



Representative

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**LSG Floor Report For Postponed Business- Wednesday, April 5, 2017**

Bill	Caption	Committee	Analysis & Evaluation	Recommendation
<b>HB 402</b> By: Huberty	Relating to money used by certain counties for the low-income vehicle repair assistance, retrofit, and accelerated vehicle retirement program and local initiative air quality projects.	Environmental Regulation	<p>HB 402 amends the Government and Health and Safety codes to allow for 90% of the funds garnered from the Low-Income Vehicle Repair Assistance, Retrofit and Accelerated Vehicle Retirement Program (LIRAP)/Local Initiative Program(LIP) to go back to counties with at least 4 million in population.</p> <p>With the population requirement only Harris County applies of the 16 counties currently enrolled in LIRAP. Both LIRAP and LIP are fees collected from Vehicle Emissions and Inspections from the county now may also include enhancing transportation systems, in addition to the LIP and LIRAP programs. The allocation of funds would be at the discretion of the county. This would not include projects on tolls roads. The LIP program in Harris County currently has a dollar-for-dollar matching program is no longer required. If the money is treated as a binding encumbrance by Texas Commission on Environmental Quality and is made available to the county for constructions purposes for a fiscal year that money can be used for the project or program in subsequent years. To the extent that is applicable provisions granted by HB 402 would prevail over other provisions in the code.</p> <p>Harris County is a nonattainment area where air quality is worse than the National Ambient Air Quality Standards defined by the Clean Air Act. By drawing down 90% of the funds from TCEQ that are proportional to what Harris County residents put in through vehicle inspections there will be consistent money coming in the from program to be used for local air quality initiatives, LIRAP, and the additional enhancing of transportation system improvements.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Erin Eriksen 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Erin@Texaslsg.org">Erin@Texaslsg.org</a></p>

**LSG Floor Report For General Calendar- Wednesday, April 5, 2017**

Bill	Caption	Committee	Analysis & Evaluation	Recommendation
<b>HB 1021</b> By: Smithee/ Farrar	Relating to county law libraries.	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence	<p>Under this legislation, commissioner’s court of counties may establish, maintain, and operate joint free county law libraries in cooperation with other counties. This amendment mirrors the language in Chapter 323, Local Government code governing county public libraries.</p> <p>Additionally, this bill clarifies that the County Law Library Fund collected may be used to establish and maintain a self-help</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:@Texaslsg.org">@Texaslsg.org</a></p>

			<p>center to provide resources to county residents representing themselves in legal matters. The statute currently allows the Fund to be used to purchase periodicals, research tools and other items that the public would access in a self-help center.</p> <p>Chapter 323, Local Government Code, says that law libraries must be accessible for both judges and litigants, and this bill clarifies how these law library funds may be spent to improve public accessibility to information and materials in the law library.</p> <p>This allows small counties that otherwise do not have many case filings, and thus, not enough money for a law library on their own, to pool together their resources for a joint law library. This legislation also aids pro se litigants who cannot afford attorneys in civil cases such as familial disputes. It is beneficial to the public as well as the judges and court personnel because when the litigant is prepared, and understands the legal process more, the system is much more effective and efficient. As the number of people representing themselves grows, the need for information and forms available at the courthouse has grown as well. A self-help center is a place where the public may access necessary information, and receive assistance from personnel.</p> <p><b>Items of Interest for HB 1021:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are 5.3 million low-income people in need of civil legal assistance, and because of a lack of resources</li> <li>• legal aid can meet only 10 percent of the civil legal needs in Texas.</li> <li>• In 2015, the Office of Court Administration found that on average more than 20% of civil cases were filed by a pro se litigant.</li> <li>• In Harris County alone, more than 51% of family law cases filed are pro se equating to over 20,000 people.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>HB 206</b> By: Flynn</p>	<p>Relating to the Texas Veterans Land Board.</p>	<p>Defense &amp; Veterans' Affairs</p>	<p>HB 206 extends eligibility for the Texas Veterans Land Board (VLB) services to those who have served in the Texas State Guard and its reserves. Currently access to the VLB is available only to those who have served in a United States military service active duty and reserves, or the Texas National Guard.</p> <p>The Texas State Guard serves to assist state and local authorities in state emergencies, homeland security and mission support activities. They are often the first responders in natural disasters such as the recent panhandle fires. In order for a service member of the Texas State Guard to be eligible for VLB benefits they would have to have served at least 15 years of active duty or reserves.</p> <p>The Veteran Land Board provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cemeteries and Burial Costs</li> <li>• Land Loans</li> <li>• Long-term Nursing Care Facilities</li> </ul>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Kylie@Texaslsg.org">Kylie@Texaslsg.org</a></p>



