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LSG Floor Report For Postponed Business- Monday, May 22, 2017

SB 1656 By: Watson Sp: Rodriguez, Eddie/ Bernal	Relating to the eligibility of certain municipalities to establish homestead preservation districts and reinvestment zones	Urban Affairs	SB 1656 increases the population requirements for homestead preservation districts and reinvestment zones. The current maximum population is 550,000. This allow those cities with smaller populations to create homestead preservation districts and reinvestment zones. These areas are designated as a having 75% of their residents qualifying as low income. They are created to ensure that these residents are not displaced due to a city's growth and evolution. This bill increases the qualifying population to 800,000. Allowing for certain municipalities such as Austin to be able to create homestead preservation districts and reinvestment zones. As the population of Texas increases cities grow and change, this will help those who already reside in premium areas not be priced out of their homes.	Favorable Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 Kylie@Texaslsg.org
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LSG Floor Report For Major State Calendar- Monday, May 22, 2017

SB 292 By: Huffman / et al. SP: Price / Coleman	Relating to the creation of a grant program to reduce recidivism, arrest, and incarceration of individuals with mental illness.	Public Health	There is no current statutory structure to coordinate care for a defendant believed to have a mental illness that is taken into custody by an officer. SB 292 requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish a program that provides grants to county-based community collaboratives to reduce recidivism of persons with mental illness, and reduce the total waiting time for forensic bed commitments. The collaborative group after meeting eligibility criteria may petition for a grant, and must provide matching funds from non-state sources. The funds from this grant must be used for jail diversion programs, alternatives to competency restoration in state hospitals, behavioral health treatment, and other related issues. Currently competency restoration services are received mostly by state hospitals, and local treatment programs. After a defendant gets restored to competency they must return to jail to await trial, often losing competency again. This necessitates a return to the state hospital, where there will likely be a wait in readmission because of waitlists at the hospitals. Additionally, lengthy waitlists delay transition into state hospitals and communities for immediate behavioral health services, resulting in county jails serving as a holding place for persons with mental illnesses.	Favorable Evaluated by: Fabeain Barkwell 210-382-4295 Fabeain@Texaslsg.org
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LSG Floor Report For General Calendar- Monday, May 22, 2017

SB 2131 By: West SP: Howard	Relating to efforts to facilitate the completion by students of undergraduate certificate and degree programs.	Public Education	Many high school students lack adequate guidance regarding which courses will transfer and apply to the major they intend to pursue at their respective institutions of higher education. SB 2131 seeks to address this problem by creating certain postsecondary education counseling requirements and establishing the Texas Guided Pathways Program. Under this bill, high school counselors would be required to provide information to students regarding the availability of dual credit and joint high school/college credit programs, including the types of dual credit courses offered and whether the courses offered will transfer to an institution of higher	Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org
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			<p>education. Each school district and open-enrollment charter school would post the required information on the district's or school's website. The bill also requires that any postsecondary advising services, including the name of the person or counseling provider who provided the services, be documented on the student's transcript.</p> <p>SB 2131 also establishes the Texas Guided Pathways Program to inform, empower, and support current and prospective students at institutions of higher education by providing those students clear and efficient pathways to the completion of an undergraduate certificate or degree program. The bill lists several program goals including a goal to streamline student pathways to the completion of an undergraduate certificate or degree program in a manner aligned with the state's goal to increase educational attainment. In the interest of decreasing the occurrence of students completing courses that do not count towards their major, the bill requires each institution of higher education to develop a "recommended courses sequence" for each undergraduate certificate or degree program offered by the institution. The required information must be posted on the institution's website. SB 2131 also requires the Texas OnCourse Initiative, a postsecondary education and career counseling academy developed by The University of Texas at Austin, to develop a statewide web-based platform that helps students compare recommended course sequences at institutions of higher education and make course transferability decisions.</p>	
<p>SB 1599 By: Miles / et al. SP: Walle</p>	<p>Relating to maternal mortality reporting and investigation information.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>Texas' maternal mortality rate is alarmingly high; a 2016 study in <i>The Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology</i> revealed that it is not only higher than the national average, but is the highest in the developed world. Maternal deaths can be caused by cardiac events, drug overdose, mental illness (specifically postpartum depression), and other health issues. The DSHS Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force was formed in 2013 to study the causes of maternal mortality and morbidity and to make recommendations for ways to reduce incidence of pregnancy related deaths among Texas women. The task force's first report submitted to the Texas Legislature noted a number of significant problems with reporting, investigation, and data collection related to maternal deaths in Texas. Specifically, they cited notable variation in how maternal death cases were being investigated and significant issues with cases being misrouted or not reported to the correct investigative entity, such as the medical examiner or justice of the peace. Additionally, the task force found a lack of standardization in lab testing administered during investigations of maternal deaths, such as the timing and quality of toxicology testing performed. These inconsistencies result in data that is uninterpretable or invalid, which makes it difficult for the task force to truly unearth the underlying causes of maternal mortality in Texas.</p> <p>SB 1599 attempts to address these reporting and investigative issues in a number of ways. It instructs DSHS to establish a systematic protocol for pregnancy related death investigations and best practices for reporting pregnancy related deaths to the medical examiner or justice of the peace, when applicable. The bill outlines specific information to be contained in these protocols and best practices, including: guidelines for determining when comprehensive toxicology screening should be performed, determining when a death should be reported or investigated by a medical examiner or justice of the peace, and how to correctly complete the death certificate of a person who died from pregnancy related causes. This information is to be posted to DSHS website to allow physicians and other appropriate professionals to easily reference it, increasing the chances for standardization and compliance. Increasing standardization and use of best practices in reporting and investigations will improve maternal mortality data, allowing the task force to more accurately determine the causes of maternal mortality. This will allow the task force to make impactful recommendations aimed at addressing this critical issue, which will help ensure safe, healthy pregnancies for Texas women.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org</p>



