

SENATE JOURNAL

EIGHTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE — REGULAR SESSION

AUSTIN, TEXAS

PROCEEDINGS

FIRST DAY

(Tuesday, January 8, 2019)

In accordance with the Constitution and Laws of the State of Texas, the Senate of the Eighty-sixth Legislature met in the Senate Chamber of the State Capitol on Tuesday, the 8th day of January, 2019, at 12:00 noon.

The Honorable Jane Nelson called the Senate to order.

The Reverend Dr. Griff Martin, First Baptist Church, Austin, offered the invocation as follows:

God, whom we know in this space through many different names but whom hopefully we all know through one attribute: that of love. May that be the guiding force this session: love. May love guide every decision made in this place. May love be the foundation of every law and piece of legislation. May love guide every discussion that takes place here. May that love guide our vision, capture our imagination, and captivate our hearts. May love call us to more. Love is our work as human beings. Love is how we speak truth to power and create new systems of equality. Love is the prophetic language of justice. Love is our primary verb. Love is how we change the world for the better. And may that love be for every Texan, not just the ones who get us elected and fund our campaigns, and not just the ones who agree with us, but every Texan. God, may this place be filled with public servants striving for love and working for the common greater good because that is what our state needs. And that is work in which You will be pleased. Amen and amen.

ROLL CALL OF SENATORS

The Presiding Officer directed the Secretary of the Senate to call the roll of the Members of the Senate.

The roll was called and the following Senators answered to their names: Alvarado, Birdwell, Buckingham, Creighton, Flores, Hinojosa, Hughes, Kolkhorst, Lucio, Menéndez, Miles, Nelson, Perry, Rodríguez, Taylor, Zaffirini.

MESSAGE FROM THE SECRETARY OF STATE

The following message from the Secretary of State was read and was filed with the Secretary of the Senate:

THE STATE OF TEXAS

Secretary of State

I, ROLANDO B. PABLOS, Secretary of State of the State of Texas, DO HEREBY CERTIFY that according to the records of this office the attached is a true and correct list, in district order, of the members of the Senate of the 86th Legislature, 2019, whose election on November 6, 2018, has been duly and legally certified to this office.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto signed my name officially and caused to be impressed hereon the Seal of State at my office in the City of Austin, Texas this 10th day of December, 2018.

(Seal)

/s/Rolando B. Pablos
Secretary of State

TEXAS SENATORS ELECTED NOVEMBER 6, 2018

State Senator, District 2	Bob Hall
State Senator, District 3	Robert Nichols
State Senator, District 5	Charles Schwertner
State Senator, District 7	Paul Bettencourt
State Senator, District 8	Angela Paxton
State Senator, District 9	Kelly Hancock
State Senator, District 10	Beverly Powell
State Senator, District 14	Kirk Watson
State Senator, District 15	John Whitmire
State Senator, District 16	Nathan Johnson
State Senator, District 17	Joan Huffman
State Senator, District 23	Royce West
State Senator, District 25	Donna Campbell
State Senator, District 30	Pat Fallon
State Senator, District 31	Kel Seliger

ROLL CALL OF SENATORS-ELECT

The Presiding Officer directed the Secretary of the Senate to call the roll of Senators-elect as certified by the Secretary of State.

The roll was called and the following Senators-elect answered to their names: Bettencourt, Campbell, Fallon, Hall, Hancock, Huffman, Johnson, Nichols, Paxton, Powell, Schwertner, Seliger, Watson, West, Whitmire.

**OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED
TO SENATORS-ELECT**

The Presiding Officer directed the Senators-elect to proceed to the Bar of the Senate.

Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht administered the Constitutional Oath of Office to the Senators-elect as follows:

I, _____, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of Senator of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this state, so help me God.

The Presiding Officer announced that a quorum of the Senate was present.

APPRECIATION EXTENDED

The Presiding Officer extended appreciation to Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht for his assistance in the opening session of the 86th Legislature.

