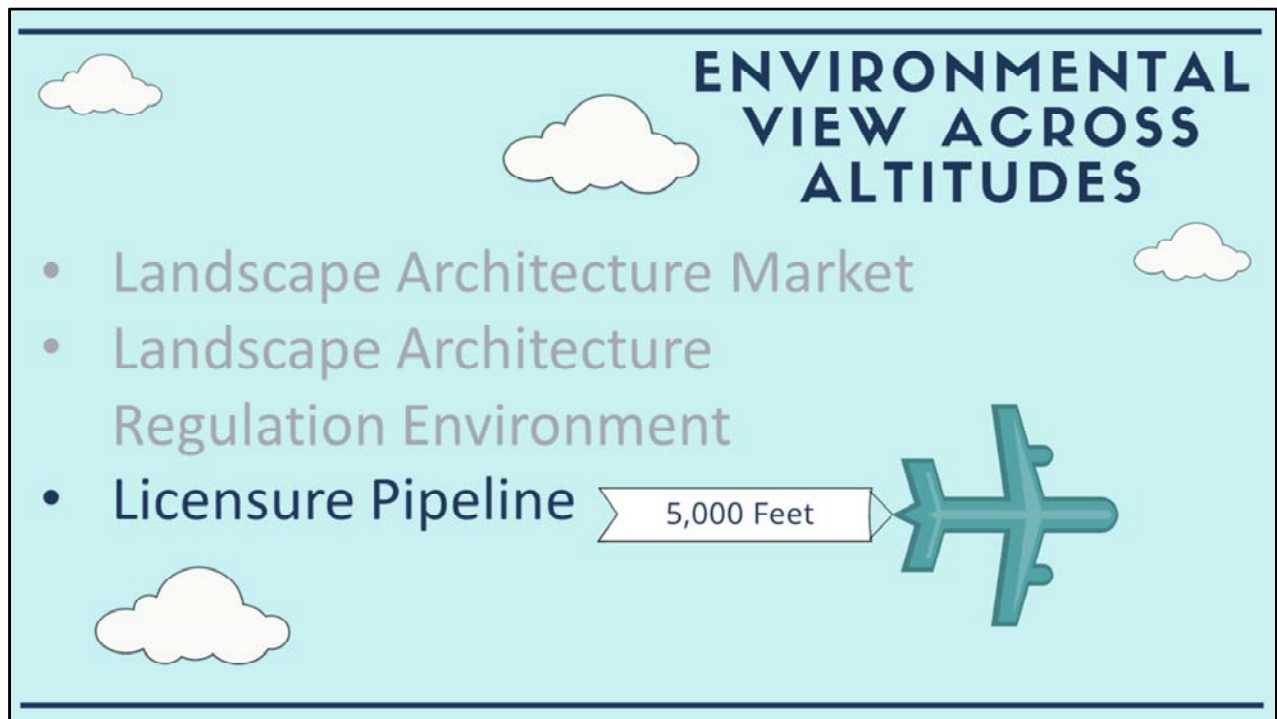


So again, as we discussed in New Orleans, there are conflicting signals on the state of licensure but, overall, and compared to other professions...



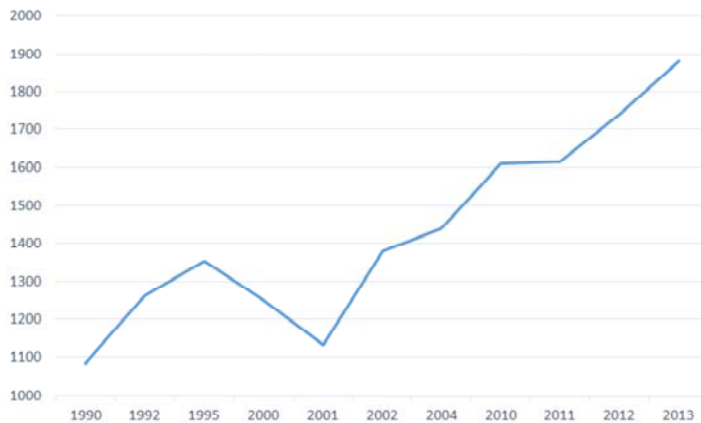
Licensure is like this sturdy, mature oak:

Solidly rooted, broad in scope and largely uniform.



Now let's look at the pipeline for licensed landscape architects.

## LA Graduates: 1990-2013



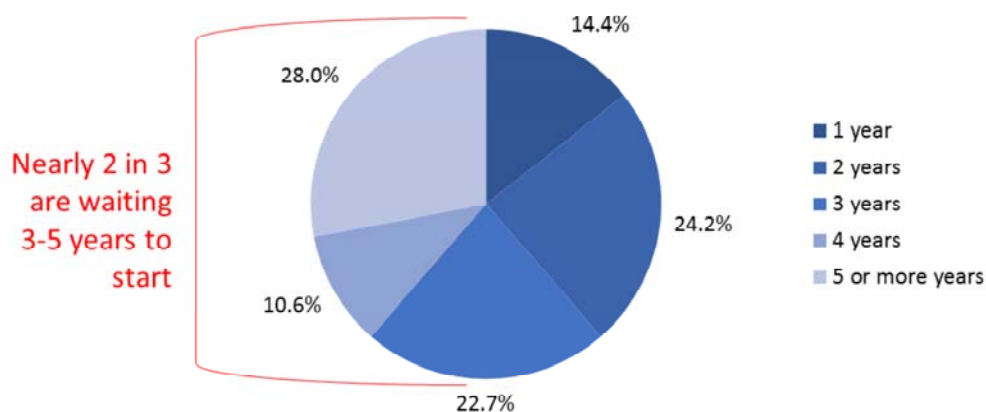
- 73% growth since 1990
- 17% growth since depth of Great Recession
- 8% growth since 2012

Source: 2013-14 LAAB, U.S. Department of Education

For almost all landscape architects the journey to licensure begins with graduation from a college or university program. As you can see the latest data available shows impressive growth in the number of graduates over the last two decades. We hope to see a continued trend with newer data.

So the pipeline is being filled—at least up to now.

## Waiting to Start Exams = Attrition Risk



Source: CLARB

However, we're finding is that almost two thirds of graduates are waiting anywhere from three to five years to start taking exams. This increases the risk that they don't pursue licensure and makes them less likely to be successful on exams 1 and 2.

That's why, "start early" is a message that we're sending to students and we encourage you to do the same.

