

T E X A S S T A T E S E N A T O R

# BORRIS L. MILES

## AN OPEN LETTER TO THE CITIZENS OF SENATE DISTRICT 13



**BORRIS L. MILES**  
STATE SENATOR • DISTRICT 13

### *Dear Friend:*

Thank you for the privilege of representing you in the Texas Senate. After 10 years in the Texas House, I was sworn in to serve as the State Senator for Senate District 13 on January 10, 2017.

I want you to know that my priority in the Texas Senate will be as it always has been improving the lives of the families in Senate District 13. This means focusing on the real issues like improving the public education system for our children, fighting to make health care affordable and accessible, working every day to bring jobs to this district, and protecting the right of everyone to fully participate in our electoral process.

Working to get the job done for you in Austin, I championed an \$11 million appropriation for the Student Success Initiative aimed toward African American male youth to provide assistance to schools located in disadvantaged communities that have a high percentage of struggling students, which could potentially help schools like Wheatley, Worthing and Yates. Other measures included economic development and job training legislation that will bring more than 600 new jobs to Senate District 13; passed legislation to improve women's healthcare in Texas and allow schools to end the practice of throwing away untouched, excess food and get it to hungry students; and passed legislation to improve the education and training of prison inmates to improve their chance of successfully reintegrating into society after their prison term.

Unfortunately, the Legislature spent more time debating issues like bathrooms rather than classrooms. A lot of time was wasted on discriminatory legislation dealing with which bathrooms transgender Texans could use or limiting who could adopt foster children in desperate need of a loving home. We wasted more time on legislation that could subject minorities to harassment by local law enforcement attempting to enforce federal immigration laws. None of these bills will help our families get ahead.

After the regular session, I was honored by the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition with the Legislative Champion Award for championing women's health initiatives, notably in maternal mortality, and extending the Women's Health Advisory Committee.

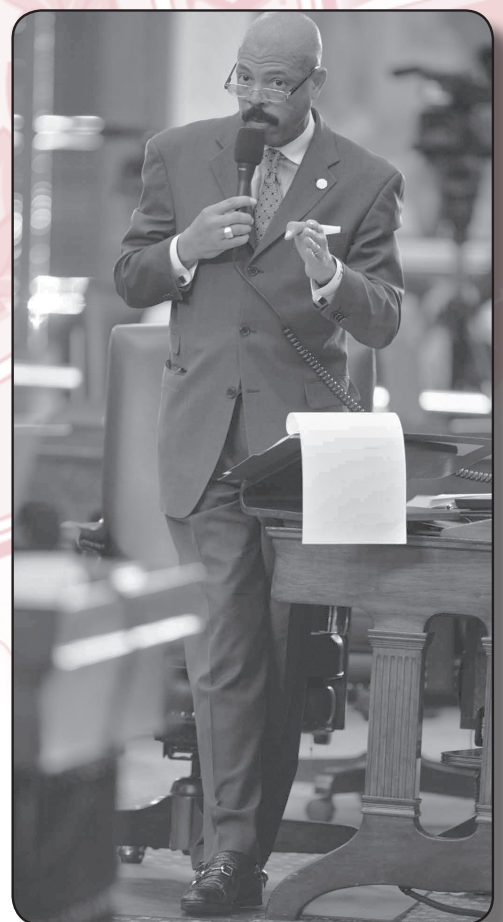
My work does not stop after the regular session or special session ends. Now that I am back in Houston, my staff and I are hard at work on solving the problems of constituents and the neighborhoods of the district. I have three offices open to serve the community. If you are having a problem with any level of government, please contact one of the offices and we will get to work on your issue.

Thank you for your support and giving me the opportunity to represent you in the Texas Legislature. You can always count on me to be, "Your Voice in Austin."

Keep the Faith! Keep the Fight!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "B" followed by a flourish.

Borris L. Miles





# Legislative Accomplishments

## Budget

Secured \$11 million for the Student Success Initiative, to provide education assistance to schools located in a disadvantaged community and have a high percentage of struggling students. This could potentially help schools like Wheatley, Worthing and Yates. The funding is targeted to assist African American males, who statistically test poorly on state assessments and who rank amongst the lowest of all groups to attend college.