			<p>Extending these important benefits will allow the state to support those who have served to protect Texas and it's citizens when most in need. It will also provide them equal standing with other Texas Guard branches and the benefits they receive.</p>	
<p><b>HB 1729</b> By: Neave/ Thompson, Senfronia/ Davis, Sarah/ Moody/ Price</p>	<p>Relating to establishing and funding a grant program for testing evidence collected in relation to sexual assaults or other sex offenses; authorizing voluntary contributions.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p>	<p>HB 1729 seeks to establish a grant funding program through voluntary contributions for law enforcement agencies or counties to utilize for testing evidence relating to a sexual assault or crime. The contributions would come from individuals electing to donate \$1 or more to the evidence testing grant program when applying, either in person or online, for an original or renewal driver's license or personal identification certificate, as well as those seeking an original or renewal commercial driver's license.</p> <p>Following legislation in 2011 to ensure rape kits get turned over to labs for testing regardless of whether the perpetrator is in jail, appropriations of \$11 million were made in 2013 to test all rape kits from 1996-2011, reported at a 20,000-kit backlog as of August 2011 from the Texas Department of Public Safety. Previous grant funding will not address future backlogs, but the Legislative Budget Board estimates the donation-based program to receive \$1 million annually in contributions. HB 1729 will set a provide a temporary solution in addressing the remaining backlog of over 4,000 untested rape kits, each of which can cost \$500 to \$2,000 per test depending on the contained DNA evidence. HB 1729 would be a step towards justice for sexual assault survivors.</p> <p>Provisions in HB 1729 require the Criminal Justice Division in Trusted Programs Within the Office of the Governor to establish and administer the grant program, and disperse funds to municipal police departments or a county sheriff or constable's office. Only accredited crime labs will receive grant funds to test any evidence collected, including physical evidence such as clothes or bed sheets. In addition, other notable responsibilities of the Criminal Justice Division include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing additional eligibility criteria for grant applicants</li> <li>• Establishing grant application procedures, guidelines for grant amounts, and evaluation criteria for grant applications</li> <li>• Biennial reports of program results and performance to the Legislature</li> <li>• Authorization to use any revenue available towards the grant funding program</li> </ul> <p>The Evidence Testing Account will be a dedicated account in General Revenue Fund in the state treasury. With no fiscal note, there is a provision for DPS to deduct an equal dollar amount of reasonable expenses for administering the program, which the LBB estimates as a one-time cost of \$140,424 in FY18 for technology implementation. Further implementation and administrative duties would utilize existing resources in the Trusted Programs department in the Governor's office.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Katherine@Texaslsg.org">Katherine@Texaslsg.org</a></p>



			The donation-based program would join three current voluntary donation-funded programs including the Fund for Veterans Assistance, Glenda Dawson Donate Life, and the Blindness Education Screening and Treatment Program.	
<b>HB 890</b> By: Geren / Gutierrez / Minjarez / Holland / Lambert	Relating to providing information to the public and to purchasers of real property regarding the impact of military installations.	Defense & Veterans' Affairs	<p>HB 890 implements the need for realtors to provide those purchasing a home near a military installation a disclosure notice of their proximity to a base or installation. Homeowners in close proximity to military installations may experience excessive disruptive noise, such as aircraft testing and training. There is also a higher risk of military training related accidents in these areas. This bill creates a standardized disclosure form for sellers to provide to prospective buyers.</p> <p>This will help homebuyers make more informed decisions about the areas in which they choose to live. Likewise, it puts no burden on the seller, while promoting more transparency in the real estate process.</p>	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Kylie@Texaslsg.org">Kylie@Texaslsg.org</a>
<b>HB 2379</b> By: Price / Raymond / Burkett / Rose	Relating to the provision of legal services to the office of inspector general of the Health and Human Services Commission.	Human Services	<p>HB 2379 seeks to clarify the legal services provided to the HHSC office of the inspector (OIG) general, by the executive commissioner. Currently statute lays out administrative tasks to be conducted by the executive commissioner that pertain to the OIG, including "legal services." This simply outlines what those legal services include.</p> <p>This cleans up any misunderstandings concerning the duties the executive commissioner has regarding the HHSC office of the inspector general. The inspector general of HHSC is appointed yearly by the governor. It is important to maintain clear boundaries on the necessary duties for those within the organization to perform. Allowing for duties to be laid out in the organizational code can help to prevent convolution of tasks for future inspector general candidates.</p>	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Kylie@Texaslsg.org">Kylie@Texaslsg.org</a>
<b>HB 678</b> By: Wu	Relating to the procedure for the entering of a plea or a stipulation of evidence by a child subject to a determinate sentence.	Juvenile Justice & Family Issues	<p>Under current law, a child subject to a determinate sentence may only have a hearing before a district judge. HB 678 amends the Family code to authorize an associate judge or referee to hold a hearing to allow a child subject to a determinate sentence to enter a plea or stipulation of evidence.</p> <p>The bill's intent is to enhance court efficiency by allowing associate judges and referees, who are appointed to help handle the district judge's caseload, to take the initial plea. The bill requires the associate judge or referee to submit their written findings and recommendations to the district judge for final consideration. The district judge may accept or reject the plea or stipulation of evidence.</p>	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Arielle@Texaslsg.org">Arielle@Texaslsg.org</a>



