.

The Texas Legislature must require state, local, and county law enforcement entities to apply for participation in the 287(g) program to bolster federal immigration enforcement efforts.

These agreements can be accepted or rejected by ICE, but under the incoming administration the likelihood of acceptance is significantly higher than under previous administrations. It will also prevent so-called “sanctuary cities” or “sanctuary counties” from hampering the federal government’s mandate to enforce our nation’s immigration laws.

This proposal is part of the 2024 Republican Party of Texas Platform Plank 242:

“The Texas Legislature should prioritize legislation to require all law enforcement entities within the state to participate in the United States Immigration and Nationality Act, Section 287(g) program, which allows local law enforcement officials to cooperate with federal immigration agents.”

Example Legislation:

HB 1881 (88R) by Rep. Nate Schatzline

Finish President Trump's Border Wall

Over the past two legislative sessions, the Texas Legislature has appropriated billions of dollars towards border barrier construction, including border wall technology that is compatible with the federal border wall constructed under the first Trump administration.

Progress was slow at first due to difficulties in negotiations with private landowners, since unlike the federal government, the Texas Facilities Commission lacks eminent domain authority to acquire land for border barrier construction. Additionally, the bill that appropriated \$1.5B for border barrier construction in the 88th Legislature's Fourth Special Session specifically precluded these funds from being used to exercise eminent domain authority to purchase land or to build border barriers on land acquired through eminent domain.

Although the incredible numbers of illegal crossings through private properties under the Biden-Harris administration have motivated many landowners to enter agreements allowing Texas to complete sections of the wall, the lack of eminent domain is still an obstacle to construction.

Instead of prioritizing border barrier construction in illegal border crossing hot spots, the State of Texas is forced to instead build border wall wherever they can successfully negotiate with private landowners. This reduces the effectiveness of border barriers in places like Eagle Pass, where some landowners south of the city have refused to work with the state.

The State of Texas must grant eminent domain authority to the Texas Facilities Commission for Border Barrier construction.

The State should continue to work with landowners to assuage their concerns about water access and reach solutions that can meet landowners' needs without compromising border security.

Border wall construction is included in the 2024 Republican Party of Texas Platform Plank 239:

"We expect both the Texas Legislature and the United States Congress to prioritize the allocation of funds to effectively secure the border through whatever means necessary, including, but not limited to barriers, a border wall, and/or fences everywhere along the border where they are feasible and useful..."

Example Legislation:

SB 1481 (88R) by Sen. Brandon Creighton

End State Subsidies for Replacing American Workers

Highly skilled and educated Texans are being replaced by legal immigrants under abuse of federal visa programs like the H-1B visa. At many companies, laid-off Texas workers are forced to train their foreign replacements as a condition of their severance packages.

The State of Texas currently offers economic incentives to the same corporations that often replace citizens with cheaper foreign labor, through programs like the Texas Enterprise Fund and tax abatements established in the Texas Jobs, Energy, Technology, and Innovation Act (Chapter 403) passed last session.

Our state has a vested interest in developing world-class domestic talent, particularly in critical sectors like Science, Technology, Mathematics, and Engineering (STEM). However, the [U.S. Census Bureau reported](#) that only 28% of STEM-educated Americans are actually working in a STEM job. This is a failure for both the state, which has invested billions of educational dollars in STEM programs, and for Texans who earn STEM degrees, who have seen their wage growth stagnate compared to other industries. A lack of domestic talent in STEM is also a national security concern, as it creates a dependence on a foreign workforce.

The Texas Legislature must reform all economic incentive programs to prioritize American workers and prevent companies who receive incentives from replacing American workers with foreign labor.

Texans expect their tax dollars to work for their benefit, not for the bottom-line of corporations who have been fined millions of dollars for discriminating against American citizens.

The 2024 Republican Party of Texas Platform calls for the elimination of the H-1B visa program in Plank 238:

“We support the repeal of the H1-B visa program, ending the Diversity Visa Lottery, and preventing chain migration in the interest of protecting American jobs, technology, and national security.”

These visa programs must be debated at the federal level, but the State of Texas should not be subsidizing companies that replace American workers with cheaper foreign labor.

Tax Remittances to Mexico and Latin America

A key driver of illegal immigration into our state is the ability for illegal aliens to send money earned in Texas back to family members (or criminal cartel smugglers) in Latin America.

In 2021 alone, remittances to Mexico from Texas totaled a staggering \$7.8 billion. With millions of illegal aliens arriving in Texas in the last 3 years and after a concurrent period of economic inflation, this number is now likely much higher.

Modest taxes on remittances have already been put into effect in Oklahoma, with a \$5 flat tax on transfers up to \$500 and a 1% tax on amounts above \$500, yielding a revenue of about \$13 million in FY24. However, Oklahoma has far fewer illegal aliens than Texas, and their taxes on remittances are very low.

The Texas Legislature must impose a significant tax on remittances to Mexico and the rest of Latin America to discourage illegal immigration and raise revenue.

With a significant tax on remittances, Texas could raise revenue that could be used to offset the costs of border security and the public burden of illegal aliens residing in our state, or to provide further property tax relief to Texas citizens. Even a 10% tax could raise more than a billion dollars in revenue.

