



## **Governor Abbott Delivers Remarks at Texas Republican Party Convention**

*Governor Abbott often deviates from prepared remarks.*

Thank you all very much.

Give it up for Joel Enge. What an inspirational guy. And thank you also to the fabulous First Lady of Texas, my wife, Cecilia Abbott. Two months from today, we are going to celebrate our 45<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary.

We gather in Harris County – a county that not too long ago was solid red, and that has now been hijacked by the socialist Democrats. Socialists spend more, tax more, and impose woke agendas.

This election, we will destroy those Democrats. My campaign alone is going to spend at least \$25 million in Harris County. We will be going block by block, door to door to turn out every single voter in this election, and we are going to win up and down the ballot.

We are going to win because Texans want conservative policies – not the wokism that you see in cities like Austin, Texas.

Almost every Democrat candidate you'll see in this election resides in the People's Republic of Austin – and they govern like it. That is not Texas. That's California, New York, and Tim Walz's Minnesota.

Our job is to keep Texas, Texas.

The power behind that movement is you all, the delegates who represent millions of Republicans across Texas. Y'all are on the front lines, turning out the voters needed to win elections. You are here at convention setting legislative priorities to ensure that conservative policies will guide the future of our great state.

Our job when we get back to Austin is to get your priorities passed.

One example. You've made clear in previous conventions that we must secure our elections. No state has done more to achieve that goal. We increased criminal penalties for voter fraud, we passed Senator Hall's bill that safeguards early voting, we passed the toughest voter ID in America, and we made clear in the Constitution that only US citizens can vote in Texas elections.

There's more to do on election integrity, but let me be clear about one thing: going forward, only Republicans will vote in Republican primaries.

You also prioritized school choice. And we delivered the largest day-one school choice initiative in American history. It empowers parents to choose the education pathway that is best for their child—because no one knows their child better.

It also does something else. By providing competition in our schools, we have set Texas on the course to be ranked No. 1 for educating our children. And that progress has begun. Scores are up across the board – early returns show what we achieved last year.

Also essential is having great teachers. We delivered the largest pay raise for teachers in state history. But it requires more than just teachers to educate our children. It requires quality curriculum. We are doubling down on reading, writing, math, and science. We are going back to the basics with phonics, cursive writing, and an expanded civics program for every student across the state.

And all of these successes are due in part to the law that I signed that banned DEI in public schools.

Another law I signed that Democrats fought tooth and nail against is the law that bans boys in girls' sports. I also signed a law that bans sex change surgeries for children. It's disgusting.

You know, I don't get it. James Talarico claims that there are six sexes.

Well, I have no idea what six-gender Jimmy is talking about. Because in Texas, there are only two sexes.

We also delivered on your priority—to protect the right to life. We made clear that life begins at conception.

The fact that matters most: because of the laws passed over the last 10 years, more than 100,000 children are alive today.

Another Republican Party priority was to better secure the Texas power grid. Again, we have achieved historic results. Over the past five years, we have added 50% more electrical power to the grid. Texas now ranks #1 for most electric power generation in America. In fact, Texas generates more electrical power than the second and third states combined.

Going forward, to better protect the grid, we will require data centers to bring their own power, reuse their own water, and lower the cost of electricity for residents.

The Republican Party also prioritized securing the border, and so did we.

Never forget Democrats embraced Joe Biden's open border policies. But now that they are running for election, they recognize their bad decision. Suddenly, on their political deathbed, they've had a conversion. They have decided they, too, support a secure southern border.

Texas has done more than any state in United States history to secure the border.

We are the only state ever to build our own border wall. We deployed buoys in our waterways to deny illegal entry, and when a federal court tried to remove them, I said, "Hell no!" The buoys are still there today.

We also deployed thousands of National Guard officers and DPS troopers. Give it up for them.

The National Guard erected hundreds of miles of razor wire border barrier to deny illegal entry. When Joe Biden ordered border patrol to cut it, I told the National Guard to go back down there and triple strand it so that no one illegally crossed the border.

