

Francis William Seabury presided as speaker of the house during the 29th Legislature, which in its 1st called session of 1905 enacted Texas' first comprehensive law authorizing and regulating corporate banking. Due to a frontier distrust of concentrated financial power, successive Texas state constitutions with only one exception (that of 1869, which was in effect only seven years) had prohibited the chartering of banks by the state. Consequently, until the early 20th century, financial services in Texas were performed by merchants and private bankers, by a few banks chartered before Texas' independence or under the short-lived 1869 constitution, and by a growing number of national banks. In 1904, however, voters approved a constitutional amendment that rescinded the prohibition, leading to the 29th Legislature's enactment of the banking law the following year.

Referred to by one contemporary source as a "Democrat of the original faith," Francis William Seabury had the roots and educational background to match his Jeffersonian political credentials. A native of Jefferson's home state of Virginia, he was born in Norfolk on May 10, 1868. Following an education at a Norfolk preparatory academy, he enrolled at the University of Virginia, which Jefferson had founded some 70 years earlier. An 1888 graduate of that institution, Seabury afterwards spent two years as an educator in northern Virginia, tutoring with a family in Leesburg and teaching at a school in Culpepper.

In 1890, Seabury moved to Texas and settled at Brownsville in the Rio Grande Valley. He entered into the study of law, and after being admitted to the bar in 1891, Seabury began his professional practice in Brownsville. By 1894, he had become city attorney.

The following year, Seabury moved to Rio Grande City, where he opened a second law practice. His affiliation with that city lasted 14 years, until he returned to Brownsville in 1909. As a border resident, Seabury acquired fluency in Spanish and ultimately became known for his bilingual political articles that appeared in Valley newspapers.

Seabury's legislative career, during which he represented the entire lower Rio Grande Valley from Zapata County to Cameron County, coincided closely with the period he spent in Rio Grande City. Beginning in 1895, Seabury's career spanned the 24th through 29th legislatures, with the exception of the 26th, when it was interrupted by a term he spent as Starr County attorney. At various times while in the house of representatives, Seabury chaired the committee on rules and the committee on mining and minerals. Chosen speaker in his last term, Seabury was regarded as the finest parliamentarian in the house.

In 1907, Seabury again became county attorney for Starr County and thereupon ended his service in the legislature. He held the post as county attorney for two years, until his return to Brownsville and his resumption of a private law practice. Seabury was a member of the Board of Texas Legal Examiners from 1911 to 1915. He accumulated over 50 years of legal experience before his retirement in 1945. Seabury died in Houston on February 6, 1946.