<p>SB 463 By: Seliger / et al. SP: Huberty / Lozano</p>	<p>Relating to the use of individual graduation committees to satisfy certain public high school graduation requirements and other alternative methods to satisfy certain public high school graduation requirements.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>Last session, SB 149 required school districts to establish an individual graduation committee (IGC) to determine whether or not a student who failed an end of course exam may qualify to graduate. IGCs are comprised of the student’s principal, teachers, and parents; and together they decide whether or not the student may graduate by considering the entirety of a student’s work, and sometimes assigning additional work or requiring the completion of a specific project in the subject the student failed. SB 463 extends the expiration date of IGCs to September 2019 and creates reporting requirements for students graduating based on an IGC review process. The bill requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to collect data related to the post-graduation pursuits of each student who is awarded a diploma based on the determination of an IGC. The data should reflect whether the student entered the workforce, enrolled in an associate degree program, enrolled in a bachelor’s degree program, or enlisted in the U.S. armed forces or Texas National Guard.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 802 By: Seliger / et al. SP: Howard</p>	<p>Relating to a study and report regarding best practices in the transfer of course credit between public institutions of higher education.</p>	<p>Higher Education</p>	<p>SB 802 requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board to facilitate a study that identifies best practices that guarantee courses transferred to higher education institutions for course credit, and dual credit apply to the degree program at the institution. Per SB 802, the study must include articulation agreements pertaining to course credit transferring between institutions, and institutions that are implementing the best practices. By November 1, 2018 the coordinating board must submit the outcomes of the study to the legislature.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Fabeain Barkwell 210-382-4295 Fabeain@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1353 By: Taylor, Larry SP: Faircloth</p>	<p>Relating to state financial assistance for a school district to which an academically unacceptable school district is annexed.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>When a school is annexed, current law provides financial assistance over a five-year period to the receiving school district to assist with operating the newly expanded district. However, this additional funding does not consider the costs of facility renovation, repair and replacement. SB 1353 provides for such funding by establishing a financial formula that is essentially a debt-service per student rate for the number of students the receiving district absorbs.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1839 By: Hughes / et al. SP: Koop</p>	<p>Relating to the preparation, certification, and classification of public school educators.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>Current law states that an out-of-state teacher is eligible for certification if their state’s exam is similar to or at least as rigorous as the Texas certification exam. Since exams are constantly changing, this is a difficult standard to maintain. SB 1839 addresses this by allowing the commissioner of education to establish certain exceptions to state examination requirements for out-of-state teachers. Additionally, the bill directs the TEA to send data to educator preparation programs that will allow them to assess their impact and effectiveness. SB 1839 also establishes an early childhood certification for pre-K through grade 3.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1710 By: Zaffirini SP: Neave</p>	<p>Relating to applications for the complete restoration of a ward's capacity or modification of a guardianship.</p>	<p>Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence</p>	<p>SB 1710 addresses the difficulties that some persons under guardianships experience in the process of applying for their restoration of rights. Guardianship proceedings are understood as a very serious matter in that they are essentially a legal mechanism by which a person who is incapacitated is deprived of their personal rights in order to have another person manage their affairs, since they do not have the capacity to do so themselves. It is thereby a general goal to use guardianship proceedings as a last resort if other related legal mechanisms are not sufficient.</p> <p>A person under guardianship who has regained capacity may apply to a court for the restoration of some or all of their rights to manage their person and estate. SB 1710 addresses a particular concern in relation to the procedure of this application for a restoration of rights. This bill provides that if a guardian dies, is removed, or becomes unable to serve, the court is not required to appoint a new guardian before a court can consider an application for restoration of rights. Additionally, it specifies that no new medical examination is required before restoration. Furthermore, SB 1710 provides that no later than 30 days after a court receives</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org</p>



			an informal letter from a person under guardianship applying for restoration of rights, the court must send the person a letter via certified mail stating receipt of their request, and contact information for a guardian ad litem or court investigator appointed by the court. Overall, this bill reduces some of the practical and procedural barriers to persons under guardianship to restore their rights.	
SB 1465 By: Taylor, Larry SP: Bonnen, Greg	Relating to the authority of certain ex officio members of the board of directors of a tax increment financing reinvestment zone to elect not to serve on the board.	General Investigating & Ethics	The bill amends tax code to allow for the notification of an ex officio member of a reinvestment zone of what their status is on the board is once they're elected as either a state senator or state representative. Notwithstanding the sections of tax code that concern reinvestment zone board membership, the state senator or house member may choose to not serve on the board or choose another individual to serve in their place. Once the senator or house member has received the notification from the board they shall notify the board of their decision to remain on the board or not.	Favorable Evaluated by: Ana Ramon 210-382-4295 Ana@Texaslsg.org
SB 830 By: Rodríguez SP: Walle	Relating to the provision of accounting statements by mortgage servicers for certain loans secured by a lien on residential real property.	Investments & Financial Services	SB 830 requires mortgage service providers to provide a borrower with an annual statement for each year of the loan term. The bill specifies that this requirement only applies to a loan secured by a first or subordinate lien on residential property and outlines exempted loans, including a federally-related mortgage loan and a loan made by a credit union. Information included within the annual accounting statement relates to payments received by the mortgage servicer in the preceding calendar year, how each payment was applied to the borrower's account, and the outstanding balance of the borrower's principal obligation under the loan. The bill further outlines the mortgage servicer's liability and procedure should the entity fail to provide the borrower with a timely statement by mail or postmarked on or before January 31 of each year; there is an exception in the case that a mortgage servicer sends a notice to the borrower's last known address with a requested return receipt. Per the bill, the borrower is not liable for any payment, fees, or charges not made during the related year the annual statement pertains to, and is instead considered to have paid all costs on time. The bill further outlines specific payments the mortgage servicer is liable to pay the mortgagee. Federal laws require lenders to provide information to homeowners. Provisions within the bill will level the playing field by providing accountability to individuals seeking third-party loans, as there is only a 64% rate of compliance related to mortgage servicing. SB 830 seeks to allow homeowners with the information they need regarding loans, saving them from late fees or charges.	Favorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@Texaslsg.org
SB 1480 By: Hughes SP: Murphy	Relating to the guarantee of school district and charter district bonds by the permanent school fund.	Public Education	<p>This bill would give charter schools access to a greater portion of state funds as backing for bonds through the Charter District Bond Guarantee Reserve Fund (CDBF). Currently, charter schools are able to utilize a portion of this fund capped at their percentage of total students in the state, less the amount of outstanding bonds; SB 1480 removes that restriction so that charters can access the complete fund. The bill also increases the charter district's contribution to the CDBF, from 10% of the total bond amount to 20%, and requires that the contribution happen up front instead of being amortized over the bond duration. The full implementation of the bill's changes does not take effect until September 1, 2021, with incremental increases to their access over the intervening years. The State Board of Education retains the ability to reduce the incremental increases if they determine that the increase would negatively affect the charter district's bond rating, and the Board must ultimately approve any charter bond under consideration.</p> <p>By expanding the amount accessible to charter districts through the CDBF, the state is subsidizing public funds for the benefit of these institutions. Charter schools are not subject to the same public accountability standards as traditional school districts and fulfill a distinct role within the broader education framework. As long as charters exist outside the limitations and requirements placed on public schools, it would be irresponsible of the state to expand its financial backing for their bond ratings.</p>	Unfavorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org