## Presidents Council Data Dashboard Project

Gender, Ethnicity,  
Age, Geography

Landscape  
architects

Licensees

Programs

Enrollments

Graduates

Economic impact

Scholarships

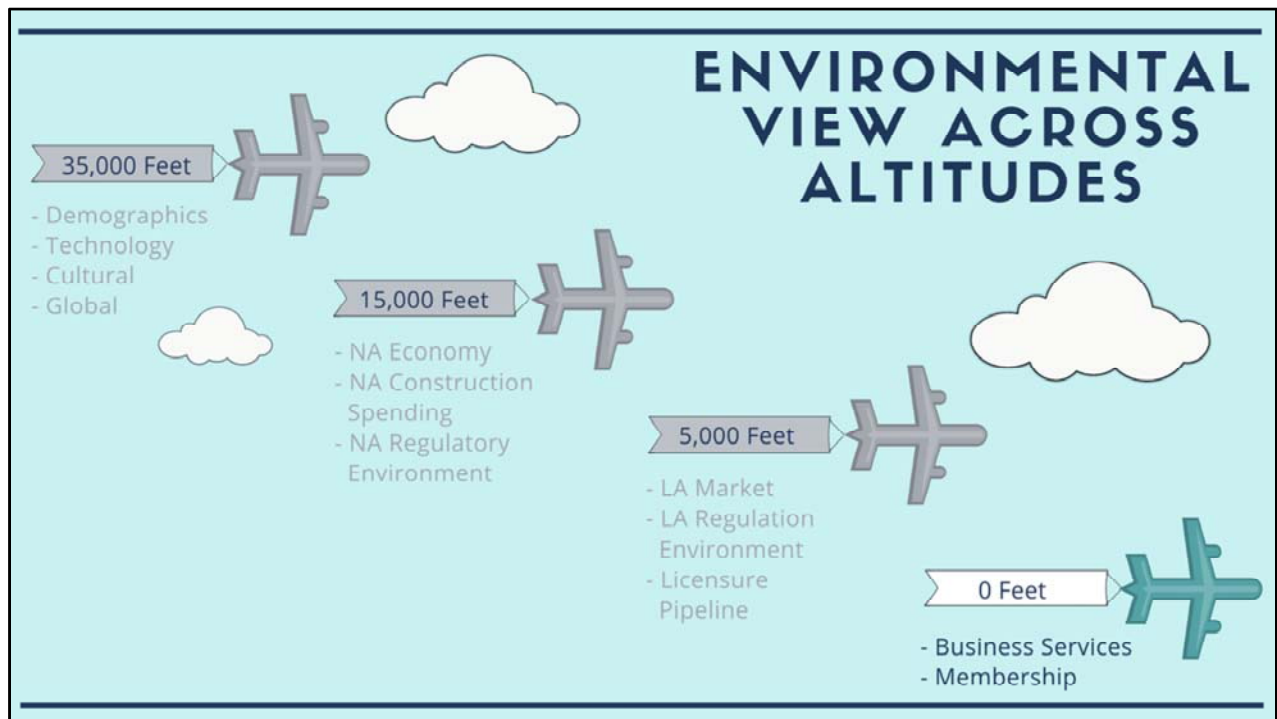
Some good news:

The presidents council, which is made up of CLARB, ASLA, CSLA, CELA, and other organizations, has agreed on the need for better data and is working collaboratively on a “data dashboard” project. We all believe that will help us better understand where we are, how things are progressing and what needs further focus.

## Strategic Conversation Starters

- What is the state of the “licensure pipeline” in your jurisdiction and what are your biggest uncertainties?
- What data do you wish you had?

We’d also recommend starting some conversations—if you haven’t already—on the licensure pipeline in your jurisdiction. Chances are that you’ll get to a point where you’re out of data. When you get there, consider creating a list of what data you wish you had and let us know. Maybe we can help.



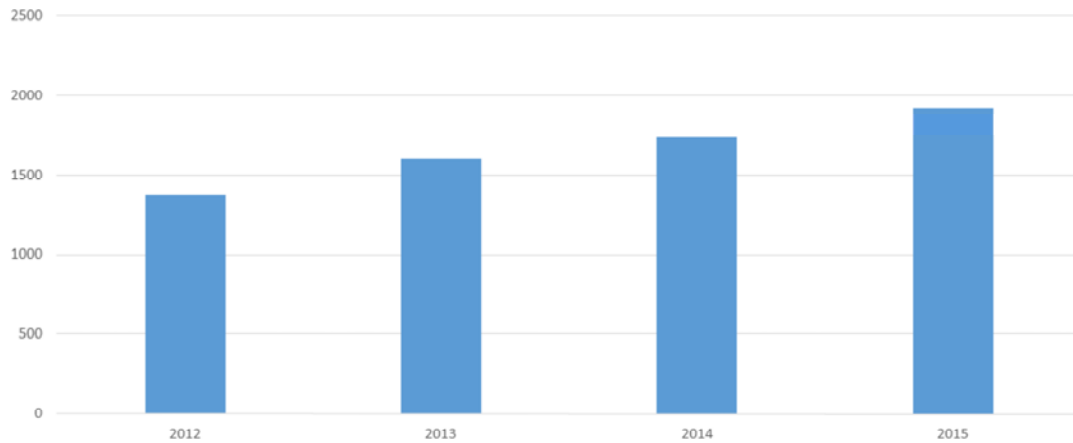
The runway is in sight and you'll be home soon—or back to work as the case may be.





The core of CLARB's core purpose, if you will, is providing the services that support your ability to effectively and efficiently regulate the profession. The performance of our licensure support services gives another important indication of the state of the licensure pipeline.

## Active L.A.R.E. Candidates: 2012-2015

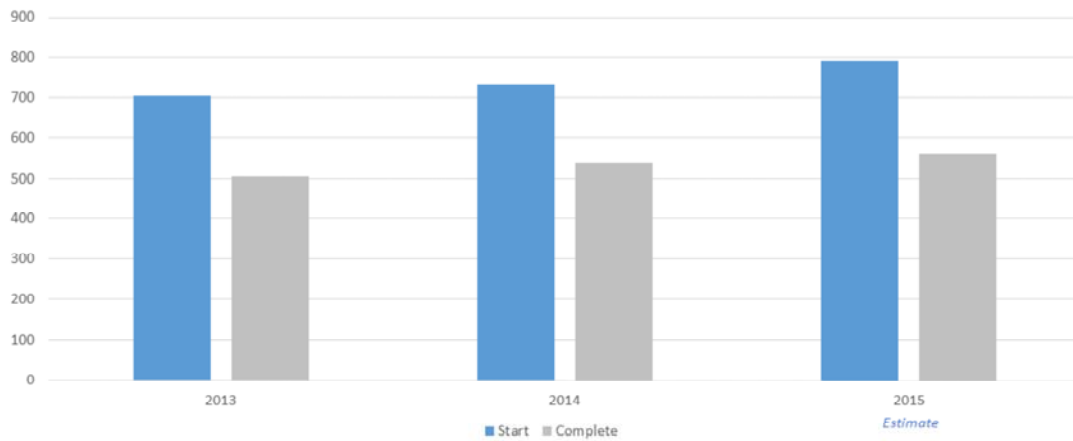


Source: CLARB

Since you need to pass the L.A.R.E. to become licensed, the number of candidates is a good indicator of future licensees. As you can see the number of test takers has risen steadily since the new exam format was introduced in 2012.

That was the year that we changed the registration process to collect more useful information from the candidates. Not only can we serve them better but we now have access to much more information that we can both use to improve our service.

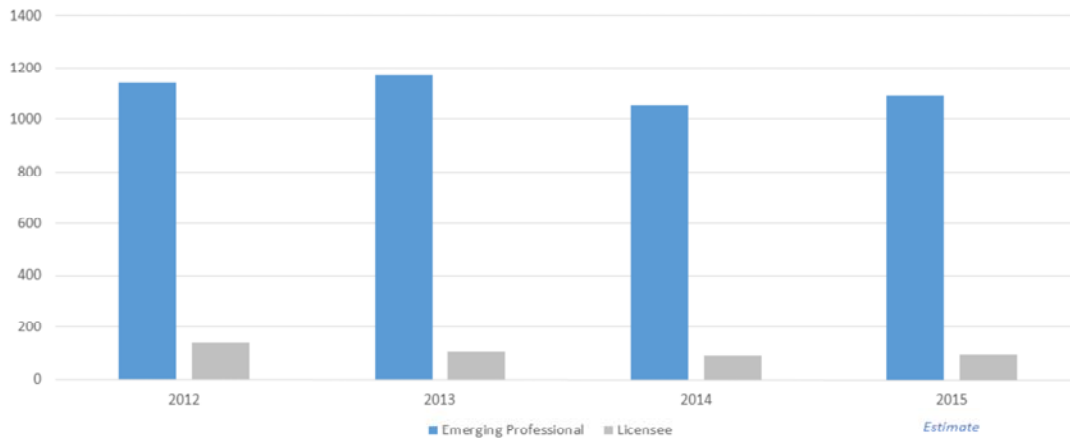
## Start and Complete L.A.R.E. by Year



Source: CLARB

It's also interesting to see how many are starting and completing the exam each year. As you can see both numbers have risen steadily since 2013.