## Business Opportunities & Economic Development

**House Bill 4290 (Senate Sponsor)**, to create the Stadium Park Management District around the Reliant Center area. The added resources provided in the bill will continue the progress toward redevelopment and cleanup work and allow for further economic development in concert with the Houston Livestock Show & Rodeo, the Houston Texans, and the Harris County Sports & Convention Corporation. **HB 4290 passed and is effective immediately.**

## Criminal Justice Reform

**House Bill 553 (Senate Sponsor)**, to create a task force to assess the daily activities of inmates in order to determine what type of certificates, industry-recognized credentials, high school, college or joint high school and college credit that can be awarded to inmates. The task force will also determine the actions necessary to obtain applicable academic credit or industry recognition in the hopes of reducing recidivism and saving money by keeping ex-convicts out of prison. **HB 553 was signed by the governor and is effective immediately.**

## Food Security

**Senate Bill 725**, will permit public and charter schools to donate surplus food to nonprofit organizations and redistribute those foods to schools so hungry kids can access it at any time. To address the issue of "lunch shaming," when students do not have enough money to purchase a hot meal at the cafeteria, SB 725 allows school districts or open-enrollment charter schools to adopt a policy that provides a meal at no cost to students. **SB 725 was signed by the governor and is effective immediately.**

## Foster Care & Children

**Senate Bill 1220**, assists students who are homeless or in substitute care transition from one school to another by establishing certain procedures for student records, course credit, special education referrals, and coordination between schools and the Department of Family and Protective Services. **SB 1220 was signed by the governor and is effective immediately.**

**House Bill 3338 (Senate Sponsor)**, will ease transition from the foster care system by providing procedures for a foster child to



Senator Miles works with Senator Kolkhorst on strengthening maternal mortality legislation.



Senator Miles and Representative Thompson discussing increasing education opportunities and job training programs.

obtain a driver's license or personal identification card before the child leaves state conservatorship. **HB 3338 was signed by the governor and is effective immediately.**

## Jobs & Job Training

**Senate Bill 2105** will provide secondary school students information regarding career and technical education partnership opportunities with business and industry. The bill also contains information regarding professional development opportunities for teachers and learning opportunities for students through industry mentorships, internships, summer programs, after-school programs, and career-based student leadership opportunities. **SB 2105 was signed by the governor and is effective September 1, 2017.**

**House Bill 2729 (Senate Sponsor)**, directs the Texas Education Agency, Texas Workforce Commission, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to compile an inventory of industry-based certifications that can be earned by high school students. Creating this inventory can ensure that Career and Technology Education (CTE) program directors can evaluate and identify gaps in what courses are being offered. Over one million high school students in Texas enroll in CTE courses to get the training and certifications needed to prepare them for the workforce. **HB 2729 was signed by the governor and is effective immediately.**

**House Bill 2790 (Senate Sponsor)**, authorizes an apprenticeship training program to be conducted by an independent apprenticeship committee, in addition to a public school or a state postsecondary institution. The program must provide adequate facilities, personnel, and resources to meet the need for skilled craftsmen and marketable skills. **HB 2790 was signed by the governor and is effective immediately.**

## Women's Health

**Senate Bill 790**, would have continued the work of the Women's Health Advisory Committee for another two years. This committee provides recommendations for improving the effectiveness of women's health programs. **Although the bill had overwhelming bi-partisan support, Governor Abbott vetoed this bill.**

**Senate Bill 1599**, seeks to improve data related to maternal mortality and, in doing so, reduce Texas's current high rates of pregnancy-related deaths. Specifically, the bill will require the Department of State Health Services to post information on its website regarding the systematic protocol for pregnancy-related death investigations and the best practices for reporting those deaths. **SB 1599 was signed by the governor and is effective September 1, 2017.**

**Senate Bill 17 (Added Amendment)**, to extend the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force until 2023. This bill also charges the task force to continue studying best practices to curb their maternal death rates, look at the health disparities and socioeconomic status of the mothers dying in Texas and find solutions to help women with postpartum depression. Senator Miles added an amendment targeting the second leading cause of maternal deaths, substance abuse, notably regarding opioids. His amendment gives physicians the substance abuse screening tools and resources to better identify and help at-risk pregnant women. **SB 17 was signed by the governor and is effective immediately.**