<p>SB 589 By: Lucio / et al. SP: Simmons / Gonzales, Larry / Stucky / Coleman</p>	<p>Relating to the licensing and regulation of behavior analysts and assistant behavior analysts; requiring an occupational license; imposing fees.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>SB 589 establishes a framework for the regulation and licensure of behavior analysts and assistant behavior analysts in Texas. These professionals primarily provide applied behavioral analysis (ABA) to individuals with Autism and other developmental disabilities. Behavior analysts are not currently required to be licensed in Texas; a national certification is available, but not mandatory. Currently, 26 states require licensure for behavior analysts; this pushes unlicensed practitioners out, and may result in them relocating to practice without restriction in states like Texas. There have been cases in Texas of individuals advertising themselves as behavioral analysts who have no education beyond a GED. While receiving medical treatment from an incompetent provider is dangerous in any situation, it is particularly harmful to individuals who have autism. If it is administered incorrectly, ABA can cause irreversible regression in autistic individuals.</p> <p>Major provisions of the regulatory framework established by SB 589, which will be overseen by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR), include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Defining behavior analyst, assistant behavior analyst, and applied behavioral analysis in statute • Requiring behavior analysts and assistant behavior analysts to be certified by the nationally accredited Behavior Analyst Certification Board in order to become licensed in Texas. This means that individuals must meet the educational requirements set by the Behavior Analyst Certification Board and pass the Certification Board examination • Establishing a Behavior Analyst Advisory Board to consist of nine members responsible for providing recommendations to TDLR on technical matters related to licensure of behavior analysts and behavior analyst assistants. The bill outlines specific eligibility requirements, powers, and duties of board members • Instructing the board to develop and implement ethical practice standards for behavior analysts/assistants and to establish a process by which individuals can file complaints if they feel a practitioner has practiced unethically • Authorizing the board to implement reasonable fees for licensure under this section • Asserting that licensed psychologists and other professionals (such as social workers or professional counselors) who administer ABA in Texas are not subject to the requirements of this bill as long as the services provided are within their professional scope • Establishing other exemptions from licensure under this bill, such as for family members who are delivering ABA services at home or an intern delivering ABA in a practice setting so long as the services are prescribed by a licensed behavior analyst • Authorizing license reciprocity for behavior analysts licensed in other states so long as that state’s requirements align with Texas’ requirements • Establishing a biennial process for license renewal and a process for enforcement of disciplinary actions against those who violate the provisions of this bill • Prohibiting individuals from calling themselves “licensed behavior analyst”, “behavior analyst”, or “licensed behavior analyst assistant” if they are not licensed under this bill <p>Evidence shows that individuals with severe autism who do not receive treatment such as ABA will likely incur lifetime specialized treatment costs of over \$3.2 million, in addition to being unable to maintain a job or live independently. Research has shown that ABA is an effective therapy for individuals with autism and it has been deemed a medically necessary intervention by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, the Centers for Disease Control, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and various other credible medical organizations.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org</p>
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			SB 589 offers a necessary regulatory licensing framework for behavior analysts in Texas and will ensure that families who invest in ABA for their children are receiving quality, regulated care. Additionally, the bill will make it easier for behavior analysts to become credentialed for Medicaid and CHIP reimbursement, as HHSC has repeatedly asserted that it primarily offers reimbursement to licensed practitioners. Increasing access to ABA for children enrolled in Medicaid and CHIP will help ensure that low-income Texas children are receiving the same high-quality care as children covered under private insurance plans. Overall, this bill protects autistic individuals in Texas, particularly children, and helps insure that they have access to an evidence-based, effective form of therapy to ensure the best possible health outcomes.	
SB 840 By: Zaffirini / et al. SP: Martinez, "Mando" / Guillen / Blanco	Relating to certain images captured by an unmanned aircraft.	Homeland Security & Public Safety	<p>This bill eliminates “real property or a person on real property that is within 25 miles of the U.S. border” in the Government Code as one of the purposes to legally capture an image with unmanned aircraft. Eliminating this part out of statute, will provide more privacy rights for private property owners and for Texans that live within 25 miles of the border.</p> <p>Additionally, this legislation amends the Government Code by expanding the purposes of legally using unmanned aircraft to capture an image if it is captured by or for an electric or natural gas utility or a telecommunications provider for the purposes of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations and maintenance of utility or telecommunications facilities for maintaining utility or telecommunications system reliability and integrity • Inspecting utility or telecommunications facilities to determine repair, maintenance, or replacement needs during and after construction of such facilities • Accessing vegetation growth for maintaining clearance on utility or telecommunications easements • For utility or telecommunications facility routing and siting for the purpose of providing utility or telecommunications service <p>Current state law treats property and persons near the border in an inequitable manner by permitting the use of unmanned aircraft in Texas to capture images of real property or persons on real property that are within 25 miles of the United States border. Additionally, this bill further clarifies that telecommunications providers are subject to the same rules as those governing other utilities. Furthermore, this is a clean-up bill and it has no impact on law enforcement and, Border Patrol still has federal jurisdiction. According to DPS, this legislation won’t restrict any surveillance. This bill will just restrict any regular civilians (not public entity) from taking pictures by using an unmanned aircraft.</p>	Favorable Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslg.org
SB 1066 By: Schwertner / et al. SP: Lozano	Relating to meeting the graduate medical education needs of new medical degree programs offered by public institutions of higher education and to the employment status of certain residents participating in certain	Higher Education	SB 1066 requires institutions of higher education offering Doctor of Medicine (MD), and Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine (DO) degrees to provide the Higher Education Coordinating Board a specific plan detailing how they intend to promote a sufficient number of first year residency slots to satisfy the number of medical school graduates. The education process does not stop for students once they graduate from medical school. After graduation, medical graduates must begin a residency program, also known as Graduate Medical Education (GME). In 2016, the Texas Medical Association concluded Texas would need an additional 129 first-year residency positions to have achieve availability for new graduates. Additionally, with the development of new medical schools there is an estimated net gain of 500 medical graduates in Texas by 2022. SB 1066 requires institutions planning for new doctorate degree programs to promptly provide to the board with a specific plan regarding the addition of first-year residency positions for the graduate medical education program to be offered in connection with the new degree program. The plan must propose an increase in the number of	Favorable Evaluated by: Fabeain Barkwell 210-382-4295 Fabeain@Texaslsg.org