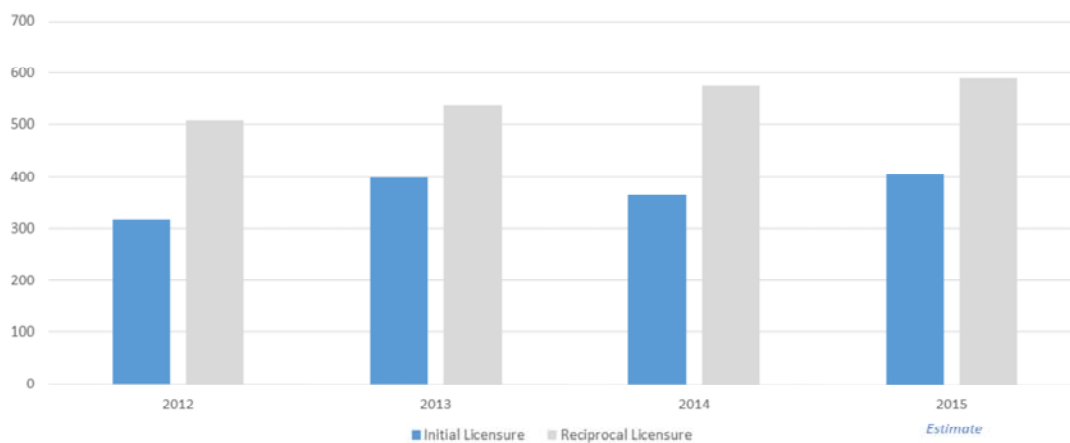
## New Council Records by Year



Source: CLARB

The Council Record is a verified, continually updated, secure digital record of a landscape architect's education, exam and work history. All exam candidates—what we call “emerging professionals” on this chart—begin a Record when taking the exam and, to date a little more than two thirds are retaining them post licensure. As we’d expect the licensee numbers are level.

## Council Record Transmittals by Year



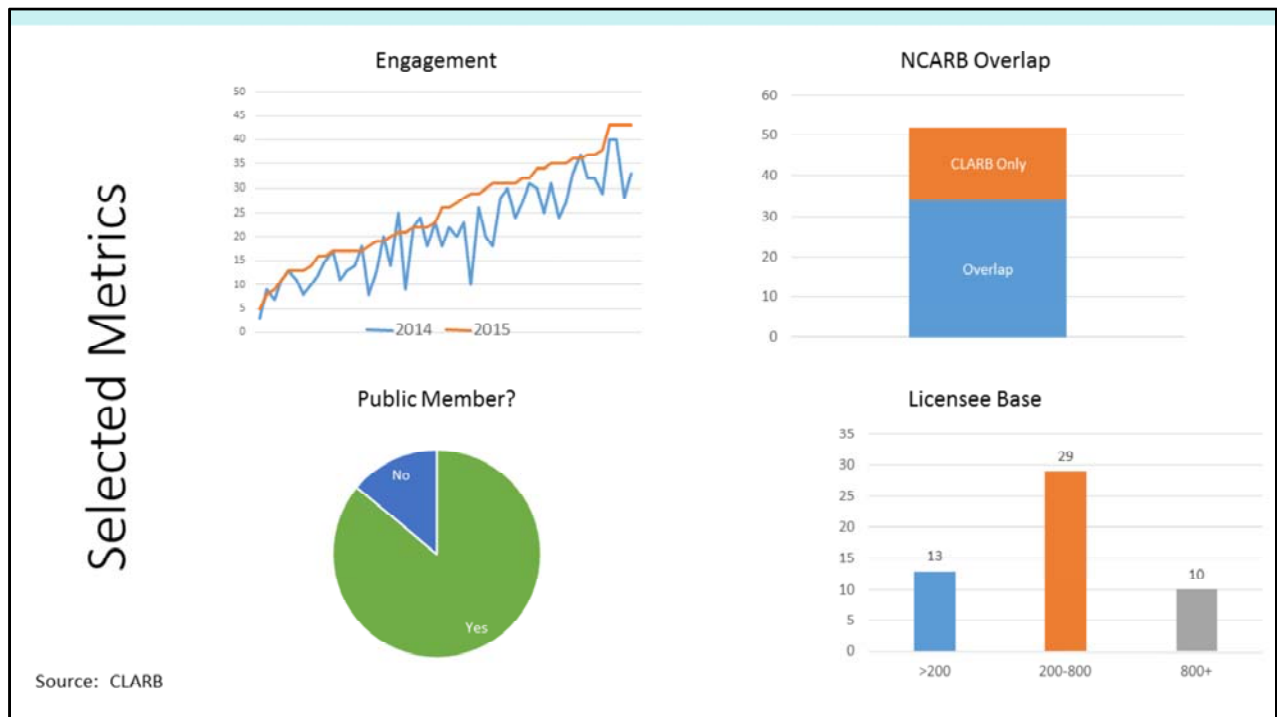
Looking at Council Records transmittals provides an indication of their use in support of initial licensure as well as for becoming licensed in another jurisdiction. What we'll call, "mobility." Tracking the grey bars suggests that mobility is increasing, which is why it may be wise for boards to consider their policies on licensure for non-residents.

## ENVIRONMENTAL VIEW ACROSS ALTITUDES

- Business Services
- Membership

0 Feet





A few selected membership metrics:

First, starting in the upper right hand corner and moving clockwise, we have a great deal of overlap with NCARB. 34 of our boards are shared either by the board or by the staff. This has lots of implications on how we might work together for mutual benefit.

Second, it's interesting to reflect on the average licensee base. As you can see the over half of the boards have between 2-800 licensees with much smaller percentages having more or less.

Third, more and more board are creating positions for public members. Lots of challenge and opportunity here—from getting them filled to thinking about them as strategic assets to your board. Today about 44 jurisdictions or 86% have public members.

Finally, in the upper left hand corner, it's good to see that member engagement in CLARB programs, issues and conversations is increasing across the board. This means that more members are receiving and creating more value.



Speaking of member data, we wanted to give everyone a heads up that we'll be calling every board between now and the end of March. The purpose of this is to make sure we have information on what it takes to get licensed in your jurisdiction, to enable us to track and monitor licensure trends and, most importantly, so we can just talk with you to see how we can help.

Of course you'll be among the first to see what we learn!



## Strategic Conversation Starters

- How are candidate counts trending in your jurisdiction and what is driving them?
- What is the resident/non-resident licensure trend and what are the drivers?

These questions also relate to the pipeline for future licensees. If you haven't already, we'd suggest looking at your candidate counts and licensure trends and try to determine what's driving those trends. What you may find is that they are connected to other trends.

## Putting Data to Work



- Take one question and have a board discussion
- Use a question or two as a “warmup” to your next strategic thinking/planning session
- Form a workgroup to vet and come up with a backgrounder on one or more big questions
- Come up with your own “derivative” questions

So we’ve provided lots of information today. Here are a couple of suggestions for how to put it to use in your board work.