There have been extraordinary results. Before Donald Trump was elected, we reduced illegal border crossings by 85%. And fentanyl deaths are down 40%.

Do you remember those sanctuary cities that criticized us and said they would welcome all of these illegal immigrants in their states. Well, I took them up on their offer. We bussed 120,000 illegal immigrants to Chicago, New York, and to Washington, DC, to Vice President Kamala Harris' front door.

We also secured Texas by passing another of your legislative priorities. We passed a law banning foreign adversaries like China, Russia, and Iran from buying Texas land.

I used that law to designate the Muslim Brotherhood and CAIR as foreign terrorist organizations. I also used that designation to shut down a Muslim-only event that was going to be hosted by the city of Grand Prairie, and Islamic games hosted by public schools.

And let me be clear about something else, we shut down EPIC City. And when they tried to rebrand to the Meadow just two months ago – we shut that down, also.

We outlawed Muslim-only communities and the Texas Attorney General will enforce that law.

All of these are just a few examples of your priorities. Altogether, 43 of your priorities made it to my desk. And I proudly signed all 43 of them.

But listen, there is a lot more that has to get done.

Tomorrow, you are going to vote on new legislative priorities. My property tax reform must be one of them. The past few sessions, we repeatedly increased homestead exemptions—but the fact of the matter is that I've talked to Texans across the state, and exactly zero have come up to me and said that they are perfectly happy with their property taxes.

Texans aren't feeling the relief, because local governments are spending more and taxing more, and your appraisals are skyrocketing.

Next session, we cannot go back to Austin and do more of the same.

We need to disrupt property taxes as we know them. My law does just that. It restricts local government spending. It requires a two-thirds voter approval to pass any property tax increase. It imposes an appraisal cap, bringing that cap down from 10% to no more than 3% per year. It ends the practice of using homesteads to fund public education. We must abolish school district property taxes on your homesteads. My law will ensure that Texans can afford to stay in their homes for the rest of their lives.

We must prioritize public safety. We must protect communities. We must prosecute criminals. We already know that most violent crimes are committed by repeat offenders. This next session, we must fully fund my Repeat Offender Task Force to get criminals off our streets statewide. And illegal immigrants arrested for felonies must be denied bail.

Activist district attorneys must be held responsible for letting dangerous career criminals back out into your neighborhood. If rogue district attorneys fail to do their jobs, the Legislature should have the power to impeach them. And we must create a new position – a state prosecutor to ensure that violent criminals are actually prosecuted and jailed. Texas is a law and order state, and we have to ensure that it stays that way.

Speaking of law and order, the only law that matters in Texas is Texas law. Next session, we must leave no doubt and totally ban Sharia law. We must give the Attorney General the tools needed to shut it down.

We must also end H-1B abuse in Texas. Let me make something clear: only the federal government issues H-1B visas.

But that did not stop me from ordering state agencies to investigate H-1B visas and H-1B visa fraud. And that didn't stop me from signing an Executive Order banning state governments from using H-1Bs. That Executive Order must be codified next session and applied to all state and local governments. Texas jobs should only go to Texans.

Finally, we must ban taxpayer-funded lobbying. It's idiotic that your taxpayer dollars are being used to lobby against your own interests.

The contrast between what Republicans have passed and how Democrats have voted is shocking. It should be a five-alarm warning to anybody thinking about voting for Democrats.

Democrats support things like Sharia law. They support sanctimonious sanctuary cities. They voted to tax you more and regulate your lives like they do in California. They want boys in girls' sports. They want to defund the police. And they have supported deadly open border policies.

There's one thing that sums up today's Democrats more than anything else—the keynote at their state convention is Bernie Sanders, the leader of their party.

The people essential to ensuring that Bernie Sanders socialism never hijacks Texas are the patriots I'm looking at right now. When Republicans unite, we are unbeatable. That unity is needed now more than ever. That unity will drive victory this November.

No one does a better job at turning out voters than the delegates in this room. Together, we will demolish the Democrats. Together, we are going to win in November. Together, we will keep Texas, Texas.

Thank you all. God bless you all. And may God forever bless the great state of Texas.