	graduate medical education programs.		first-year residency positions for MD and DO programs. SB 1066 seeks to protect the investment in medical students, by ensuring Texas has enough GME spots so graduates are more inclined to complete their residencies in Texas.	
<p>SB 1913 By: Zaffirini / et al. SP: Thompson, Senfronia</p>	<p>Relating to the administrative, civil, and criminal consequences, including fines, fees, and costs, imposed on persons arrested for, charged with, or convicted of certain criminal offenses.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p>	<p>SB 1913 introduces provisions allowing judicial discretion when imposing fees or charges on indigent defendants convicted of low-level, fine-only offenses by providing several instances in which individuals have more opportunities to have associated fees or charges waived or discharged through completion of community service. Within the bill, rules and procedures regarding arrest without a warrant allows a peace officer to issue a citation containing alternatives to the full payment of any fines/costs assessed against an individual charged with a Class C misdemeanor, other than public intoxication, if that person is convicted and unable to pay the amount. The bill further outlines substantive changes relating to the prohibition of personal bond fees, court-provided notice of any fines/costs assessed in a case and alternatives to paying, the process by which a court can impose fees/costs only after making a determination that a person has sufficient financial resources to pay, prohibition of a court from issuing a capias pro fine for a defendant's failure to satisfy judgment and subsequent related procedures, and information a court must provide in an order requiring a defendant to perform community service to discharge fines/costs. The bill specifies circumstances in which a judge may not issue an arrest warrant regarding a defendant's failure to appear and the subsequent procedures for providing notice to a defendant. Furthermore, the bill specifies that a judge is prohibited from issuing a bail bond in addition or instead of a personal bond, except in certain instances within the bill. A judge is allowed to impose a fine only if they determine the defendant has sufficient financial resources, and again must consider the person's financial history within that determination. The bill makes similar substantive and conforming changes to statutes and procedures for justice and municipal courts as well. The bill rehouses a provision relating to completion of community service through a tutoring, work, or job skills program, as well as completing required hours at certain organizations and entities. Per the bill, the defendant is considered to have discharged no less than \$100 of fines for each 8 hours of community service performed. The bill also outlines provisions relating to collection contracts in which the accused must include specific information or contact the court regarding alternatives to full payment to resolve the case. The bill further specifies statutes relating to county scofflaw, in which a county assessor-collector can refuse to register a vehicle should they receive information that the vehicle owner owes outstanding fees to the county. Information provided regarding past due status for a criminal offense and subsequently owed to a county would expire after 2 years, and may not be used to refuse registration afterwards. The bill further provides requirements regarding an individual's cause to continue to deny driver's license renewal in the case of a dismissal for a charge due to lack of evidence. Additionally, the bill provides that a person failing to appear for a complaint or citation is required to pay an administrative fee of \$30, unless they meet certain criteria in which they are unable to pay. The Legislative Budget Board estimates an indeterminate negative fiscal impact to the state, as there would be decreased revenue from an unknown number of individuals who have their fees or costs waived under this bill. SB 1913 would end the cycle of debt for individuals who cannot afford to pay minor, compounding fines and subsequently spend time in jail. SB 1913 seeks to provide opportunities for populations with limited financial means who are disproportionately penalized by the criminal justice system.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@texaslsg.org</p>



<p>SB 762 By: Menéndez / et al. SP: Moody</p>	<p>Relating to the prosecution of offenses involving cruelty to animals; increasing a criminal penalty.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p>	<p>SB 762 enhances the punishment for certain offenses of cruelty to non-livestock animals and reduces the circumstances constituting penalty enhancements for related acts of cruelty. Per the bill, an individual that tortures, kills, or causes serious bodily injury to an animal, or does so without the owner’s consent, commits a third-degree felony; the aforementioned acts constitute a second-degree felony if that person has been previously convicted of certain acts of cruelty or neglect to livestock animals. Furthermore, the bill stipulates that a person causing two animals to fight or using a live animal as a lure in dog race training commits a state jail felony whether they have been previously convicted of any offense of cruelty to livestock animals. SB 762 seeks to provide greater punishment for individuals abusing animals by providing a streamlined penalty enhancement framework.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1882 By: Menéndez / et al. SP: Koop</p>	<p>Relating to a school district contract to partner with an open-enrollment charter school to operate a district campus.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>HB 1882 encourages partnerships between public school districts and open enrollment charter schools by creating financial and accountability incentives. Under this bill students attending the district charter partnership campuses are considered district students for enrollment purposes. This means the public school would receive facilities funding it otherwise would have lost if the students had left. The bill also includes a provision which allows a school that partners with an open enrollment charter specifically to improve their D or F rating to receive a two-year pause in the accountability system, during which the commissioner could not impose a sanction or take action against the campus. Interested parties contend that ISD school employees do not have adequate protection under this bill. There are also concerns regarding the practicality of creating an incentive for this one, specific avenue for collaboration that has not been proven to be more effective than other avenues.</p>	<p>Favorable w/ Concerns Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 2212 By: Hancock SP: Kuempel</p>	<p>Relating to certain real estate sales, brokerage, and advertising activities, certain functions of the Texas Real Estate Commission, and the authorization of a ground lease with the Texas Facilities Commission to construct or maintain a building.</p>	<p>Licensing & Administrative Procedures</p>	<p>SB 2212 amends the Occupations Code to allow individuals to sell a contract on a property without a license if they do not engage in real estate brokerage but do disclose the nature of interest in the property. If the interest of the option is not made available to the buyer than it is considered brokerage. This bill requires that the broker's license number and their title as are a broker or agent to be on their advertisements. In advertisements, the sales agent cannot be misleading to allow a client to believe the agent has stake in the real estate broker’s business and must include the name of the broker. Failure to do this could result in a suspension or revocation of a license. The Texas Real Estate Commission and the Texas Appraiser Licensing and Certification Board payment to the general revenue fund will be altered to the amount of \$750,000 minus money expended for the purposes of the construction and maintenance of a building located within the Capitol Complex. To ensure consumer protections, it must be made aware to the buyer that an unlicensed seller of the option to purchase real property does not have a legal title to the property. This provides much needed transparency for a person who has a contract for a property but does not own it outright to notify the customer of their interest of the property. Also, adding more consumer protections when it comes to information on a broker’s advertisement aids to this transparency as well.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1233 By: Rodríguez SP: Thompson, Senfronia</p>	<p>Relating to a writ of mandamus by a court of appeals against certain judges.</p>	<p>Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence</p>	<p>SB 1233 authorizes writs of mandamus against associate judges appointed under certain provisions of the Family Code. Currently, the courts of appeals are not authorized to issue writs of mandamus against associate judges who may commit an abuse of discretion, even though a writ of mandamus may be issued against a judge of a district or county court. In larger counties, the bulk of family law practice is often in front of associate judges. Having to go through a different process, such as a de novo appeal, to rectify situations of an abuse of discretion is a costly and timely process for clients. SB 1233 simply clarifies this inconsistency so that associate judges appointed under the Family Code can be issued a writ of mandamus just as district or county judges.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org</p>