First, think about taking one question and having a board discussion around it. If you want to go big, take the “changing demographics” question. If you want to start smaller scale, take the licensure trends question. Regardless of the question, try to set aside lots of time—at least a morning or afternoon if not a day—to discuss it.

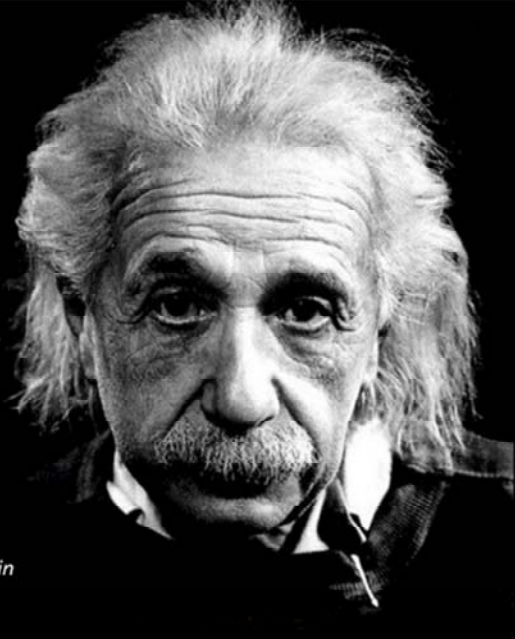
Or you could take a couple of questions and use them as a warmup to your next strategic session. These questions are tough and they are good for stretching your mind, which can make for a good strategic thinking session. We use this technique at CLARB a lot.

Another idea is to form a workgroup to vet a question and come up with a backgrounder for the board to use. Perhaps they can even make a presentation.

Finally, you can always take the questions that we’ve presented and make up your own because...

"If I had an hour to solve a problem and my life depended on the solution, I would spend the first 55 minutes determining the proper question to ask, for once I know the proper question, I could solve the problem in less than 5 minutes."

- Albert Einstein



Asking the right question might be the most important part of the discussion.

## Takeaway #1

The scanning process is like a GPS, helping you to anticipate future developments and plan to thrive



So as we close, here are three takeaways.

First, the scanning process is like a GPS, helping you to anticipate future developments and plan to thrive.

## Takeaway #2

Powerful demographic, technology, cultural and governance trends are reshaping—and roiling—the regulatory environment



## Takeaway #2

Powerful demographic, technology, cultural and governance trends are reshaping—and roiling—the regulatory environment.

## Takeaway #3

Thinking ahead and being proactive will reduce the risk of disruption and increase the ability to thrive...



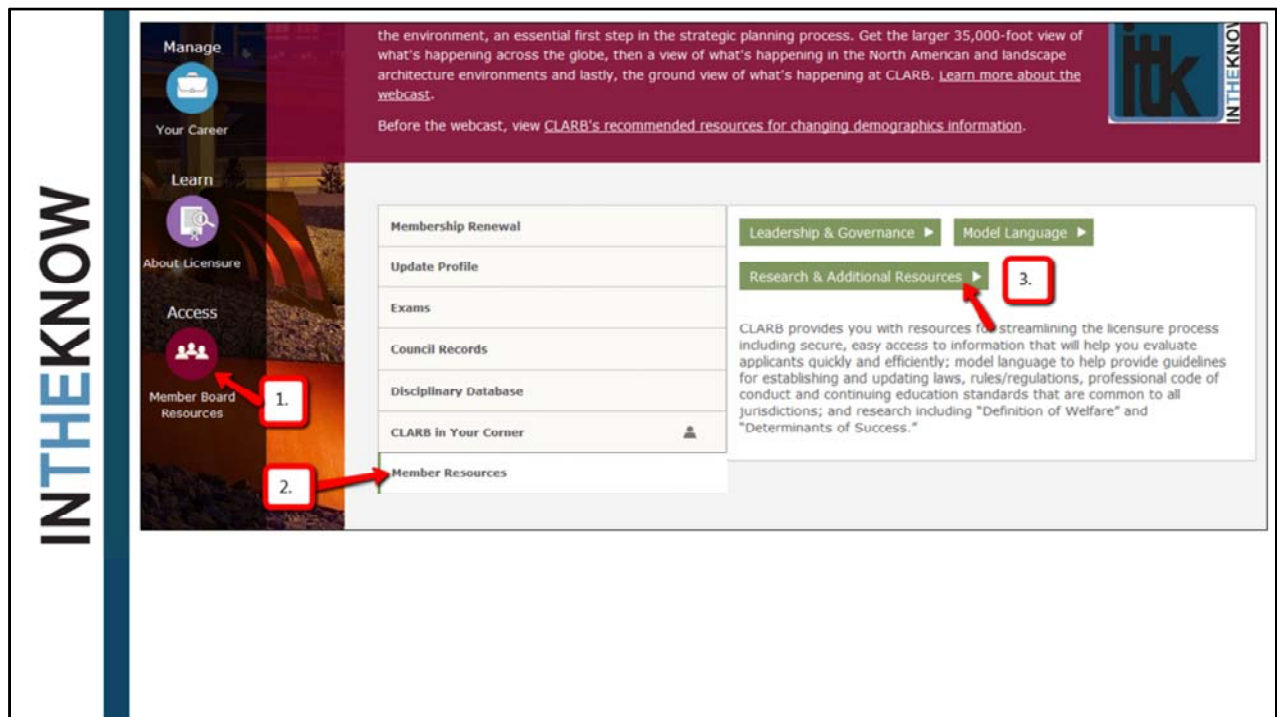
*And it all begins with a strategic conversation!*

And, finally, takeaway #3.

Thinking ahead and being proactive will reduce the risk of disruption and increase the ability to thrive.

And it all begins with a strategic conversation.

Thank you.



You can find a recording of this webcast at <https://youtu.be/WYF4xt1z4nk>; you can find the PowerPoint slides on the CLARB website in the "Member Resources/Member Events" section. Find more strategic planning tools on the CLARB website in the "Member Resources/Research and Additional Resources" section.

Join us for the next “In the Know” event!

January 21 at 3 p.m. ET

“Growing the Pipeline of Future Licensees”



thank you!



# REPORT TO THE PEOPLE OF TEXAS

## GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

**The promise of the future knows no bounds, and the Lone Star State remains the best place to raise a family, build a business and create greater opportunity for all.**

The true secret to the robust strength and resilience of the Texas economy is our greatest natural resource: the hardworking people of Texas. It is a privilege to serve the people of this great state, working by your side to ensure the future is bigger and brighter for generations to come.



*Greg Abbott*

**2016**

**“Without dreams,  
there is no need to work.**

**Without work, there is  
no need to dream.**

**Success** requires big **aspirations**  
to dream great things and  
the **work ethic** to achieve them.”

**Governor Abbott’s remarks to high school students attending  
the Hispanic Engineering, Science and Technology Week  
at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, October 2015**

**On the cover:** Governor Abbott addressing business leaders at the San Antonio Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Congratulating a graduating class of Texas Department of Public Safety recruits. Promoting the more than 280 Texas-based companies listed on the New York Stock Exchange during an economic development trip to New York. Celebrating the future of Texas with bright young students at Emerson Elementary School in Houston.

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|--|-----------|
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## The only thing bigger than Texas today is Texas tomorrow.