GUEST PRESENTED

The Presiding Officer introduced to the Senate Cecilia Abbott, wife of Governor Greg Abbott.

The Senate welcomed its guest.

ADDRESS BY GOVERNOR

The Presiding Officer presented to the Senate Governor Greg Abbott, who addressed the Senate as follows:

Thank you all. Thank you all and, Senator Nelson, thank you. Let me start out by expressing my congratulations to everybody who just took the oath of office. Whether you are here for one of many sessions that you've been in service or whether or not you were just newly elected, this is a monumental moment both for you as well as the people of Texas. So, I congratulate everybody who just won election or re-election. Those are rigors that are very tough on individuals as well as families. But they are rigors worth paying the price for, for the very reason why you are here. I congratulate all the family members and friends who gather with you, whether they are seated by you or whether they are seated above us or whether they may be outside the room. Because one thing we all know, we don't have the opportunity to come in here and serve without the love and support of so many family members and friends across the entire State of Texas and maybe even beyond our borders. But we're here today for the very beginning of a very monumental time. I want you to think for a second, if you would, about the desks that you are sitting at. For some of you, you may have sat at that desk for years now. Others of you are seated at that desk for the very first time. Regardless, the fact is, that desk holds so many stories about so much history that has meant so much in shaping this state in which we live. But the awesome thing about it is that the chapter of history that will be added to that desk in the next 140 days will surpass whatever has happened that's come before. I think what happened already today is an auspicious beginning of the history that we will make. I'm going to say something that I've been told, and maybe someone can fact check it later, but I think when we gavelled in today, with Jane Nelson being the person to gavel it in, is the first time in the history of the State of Texas that a woman gavelled in the beginning of an opening session in the Texas Legislature. If anyone says otherwise, they are just wrong. But those of you who've been

elected by the people back in your districts, they put you here for a reason. They don't want you to come here and just occupy space. They want you to come here and make a difference. And there are so many things that we must do over the next 140 days that will make a difference in people's lives. We must address the challenges of shootings that take place in our schools to make sure that our schools are a safer place for our kids. We must respond to the damages and challenges posed by Hurricane Harvey as well as other storms. And we must address and face up to the challenge of mental health in a time that I know that Senator Nelson is leading the charge on. But there are other challenges that we must address this session, challenges that will alter the arc of the future of Texas, challenges that your constituents and our fellow Texans have been begging for the Legislature to address in a solid way for decades stretching back into the last century. And we are going to step up and address it. We are going to solve school finance reform and property tax reform in Texas this session. A decade or two from now, someone other than yourself may be seated at your desk. When they reach the desk you're in now, they will know the magnitude of the history made by you. And you will be an inspiration for future generations of Senators to live up to the standard that you set this session. May God be with you and guide you over the next 140 days as we chart a course for an even better Texas. God bless you all and God bless the great State of Texas.

GUESTS PRESENTED

The Presiding Officer introduced to the Senate the following state officials: Nathan L. Hecht, John Phillip Devine, Debra Lehrmann, Kevin Yeary, David Newell, Jeff Rose, Melissa Goodwin, Michael Toth, Ken Paxton, George P. Bush, Sid Miller, Mike Morath, Sherry Radack, Bonnie Sudderth, Sandee Bryan Marion, Robert Burns, Carolyn Wright, Josh Moore, Yvonne Rodriguez, Steve McKeithen, John Bailey, James T. Worthen, Dori Contreras, and Kim Thompson Frost.

The Senate welcomed its guests.

AT EASE

The Presiding Officer at 12:19 p.m. announced the Senate would stand At Ease subject to the call of the Chair.

IN LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The Presiding Officer, Senator Nelson in Chair, at 12:45 p.m. called the Senate to order as In Legislative Session.

PHYSICIAN OF THE DAY

Senator Taylor was recognized and presented Dr. Rebecca Hart of League City as the Physician of the Day.

The Senate welcomed Dr. Hart and thanked her for her participation in the Physician of the Day program sponsored by the Texas Academy of Family Physicians.