## Legislative Update



### FOSTER KIDS

The Legislature passed sweeping reforms to the troubled Child Protective Services System. The changes include a significant funding boost, additional funding to hire CPS caseworkers and a pay raise to reduce turnover and ensure more children are checked on in a timely fashion. The state's increased investment in foster care reimbursement rates will provide more homes, and ensure appropriate services are available. Senator Miles also co-authored legislation to boost support for kinship providers who take in young relatives, ensuring that families stick together.



### HOUSTON PENSIONS

When Mayor Sylvester Turner took office, the Houston pension crisis was one of his top priorities. He met with local labor organizations, pension groups, the Greater Houston Partnership and business leaders to craft a fair and sustainable plan. Senator Miles supported legislation enacting the Houston Pension Solution to immediately reduce the City's \$8.2 billion unfunded liability through future benefit reductions. The plan utilizes a 7 percent rate of return on investments and will require the City to meet its annual contribution until the unfunded liability is fully paid off in 30 years.

Although not everyone was happy with this plan, it was created with fairness to ensure the City can address its fiscal needs to serve residents better while protecting the retirements of the City's employees.



### HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is incredibly important to our community. We need to provide as many opportunities as possible for students so that they can be successful, get a good paying job, and provide for their families. In the Senate, we successfully killed legislation that would remove the Top 10 Percent Rule, which guarantees Texas students who graduated in the top ten percent of their high school class automatic admission to Texas' flagship public universities.



Senator Miles welcomes students from Wisdom High School to the Texas Capitol and discusses their plans after graduation.



Senators West, Whitmire and Miles meet Geneva Reed-Veal, mother of Sandra Bland.



### SANDRA BLAND ACT

Tensions between police and the Black community have been rising for years. This year alone, another unarmed black youth, Jordan Edwards, was shot and killed at the hands of an officer in Texas. In response, Representative Garnet Coleman passed the Sandra Bland Act, named after the Black woman who died in 2015 in the Waller County Jail after a routine traffic stop.

The bill will mandate that county jails divert people with mental health and substance abuse issues toward treatment. It will also require that independent law enforcement agencies investigate jail deaths.

Many were disappointed by the removal of certain provisions in the original bill which addressed Sandra's situation. However, this bill includes much needed mental health training for criminal justice personnel. Senator Miles is dedicated to working during the interim to further address this issue in the 86th Legislative Session.



### BATHROOMS

This bill is nothing more than discriminatory legislation and would allow the state to intrude on our personal lives and have devastating effects on our economy. One of my top priorities in the Senate has been to bring jobs and economic activity to Senate District 13. This bill would do the exact opposite.

Over the past year, multiple studies found that this bill could cost the state \$3.3 billion in annual tourism and more than 35,600 jobs. Moreover, Mayor Sylvester Turner stated that one planned conference canceled, costing the city an estimated \$11 million in economic activity. Those are real dollars, for a proposed bill that is not even a law. Imagine what the impact will look like if enacted. We would not see events like the Super Bowl, NCAA tournaments, and the NBA All Star Game come back to Houston.

Proponents of this legislation said this bill was about safety, top law enforcement officials from across Texas stated it would divert police from investigating real crimes.

This bill is bad for business. It is bad for Texas. Moreover, it is bad for Senate District 13.





## Budget Highlights

### IMPROVING HEALTH CARE

The budget includes \$125 million that can be used to construct a continuum of care campus at the Harris County Psychiatric Center. The project would include a 304-bed multi-acuity psychiatric center and, if approved, will generate hundreds of short and long term jobs in our community.

### INCREASING FINANCIAL AID

The state's largest scholarship program for four-year university students, TEXAS Grants, received an increase of \$71.5 million. Funding will serve 92 percent of first-time eligible students under the program. Each year, more than 12,000 students from Harris County receive over \$60 million in TEXAS Grants awards averaging \$5,000 each.