**In this first Report to the People, we look back at an incredible year. We celebrated so many Texas heroes in 2015: our law enforcement officers and first responders, our men and women in uniform, our students and educators, the entrepreneurs and innovators building their businesses and growing new jobs—and everyday Texans who went to work and to school each day, all to make tomorrow brighter for their families, their community, our state and our nation.**

**W**hether tested by fire or flood, by acts of nature or acts of madmen, Texans came together this year: Neighbors helped neighbors, and strangers helped new friends. We saw again and again the strength of character of our Texas family as we paused to remember lives lost and to celebrate lives saved.

While traveling across this state, it's been an honor to shake your hand, look you in the eye and listen to your concerns and hopes for the future. As Texans, we know the bonds we share transcend our differences. We look to the horizon and see opportunities unbounded. We look to our families and see cultures blended and strong. And we look to the future and ask: How do we give all of our children lives worthy of their promise?

Children born last year will graduate from college in 2036, the bicentennial year of our state's independence. What kind of Texas will they inherit? That is our shared focus: building an even stronger Texas for tomorrow.

Today, Texas remains the land of opportunity, a bright beacon for the nation. Our economy is diverse

and our workforce strong. Despite the drop in oil prices, jobs are growing here and families are growing here.

The Texas model is proof that limited government encourages unlimited opportunity. Less government, low taxes, smarter regulations and right-to-work laws—these are the pro-growth economic policies that help free enterprise flourish in Texas.

Going forward, we will continue to take a strong stand against known threats—the drug cartels, transnational gangs and human smuggling and trafficking operations—and against unknown threats from those who seek to wage war against our freedoms and our liberty.

It is a privilege to serve the people of this great state, working by your side to ensure the future is bigger and brighter for generations to come. The First Lady and I thank you for your letters, your calls and your prayers.

**May God bless you all in the year ahead, and may He forever bless the great State of Texas.**

Private-sector

**JOBS added:**

TEXAS is **#1**

with over **1.85 million jobs**  
added in the last 10 years

Source: BLS, seasonally adjusted CES, as of December 2015

Texas population **GREW**

by more than

**6 million**

since 2000,

**MORE** than any other state

Source: US Census Bureau, most current data, July 2000-July 2014

Small, mid-size and large cities:

**Fastest-  
growing  
economies**

**ALL** in Texas; 9 of Top 10 overall

Source: WalletHub, 2015

Unemployment in Texas:

**4.7 %**

At or **BELOW** the national average  
for 108 consecutive months

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, Texas, as of December 2015

Nation's top CEOs name  
Texas **BEST** State for Business

**#1**

for **11 years** in a row

Source: Chief Executive magazine annual survey, 2015

Women-owned businesses  
in Texas **GROWING**

**2x faster**

than **ALL** businesses nationwide

Source: 2015 State of Women-Owned Businesses,  
American Express OPEN and Womenable

Texas on-time high school  
graduation rate:

**88.3 %**

**ALL-TIME HIGH**; again surpassing  
the national average of 82.3%

Source: National Center for Education Statistics, 2014 Class

College degrees and certificates  
awarded in Texas

**up 61 %**

since 2000; **doubling** enrollment of  
African-Americans and Hispanics

Source: THECB, 2000 to 2014



## Building an even stronger Texas

### After taking the oath of office as governor of this great state,

I promised to improve our public and higher education systems, build new roads, secure our border and chart a course that keeps Texas a beacon of individual liberty and economic opportunity.

**A** bold, ambitious agenda—that’s what observers called the top priorities I outlined for the 84th Legislative Session. One year later, I’m happy to report that we are following through on those promises and much more.

#### EARLY EDUCATION

With strong bipartisan support in both the Texas House and Senate, we passed a critical legislative package strengthening the foundation on which our children will build their future.

■ **School districts are awarded** more resources to improve pre-kindergarten program quality while being held more accountable for student success.

■ **Teachers now have access** to new specialized training to help more of our children master critical reading and math skills in kindergarten through fifth grade.

■ **Parents are being empowered** with clear and concise school performance information so they can make the best educational decisions for their children.

#### HIGHER EDUCATION

To make college more affordable for more Texas families:

■ **More college credits earned** early in high school are counted.

■ **College credits transfer more** easily between institutions.

■ **Career and technical training** pathways are cleared of obstacles to meet the growing demand in high-skilled technical fields.



**“Education is the key that opens the door to economic opportunity.”** Governor Abbott honoring 2015 National Teacher of the Year Shanna Peebles from Palo Duro High School in Amarillo. Celebrating the first day of school with students at Zavala Elementary in Austin. Announcing a major grant by the United Health Foundation to The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine in Edinburg.

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“Texas is the land of opportunity,  
where the improbable becomes the possible...  
The future is yet to be written—all of our children should be its authors.”

Governor Abbott's remarks to the Fort Worth Metropolitan Black Chamber of Commerce, June 2015

And because technologies not yet invented will drive continuing innovation in higher education and future job growth:

■ **We've committed \$450 million** to elevate our university research programs and to attract even more nationally recognized researchers and Nobel Laureates.

#### ROADS

To keep Texas commerce and commuters moving:

■ **We're adding nearly \$4 billion** more for roads without raising tolls, fees, debt or taxes.

#### TAX RELIEF

We're freeing Texas businesses and homeowners to invest more of their own money in new jobs, higher wages and stimulating the Texas economy.

■ **We cut the business franchise tax by 25 percent.**

■ **And we're providing tax relief** to homeowners by increasing the homestead exemption to \$25,000 while holding local taxing districts more accountable to voters as first steps toward lasting relief.

#### BORDER SECURITY

To address the threats posed to communities large and small all across our state due to the federal government's failure to secure our nation's border:

■ **We are nearly doubling our** investment in border security, allocating approximately \$800 million for added public safety personnel, technology and local resources.

#### FREEDOM

Thanks to all of my partners in the 84th Legislature, much more was accomplished this session.

■ **We're keeping our state strong** and prosperous with a budget below the state's spending limit.

■ **We're removing barriers to job** growth to unleash the power of entrepreneurs and innovators.

■ **And we're securing Texans'** freedom to aspire.

I invite you to read more in this report about all we accomplished together in 2015. And I look forward to the successes to come as we build an even stronger Texas for tomorrow.



“While other states are raising taxes, we just slashed the business franchise tax by 25 percent.” Governor Abbott and the First Lady welcoming guests to a Governor's Commission for Women luncheon honoring women serving in the 84th Texas Legislature. Traveling to Mexico on his first international trip to strengthen trade relations. Touring the 1.25-million-square-foot Amazon Fulfillment Center in Schertz.

## Spurring continuing economic expansion

**Job creation is the lifeblood of our state; our long history of job growth equates to more opportunity for all Texans.**

Governor Abbott accepting a personalized welding helmet at Texas State Technical College's 50th Anniversary Celebration.



► **VIDEO LINKS:**

[Governor Abbott Lures Businesses To Texas From NY](#)

[Governor Abbott Goes To Mexico](#)

[Governor Abbott Goes To Cuba](#)

**B**ecause of the robust strength, resilience and diversity of the Texas economy—the 12th largest in the world—jobs are growing and employment is holding steady, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Dallas, despite losses in the energy sector driven by the drop in oil prices. In fact, manufacturing accelerated in the last quarter of 2015.

### **JOB GROWTH REPORT**

■ **Texas employers added** 166,900 non-farm jobs in 2015 across nine of 11 major industries.

■ **Job creators include 2.4 million** small businesses and 54 Fortune 500 companies attracted by our work-ready job force of 13 million.

■ **Texas still leads in energy** production and exports; we're also among the top states for technology, manufacturing and healthcare jobs.

■ **Even as our population grows,** the unemployment rate has been at or below the national average for 108 consecutive months.

