

TEXAS EAGLE FORUM

March 2021

Dear Eagles,

I hope you and your family stayed warm and safe during Texas' epic winter storm last month. So many Texans were without heat and water and suffered the tragic consequences of years of legislative inaction on "hardening" our grid.

Texas Eagle Forum has been concerned about our electric grid for several years. We were co-sponsors of Senator Bob Hall's "Texas Electric Grid Summits" in 2016 and 2019, which informed legislators and citizens how vulnerable our grid is to cyber hacking, as well as to brutally hot and extremely cold weather. Senator Hall has an article in this month's *Torch* entitled, "Texas Electric Grid Resilience is Priority: Fix the Problem." Lawmakers must "fix" our grid this session. No more empty talk, no more excuses. Get it done!

Also in this issue, Trayce Bradford, Eagle Forum Human Trafficking Chair and former TEF President, looks at the evils of human trafficking, especially sex trafficking of children and young teens. Tragically, Texas joins California and Florida in having the most sex trafficking in the Nation. Our goal is to bring awareness and ways to recognize and prevent what is happening under the radar in our communities.

Too many of our elected officials call themselves conservative but are afraid to stand for truth and for our Constitution. They fold in the face of pressure from a more powerful elected official or even a paid lobbyist. They seek the praise of man instead of doing what they know is right. They are in the battle but play it safe.

Eagles aren't afraid of the truth, and we seek to expose it and teach it. Some time ago, I found a poem written by Scottish poet Charles Mackay (1814–1889) entitled, "You Have No Enemies." This poem reinvigorates my courage and keeps me focused when under attack, and I am excited to share it with you.

*YOU have no enemies, you say?
Alas! my friend, the boast is poor;
He who has mingled in the fray
Of duty, that the brave endure,
Must have made foes! If you have none,
Small is the work that you have done.
You've hit no traitor on the hip,
You've dashed no cup from perjured lip,
You've never turned the wrong to right,
You've been a coward in the fight.*

(over, please)

Politics is not for the fainthearted. Margaret Thatcher is said to have kept a copy of Mackay's poem in her scrapbook and often looked at it for solace and inspiration. During her time as England's prime minister, Mrs. Thatcher faced constant disapproval by the press and the opposing party for her conservative politics and policies. She wasn't called "The Iron Lady" because she wanted to be popular. She did what she thought was right for her country and stood firm on her principles. Her famous quote, "This is not the time to go wobbly," encourages me, and I hope you, to take a stand and not back down during this era of conservative suppression.

As the 87th Texas Legislative Session finally gets down to business, how many legislators will fight for our conservative issues and not be "cowards in the fight?" How many are willing to co-sponsor a bill banning minor children from having dangerous and body-altering medical procedures to "change" their gender? How many will back a bill to end abortion in Texas or even support a heartbeat bill? How many will be influenced by powerful lobbyists to vote for Las Vegas-type gambling casinos in Texas, or vote to legalize marijuana, despite studies showing legalization opens the door to hard drugs, increased homelessness, and more crime in our streets? How many will give their approval to HB 3, the terrible bill authored by a Texas Republican, giving the Governor, the Federal Government, and even the CDC more power during a pandemic?

Please pray for legislators to stand strong on our grassroots issues, despite inevitable censure by their peers and the media. We pray God will give them discernment, wisdom, and courage as they look at the bills, listen to their constituents, and cast votes.

Make sure you are receiving our Monday Action Alerts email during the session. We share insight into important bills we are tracking and give action points on how your voice can make a difference. If you are not receiving them, sign up on our website www.texaseagleforum.com.

The month of March ushers in spring, with its budding trees, bluebonnets, and warm sunshine. Texas is so beautiful in spring—barren winter leading to a renewal of life! I am reminded of a spiritual comparison as we celebrate Easter on April 4—the death and resurrection of our Savior Jesus Christ. When we accept His free gift of salvation, we receive eternal life!

I am so grateful for you standing with TEF as we continue to fight for conservative principles in Texas and our beloved Nation. Together, we can keep Texas free for our children, grandchildren, and future generations!

Easter blessings to you and your family!