**ELECTION OF PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE
EIGHTY-SIXTH LEGISLATURE, REGULAR SESSION**

The Presiding Officer announced that the time had arrived for the election of President Pro Tempore of the 86th Legislature, Regular Session.

Senator Whitmire placed in nomination the name of Senator Watson for the office of President Pro Tempore of the 86th Legislature, Regular Session.

The nominating speech by Senator Whitmire and the remarks made to second the nomination are as follows:

Senator Whitmire: I'd like to nominate Senator Kirk Watson as our President Pro Tem for the 86th legislative session. Senator Watson, I'd like to thank you for asking me to place your name in nomination. I'm honored and it's a pleasure, and I want to thank you for your service. We really need you to be our President Pro Tem, as I stand before you. Your character, your experience, the "it" that I witness on a regular basis is what we need at this particular time. Unfortunately, the last year we've received some bad publicity, reflection on this body which is not accurate. I could not be more pleased to present you to this body, to the State of Texas as someone that loves his God, his country, his family, his colleagues, and you practice it, Senator Watson. So, thank you for that service. And I could go back to your childhood, we know you had great parenting or you wouldn't be on this floor today, and I wouldn't be making the remarks that I am. But I'm not going to go back to your childhood in Fort Worth. I'd like to start with Baylor, because I know you were a mischievous student 1 through 12. But at Baylor you were law review editor, number one in your class at law school, which most of us will never know how it feels. You prepared yourself for this date, came to Austin and clerked for federal Judge Sam Johnson, who you know was a mentor of mine when I lived in Hillsboro and he was a District Judge, a State District Judge, actually encouraged me to go to law school. So, I know the influences you've had in your life. Ann Richards made you Chair of the Air Control Board. You transformed that agency into a much more sensitive to our environment and not geared for the special interests, and I would suggest we still have some work to do in that regard. Served as Mayor of Austin, you allowed Austin to continue to be weird, but you also had vision. The people of Austin are benefiting from your public service this very day, the creation of the Dell Medical Center, which was your vision along with others, your improvement to the State Hospital, I could go on and on, and then, today, as a Senator. I can't think of a better face to put on this Senate than Senator Kirk Watson. You're always one of the most prepared Senators. You work across the aisle, really make this body, you make each of us, as Senators, better Senators. You certainly have made me a better Senator by having you on this Senate floor and being a colleague. You know, before I close, in fact, let me point out how proud you are of your family, Liz, Preston, Cooper, your daughter-in-law, and grandchild. I mean, that's what I want people to understand we're about as a Senate. I love this body. I've spent my adult life, practically my entire life, and it concerns me that people do not realize we have outstanding men and women on this Senate floor. They give of their time, they're totally dedicated to public service and understand, as you do, the reason we're here to make improvement in our state and to people's lives. Before I close, because there's others who would like to speak, I would like to take this opportunity,

Kirk, to applaud you and use you as an example for our new Members and those of us who are returning. You understand and you demonstrate, and I would urge my colleagues to watch you on this Senate floor. You understand the role of a State Senator. Let me elaborate a moment. I spent 10 years in the House, it's a great body, but they serve two-year terms, they have small constituencies, they're designed to react to the issue of the day. Kirk, you do such an outstanding job of realizing we're supposed to be the deliberative body. We get four-year terms for the fact that we don't have to worry about that election in two years from now. We look for, as you do on a regular basis, the unintended consequences of proposals. We slow things down. You use the rules so effectively. So, I could spend the rest of this morning talking about how much I appreciate Kirk Watson, and how lucky this state is, your district, and this Senate Chamber and body, for having you as one of our colleagues. Madame Chair, I'm proud to place in nomination Senator Kirk Watson from District 14 as our President Pro Tem for this 86th district. Thank you.