<p><b>HB 1829</b> By: Geren</p>	<p>Relating to the preservation, maintenance, and improvement of the Capitol and the Capitol grounds.</p>	<p>House Administration</p>	<p>HB 1829 would allow the State Preservation Board to contract with a non-profit entity to help maintain, operate, and improve the Capitol Grounds. This Bill will help ensure that the greatest symbol of our state, it's capitol, is given the resources it needs to be maintained for future generations.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Ana Ramon 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Ana@Texaslsg.org">Ana@Texaslsg.org</a></p>
<p><b>HB 1227</b> By: Smithee</p>	<p>Relating to the transparency of certain information related to prescription drug coverage provided by certain health benefit plans.</p>	<p>Insurance</p>	<p>This bill clarifies the Insurance Code to include "individual" health benefit plans as it relates to transparency requirements. Essentially, this bill specifically adds individual group benefits plans to the existing language on the transparency of drug formula disclosure requirements. This bill extends the requirement that the insurer post drug formula information on their public website to individual health benefit plans. There has been some concern about the transparency of drug formulas and this bill ensures that these disclosure requirements apply to the individual health market.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Elizabeth Hann 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Elizabeth@Texaslsg.org">Elizabeth@Texaslsg.org</a></p>
<p><b>HB 1697</b> By: Price / Burkett / Sheffield / Thompson, Senfronia / Longoria</p>	<p>Relating to the establishment of a pediatric health tele-connectivity resource program for rural Texas.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>HB 1697 establishes a pediatric tele-connectivity resource program that would provide grants to rural health care facilities to be used to connect them with neonatal pediatric specialists and subspecialists who work at urban health care facilities. Grant funding would come from gifts, donations, and grants made to the fund. The bill outlines eligibility requirements and a selection process for grant recipients as well as stipulations on what the grants can be used for. It would also allow for HHSC to establish a work group for the purpose of assisting with the development, implementation, and evaluation of the grant program. The bill also requires HHSC to submit a biennial report to the Governor and the Legislature regarding activities of grant recipients, including results and outcomes related to the program.</p> <p>Many rural Texas communities do not have access to pediatric specialists such as neonatologists (there are only 24 neonatal subspecialists in Texas) or pediatric trauma surgeons, as these specialists tend to be employed at children's hospitals located in urban areas. This lack of access creates barriers to accessing lifesaving health care for medically fragile children such as babies that are born prematurely. Telemedicine access in rural hospitals would allow for remote examination, diagnosis, and treatment of these medically fragile children by utilizing telecommunications technology such as secure, HIPAA compliant video conferencing.</p> <p>To ensure that medically fragile children's health care needs are adequately met, doctors in rural hospitals often opt to transfer them to urban hospitals due to lack of access to necessary medical equipment and available neonatal specialists. The grants established within this bill would allow health care providers in rural areas to consult with neonatal specialists to get a second opinion on medical diagnoses and treatment plans, consequently resulting in fewer unnecessary transfers of medically fragile children. The Dallas Children's Hospital established Texas' first pediatric telemedicine program in</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Tyler@Texaslsg.org">Tyler@Texaslsg.org</a></p>



			<p>2013; on average, 50% of their tele-NICU patients and 75% of their tele-ER patients are able to stay in their home hospital and avoid being transferred because of receiving telemedical care.</p> <p>This also has a financial benefit, as medical transfers can be costly for both families and the State. If the grants established within HB 1697 are implemented at 20 rural health care facilities, they are projected to save the state \$15 million over the course of the biennium by reducing the number of unnecessary transports. More importantly, HB 1697 affirms that Texas children should have access to necessary life-saving medical treatment regardless of their zip code and helps ensure that children born in rural Texas communities have access to care that will improve their short and long-term health outcomes.</p>	
<p><b>HB 284</b> By: Springer</p>	<p>Relating to authorization for certain health care facilities to secure residents with wheelchair self-release seat belts.</p>	<p>Human Services</p>	<p>HB 284 amends the Health and Safety Code to allow nursing homes to utilize self-release seat-belt restraints for patients in wheelchairs. Previous legislation band the use of any type of restraints in nursing homes as it was found that caretakers were abusing the utilization of such restraints such as restraining patients in beds. While this has helped to reduce that amount of abuse and neglect of seniors living in long term residential care, there have been many instances since of elderly patients who fall or slip out of their wheelchairs.</p> <p>This bill simply cleans up the existing code to allow for nursing home facilities to implement the use of wheelchair self-release seat belts. Stipulations for use of self-release wheel-chair seat belts are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrate the ability to fasten and release the seat belt by oneself.</li> <li>• It must be included within the plan of care for the resident.</li> </ul> <p>The facility must receive written consent for use of the seat-belts from the resident or the resident’s legal guardian. CHHB 284 acknowledges that restraints can hinder one’s autonomy. By personalizing the use of self-release seat-belts into a patient’s plan of care this helps to individualize the utilization of these seat-belts. This bill will ensure the safety of some of our most vulnerable citizens while help to ensure dignity and autonomy.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 <a href="mailto:Kylie@Texaslsg.org">Kylie@Texaslsg.org</a></p>