Faithfully,



Cindi Castilla
President of Texas Eagle Forum

THE TORCH

TEXAS EAGLE FORUM

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The EVIL Of Human Trafficking

By **Trayce Bradford**, Eagle Forum Human Trafficking Chair and former TEF President

From out of the shadows to the forefront is one the most horrendous issues facing our nation today: Human Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children (SEOC). In the United States alone, trafficking and sexual exploitation of children is at least a \$9.5 billion dollar industry. Families from all walks of life are losing daughters and sons to this ever-growing industry. The only way for this to come to an end is for an engaged citizenry to understand this present evil and speak out.

The Trafficking Victims Protection Act (TVPA) of 2000 defines “severe forms of trafficking in persons” as:

- Sex trafficking in which a commercial sex act is induced by force, fraud, or coercion, or in which the person induced to perform such an act has not attained 18 years of age;
- Labor Trafficking: The recruitment, harboring, transportation, provision, or obtaining of a person for labor or services, through the use of force, fraud, or

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coercion for the purpose of subjection to involuntary servitude, peonage, debt bondage, or slavery.

- A victim need not be physically transported from one location to another for the crime to fall within this definition.

Here are some vital facts to help understand the current situation:

- Roughly one-third to one-half of sex trafficking victims are children.
- The average age of entry is 11–14 years.
- Only two percent of victims being trafficked are rescued.
- A trafficker can easily make \$100–250 thousand per year exploiting just four or five children.
- The average life span of a trafficked victim is seven years.
- Many believe those being exploited are runaways and children in already precarious situations. Sadly, that original demographic is still heavily targeted because of the ease of access, as well as low self-esteem issues that often impact minor children.
- The various apps that pre-teens and teens use to share their daily lives are actually very effective tools for traffickers to gain access to a particular target.
- Most teens walk through a vulnerable stage of life seeking affirmation, and savvy traffickers know this. They “hunt” on social media, befriend their target and groom the child to trust them. Before long the young teen has been betrayed by her “new friend” (a “groomer”), abducted, and branded (tattooed).
- The stories and testimonies of children trafficked in this fashion have risen noticeably. Even law enforcement agencies say traffickers are changing the way they solicit potential victims faster than officials can adapt.
- Another approach is to send a young, attractive woman or teen (a “recruiter”) to find their next victim at malls and/or invite them to parties via social media where drugs and alcohol are served, and then stalk them.
- Traffickers do not discriminate based on race, religion, education, or economic levels.
- And, finally, there is the misconception that victims are kidnapped and taken to another country. While some of that still does take place, traffickers learned quickly that selling drugs, weapons, and trafficked laborers are a one-time sell, while the sex-trafficked victim can be sold over and over again. Traffickers no longer need to traffic or buy from other nations; they can find easy access in this Nation.

In 2016, a University of Texas report estimated over 300,000 Texans were human trafficking victims, and nearly 80,000 of those were minors and youth victims of sex trafficking. And, more recently, the National Human Trafficking Hotline (NHTH) data showed Texas had the second-highest number of human trafficking cases in America in 2019, with 1,080 cases reported (most cases are not reported). The Lone Star State is currently ranked second behind California for the number of child sex trafficking cases in the U.S., with Houston and Dallas among the top ten cities in the Nation for trafficking.

Last year, an analysis by the Polaris Project tracked the impact of the COVID pandemic and subsequent quarantine by comparing the NHTH activity in 2019 and 2020, and found trafficking had increased by 40 percent.

Researching where Texas stands on this issue, it is clear we have a way to go. There have been some strong efforts to make impactful change, especially in the private sector, non-profit organizations, and faith-based ministries.

“The only way for this to come to an end is for an engaged citizenry to understand this present evil and speak out.”

But accountability and transparency have to be at the forefront in regards to how and where taxpayer money is spent. SEOC legislation needs harsher penalties for sex traffickers, and “protective response laws” for minor victims, which protect against prosecution for prostitution or other crimes they may have committed while in slavery.

In closing, there are many opportunities to make a difference in the war on Human Trafficking/Sexual Exploitation of a Child. This evil of human trafficking/sexual exploitation of children won’t go away until we, as a people, a State, and a Nation, say NO MORE.