Presiding Officer: Thank you, Dean Whitmire. I, little aside, I have to tell you when the Lieutenant Governor asked if I would preside today, my first reaction was, I want to second the nomination, how do I do that from the Chair, but I'm in the Chair, so I guess I get to recognize myself to do that. It was very important to me, Senator Watson, to be able to second the nomination for your Pro Tem. And Senator Whitmire talked to everybody about the attributes and the experience the Senator Watson brings. He's served at so many levels of government. I remember when you, it was the Air Quality Control Board back then, and now it's the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, he was an Ann Richards appointee to that. Then, as was mentioned, he became Mayor of Austin and was a fierce advocate for transportation improvements, for revitalization of downtown, and, of course, now he's a Senator, whose experience in all those other capacities brings so much to our Chamber, because he provides that special insight into how our local governments work. But I have to tell you, what I love most about Senator Kirk Watson is he's a fighter, and I love that Kirk Watson, and some people in here are saying, wait, she's a conservative Republican, why is she loving the fact that Kirk Watson's a fighter? First of all, let me tell everybody, you don't realize that, I'll bet 90 percent, probably more, of what we do in this Chamber is not partisan. We all care about the education of all of our children and our grandchildren now, too. We all care about the health and the safety of all Texans. And I want to just give you a couple of examples of Kirk Watson fighting. Years ago, 2007, I had a bill that would create the Cancer Research and Prevention Institute of Texas, and you probably know Kirk Watson is a cancer survivor. I think both your parents were cancer survivors, and he is passionate about cancer research and prevention. And so, when we created this, we call it CPRIT now, but Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas, nobody fought harder to make that a reality than Kirk Watson. And today that entity has proven so successful, it has made Texas a world leader in cancer research, and if it hadn't been for Kirk Watson, we wouldn't be there. We attract talents from around the world that are conducting groundbreaking research to find a cure for cancer as well as the prevention components. None of that would have been possible without Senator Watson's support and passionate advocacy. We could tell a lot of stories about getting that bill passed. He's a member of the Senate Finance Committee that I chair, and he is a

strong proponent of education, of transportation, health care, including mental health. He says a refrain that we've heard so often I can repeat it from memory. Kirk Watson says that he wants mental health to be treated just like heart health, and I agree, Senator Watson. Through funding, he helped secure, I think Senator Whitmire mentioned the Dell Medical School, right here at UT. We're training doctors to treat mental health on a continuum of care just like any other disease, Kirk Watson. I could go on and on about his many accomplishments but, you know, Kirk Watson actually grew up, you met Liz there, right, in Saginaw, my district, but his home and his heart right now are in Central Texas. He loves his constituents, and he comes here to fight for them every single day. Senator Watson is in a unique position of representing Austin, Texas, where our State Capital is, so, his district includes many of our Capitol staff, employees. And for 140 days, we're, we're here with you, Senator Watson. We appreciate your hospitality. You're a great host, and you take great care of us when we're here. We know when we head back to our district, Senator Watson keeps our Capital home fires burning. But I have to talk about what I consider to be your greatest achievement, and they're sitting right around you. He is going to celebrate his 40th wedding anniversary with Liz, they are high school sweethearts. They've raised two terrific boys that we've watched grow up, Preston and Cooper. And I know you all are proud, proud, proud of your dad. Last year, Senator Kirk Watson became a member of what I consider to be the most important caucus in this body, and that's the Grandparent Caucus. He has, she's here with us, right? She is just darling. Effie was brought into the world last year, and it gave Senator Watson a whole new reason to fight to make the world a better place for all of our grandchildren. So, Kirk Watson isn't just a great Senator, he is someone I am proud to call a friend, and it is with pleasure that I second Senator Whitmire's nomination for President Pro Tempore. And now I'll recognize somebody else. See, I made it through without using my Kleenex, I know.