Imposing a tax on remittances is included in the 2024 Republican Party of Texas Platform in Plank 232:

“The State of Texas shall impose a 100% surcharge on remittances from an illegal alien to a recipient in a foreign nation.”

Example Legislation:

HB 4743 (88R) by Rep. Tony Tinderholt

End Birthright Citizenship for Children Illegal Aliens and Non-resident Visa Holders

The 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution established the system of birthright citizenship in Section 1: “All persons born or naturalized in the United States, and **subject to the jurisdiction thereof**, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”

When the 14th Amendment was debated before Congress in 1868, Senator Jacob Howard of Michigan clearly articulated the meaning of this clause:

“This will not, of course, include persons born in the United States who are foreigners, aliens, who belong to the families of ambassadors or foreign ministers accredited to the government of the United States, but will include every other class of person.”

Unfortunately, the federal government has long misinterpreted the birthright citizenship to include *all persons born in the United States*, including children of illegal aliens and aliens in the United States on tourist visas and other non-resident visas. The oft-cited *U.S. v. Wong Kim Ark (1898)* only mandated that the children of legal permanent residents must be awarded citizenship by birthright.

The Texas Legislature must restore the original meaning of the 14th Amendment for birthright citizenship and stop awarding citizenship to children of illegal aliens and non-resident visa holders.

Ending birthright citizenship is supported in the 2024 Republican Party Platform in Plank 232:

“The state shall refuse to grant a birth certificate to any child born to illegal alien parents on Texas soil.”

The State Republican Executive Committee also recently [passed a resolution stating that:](#)

“[T]he Republican Party of Texas calls upon the incoming Trump Administration, the United States Congress, and the 89th Texas Legislature to return to the proper and historical interpretation of birthright citizenship under the 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution and to end the practice of awarding citizenship to the children of illegal aliens, tourists, and temporary visa holders in the United States;”

Example Legislation:

HB 3612 (88R) by Rep. Steve Toth

Protect Texas Land

One concern that has been raised by many Texans and watchdog groups over the last few years has been the purchasing of Texas land, particularly farmland and land containing key natural resources, by foreign nations, including hostile foreign nations like China.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, foreign entities controlled nearly 26.1 million acres of domestic agricultural land in 2012. By 2022, that number had nearly doubled to a staggering 43.4 million acres. In Texas, we have the most foreign-owned acreage at 5.5 million acres.

Ownership of key strategic resources such as agricultural land, minerals, timber, and oil by foreign entities is a national security risk. Although the recent focus of the legislature has been on Department of National Intelligence-designated countries, in a rapidly changing multipolar world, once-friendly nations could quickly have relations with the United States degrade, rendering their domestic holdings as national security risks.

Additionally, an influx of foreign buyers inflates prices for citizens seeking to buy land for their own homesteads or businesses.

The Texas Legislature must restrict the sale of Texas land to foreign entities, starting with hostile foreign adversaries and illegal aliens.

The best eventual solution would be a general restriction on foreign ownership, but the most pressing concern is agricultural land and other resource-rich land owned by entities from hostile nations like China.

Protecting Texas Land is a 2024 Republican Party of Texas Legislative Priority:

“Banning the sale of real property in Texas, and discontinuing taxpayer funding and incentives, to governments, entities, and proxies of China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia, and to individuals from these nations who are not legal permanent residents or citizens of the United States.”

This policy was supported by 95.23% of Republican Primary voters in the March 2024 Republican Primary in Ballot Proposition 13.

Example Legislation:

SB 147 (88R) by Sen. Lois Kolkhorst

Reform Higher Education to Put Texans First

The purpose of our state's public colleges and universities is to, first and foremost, educate the next generation of Texans and to equip them with the skills necessary to find personal success and to work in our dynamic economy.

Today, however, many of the coveted slots in our top public universities are awarded to foreign students on F-1 or J-1 visas, which are issued on the condition of the visa holder returning to their country of origin after graduation. These visas totaled over 820,000 nationwide in FY23, [according to the U.S. State Department](#).

Additionally, many public universities are vulnerable to monied foreign influence, such as Chinese Communist Party-controlled Confucius Institutes (which have significantly decreased since federal funding for them was prohibited in 2018) and the recent Texas A&M Qatar campus. Although the concerns around these two specific threats have been addressed, our universities are subject to other compromising foreign entanglements.

The Texas Legislature must uphold the mission of our public colleges and universities by imposing caps on F-1 and J-1 enrollment and by prohibiting foreign entanglements without state oversight.

A cap on foreign student enrollment would open educational opportunity to well-qualified Texans who might otherwise have to look to private or out-of-state institutions for their higher education. It would also help companies in Texas by producing more skilled domestic workers.

Prohibiting foreign entanglements without state oversight would eliminate conflicts of interests in our public colleges and universities, whose mission is to equip young Texans with the skills necessary to succeed.



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P.O. Box 178, Seabrook, TX 77586 • 713-582-8440

chris@strongborders.org • WWW.STRONGBORDERS.ORG