■ **In fact, if not for Texas' record** job growth, the nation as a whole would have experienced a net job loss since the 2007 recession.

### **BUSINESS CLIMATE REPORT**

When businesses succeed here, Texans succeed.

■ **Texas ranks first for economic** climate according to Forbes.



■ **Texas is again ranked the best** state for business—the 11th year in a row—in Chief Executive’s survey of the nation’s top CEOs.

■ **Texas is the No. 1 state** for foreign and domestic investments as noted in IBM’s 2015 Global Location Trends Facts & Figures.

■ **Texas is also the top performing** state for qualified capital investments for the third year in a row and the sixth year since 2004. According to Site Selection magazine, each of the 689 business facility projects completed in 2014 represents a minimum investment of \$1 million.

■ **Showing the breadth of these** capital investments, Odessa, Houston and Dallas were also named among the top metro areas in the nation for facility growth.

■ **And Houston ranks third** in the nation, behind only New York and Los Angeles, for minority-owned startups.

#### EXPANDING THE ECONOMY

To spur continuing job growth:

■ **I restructured key divisions** in my office to increase the focus on economic development.

■ **While Texas imposes no** personal or corporate income tax, we just cut taxes by nearly \$4 billion to further stimulate job creation and the Texas economy.

■ **We are also speeding up** permitting processes and have eliminated occupational licensing fees for more than 600,000 Texas professionals.

#### 2015 CORPORATE RELOCATIONS AND EXPANSIONS

**Attracted by Governor Abbott’s pro-growth economic policies and our work-ready job force, even more businesses and jobs came to Texas this year, including:**

■ **Kubota Tractor**—from Torrance, Calif., to Grapevine, a \$51 million capital investment creating 344 new jobs;

■ **Farmer Brothers**—also from Torrance, Calif., to Grapevine, a \$65 million investment bringing 350 new jobs;

■ **LiveOps**—from Redwood City, Calif., to Cedar Park, a \$5 million capital investment in Texas adding 155 new jobs;

■ **GM Financial**—expanding operations here, building a servicing center in San Antonio, a \$20 million investment creating 490 jobs;

■ **Facebook**—building a data center in Fort Worth representing more than \$500 million in capital investment and 40-plus full-time jobs;

■ **GRI Renewable Industries** of Spain—building a manufacturing plant in Amarillo, a \$41 million investment creating 300 new jobs;

■ **Amazon**—building its fifth center in San Marcos, investing more than \$400 million to date and creating over 3,500 jobs in the state;

■ **CGT U.S. Limited**—constructing a new manufacturing facility in New Braunfels, an \$80 million investment creating at least 275 jobs;

■ **Apple, Oracle, Google and Microsoft**—expanding their corporate presence and jobs in Texas’ tech innovation corridor.

#### SPOTLIGHT:

##### WOMEN-OWNED BUSINESSES

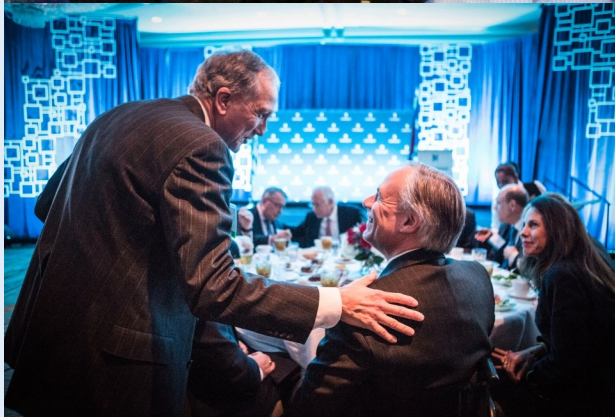
Women business owners are a powerful economic force, and my goal is to make Texas the most welcoming home for them.

Women in business are looking for the same opportunities as all entrepreneurs—more access to capital, fewer barriers to entry and greater freedom to grow. Texas offers more of those growth opportunities.

■ **We’re also connecting Texas** businesswomen to resources through the Governor’s Commission for Women.

■ **And I proudly approved \$2.2** million in funding to establish a Center for Women in Business at Texas Woman’s University in Denton to provide more of the tools needed to succeed.

**“Freedom is the intangible but very real promise of Texas that encourages businesses to grow here.”**



Governor Abbott celebrating with members of the National Association of Women Business Owners at the national convention and gala in San Antonio. Sharing his bold vision for continuing innovation and job growth with the Greater Houston Partnership. Breaking ground on a new Facebook data center in Fort Worth to be powered by 100 percent renewable energy.



## Unlocking opportunity for more Texas children

### Students learning in our classrooms today are more than the future workforce of Texas.

They are also the future job creators of America.

► **VIDEO LINKS:**

[Governor Abbott On The Importance Of Early Education](#)

**T**exas public schools educate more than 5.2 million students in pre-kindergarten through 12th grade—that's more than 1 in 10 of all public school students in the U.S.

In just the last decade, enrollment has grown 19 percent, and more than 17 percent of our students receive bilingual or English as a Second Language instruction.

The gains we make here matter not only for our children's future, but also for the nation's.

■ **That's why I want our schools** to be the best in America.

■ **I want every child reading at** grade level by third grade.

■ **And I want every high school** diploma to truly certify a student is career-ready or college-ready.

#### EDUCATION GAINS REPORT

Because of our dedicated teachers and involved parents, more of our students are succeeding.

■ **Four of the top 10 high schools** and the highest-ranked high school in the nation are in Texas, according to U.S. News.

■ **Our 88.3 percent on-time high** school graduation rate is at an all-time high, placing us in the top five nationally.

■ **And notably, our Hispanic and** African-American students are graduating at the second-highest rate of their peers in all states.

As more of our students are college-bound:

■ **The number of Texas high** school students taking Advanced Placement exams has doubled,



**“Teaching is more than just a job—it’s a calling and a commitment.”** Governor Abbott visiting the School at St. George Place to present his education plan to Houston ISD leaders. Signing his gold-standard pre-kindergarten program into law. Celebrating the success of public charter schools with students, teachers and parents at a rally on the south steps of the Texas Capitol.

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“We must not rest. We must not relent.  
We can be No. 1 in education if we apply the same tenacity and  
commitment to education as we do to job creation.”

Governor Abbott's State of the State Address, February 2015

and they are more likely to qualify for college credit when compared to the national average.

■ **More of our students are also** taking the SAT and ACT college entrance exams, including double-digit gains for the number of Hispanic and African-American students participating.

We're also seeing encouraging gains by our elementary and middle school students.

■ **Texas students have jumped** from 27th to 11th in the nation in fourth grade math in two years.

■ **African-American students in** Texas are second in the nation in fourth grade math; our Hispanic students are fourth.

■ **Our students also exceed** the national average in eighth grade math.

### UNLOCKING MORE OPPORTUNITY

To build a stronger early education foundation in reading and math, we're providing our educators with new resources.

■ **High-quality pre-kindergarten** increases per-student funding for districts voluntarily adopting more rigorous instruction guidelines,



“Your lives will not be defined by how you are challenged, but by how you respond to those challenges.” Governor Abbott congratulating the class of 2015 at his alma mater, Duncanville High School. (Photo courtesy of Duncanville ISD.)

teacher qualifications and parental engagement measures.

■ **Reading Excellence Teams** offer in-classroom skills coaching for K-3 reading teachers.

■ **Literacy Achievement Academies** provide intensive face-to-face training in the summer with an innovative reading, writing and technology curriculum for K-3 teachers.