Senator Birdwell: Thank you, Madame President. Members, I rise this afternoon to second the nomination of our colleague, Senator Kirk Watson, to be the President Pro Tem for the 86th Regular Session. When Senator Watson asked me to make this seconding speech, it wasn't because we were both from Tarrant County and spent time on Casino Beach in the '60s, many, many, many, many decades ago. But it was because he, he honored me with the opportunity to do this to express many of the same sentiments that our Chair today, as well as our Dean, have expressed. I did tell him that or did ask him what were his preferred adjectives for which he wanted me to describe him as. And he told me I was at my discretion. And as a career military officer, my two favorite adjectives are dirtbag and maggot. But because that is not an appropriate way to describe our President Pro Tem for the legislative session, I wanted to describe him in a different way. Members, the better description for Senator Watson is both as a valued ally and formidable opponent. Kirk and I have been both. We have both each been the victor and the vanquished on the issues of the day. Do we have our agreements and disagreements? Absolutely. But what I observed is his desire to make legislation the best that it can be even if he opposes the desired end state of that legislation. Specifically, on the floor of this Senate in 2015, during the 84th session, I carried the bill that is most publicly known as campus carry. While that bill would ultimately, he would ultimately oppose that bill, of the 22 amendments that were

offered to that bill, I accepted one, and that was his, because it made the bill a better bill. As my Vice-chair of Nominations, we have jointly pursued holding those in the executive branch overseeing the various boards and commissions to be responsible for everything their organizations do or fail to do. Members, the rigor of work, sense of duty, and dedication of purpose all compel me to accept the honor of seconding the nomination of Senator Kirk Watson to be our President Pro Tem for the 86th Regular Session. God bless you, Kirk. Thank you.

Senator West: Thank you, Madame Chair. Members, especially new Members, and to some of the young adults here and children that are here, I rise today to second the nomination of my friend, my colleague, Kirk Watson. I do so and thank him for the opportunity to second the nomination at a time in America where we need persons like Kirk Watson. Young people, he prepared himself that on this floor as a Senator like many of us have in our respective offices. He was student body president 8th grade, 9th grade, 10th grade, 11th grade, 12th grade. And I really believe that some of the material that he used in the 8th grade he recycled all the way through the 12th grade, as he's that type of person. You know, whether we like it or not, freshmen Members, we are in a divided society right now. All of us know that. We need bridge builders. Yes, Kirk Watson is a Democrat, but you know what, first of all, he's a Texan. He's a Texan that believes that we've got to do what's best for this state, the type of person we are electing today. He's a person that believes that you can disagree without being disagreeable. That's kind of the earmark for this particular body. Yes, we can disagree without being disagreeable. And Kirk is one of the persons going to lead that charge. So you see, as he prepared for this particular day in his life, he built bridges. You know, Kirk is so persuasive, he even persuaded the voters of Travis County to tax themselves with the Dell hospital. Very persuasive. And needless to say that when it comes to issues here in our body, Kirk is called upon to provide leadership just like many of the new Members will be able to do in terms of helping to resolve problems. Madame Chair's correct, most of these issues are not about partisan politics, it's about what's best for the State of Texas. So, as I second your nomination today, Kirk, I know that we are electing the best person for this particular job. Thank you, Madame President.

Senator Seliger: Madame President, Members, ladies and gentlemen, I think the reason that I am giving one of the last of the seconding, seconding speeches is because Senator Watson was hoping that you would be asleep or at lunch now. But it is a very great honor to do so, and in all honesty, it would have cost Senator Watson way too much to get me to sit quietly at my desk during these speeches, and so it's a great honor to talk here. As you look around the room at these portraits, and then you walk through the Capitol, look at all the portraits here, there's something very significant about those people, the greatest majority of them. They are people of enormous vision and moral courage and ethical standing, it's why they are prominent Texans. And those qualities are one of the largest reasons that we nominate today another prominent Texan who has earned that prominence. The story begins, after what I assume was a somewhat misbegotten and callow youth, when Senator Watson went to Baylor University. You don't finish first in your class at Baylor Law School just because you're so darn good looking. You have to be capable and smart and have a great memory. The fact that he married a Texas Tech graduate explains the