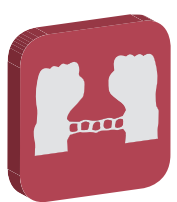
Under the budget, community college students received a \$2 million increase in financial aid funding for the Texas Education Opportunity Grant program.

### SUPPORTING OUR UNIVERSITIES

The budget increased funding for Texas Southern University by more than \$7 million per year. Because of the increase, TSU will not have to make devastating cuts imposed last year and will fund needed benefits for university staff. The funding also supports TSU's new library, Thurgood Marshall School of Law and the College of Pharmacy.

The University of Houston System did well compared to some institutions and didn't face budget cuts. The University of Houston received an additional \$10 million for pharmacy funding.

Community colleges received \$18 million more for operations and \$10.8 million in additional funding for college graduation and success.



### SANCTUARY CITIES

Since 2011, the Legislature has attempted to pass a bill to require local police to enforce federal immigration laws. This would give law enforcement the authority to ask anyone, including children, about their immigration status.

During the regular session, protesters exercising their First Amendment rights made their voices loud and clear about this bill. It is an anti-immigrant bill that will do nothing but divide our communities and prevent law enforcement from doing their job. This legislation targets the most vulnerable and rips families apart. Police chiefs and sheriffs across our state, including Houston and Harris County, opposed this bill because it would drain local resources to enforce federal immigration laws, a task for which local police are not trained to do. Also, it was estimated that the state stands to lose roughly \$223 million in state and local taxes and more than \$5 billion in gross domestic product due to this legislation. The governor signed this bill into law, and several major cities, including Houston, Austin, San Antonio and Dallas challenged the legality of the bill in court.



Senator Miles leads a press conference discussing the lack of minorities appointed to the University of Texas Board of Regents.



### ANTI-CHOICE LEGISLATION

The Legislature approved a sweeping measure that bans the safest second-trimester abortion procedure and would also require health care facilities to bury or cremate any fetal remains. Unfortunately, this bill passed and will end one of the most commonly used and safest procedures. It was another anti-choice bill that may end up being decided by the courts.



Senator Miles and Senator Zaffirini work together on legislation to improve women's health.



# About Senator Borris L. Miles

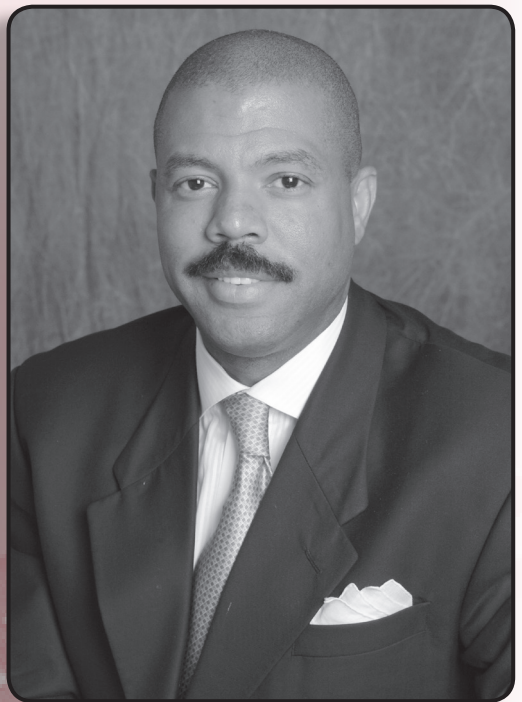
A lifelong resident of Houston, Senator Borris L. Miles was elected to the Texas Senate in 2016 after serving four terms in the Texas House of Representatives. Miles is a successful businessman and developer, owning one of the largest insurance agencies in Texas and redeveloping two commercial blocks.

A fighter for the people, Miles was first elected to the House in 2006 and became a leading progressive voice. His legislative initiatives included increased funding for HIV testing, giving second chances to individuals by making it easier to seal their juvenile records, creating an ombudsman office for the juvenile justice department, and creating economic development opportunity districts in his community.

For his work, Miles' recognitions included being named "Star of the Legislative Session" by the Texas Classroom Teachers Association, "Champion of Women's Health" by Planned

Parenthood, an "Urban Agriculture Leader" by the Texas A&M Agrilife Extension and Legislative Champion by the Texas Women's Healthcare Coalition.

