

## **The 85th Texas Legislative Session and Homeland Security Issues**

One of the primary duties of state government is to ensure the safety and security of the citizens of the state. Therefore, several items on my legislative agenda address compelling homeland security threats to the great state of Texas.

*Electric grid security, border security, refugee resettlement, and Islamic terrorism will be top priority issues for me in the next legislative session.*

### ***Electric Grid***

The electric power grid is essential to sustaining life. In the event the electric power grid fails for a week or more significant disruptions to the remaining critical infrastructure sectors will take place. Our electric grid infrastructure is vulnerable to both a man-made nuclear electromagnetic pulse (EMP) attack and natural geomagnetic storm events. Texas is in a unique situation because the majority of our electric grid is self-contained within the state and does not depend on federal action for protection. Hardening our grid from an EMP attack will benefit the citizens of the state who will be ensured a dependable source of power and further serve as an economic draw to businesses that depend on a reliable power source. *Unfortunately the legislative roadblocks preventing our efforts to secure the Texas electric grid last session are still in place.*

During the legislature's interim, my office has continued to make progress towards Texas grid security. On April 28th and 29th, we hosted the 2016 Texas Grid Security Summit. National security and emergency management experts addressed the Texas electric grid's vulnerability to EMP and introduced the most effective implementation strategies to ensure our state's security from the consequence of high-impact events. As the next legislative session nears, work will continue to further educate members of the Texas legislature, the electric industry, and the citizens of Texas about the EMP threat and the need to protect the Texas electric grid.

### ***Border Security and Refugee Resettlement***

In the past year, the federal government's refusal to secure our southern border has grown worse. Consequently, Texans are vulnerable to the threat of violence and exploitation from Mexican drug cartels, criminal illegal aliens, and Islamic terrorists operating along the Texas-Mexico border. According to the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), seven major Mexican drug cartels currently operate throughout Texas. To compound the problem, the Obama administration is on target to resettle at least 10,000 Syrian refugees into the U.S. by the end of this year. Several top law enforcement and intelligence officials have expressed concerns about the inability to properly vet and screen such a vast quantity of refugees. Furthermore, reports have stressed that terrorist groups are exploiting the gaps in the refugee program's existing security screening process. During the interim, my office has worked to develop border security and refugee resettlement legislation designed to reassert Texas's legal authority to secure our southern border and restrict the resettlement of refugees. We have worked closely with state legislative offices in other states to develop an effective interstate compact bill on border security and refugee resettlement.

***Terrorism*** The threat from the Islamic State and other Islamic terrorists continues to grow in the United States and other western nations. Since last November, Europe has experienced the violent hand of jihad in Paris, France; Brussels, Belgium; and recently in Istanbul, Turkey. Domestically, the events in San Bernardino, California and Orlando, Florida serve as reminders that the threat is also present here at home. We must ensure that our law enforcement professionals have the necessary resources and training to effectively respond to a San Bernardino or Orlando style terrorist attack.

***Moving Forward*** The 85th Legislative Session will be an important time for addressing homeland security issues and the well-being for the citizens of Texas **for protecting our electric Power Grid from EMP; securing our border from illegal aliens and organized crime; preventing the settlement of refugees until the associated security vulnerabilities can be secured; and providing the necessary protections to safeguard all Texans from the threat of Islamic terrorism.**