intellectual capacity of that family, and I think that's an important thing to note. But after Senator Watson had done all that, and he'd been President of the Chamber of Commerce here and things like that, when he was Mayor, there was an issue of *Texas Monthly* that came out about that time, and it was quoted extensively, a major national business magazine, about the best pro-business mayors in the United States. And think of what it takes, with the various interests in Central Texas and Austin, and Kirk Watson paid close attention to some of the most important elements in any city—transportation, utilities, electricity, livability, and affordability—at the same time getting a reputation that this was one of the best places in the United States to grow and build a business. That influence as Mayor exists even today as you look around Austin. That is a rare sort of influence. Something else I would like you to contemplate as you look around this room and the portraits, how many people here on this, on these walls, do you think have ever ziplined 50 feet over a crowd of 15,000 people in the Full Throttle Bar in Sturgis, South Carolina, South Dakota. Senator Watson has. There is a picture of the leather-clad Kirk Watson standing outside the Devils Tower in Wyoming and while his friends were assuring people that, no, it was not a black leather alien invasion. The simple fact of the matter is, and I think in, in summary, is every endeavor in which Kirk Watson has engaged has been left better by his dedication and his insight, his ability to work with people toward a common goal, which is a better place to live and a better city and a better state of Austin. We are all honored to have as, as our President Pro Tempore, my old, old friend, Senator Kirk Watson.

On motion of Senator Whitmire, Senator Watson was elected President Pro Tempore by a rising vote of the Senate.

The Presiding Officer declared that the Honorable Kirk Watson had been duly elected President Pro Tempore of the 86th Legislature, Regular Session.

The Presiding Officer appointed the following committee to escort Senator Watson and his party to the President's Rostrum: Senators Campbell, Hinojosa, Nichols, and Zaffirini.

Senator Watson and his party were then escorted to the President's Rostrum by the committee.

OATH OF OFFICE ADMINISTERED

Chief Justice Nathan L. Hecht administered the Constitutional Oath of Office to Senator Watson as follows:

I, Kirk Watson, do solemnly swear, that I will faithfully execute the duties of the office of President Pro Tempore of the Senate of the State of Texas, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States and of this state, so help me God.

ADDRESS BY PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE

President Pro Tempore Watson addressed the Senate as follows:

Lieutenant Governor Patrick. Dean Whitmire. Senators Nelson, West, Seliger and Birdwell, members of the escort committee, and all of my colleagues in the Texas Senate.

Thank each of you. I deeply appreciate not only the nice things the speakers have said, but also the friendships and relationships I have with so many of you.

I'm joined by my family. My wife, Liz. Our children Preston and Cooper. Our daughter-in-law Catherine. My brother Kyle is here with my sister-in-law Marianne. And, of course, there's Effie. I'm very proud of this family and thank them so much for being here and their support of my public service.

And thank you to the people of Austin and Central Texas that have allowed me to serve in elective office for such a long time now. Liz and I ended up in Austin in 1981, thinking we'd only be here a year. This town wrapped itself around us and, well, here we are almost 40 years later. The people, the place, the passion and the prospects of Austin and Central Texas still excite me. It's neat to be allowed to be in the middle of so much of it.

This event is especially gratifying because, when I came into the Senate, I was dead last in seniority. Dead last. I told my staff at the time that would happen.

There were 5 new senators that session. One was elected in a special election and had seniority over the other four of us. Those four met with Secretary of the Senate Patsy Spaw on the senate floor to draw four numbers out of a red gimme cap. She went in alphabetical order. Then-senator Glenn Hegar pulled out the number 1. Senator Robert Nichols, the current President Pro Tem of our Senate, went next and pulled out number 2.

The Secretary of the Senate said, "Senator Patrick, you and Senator Watson draw at the same time." So we both reached in and pulled out our little slips of paper. His said "3" and mine said "4."

Just think about it. If you hadn't left the senate, you'd be President Pro Tem today.

More than anything, this moment in time has me thinking about what it means to serve . . . to be a servant . . . about the thing that has brought us all into this special chamber.