<p>SB 1446 By: Estes SP: Clardy</p>	<p>Relating to contested cases conducted under the Administrative Procedure Act.</p>	<p>State Affairs</p>	<p>SB 1446 is a clean-up bill that addresses ambiguities in code related to the handling of contested cases under Administrative Procedures Act. The bill adds an option for notice that includes an attachment containing facts of an asserted case filed with a state agency as an alternative to the plain statement of factual matters asserted that is currently offered. Additionally, the bill asserts that if a state agency fails to meet certain requirements before instituting an agency proceeding against a licensee, that action constitutes prejudice to the substantial rights of the license holder in a suit for judicial review. The bill clarifies methods by which all parties involved in agency proceedings are to be notified of decisions by the state agency. It also shortens the time period within which an adversely affected party can participate in a rehearing from the 90 days to 45 days; agencies maintain the option for initiating rehearing for up to 100 days after a decision has been made on a motion to rehear a particular case. SB 1446 offers statutory changes that will provide clearer guidelines for contested cases within state agencies and will contribute to the efficiency and transparency of these proceedings.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1559 By: Taylor, Larry / et al. SP: Bonnen, Greg</p>	<p>Relating to a fee exemption for guardianship proceedings of certain military servicemembers and certain law enforcement officers, firefighters, and other first responders.</p>	<p>Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence</p>	<p>This bill provides an exemption for certain military service members, law enforcement, firefighters and other certain public servants as it relates to filing fees and administration fees in guardianship proceedings. Guardianship proceedings are legal mechanisms by which a person may appoint someone else to manage their affairs on their behalf in the event they become incapacitated.</p> <p>SB 1559 waives some fees related to guardianship proceedings for persons who become incapacitated as a result of performing their duties as either an active service member of the armed forces in a combat zone, or as a law enforcement officer, firefighter, or other public servant as defined by Chapter 615.033, Government Code. The fees waived are filing fees in a guardianship proceeding, and fees for services provided by the court during administration of the guardianship. Public servants who suffer incapacity in the course and as a result of their duties should not have to bear further burdens associated with administrative fees related to guardianship.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1404 By: Hughes / et al. SP: Ashby</p>	<p>Relating to requiring school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to report certain information regarding expanded learning opportunities.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>SB 1404 amends the Education Code to require school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to report on the availability of expanded learning opportunities. Expanded learning opportunities (ELOs) consist of programs that exist out of the regular school day, such as after school or summer learning programs. This bill would require schools to use the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) to report both the availability of such programs and the number of students participating in the programs. Increasing accessibility to ELO programs will help students improve grades as well as attendance. Those who do participate show an increase in attendance by 42%. This bill will help the state gain insight regarding participation in ELO programs.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1318 By: Taylor, Van SP: Parker</p>	<p>Relating to designation of mathematics innovation zones by the commissioner of education and to the establishment of pay for success programs to provide necessary funding.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>This bill grants the Commissioner of the Texas Education Agency (TEA) the authority to designate Math Innovation Zones, campuses that would implement an alternative curriculum to teach mathematics to students. School districts would be required to apply for the designation and would be eligible for grant funding to cover training and implementation of the curriculum, the contents of which remain unknown until TEA undergoes a Request For Qualification process. The grant mechanism is referred to as a “pay for success” program that would rely on public and private donations for funding, and continued funding is contingent on demonstrated improvement. Schools that implement this program would also be temporarily exempt from enforcement protocols to address inadequate performance, at least while the new curriculum is being implemented.</p> <p>While the concept of Innovation Zones has shown some promising results in parts of the country where districts have been given this flexibility, legislation regarding their application in Texas fail to provide necessary specifications. The Commissioner is granted wide latitude in the selection of a curriculum, selection of grant recipients, oversight over the entire process, and the TEA is exempted from liability for actions resulting from the pay for success program. With additional safeguards in place for review of this program by the</p>	<p>Will of the House Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>



			Comptroller or Legislative Budget Board, SB 1318 could become a more feasible method of introducing a blended curriculum for mathematics.	
SB 1781 By: West SP: González, Mary	Relating to the regulation of certain degree-granting postsecondary educational institutions by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board; providing administrative penalties.	Higher Education	<p>SB 1781 gives explicit oversight of career colleges to the Higher Education Coordinating Board, and creates provisions that protect enrolled students at these institutions. Per coordinating board, most career institutions are stable and reputable, however numerous students at certain career institutions fall victim to sudden closure due to mismanagement and financial weakness. Between 2008-2014 the number of students attending career colleges increased by 230%, since 2012 fifty-seven career colleges in Texas have closed. SB 1781 seeks to guard students enrolled at for-profit colleges from these issues, and ensure that they continue to receive a quality education. Per SB 1781, institutions in good standing that are fully accredited by a recognized accrediting agency are exempt from the provisions of this bill. The coordinating board is permitted to require that exempt institutions provide documentation that guarantees that the financial resources and stability of the institution are adequate to provide a quality education and achieve the institution's obligations.</p> <p>The bill allows the board to issue a certificate of authorization to grant degrees at exempt institutions. Institutions under this bill are required to maintain reserves, and lines of credit. The board may revoke or place conditions on an institution's exemption status, and ability to grant degrees if they are not compliant with their financial obligations. Prior to revoking exemption status, the board must provide written notice of the potential actions and the reasons for it. An authorized institution that fails to maintain the academic records of enrolled or former students, or fails to protect identifiable information will be given an administrative penalty of at least \$100 but no more than \$500 for each student with an academic record not maintained or protected.</p>	Favorable Evaluated by: Fabeain Barkwell 210-382-4295 Fabeain@Texaslsg.org
SB 1911 By: Zaffirini / et al. SP: Farrar	Relating to posting notice of self-help resources on the Internet website of a state court and in the office of the court clerk.	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence	<p>Requires the clerk of each court to post on the court's website, if there is one, a link to self-help resources. Specifically, the link would be to the self-help resources website designated by the Office of Court Administration, in consultation with the Texas Access to Justice Commission. This website includes information on: lawyer referral services, a court affiliated self-help center serving the county in which the court is located, and name, location, and any website of any local legal aid office. Also, a link shall be posted to the state law library's website. Lastly, the clerk shall post a sign in the clerk's office on these self-help resources website links.</p> <p>Each year, thousands of people arrive at the courthouse looking for help with legal matters. Many Texans do not qualify for free legal services, even though they cannot afford legal services on their own. Sometimes these court patrons need help in securing an attorney for their case. Most courts do not provide basic information on where these court patrons can receive help. Additionally, as the number of people representing themselves grows, the need for information and forms available either at the courthouse or on their website has grown as well. Judges are put into difficult situations when they want to be fair to pro se litigants, but need to follow the rule of law. It is imperative to provide access to information and materials that will help pro se litigants handle their case. 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.</p>	Favorable Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org