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

1. The National Human Trafficking Hotline is 1-888-373-7888.
2. Educate yourself. View *Be The One* at www.texasattorneygeneral.gov/initiatives/human-trafficking, and the documentary www.contralandmovie.com for information.
3. Share this information with others. The more aware we are, the less access predators and traffickers have to our kids.
4. Make sure the children in your life have accountability when it comes all their social media devices and apps. Talk to your kids about ways predators recruit and groom kids online. This is not about panic or living in fear; this is tactical and practical.
5. Get Involved this legislative session on several human trafficking bills Texas Eagle Forum and other other groups may be advocating. Your voice counts!
6. Most importantly of all, PRAY! Pray for the child victims, families, and those on the front lines fighting to free these children! Pray for the heart of the traffickers and those involved in trafficking find God, turn their lives around and combat this wickedness.

Texas Electric Grid Resilience is Priority: Fix the Problem

By **Senator Bob Hall**, 2/18/21

The 87th Legislature marks the fourth legislature (that's over six years) that a resilient electric grid has been one of my top legislative priorities. While we were successful in getting legislation out of the Texas Senate, the proposal repeatedly failed to make it through the process to become law. Legislators need look no further than the mirror for a scapegoat to place blame for our current situation.

Last session, in a report written to inform constituents about my proposed legislation, I said, "The very idea that a single event causing the loss of the electric grid could plunge the entire nation back into a time without electricity, cell phones, or the internet is so overpowering that it is easier to ignore the threat than to plan for it."

So, we did.

Through participation in a series of conference calls with the Texas Department of Emergency Management (TDEM) and the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) for situation reports, it was obvious that everybody is looking for someone to blame.

Who was it that failed to have a reliable grid in a time of need? Why are areas with significant cold weather not having the same issues? Who made the decision which neighborhoods to cut power to and which ones to leave with power? Why are rolling power outages that are supposed to last 15 to 30 minutes lasting hours or days?

"There is plenty of blame to go around, but the responsibility for the issue lies squarely with the Legislature..."

ERCOT blames the weather or the generation power companies who make the decision to cut the power. The generation companies are just doing what they are told. Some wind turbines are to blame for being frozen. The sun failed to shine during peak need hours, so solar shares some blame. Weather froze key instrumentation equipment preventing coal and natural gas plants from operating.

It would be inaccurate to lay all the blame on windmills and solar panels for the power generation shortage during the recent storm. However, it would be absolutely correct to say the "go green energy" philosophy and policies are at the heart of the Texas power generation struggles. If it were not for the huge amounts of taxpayer money being diverted to "green energy" and the oppressive environmental policies, upgrades to protect the Texas grid against the natural and manmade threats could certainly have been in place. This is supposed by multiple undisputed facts:

- Over \$19 billion of taxpayer money has been sunk into highly unreliable concepts like wind and solar, and we continue to spend approximately \$1.4 billion per year propping it up.
- This far exceeds even the highest estimates for hardening and winterization.
- The "go green" philosophy has caused over 100 Texas coal-fired plants to be closed. This would have provided more than enough generation capacity to have carried us through the low temperatures.
- For environmental reasons and to boost green energy, the federal EPA limits the Texas fossil fuel plant operation to a fraction of actual capacity.
- The taxpayer subsidies for green energy are a deterrent for the investment in construction of more reliable power generation options.

There is plenty of blame to go around, but the responsibility for the issue lies squarely with the Legislature which has failed to require a plan to protect against just such an event as we have had. To their credit, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick and Speaker Dade Phelan both saw the need for the legislation last session, and each played their part in moving the critical legislation. Lt. Governor Patrick ensured my legislation went to the Senate Committee on Natural Resources to ensure a favorable vote to get the bill to the Senate Floor. Speaker Phelan, then chair of the House Committee on State Affairs, did his part and voted the bill out of his committee. Both are key players in ensuring the success of legislation this session.

Since this crisis began, Governor Greg Abbott has added the grid as an emergency item for the legislature to consider. Both Lt. Governor Patrick and Speaker Phelan have charged the appropriate committees to investigate the situation. I applaud their actions and stand ready to help in any way possible.