■ **Math and Technology Achievement Academies** offer advanced instruction for K-3 math teachers so our students can compete for the more than one million new STEM-related jobs.

■ **Reading-to-Learn Academies** offer educators in grades 4 and 5 curriculum-focused teaching strategies to improve student comprehension across subjects.

■ **And to increase transparency** and give parents the information they deserve, districts will provide A through F performance ratings for each campus.

With parents, educators and communities working together, we will build a foundation of excellence for all of our children.

## Learning to earn for the future

### Texas colleges and universities are vital centers for developing new knowledge,

where groundbreaking innovations are born that drive our state's economy and improve quality of life for all Texans.

► **VIDEO LINKS:**

[Governor Abbott On Making Higher Education More Affordable](#)

[Governor Abbott Elevates Higher Education in Texas](#)

**A** skilled, educated workforce is a competitive advantage—as is a degree from one of the leading institutions of higher education in Texas.

#### HIGHER EDUCATION REPORT

More than 1.6 million students are currently enrolled in Texas public colleges and universities.

■ **With a sharpening focus on** performance and outcomes, more than 2.6 million undergraduate credentials have been awarded since 2000.

■ **Our six-year college graduation** rate is at 60.5 percent, up from 49.6 percent in 2000.

■ **Community college completion** rates are up 179 percent; certificate awards have increased 107 percent.

■ **And we've doubled enrollment** of Hispanic and African-American students in Texas.

#### LEARNING TO EARN MORE

We need more students in Texas advancing up the ladder of success—whether the next step is career and technical training, a community college, the military or an academic degree program.

That's why we passed laws that help more students graduate on time with less debt.

■ **Advanced Placement scores** of 3 or higher earned in high school now qualify for college credit in Texas public colleges and universities, saving students and families thousands in tuition costs.

■ **Core courses are now more** consistently transferable between institutions so students don't waste time and money repeating classes they've already passed.

■ **Community college class** scheduling is now more predictable for students attending part-time while working to pay tuition—with morning, afternoon and evening class blocks.

And to advance higher education and fuel economic development:

■ **We are making a strategic** investment of \$450 million to elevate the national research standings of our public colleges and universities.

■ **This includes matching funds** from the new Governor's University Research Initiative to help our universities recruit even more Nobel Laureates and National Academy members who will partner with the private sector to develop ideas that transform the next generation.

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“We must make college more affordable and accessible.  
We must better prepare our students for real-life workforce needs.”

Governor Abbott's State of the State Address, February 2015

#### **SPOTLIGHT: 60x30TX**

The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's 60x30TX Plan will also help take Texas to the next level.

■ **By 2030, 60 percent of Texans** ages 25-34 will have earned a certificate or degree.

■ **All graduates from public** higher education institutions will have completed programs with identified marketable skills.

■ **And undergraduate loan debt** will not exceed 60 percent of first-year wages for graduates of Texas public institutions.

But 60x30TX is about more than numbers. It's about creating even more opportunity for more Texans. When we meet these goals, Texas will be the undisputed center for innovation and intellectual capital.

#### **ACCELERATED DEGREE PROGRAM FOR VETERANS**

**The new Veteran Bachelor of Science in Nursing degree program at Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center** is the future of higher education—offering online access, competency-based evaluation and credit for previous education and training.

Started with a seed grant from the Texas Workforce Commission's Credit for Heroes program, the VBSN program will put medically experienced military veterans on a path to pursue a bachelor's degree in nursing without having to start over in training.

If the rigorous training that military medics and corpsmen receive meets the standard of the U.S. military, it should be good enough for the State of Texas.

The fast-track 12-month degree program at Texas Tech addresses three critical needs:

- **Creating career paths** for returning veterans;
- **Educating more Texans** to address the nationwide nursing shortage;
- **Improving care for our veterans** by working with clinical partners in the VA health care system.



**“Rivalries exist, but competition raises rankings—and our premier colleges and universities are working toward a singular goal: educating the future leaders of America.”** Governor Abbott visiting with The University of Texas Longhorn Band in Austin. Signing the game-changing Governor's University Research Initiative. Adopting Aggie spirit on the sidelines at Texas A&M University's Kyle Field.



## Serving those who served

### America is the greatest force for freedom the world has ever known

because of those who wear the uniform of the U.S. Armed Forces. They have been there to serve us; it is our turn to serve them.

#### ► RELATED NEWS:

[Governor Abbott Orders National Guard To Carry Guns On Base](#)

[Office Of Governor Awards \\$15 Million To Texas Military Installations](#)

**T**exans have long played a powerful role in defending this nation. Many have served, and many more have trained and lived on military installations in this state.

Today, Texas is the proud home to almost 2 million veterans, active duty military, reserve and National Guard members and their families.

■ **So important is the military's** role in Texas, one of the first pieces of legislation I signed into law as governor was the Stolen Valor Bill increasing the penalty for presenting a fraudulent military record in Texas.

■ **No veteran should wait in line** for care. I called on Congress to pass legislation adding in-patient and urgent care facilities at the VA Health Care Center in Harlingen, and I offered The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine and its 15,000-square-foot Smart Hospital complex as a force multiplier.

■ **To help our military heal their** deepest wounds, mental health and family support services will be offered locally in partnership with private providers.

■ **And because Texas is home to** more women veterans than any state, a Women Veterans Program has been created to improve access to benefits.

As our veterans transition to civilian life, we've also made it easier for them to open a business and create new jobs in Texas.

■ **Occupational license and exam** fees are now waived for veterans with the required education, training and practical experience.

■ **New veteran-owned businesses** are now exempt from franchise taxes for the first five years.

Finally, we were often reminded this year that our freedom is not free. On behalf of all Texans, I was privileged to:

■ **Declare Feb. 2 Chris Kyle Day** in honor of his service and that of his comrades in arms who have long defended our great nation;

■ **Attend the Purple Heart** ceremony at Fort Hood for victims of the 2009 terrorist attack;

■ **Award the Lone Star Medal of** Valor to retired Marine Sgt. Ronnie Reininger;

■ **Present Texas Legislative** Medals of Honor to the families of U.S. Army Lt. Col. Ed Dyess and U.S. Navy Chief Petty Officer Chris Kyle;

■ **Present Texas Purple Hearts** to Texas National Guard members injured while serving.

As Texans, as Americans, we must recommit to serve all of those who have served.

**“It is our duty to honor those whose **sacrifice** has preserved our freedom.”**



Governor Abbott presenting a Texas Purple Heart to Pfc. Jose Romo of Pasadena, one of four Texas National Guard members injured in September by an improvised explosive device while serving in Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. Presenting a Texas Legislative Medal of Honor for Chief Petty Officer Chris Kyle to his widow Taya Kyle. Meeting with members of the Greatest Generation outside the Texas Capitol following the 2015 Veterans Day parade.



## Protecting against known and unknown threats

### It is imperative for the state to fulfill its most solemn responsibility:

protecting the safety of our citizens and communities while respecting individual rights and civil liberties.

#### ► RELATED NEWS:

[Governor Abbott Directs DFPS To Implement New Child Safety Measures](#)

[Governor Abbott Releases Texas Homeland Security Strategic Plan](#)

[Governor Abbott Announces State Refugee Act With Senator Ted Cruz](#)

**K**eeping Texans safe from threats to our security—whether from within our communities or from across the border—is my top priority.

#### BORDER SECURITY REPORT

■ **I warned the U.S. Department of Homeland Security** in September about the significant increase in unaccompanied minors once again pouring across our border and challenging Texas' security and resources.

