The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Veto Rampage in Texas Discredits Anti-Trumpers

By John and Andy Schlafly

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Texas Gov. Greg Abbott vetoed more than 75 bills before Sunday night's deadline, mostly sponsored by conservative Texas state senators. Never before in the 178-year history of Texas has its governor vetoed so many bills passed by his own party.

Texas Republicans would override most of these vetoes if they could, but the legislature was required by the state constitution to adjourn in May until 2025. Tens of thousands of hours of work that went into all these bills were washed away by Abbott's retaliatory strike against conservatives.

One of the bills that Gov. Abbott vetoed was SB 335, authored by conservative state Sen. Dr. Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown). It passed the state senate by a unanimous vote of 31-0, and passed the state house by an overwhelming 119 to 19.

This bill sought to require the Texas Family and Protective Services Council, which makes recommendations to the notorious Department of Family and Protective Services, to post online videos of its meetings so that the public can see what they are doing at taxpayer expense. Yet Abbott vetoed this with a petulant message about an unrelated issue.

Another bill sponsored by one of the most conservative Texas legislators, Sen. Tan Parker (R-Flower Mound), would have authorized studying the conversion of coal-fired energy plants into cleaner nuclear plants. SB 1404 passed the senate unanimously 31-0 and passed the house nearly unanimously, yet was likewise vetoed by Abbott with the same peevishness.

Meanwhile, Abbott has refused to endorse Donald Trump for president despite using Trump's endorsement of him to overcome a primary challenge to his reelection last year by two conservatives, former U.S. Rep. Allen West and state Sen. Don Huffines. Trump's endorsement and a hoard of cash from wealthy donors enabled Abbott to survive his primary.

More than two-thirds of the oil and gas donations went to Abbott rather than all the other Texas Republican statewide candidates combined. There are no campaign contribution limits in Texas, so Abbott panders to multi-million-dollar donors from whom he has raised far more money than any other Texan in history.

Despite being reelected by Trump's endorsement last year, Abbott's refusal to endorse him now has the effect of limiting donations by these Texas mega-donors to Trump's campaign and Trump-supporting PACs. A few anti-Trump billionaires and their egotistical mindset are making it easier for Joe Biden to win reelection next year.

Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick, who leads the Texas Senate, prominently endorsed Trump earlier this year. That endorsement may not have sat well with the Never-Trump Republicans, including Abbott, and some view his veto rampage as a retaliation against Patrick.

Lt. Gov. Patrick pointed out that Abbott vetoed some bills as retaliation against conservative Texas Sen. Paul Bettencourt, who has been a leader in the effort to stop rampant election fraud in Harris County (Houston). "This is targeted vetoing of bills that have nothing to do with the issue at hand except Paul Bettencourt is the author of those bills," Patrick said last Thursday in disgust.

Abbott has hurt the Republican Party in Texas with his dictator-like vetoes of many good bills based merely on who sponsored them. Even some Democrats criticize Abbott's conduct, as State Sen. Sarah Eckhardt (D-Austin) observed about Abbott's veto of her bipartisan bill, "This was NOT Vetoed on POLICY."

Abbott's retaliatory vetoes reflect how closely he is tied to RINO mega-donors frustrated by the lack of enactment of their preferred type of property tax reform. These RINO billionaires failed to provide needed financial support for Trump in 2020, and our country cannot afford a repeat of their treachery again next year.

While campaigning against Abbott more than a year ago, Allen West aired a campaign ad standing next to the unfinished border wall in Texas. West rhetorically wondered why Abbott has accomplished so little to secure the border, despite being governor for nearly a decade.

Our entire country suffers enormously from Abbott's unwillingness and ineffectiveness about the Texas border with Mexico. Thousands pour over that Texas-Mexico border every day, bringing drugs with them that spread throughout our country.

Only a few good bills, such as the overwhelmingly popular ban on male-bodied transgenders invading women's sports, and a ban on minors being subjected to life-altering transgender procedures, were signed into law by Gov. Abbott, who was not the real leader on either one. Nothing meaningful was supported or signed by Abbott to stem the tidal wave of illegal migrants crossing the Texas-Mexico border.

No Republican can win a future presidential election without winning Texas, yet Abbott is harming the GOP's reputation with voters there by taking the party in the wrong direction. Governing for the benefit of a handful of oligarchs while retaliating against conservative legislators is a recipe for a long-term political disaster.

John and Andy Schlafly are sons of Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) and lead the continuing Phyllis Schlafly Eagles organizations with writing and policy work.