<p>SB 2065 By: Hancock SP: Kuempel</p>	<p>Relating to the licensing and regulation of certain occupations and activities.</p>	<p>Licensing & Administrative Procedures</p>	<p>SB 2065 addresses six statutory changes recommended in the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation’s (TDLR) 2016 plan for effective strategy. TDLR holds a biennial review for strategic planning; in 2016 they laid off programs and services that were recommended to be deregulated or eliminated. Those include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vehicle protection product warranty; this prohibits retailers from requiring consumers to purchase this warranty • Temporary common worker employers; SB 2065 allows employers to practice this if they meet certain requirements without a license • For profit legal service contract • Shampooing • Eyebrow threading • Legal booting of motor vehicles <p>By removing red tape from these services and programs, individuals will have more streamlined access to services and will not be forced into purchasing certain product protections. Similarly, businesses will be able to operate without a license where it may not be deemed necessary.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 2144 By: Taylor, Larry / et al. SP: Huberty</p>	<p>Relating to the creation of a commission to recommend improvements to the public school finance system.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>This bill establishes an interim commission to consider all aspects of public education financing and provide recommendations to the legislature before the 86th Legislature convenes. This commission would consist of 15 members appointed by the state leadership and includes a member of the State Board of Education and the chairs of the Senate and House committees covering public education and appropriations, or their designated representatives. The commission’s scope encompasses the balance between local and state funding for public education, appropriate levels of funding that reflects the changing needs of students in Texas, and how best to meet those needs.</p> <p>The public school finance system has been cobbled together over the decades with new mechanisms added to address issues brought about by previous additions. The Commission on Public School Finance created by SB 2144 provides an opportunity for experts representing various perspectives within the system to comprehensively evaluate that system. The legislature is under no obligation to adopt the recommendations included in the Commission’s report, but the interim is a more appropriate time to work on this issue. The Commission expires on January 8, 2019 after delivering its report to the legislature.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1005 By: Campbell SP: Deshotel</p>	<p>Relating to the use of the SAT or the ACT as a secondary exit-level assessment instrument to allow certain public school students to receive a high school diploma.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>This bill amends the Education Code to allow the TEA to adopt rules to substitute the exit-exam required to receive a high school diploma. SB 1005 would allow a certain group of students, those who repeated the ninth grade during the 2011-2012 school year, to use the SAT or ACT as a secondary exit-level exam to satisfy the requirement for graduation. It allows the commissioner to adopt rules necessary to determine the satisfactory standards of performance on the SAT or ACT in order for that student to receive their high school diploma. Currently, students under the STAAR exam system may use the SAT or ACT as a secondary exit-level exam, but students who were under the previous testing system (TAKS) are not eligible to use the SAT or ACT as a secondary exit-exam. This bill eliminates the requirement that the Texas Education Agency (TEA) administer the exit-level TAKS exam after September 1, 2017 and as a result will save the state approximately \$2 million per year. SB 1005 ensures that students who are returning to complete their diploma are able to use the same secondary exit-exam standards as students under the STAAR exam. Interested parties express concerns about requiring the passage of the SAT or ACT for graduation. There are also concerns about the bill passing the cost of the exit-level exam from the state to the student.</p>	<p>Favorable w/ Concerns Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>



<p>SB 1625 By: Uresti SP: Cortez / Oliverson / Guerra</p>	<p>Relating to the Texas Physician Assistant Board and the licensing and regulation of physician assistants.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>SB 1625 implements increased protections for physician assistants who refuse to engage in certain conduct that they perceive may constitute grounds for reporting them to the physician assistant board or is in violation of a physician assistant board rule. This bill would bring protections for physician assistants up to par with those already afforded to nurse practitioners in Texas. These types of protections are critical toward ensuring that physician assistants feel comfortable reporting incidents to the board without fear of retaliation or punitive disciplinary actions. Increased reporting of unethical behavior also benefits patients, whose health and safety are more protected when practitioners are comfortable speaking out against practitioner violations.</p> <p>In addition to increasing the aforementioned protections, SB 1625 makes various statutory updates to the Occupations Code as it relates to the regulation and licensure of physician assistants. These changes include updated training requirements for physician assistant board members, updated procedures for disciplinary hearings, and updated criminal history background check and fingerprinting requirements for licensees. These changes are being implemented across regulatory boards for various health practitioners in Texas; implementing them for the physician assistant board ensures statewide statutory consistency and compliance.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1677 Lucio / et al. SP: Thompson, Senfronia</p>	<p>Relating to information about services for women veterans provided through certain state agency applications.</p>	<p>Defense & Veterans' Affairs</p>	<p>This bill aims to raise awareness for available services and benefits to female veterans who apply for certain government supplemental financial assistance programs. Many veterans are unaware of the many benefits afforded to them for their service. SB 1677 add a box to check whether or not a woman is a veteran on applications for programs typically pertaining to adult women, such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) and the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), among others. If checked language would be provided to inform these women of possible veteran related services or benefits, along with a link to more information and access. SB 1677 will help many female veterans have better access to the benefits they have earned.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 Kylie@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1649 By: Watson SP: Moody</p>	<p>Relating to increasing the punishment for certain conduct constituting the offense of criminal trespass.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p>	<p>SB 1649 increases the punishment for individuals convicted of repeated offenses of criminal trespassing on the grounds or campus of an institution of higher education to a Class A misdemeanor. The bill further provides that previous convictions of criminal trespassing on an institution of higher education relate to an individual that was adjudged guilty or entered a plea of guilty or nolo contendere and received deferred adjudication community supervision, regardless of whether the sentence for criminal trespassing was imposed or probated and the individual subsequently received a discharge and deferral. Increasing penalties for repeated instances of criminal trespassing on college campuses will improve campus safety and deter individuals with malicious or dangerous intentions, as well as seek to prevent crimes committed against the student population.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1009 By: Perry SP: Larson</p>	<p>Relating to administrative completeness requirements for permit and permit amendment applications for groundwater conservation districts.</p>	<p>Natural Resources</p>	<p>SB 1009 amends the Water Code to allow for more efficient process for water permits and permit amendments applications. When a permit or permit amendment has been submitted to a groundwater conservation district the rules and information required at the time of submission is the only information needed and will be deemed as administratively complete. This will prevent groundwater conservation districts from amending information needed which could slow down the permitting process.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Erin Eriksen 210-382-4295 Erin@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 674 By:</p>	<p>Relating to an expedited licensing process for certain</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>A major component of the healthcare practitioner shortage in Texas is a shortage of mental healthcare providers; Texas currently has 412 healthcare shortage areas that lack an adequate number of trained mental health practitioners, which is the second highest rate of shortage areas in the country. More than 2.5 million Texans live in a county without a single psychiatrist serving their</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson</p>