Active in his community, Miles conceived the Hip Hop 4 HIV concert series, which was adopted by the CDC, and has given his time to organizations like the Urban League and the Houston Sickle Cell Association. Miles' non-profit, the TexStars Foundation, has awarded more than 100 scholarships to help pay for the college education of your African American men.



## HELP AVAILABLE FOR FLOOD VICTIMS APPLY FOR FEMA AID!

**Have this ready when you apply:**

- **Social Security Number**
- **Address of the damaged home or apartment**
- **Description of the damage**
- **Telephone Number**
- **Mailing Address**
- **Bank Account & routing numbers for direct deposit of funds**

**APPLY HERE:**

**WEB: [www.disasterassistance.gov](http://www.disasterassistance.gov)**

**PHONE: 1-800-621-3362**

**TTY: 1-800-462-7585**

# CONTACT SENATOR MILES

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 713-665-8322

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 COMING SOON!



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## TEXAS SENATOR

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## HELPFUL PHONE NUMBERS

### City of Houston

Non-Emergency Help Line.....3-1-1  
 Texas/United Way Help Line.....2-1-1  
 24-Hour Information and Referral Network

### Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner

Consumer Helpline.....1-800-538-1579  
 Public Utility Commission of Texas  
 Consumer Protection Division.....1-888-782-8477

### United States Social Security Administration

Help Line.....1-800-722-1213

### Office of Attorney General

Child Support .....1-800-252-8014  
 Consumer Protection Hotline.....1-800-621-0508  
 Crime Victims Compensation.....1-800-983-9933

### Office of the Governor

Information and Referral Hotline.....1-800-843-5789

### Texas Department of Family & Protective Services

Texas Abuse/Neglect Hotline.....1-800-252-5400  
 Texas Youth Hotline.....1-800-989-6884  
 Office of Consumer Affairs Hotline.....1-800-720-7777  
 Foster Care & Adoption Inquiry Hotline.....1-800-233-3405

### Texas Department of State Health Services

Substance Abuse Services.....1-866-378-8440  
 WIC.....1-800-942-3678  
 Family and Community SVCS.....1-800-422-2956  
 Mental Health Consumer Rights.....1-800-252-8154

### Texas Health & Human Services Commission

Disaster Assistance.....1-800-582-5233  
 Medicaid Hotline.....1-800-252-8263  
 Children's Health Insurance Plan(CHIP) ....1-877-543-7669

### Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Victim Services Division.....1-800-848-4284  
 Offender Status Line.....1-800-535-0283  
 Offender Parole Review Status Line.....1-844-512-0461

### Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs

Hotline.....1-800-525-0657  
 Fair Housing/Discrimination.....1-888-452-4778  
 Disaster Assistance.....1-877-541-7905  
 Homebuyer Help & Education.....1-800-792-1119

### State Bar of Texas

Hotline.....1-800-204-2222  
 Grievance Information.....1-800-932-1900  
 Lawyer Referral Service.....1-800-252-9690

### Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

Hotline.....1-888-777-3186

### Texas Department of Aging & Disability Services

Main Line.....512-438-3011  
 Ombudsman for State Supported  
 Living Centers.....1-877-323-6466  
 Self-reporting abuse, neglect or.....1-800-458-9858

### Texas Department of Insurance

Consumer Help Line.....1-800-252-3439

### Division of Workers' Compensation

Injured Worker Hotline.....1-800-252-7031  
 Safety Violations Hotline.....1-800-452-9595

### Texas Department of Public Safety

Driver License Customer Service.....512-424-2600  
 Vehicle Inspection .....512-424-7293  
 Emergency Roadside Assistance.....1-800-525-5555  
 Texas Crime Stoppers Hotline.....1-800-252-TIIPS

### Texas Department of Motor Vehicles

Hotline.....1-888-368-4689

### Texas Medical Board

Consumer Complaint Hotline.....1-800-201-9353

### Texas Veterans Land Board

Veterans Hotline.....1-800-252-VETS

### Texas Workforce Commission

Hotline.....512-463-2222