From a very early age, I knew I wanted to serve in some way. But it wasn't until my freshman year at Baylor when I first really found myself thinking about and understanding purpose or why one should pursue certain paths.

It was the first time I really heard people my age talk about being "called" to do something. In fact, it was the first time I remember hearing the word "calling" as my classmates contemplated their future.

This was new. It was, frankly, a little concerning. What was a "calling"? What was I supposed to do? Was the path I'd chosen the right path? And how would I know? The Bible tells of a burning bush that gave some clear advice. A burning bush? Our high school barely had a guidance counselor.

One night, talking to my father on the phone, I asked him about it. Daddy said, "Hang on", and went and got his Bible. He read me Romans 12, verses 4-8.

For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Don Watson was a thinker. He was pretty devout, and he questioned, tested and analyzed his faith constantly. He read and studied and often came to very thoughtful, practical conclusions about how belief translates to action. Daddy told me to assess my desires, my strengths, the "gifts" that Paul references, and then to do right with them – whatever they are. Your calling is in the gifts you've been given – God calls us to seek our purpose, to play our parts, and to trust that *our* gifts will be amplified when *others* play their parts appropriately.

Of course, it was also my father who started saying when I was in elementary school, "Son, we've got to figure out a way for you to make a living with that mouth. Otherwise, it's just going to get you in trouble." I'll defer to the will of the Senate as to whether it's a "gift" or "strength" – but about the only thing close to what you might call a talent is that I could talk.

I became a lawyer. And I sought opportunities to serve in that capacity; even in the way I practiced law day to day. There were other opportunities to serve. Governor Richards appointed me to chair a state environmental agency. I was elected Austin Mayor. I ran for Texas Attorney General. I lost to a guy, what was his name? Oh, yeah, Abbott.

And then, I was elected to the Texas Senate.

Where I was last in seniority.

I've tried to follow Daddy's lesson. But simply following one's desires or perceived gifts and strengths doesn't make you a servant any more than words create actions.

To get things done, as we all know very well, service requires *urgency*.

My urgency was manifest over 25 years ago, when I was in my early 30's – when I was told I had metastatic cancer.

I went through chemo and three surgeries, and we hoped I was okay. Then, a couple of years later, they found another tumor, and I had another major surgery.

The last treatment of any kind was back in April of 1995. I am deeply blessed – to be a survivor. Another "gift" – given out of grace.

There's a reason it's a cliché to say "Life is short." I sensed it before my cancer, and it revealed itself in youthful impatience. But my journey reminds me – every day – how short it is.

There's a gift in that as well. Among other things, it enhances empathy for those who suffer and have unfulfilled needs.

Another gift of cancer has been the freedom to take chances. The freedom to pursue things in the right way without fear of consequence. The freedom to seek compromise or practical outcomes when some people demand only one way. The freedom to throw away labels and listen to a person because, even though we think we know all they believe, that label may not be really telling us everything we can or ought to know about them.

And there's a gift in understanding urgency.

Every minute we waste is gone.

You all know that. In one sense, we feel it every session. We're not here just to be here; we're here because there are things we're compelled to accomplish, and we have very little time – 140 days – to accomplish them. If pursuing our gifts, strengths and desires is what we're supposed to do, then urgency is how it gets done.

But . . . what is it? What gets done? What do we do? *Calling* and *urgency* make us servants, but what does that look like?

Priorities give shape to our service.

My priorities, honestly, probably haven't changed that much over the time I've been in the senate or even first ran for office – education, health care, equal rights, government transparency, opportunity.

You'll hear me talk about them some more over the next 140 days. But you'll also probably hear me talk about them a little differently.

You can call that the "Effie Effect".

As I referenced a minute ago, since we were last together, I became a grandfather. And I'm not afraid to say that my single favorite constituent is a 13-month-old girl named Frances Ellen Watson – we call her Effie.