<p>Schwertner / et al. SP: Davis, Sarah / Coleman</p>	<p>physicians specializing in psychiatry; authorizing a fee.</p>		<p>community. Rural areas are most heavily impacted, as over 60% of the state’s licensed psychiatrists practice in the 5 most populous areas of Texas. Currently, Texas is one of only 8 states that does not offer an expedited licensure process for out-of-state psychiatrists despite the fact that we have one of the most severe mental healthcare provider shortages nationally.</p> <p>SB 674 addresses this issue by instructing the Texas State Medical Board (TMB) to establish and implement an expedited licensure process for out-of-state psychiatrists looking to relocate to Texas. This expedited process would only be available to practitioners who are board certified in psychiatry by the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology or the American Osteopathic Practice Act. The bill instructs TMB to include eligibility criteria in the expedited licensure process to ensure only qualified candidates are approved for licensure. Additionally, the bill asserts that requirements under the expedited licensure process cannot be more stringent than those under the non-expedited process and authorizes TMB to implement a fee for the expedited process. This expedited licensure process will help address the healthcare shortage by attracting qualified psychiatrists to Texas and ensuring that they can begin serving patients as quickly as possible.</p>	<p>210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1912 By: Zaffirini SP: Hinojosa, Gina</p>	<p>Relating to certain notice requirements and filing requirements in court proceedings involving persons with mental illness and representation of proposed patients in proceedings for court-ordered mental health services.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>SB 1912 makes 3 statutory changes that aim to improve the efficiency of the mental health court system in Texas. First, it authorizes county sheriffs and constables to deliver notice to individuals who have been summoned for mental health court proceedings. This already takes place in many counties, but some sheriffs and constables have expressed concern about performing this function without the explicit statutory authority this bill provides. Secondly, the bill repeals the requirement that individuals who have e-filed court documents (via fax or email) also file that document in person at the courthouse within 72 hours and instead requires that individual to hold onto the original signed copy of the document in case of a court-order to provide it. This removes administrative burdens for the individual and the court while ensuring a hard copy of the document will be available if necessary. Finally, the bill authorizes county courts to establish mental health public defender offices. Many courts, such as those located in Travis and Bexar Counties, already utilize mental health public defender offices; this bill simply provides explicit statutory authority for the establishment of this type of specialty public defender office. This section is permissive and does not require a county to establish a mental health public defender office should they elect not to. Overall, SB 1912 removes antiquated statutory provisions and provides for increased efficiency and effectiveness in the functioning of Texas’ mental health court system.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1679 By: Lucio SP: Gutierrez</p>	<p>Relating to the use of the fund for veterans' assistance to provide grants to support veterans county service offices.</p>	<p>Defense & Veterans' Affairs</p>	<p>This bill requires the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) to use at least 5% of their appropriated funds for grants to veteran’s county services offices. These offices exist to assist veterans and their families access benefits available to them. SB 1679 will provide more appropriated funds for more services, this does not limit the grants to 5% of funds. If by July 1 of each year there are not sufficient grant applications TVC is able to use the funds for other authorized purposes. The expansion of services will help veterans and families in gaining benefits they have earned from their service.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 Kylie@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 854 By: Nelson SP: Flynn</p>	<p>Relating to the purchase of food and beverages by the Texas Division of Emergency Management for certain persons.</p>	<p>Appropriations</p>	<p>This bill expands the authority for the Division of Emergency Management to purchase food and beverages during emergency response situations. Under current statute, appropriated funds may only be spent to provide food and beverages for division personnel. With the changes in SB 854, other emergency responders working in conjunction with the DEM to provide services upon activation. The unpredictable nature of situations requiring DEM involvement sometimes necessitates the inclusion of local first responders and service providers, and this bill gives the division the flexibility to provide food to individuals supporting their operations.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Joel Kissell 210-382-4295 Joel@Texaslsg.org</p>



<p>SB 869 By: Huffman SP: Farrar / Smithee</p>	<p>Relating to authorizing a beneficiary designation that transfers a motor vehicle at the owner's death.</p>	<p>Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence</p>	<p>SB 869 authorizes a beneficiary designation outside of probate for owners to transfer their vehicle upon their death. This designation is revocable and changeable by the owner at any time without the beneficiary's consent, and the beneficiary does not have any rights to the vehicle while the owner is still alive. The bill also mandates a procedure for the transfer when there are joint owners of the vehicle, which requires all joint owners to agree to the beneficiary designation. Additionally, the beneficiary will take subject to all encumbrances, contracts, liens, and any other interests, as applicable. A lienholder will still be able to pursue debt collection against the beneficiary if necessary, and will be provided full contact information so that pursuit of payment would be easy.</p> <p>Currently, there is no mechanism to transfer ownership of a motor vehicle upon death without going through probate. This is a very expensive process because a person can only represent themselves in probate court in rare situations; thus, a person must pay for an attorney, filing fees and, also, a legal notice to creditors in the newspaper. For many low-income Texans, a car and money in the bank are often their only assets, and the cost of probate can be more than what the vehicle is worth. Last session, two bills were passed that made it easier for Texans to designate heirship for their money and their home without going through probate; since that time, the Transfer on Death Deed (TODD) forms have been downloaded over 25,000 times. SB 869 creates this process for motor vehicle transfers to a sole beneficiary effective on the owner's death, allowing for more accessibility of all working families to the legal process for transferring property to their loved ones.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 744 By: Kolkhorst / et al. SP: Phelan / Fallon</p>	<p>Relating to a tree planting credit to offset tree mitigation fees imposed by a municipality.</p>	<p>Urban Affairs</p>	<p>This bill implements a tax credit for a tree mitigation fee. Municipalities with tree ordinances may require permit with a corresponding fee, for the removal of protected size trees. CSHB 2052 allows a person who has to pay a tree mitigation fee for the removal of a tree due to development or construction can apply for a credit. In order to receive the credit a tree has to be planted either on the property which the mitigation fee was assessed or a place mutually agreed upon by the person and the municipality. The rates of the credit are laid out in the bill. CSHB 2052 will help to neutralize the loss of trees due to construction and development.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 Kylie@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 315 By: Hinojosa / et al. SP: Burkett /Thompson, Senfronia / Flynn / Raymond</p>	<p>Relating to the enforcement of subpoenas and the regulation of pain management clinics by the Texas Medical Board.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>SB 315 seeks to clarify the statutory authority of the Texas Medical Board (TMB) as it relates to inspections and subpoenas of pain management clinics. The bill authorizes TMB to file a suit with the attorney general for enforcement of a subpoena issued by the board in district court; if the court finds good cause for issuance of the subpoena, it is required to compel the individual to comply. Additionally, the bill specifies that TMB may inspect certified pain management clinics to ensure they are in compliance with all regulations. Additionally, they may inspect uncertified clinics for the purpose of determining whether that clinic should obtain TMB certification. The bill instructs TMB to establish grounds on which these types of investigations may be completed including: the population served by the clinic, the volume, type, or combination of drugs prescribed by the clinic, and any other criteria that warrants the clinic's inspection by the board. Finally, the bill defines inappropriate prescribing as any prescribing that is nontherapeutic or that demonstrates other conduct established by board rules.</p> <p>The provisions of SB 315 will allow for increased oversight and enforcement of certified and uncertified pain management clinics in Texas. Pain management clinics have been cited as problematic in the past for contributing to the opioid epidemic through the overprescribing of prescription medications; they are especially important to consider when investigating the supply-chain of opioids that are pushed into the streets and utilized for illegal consumption. It is imperative that TMB and other relevant entities maintain enforcement authority to mitigate any public health risks associated with the operations of pain management clinics in Texas communities.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org</p>



