

Claud H. Gilmer teamed with A. M. Aikin, Jr., to produce one of the most comprehensive sets of legislation affecting public school education ever enacted in Texas. In the 50th Legislature in 1947, following his term as speaker in the 49th Legislature, Gilmer introduced a concurrent resolution proposing a special panel to study the state's public school system. Aikin, a member of the senate, sponsored the resolution in that chamber, and it was adopted. Governor Beauford Jester appointed both men to the panel, which acquired the title of "the Gilmer-Aikin Committee." After 18 months of study, the committee submitted its recommendations to the 51st Legislature. The recommendations were incorporated into a package of three bills that were introduced and passed in 1949. Although Gilmer had not sought reelection to the house and was not a member of the 51st Legislature, the measures, like the committee, were popularly referred to as the "Gilmer-Aikin bills."

The Gilmer-Aikin package, enacted in 1949, substantially raised teachers' salaries, providing incremental pay increases for years of service and level of education attained. It thereby sent many teachers back to college during the summer months for advanced studies. Designed to equalize education across the state, the package also provided the first major state financial support for local school districts. Finally, it reorganized the State Board of Education to provide that one member be elected from each congressional district.

Gilmer was a native and lifelong resident of Rocksprings, where he was born March 12, 1901. His family operated a Rocksprings drugstore, as well as the local telephone office. Gilmer was graduated from Rocksprings High School in 1919 and later from Meridian Junior College. He taught school in Rocksprings for two years and served as principal there for another year and a half. While principal, he served as athletic coach, and in that capacity he coached the high school's first football team. Gilmer was elected county judge of Edwards County at age 23. In 1929, he received his law degree.

When the state representative from Gilmer's district, Coke Stevenson, sought the office of lieutenant governor in 1938, Gilmer ran for the vacated house seat and was thereupon elected to the legislature. He served in the 46th through 50th legislatures and was speaker in the 49th. After serving on the Gilmer-Aikin Committee during the interim following the 50th Legislature, he retired to devote time to business interests at home.

Besides practicing as an attorney, Gilmer also was involved in ranching. In addition, based on his family's operation of the local telephone company, he became president of the Texas Telephone Association, serving periodically as a lobbyist for that association in the legislature. For six years following his last term in the house of representatives, he was chairman of the Board of Texas State Hospitals and Special Schools. Gilmer died in San Antonio on February 26, 1983.