■ **The federal government** compounded its negligence by failing to give advance notice so state and local governments could prepare for the administration's unilateral decision to relocate thousands of foreign nationals in Texas.

#### ENFORCING SECURITY

As governor, I will not allow our porous border to go undefended. That is why we took these measures this legislative session:

■ **We have nearly doubled border security funding** to approximately \$800 million.

■ **We are accelerating the hiring** of 250 additional DPS troopers for the border region.

■ **We're providing additional training and equipment** for border security and enforcement.

■ **And we are giving prosecutors** across the state more tools to crack down on criminal enterprises involved in human trafficking and drug smuggling.



**"Texas is strong. When we work together, we're even stronger."** Honoring fallen officers at the 2015 DPS Peace Officer Memorial Service. Governor Abbott signing Kari's Law requiring direct dial of 9-1-1 from multi-line telephones. Briefing the public on state resources dispatched to disaster areas.

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“All of the men and women who protect and serve,  
and the families who stand by their side,  
deserve our deepest respect. They are the best of Texas.”

Governor Abbott's remarks at the Star of Texas Awards, September 2015

■ **To stop the reach of gangs into** our communities and schools, we're expanding the Texas Anti-Gang Program across the state.

■ **And all state agencies are now** required to use E-verify when hiring new employees.

I am also taking the following actions as governor to respond to the federal government's inaction:

■ **Extending National Guard troop** deployments at strategic locations on the border;

■ **Increasing the number of boats** and tactical officers at strategic locations on the Rio Grande River, coordinating Texas Department of Public Safety and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department resources;

■ **Instructing DPS to increase** aerial observation missions to aid interdiction efforts;

■ **Awarding grants to the Border** Prosecution Unit and to local law enforcement in the border region;

■ **And again urging Homeland** Security to increase U.S. Border Patrol agents in Texas.



“As the people of Texas and across America are enjoying their Christmas holiday, they do so under the blanket of freedom you help to protect for this state and this nation every single day.” Governor Abbott sharing his thanks with Texas National Guard troops and their families in Weslaco during the holiday season.

Finally, to ensure compliance with the rule of law and the safety of all Texas communities:

■ **Any sheriff's department that** does not fully honor detention requests from Immigration and Customs Enforcement will not be eligible for grants from my office's Criminal Justice Division.

■ **I supported the Texas attorney** general's decision to sue the federal government to stop the resettlement of any Syrian refugees because the federal government does not have the necessary security screening precautions in place.

■ **And I am working with** Congress on the State Refugee Security Act giving governors tools to reject resettlements until security screening improves.

#### **PREPARING COMMUNITIES**

We are also helping communities prepare for threats and hazards that pose the greatest risk.

■ **We are awarding \$57 million in** homeland security preparedness grants to jurisdictions across the state for security planning, organization, equipment, training and exercises.

## INCREASING PROTECTION

To provide more protection for the most vulnerable in our society, we:

- **Awarded \$165 million in** criminal justice and victim services grants to local law enforcement agencies, domestic violence shelters, child sex-trafficking victims programs and other governmental and nonprofit agencies across Texas;

- **Strengthened Texas law** against human smuggling;

- **United law enforcement,** prosecutors, medical professionals and victim advocates at the local level by creating Domestic Violence High-Risk Teams;

- **Increased funding for Sexual** Assault Nurse Examiners and for DNA testing of sexual assault kits;

- **Made the online solicitation** of a minor a punishable offense;

- **Created civil and criminal** liability for “revenge porn,” the disclosing of sexually explicit

images of a former partner without consent;

- **And we are doing more to** address the tragedy of child sex trafficking by building programs to provide statewide coordination of prevention activities and wrap-around care for young survivors.

## PROTECTING LAW ENFORCEMENT

To more adequately protect our law enforcement officials from acts of retaliation:

- **The dissemination of certain** personal information of peace officers or their family members is now an offense for interference with public duties.

## DISASTER RESPONSE REPORT

This was a challenging year as families and businesses across the state faced devastating fires, flooding, blizzards and tornadoes.

We mourn deeply the loss of life. We look for lessons learned. And we will rebuild for the future.

- **Disaster declarations were** issued for counties across the state to activate emergency management plans and to help secure federal recovery funds.

- **And at the state level, we will** continue to assist with challenges faced from the flooding in Wimberley and beyond, to the fires in Bastrop County, the severe winter weather in West and North Texas and the tornadoes that hit across the state.

I want to thank our dedicated first responders and local officials on the ground as well as all Texans for heeding warnings about the dangers posed and for rushing in to help family, friends and neighbors in the long recovery.

## SPOTLIGHT: FIRST RESPONDERS

In September, I had the privilege of honoring 28 true Texas heroes and meeting their families at the Star of Texas Awards recognizing first responders killed or injured in the line of duty.

Those who are first to respond, to provide comfort and safety, to save lives at costs unknown, that is a special calling only the best can answer.

I also called for a moment of silence on September 4 at 11 a.m. to honor the service of Harris County Deputy Darren Goforth, who was so cowardly murdered. Officers on patrol around the state also turned on their vehicles' flashing lights.

The moment served as a reminder: For our law enforcement officers to stand in front of us and all that threatens, we must stand behind them.



**“Respect and pride in our law enforcement must be restored in this state and nation.”** Governor Abbott inviting law enforcement officers and Texans around the state to pause for a moment of silence on September 4 honoring Harris County Deputy Darren Goforth.

## Preserving our freedoms

**Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness—these are more than just words.**

These are the story of America, of why we believe in America.

► **RELATED NEWS:**

[Texas Eliminates Taxpayer Funding To Planned Parenthood](#)

[Governor Greg Abbott And First Lady Cecilia Abbott Receive Dignity In Life Award](#)

[Governor Abbott Sends Letter To BLM Director Over Federal Land Grab](#)

I'm proud that no state does more to preserve, protect and defend our God-given rights.

### **PRESERVING LIFE**

We made significant strides this session in further protecting innocent life and the health and safety of vulnerable Texans.

■ **Pregnant minors are now more** safeguarded from exploitation in the judicial system.

■ **Texans nearing the end of life** have new protections for continuing care.

■ **Alternatives to Abortion** program funding has been increased to \$18 million.

■ **And Texas Women's Health** Program funding has been increased by \$50 million to provide more women with access to family planning services and annual exams at no cost.

In the wake of the videos exposing horrific abortion clinic practices, my LIFE Initiative called for immediate and ongoing action:

■ **We must make partial-birth** abortion a felony in Texas; it must also be illegal for doctors to risk a woman's health by altering abortion procedures to preserve fetal body parts.

■ **We must expand adoption** services and increase support for children and families at risk of abuse and neglect.

■ **Taxpayer funding must be** eliminated completely for any abortion provider in Texas.

■ **And we must criminalize any** sale or transaction of fetal body parts or tissue in Texas by an abortion clinic for any purpose.

### **PRESERVING LIBERTY**

Because Texans must be secure in the knowledge that our religious freedom is beyond the reach of government or coercion by the courts:

■ **I signed the Pastor Protection** Act ensuring clergy cannot be forced to violate their sincerely held religious beliefs.

■ **I instructed all state agencies** to never pressure individuals or organizations into violating their First Amendment rights.

■ **I supported the right of local** governments to publicly display Nativity scenes and defended the right of law enforcement in Texas to display the national motto, "In God We Trust," on their patrol cars.

And I'm proud we expanded liberty in Texas:

■ **Licensed Texans can openly** carry a holstered handgun in public.

■ **And licensed Texans can carry** concealed handguns on public higher education campuses beginning August 2016.