<p>SB 1660 By: Taylor, Larry SP: King, Ken</p>	<p>Relating to the minutes of operation required for public school districts, charter schools, and other education programs and to calculating the average daily attendance for certain education programs.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>Last session, SB 1660 replaced the requirement for schools to provide instruction for a specific number of days with a requirement that instruction be provided for 75,600 minutes. While this statutory change has increased flexibility for most school districts, it has had the unintended consequence of decreasing funding for certain charter schools, specifically dropout recovery charter schools. SB 1660 addresses this by allowing public school districts to choose to use either days or minutes when calculating the length of their school day. The bill grants the education commissioner the authority to adopt any necessary rules to implement the bill's provisions.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 537 By: Hinojosa SP: Lozano</p>	<p>Relating to requiring the disclosure of special course fees at public institutions of higher education.</p>	<p>Higher Education</p>	<p>SB 537 requires institutions of higher education to include the description and amount of a special course fees, online access fees, and lab fees for each course listed in the institutions online course catalog. If the institution decides to publish a paper course catalog, they may publish any fees charged for each course, according to the most recent academic school year. College students deal with many financial burdens from tuition, housing, and food alone. Many courses now require students to purchase access codes that provide supplemental textbooks, homework, and quizzes for the students. On average an access code can cost around \$100. With the rising expense in tuition and other financial obligations students have, it is important that students have full transparency on the additional costs that come with taking a class. SB 537 gives students the opportunity to examine the cost of taking courses beforehand.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Fabeain Barkwell 210-382-4295 Fabeain@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 1709 By: Zaffirini SP: Moody</p>	<p>Relating to the requirement of a guardian to provide information regarding a ward's health and residence to certain relatives of the ward.</p>	<p>Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence</p>	<p>Currently, the Texas Estates Code requires guardians to provide initial notification of a filing of a guardianship proceeding to certain relatives via registered or certified mail. In addition to this initial notification, the law requires a second layer of notifications to such relatives when the person under guardianship is hospitalized or requires a change in residence. Oftentimes the requirements of these notices may be burdensome on guardians, since the person under the guardianship is in and out of different facilities with changing health conditions. The guardians may also need to send notice to more than five different relatives. This may detract from the degree of care that the guardian provides, and the costs of the notices are often deducted from the estate of the person under guardianship.</p> <p>SB 1709 amends these provisions such that a guardian is required to give notice only to relatives who have elected in writing to receive related notifications. Additionally, the bill specifies that these relatives cannot have been found by a court to have abused, neglected or exploited the person under guardianship, nor been issued a protective order for protecting the person under guardianship.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 277 By: Campbell / et al. SP: Frank</p>	<p>Relating to the eligibility of certain property for certain ad valorem tax incentives relating to wind-powered energy devices.</p>	<p>Ways & Means</p>	<p>SB 277 prohibits property in a reinvestment zone on which a wind-powered energy device is installed or constructed from receiving property tax abatement if located within 25 nautical miles of the boundaries of a military aviation facility. The provisions within the bill also extend to tangible personal property located on the land under a tax abatement agreement entered into on or after September 1, 2017, and further extends to pending agreements on that date if a wind-powered energy device will be installed. The bill further specifies that the prohibition applies regardless of whether the wind-powered energy device is installed or constructed at a location that is within the reinvestment zone. The bill makes related provisions to apply the same prohibition to an appraised value of the aforementioned properties used to create jobs. SB 277 attempts to remove subsidies that incentivize wind turbine builders and owners in order to promote wind energy; Texas currently leads the nation in wind production, as the \$21 million in payments made to Texas landowners is a result of the 39% of the state's wind energy capacity that is generated within the 25-mile buffer zones addressed in the bill. While wind turbines located close to military bases can interfere with flight training missions and contribute to the degradation of the radar system, the consequences of prohibiting tax abatements for wind-powered energy device owners and builders is made on a baseless claim. A 2015 report from the Department of Defense states that generic standoff distances are not</p>	<p>Unfavorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@Texaslsg.org</p>



			<p>useful, and that it is not possible to apply a standard distance restriction to a wide variety of missions with different impacts, as there is too much variability in each structure that could impede radar and flight patterns. Texas can not ignore the negative impact of this restrictive policy that would serve to hinder wind turbine development.</p>	
<p>SB 578 By: Lucio / et al. SP: Gutierrez / Blanco</p>	<p>Relating to measures to facilitate the delivery of certain mental health services for veterans.</p>	<p>Defense & Veterans' Affairs</p>	<p>SB 578 aims to establish the National Center for Warrior Resiliency as well as a veteran suicide prevention action plan. As of 2014 veteran's accounted for 18% of all suicide related deaths in the country. While debate remains among the number of veterans who take their lives each day, even one is too many. As veterans try to acclimate back to civilian life, many struggle with combat-related PTSD, difficulty in relaying their transferrable skills, and overall difficulty relating to family and friends. These factors lead to homelessness, other co-occurring mental health issues but and at worst suicide.</p> <p>This bill seeks to address the struggles veterans have by requiring the UT system create the National Center for Warrior Resiliency (NCWR) at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UT Health San Antonio). The NCWR will be responsible for both researching and providing clinical treatment for combat-related PTSD and other conditions. The bill also requires certain stakeholders to collaborate in creating an action plan for veteran suicide prevention. The plan will include both raising awareness and ways in which access to suicide prevention can be increased. SB 578 is an important step in helping eliminate the lives lost of our nation's heroes.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 Kylie@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>SB 59 By: Zaffirini SP: Kuempel</p>	<p>Relating to energy and water management planning and reporting requirements for state agencies and institutions of higher education.</p>	<p>Government Transparency & Operation</p>	<p>This bill amends sections of the government code that deal with energy and water management planning. It also addresses some of the reporting requirements for state agencies and institutions of higher education. Specifically, it removes the state agency's requirement to develop a long-range plan for the reliable and cost effective utilities for the agency. The agency would no longer have to submit the plan to the state energy conservation office (SECO) and it would no longer be necessary to include in the state agency's five-year construction and major renovation plan. The bill provides that SECO no longer is required to assist state agencies, excluding institutions of higher education, in meeting certain energy and water conservation mandates. The bill also states that state agencies and institutions of higher education are no longer required to plan and implement a five-year energy and water management plan. Agencies and institutions of higher education no longer need to submit the plans to SECO as well. The bill also changes the reference of gasoline to transportation fuel within the code dealing with the requirements for the agency's or institution's energy and water management plan. It also changes the deadline by which SECO must submit a report to the Governor and Legislative Budget Board on the utility management and conservation efforts of state agencies and institutions of higher education.</p> <p>This bill seeks to reduce redundant and often confusing reporting on conservation for agencies. This will not reduce what is necessary for agencies to report but instead make sure reporting is more efficient and ultimately helpful in conservation efforts.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Ana Ramon 210-382-4295 Ana@Texaslsg.org</p>