The real danger of a situation like this is that it causes a lot more to be said than done. However, nothing brings awareness of a situation like being a victim of it. You can watch the New Year's Day videos of people taking the "Polar Bear Plunge" into icy water, but you never know exactly how cold it is until you plunge in yourself.

For better or worse, the Texas Legislature has now taken the plunge.

At the end of the day, if we talk about the situation without solving it by ensuring the resiliency of the electric grid—no matter what the threat—the legislature will continue to bear the responsibility in crises such as these.

Senator Bob Hall (R-Rockwall) has served in the Texas Senate since 2015 and held Texas Electric Grid Summits in 2016 and 2019. Sign up for his timely reports at senatorbobhall.com.



Shakespeare Condemned as a “White Supremacist”

For centuries, William Shakespeare’s works have been used to teach English, humor, irony, and tragedy. It’s strange, then, his lessons in “toxic masculinity” and “Marxism” have been missed until now. “Woke” English teachers are reinterpreting his work or just canceling it because of his “white supremacy, misogyny, racism, and classism.” A “coalition” of far-left teachers want his works removed entirely from school curricula. They demand that Shakespeare and other iconic figures in Western literature either be removed from schools altogether or face mandated criticism. *The School Library Journal*, a far-left publication that calls itself “the premier publication for librarians and information specialists who work with children and teens,” claims that more and more educators believe “it’s time for Shakespeare to be set aside or deemphasized to make room for modern, diverse, and inclusive voices.” Peter Wood, president of the National Association of Scholars, said it’s nothing more than “a new version of cancel culture.” “They have little regard for the great books,” he said.

SOURCE: Bob Unruh, WND, 2/16/21

“Where’s the Beef?”

Bill Gates, the founder of Microsoft and reportedly the fourth-richest person on the planet, self-identifies as an expert on the climate. He now claims the battle against changing climate “is an all-out effort, like a world war, but its us against greenhouse gases.” In a new book, *How to Avoid a Climate Disaster*, Gates takes the rhetoric to a new level by urging “regulation to force people to eat synthetic meat.” Gates invests in a synthetic meat company called Beyond Burgers. Anyone see a potential conflict of interest here? The World Economic Forum is also promoting fake meat. It says a printer can print up to six kilograms of the stuff an hour, and they expect us to get used to it. Wendy’s, the fast-food chain, used to run a TV ad promoting their hamburgers with an old woman shouting, “Where’s the beef?” It could be a shout by meat lovers everywhere unless we tell our “masters” we have had enough.

SOURCE: Cal Thomas, “Where’s the Beef?”, 2/19/21

Remembering Rush | By Colleen Holcomb, Eagle Forum President

Eagle Forum joins millions throughout the country in mourning the passing of the inimitable Rush Limbaugh last month. Rush embodied the spirit of the country he loved so much. He was a brilliant pioneer who gave a voice to those scorned by liberal politicians and cultural elites, hardworking Americans who value faith, family, and freedom. Eagle Forum’s beloved founder, Phyllis Schlafly, and Rush were kindred spirits, both gifted with superior insights and intellect and committed to hard work and excellence in service to America. While Rush is irreplaceable, we at Eagle Forum, commit to honor him by continuing to advance the liberating cause of conservatism.

Wisdom From Rush

“Freedom without virtue isn’t freedom—it will eventually destroy a society.”

“The battle for freedom and liberty really is never over, and there are really low points in it, but I am not giving up.”

“Let me tell you who we conservatives are: we love people. When we look out over the United States, ...we see Americans. We see

human beings. We don’t see groups. We don’t see victims.”

“Liberals always exempt themselves from the rules they impose on others.”

“I want anyone who believes in life, liberty, pursuit of happiness to succeed. And I want any force, any person, any element of an overarching Big Government that would stop your success, I want that organization, that element or that person to fail. I want you to succeed.”

Quote of the Month

“The decision to leave election law hidden beneath a shroud of doubt is baffling. By doing nothing, we invite further confusion and erosion of voter confidence. Our fellow citizens deserve better...”

~ Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas on the Court’s decision not to investigate 2020 election irregularities, *Canada Free Press*, 2/24/21

Great American Quote

“Those who deny freedom to others, deserve it not for themselves; and, under a just God, can not long retain it.”

~ Abraham Lincoln, 1859

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