I love Texas. I'm so proud to be part of this state's history, and so grateful of the role it's played in mine. I appreciate, so much, the good, decent, hard-working people of this state. Those Texans – the ones who are here and the ones who are coming – have always shaped the priorities I've brought into this chamber.

But I confess that Effie highlights those priorities. She's made them more real. More immediate. More personal. She has her whole life ahead of her, and the decisions we make over the next 140 days will shape that life.

But not just Effie, of course. Our decisions between now and May will touch 28.7 million Texans. More than 7 million of them are children – just like Effie. Their whole lives are ahead of them too.

While those children may not be one of our actual children or grandchildren, they're all our children. Though they are many, they – we – are members of the same body. And each member belongs to all of the others. They are ours.

What will our actions mean to those dear, sweet, essential Texans?

Of course, Texas is a beautifully diverse place. So we don't all come in here with the same set of priorities. That's more than OK. That's how this system is supposed to work.

But it's reassuring to me when those differing priorities all rise from or out of our own individual, personal versions of the Effie Effect. Our priorities must be driven by their effects on all of our people, especially the people who will define our future.

It's how good-faith principles lead good servants to the common good.

It's how this chamber of servants from different places and different experiences truly succeeds – not in spite of our differences, but because of them.

So, I end where I started, and Don Watson's encouragement.

We're all servant members of one body. We rely on one another – we each belong to all the others. We're all called, we do our best to do the right thing, and we should try not to waste time doing it.

Let that be the legacy of the 86th Texas Legislative Session. I pray it is.

Again, thanks to all of you for your service and for this honor. Thanks again to Liz and my family. And thanks to the people of Austin and Central Texas. God bless you and the people of Texas.

(Note: Prepared text)

MOTION IN WRITING

Senator Kolthorst offered the following Motion In Writing:

Madame President:

I move that the Senate's media policy be waived in order to allow Senator Watson to have recorded video of today's session.

I also move that all the remarks made during today's proceedings be reduced to writing and placed in the journal.

KOLKHORST

The Motion In Writing was read and prevailed without objection.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 3

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following resolution:

SCR 3, Providing for a joint session to canvass the votes for the governor and lieutenant governor and for a joint session for the inaugural ceremony.

WHITMIRE

The resolution was read.

On motion of Senator Whitmire and by unanimous consent, the resolution was considered immediately and was adopted by a viva voce vote.

All Members are deemed to have voted "Yea" on the adoption of the resolution.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 4

The Presiding Officer laid before the Senate the following resolution:

SCR 4, Granting the legislature permission to adjourn for more than three days during the period beginning on Thursday, January 10, 2019, and ending on Tuesday, January 15, 2019.

WHITMIRE

The resolution was read.

On motion of Senator Whitmire and by unanimous consent, the resolution was considered immediately and was adopted by the following vote: Yeas 31, Nays 0.

GUESTS PRESENTED

Senator Zaffirini was recognized and introduced to the Senate Edith Royal and her grandson, David Kazen.

The Senate welcomed its guests.

MOTION IN WRITING

Senator Whitmire offered the following Motion In Writing:

Madame President:

I move that the President be authorized to appoint two committees of five Members each to notify the Governor and the House of Representatives that the Senate is organized and ready to transact business.

WHITMIRE

The Motion In Writing was read and prevailed without objection.

Accordingly, the Presiding Officer appointed the following Committee to Notify the Governor: Senators Nichols, Chair; Flores, Hancock, Hinojosa, and West, and the following Committee to Notify the House of Representatives: Senators Taylor, Chair; Alvarado, Fallon, Johnson, and Paxton.

SENATE NOTIFIED

A committee from the House of Representatives appeared at the Bar of the Senate and notified the President and Members of the Senate that the House was organized and ready to transact business.

RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION

The following resolution was adopted by the Senate:

Memorial Resolution

SR 2 by Watson, In memory of Donald Alan Waller Jr.

ADJOURNMENT

On motion of Senator Whitmire, the Senate at 1:44 p.m. adjourned until 12:00 p.m. tomorrow.