

<p>Sp: Allen/ White</p>			<p>The bill would also require a judge to consider the results of an evaluation determining the appropriate type and level of treatment necessary to address an individual’s alcohol or drug dependency before a judge can require participation in a state-funded substance abuse treatment program.</p> <p>Probation requirement that are cognizant of conditions of community service based on individualized treatment plans and risk and needs assessments are the most effective impact on a person’s rehabilitation. This bill also safeguards individuals and probation officers from excessive and duplicative conditions that are burdensome: Individuals can face difficulties maintaining stable employment and achieving educational and career goals, and probation officers that are losing time away from actively pursuing crime.</p>	<p>210-382-4295 Katherine@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 3746 By: Phelan</p>	<p>Relating to the permissible uses of the floodplain management account.</p>	<p>Natural Resources</p>	<p>HB 3746 amends the Water Code to allow the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) to allow the floodplain management account to be used for: the collection and analysis of floodplain information; flood planning, protection, mitigation, or adaption; and, public outreach education.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Erin Eriksen 210-382-4295 Erin@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 1635 By: Smithee/ Fallon</p>	<p>Relating to the authority of the commissioner of insurance to request a state innovation waiver for certain small group health benefit plans of certain federal actuarial value and level of coverage requirements.</p>	<p>Insurance</p>	<p>This bill would give the commissioner of insurance the ability to negotiate with the U.S. Secretary of Health and Human Services in order to obtain a waiver under 42 U.S.C. Section 18052 for small employer health benefit plans of the actuarial value requirements.</p> <p>This bill specifically targets small employers, and the actuarial value requirement it refers to has to do with the percentage of health care costs that the insurance plan covers. The bill will authorize the commissioner to submit an application on this specific aspect so that small businesses could offer plans that cover less than half of their employee's costs. It would not affect the premium or deductible subsidies that individuals can receive in the Marketplace. While this would save companies money, it opens up the door to massive financial burdens for their employees. This could essentially allow small employers to provide sub-par plans with higher deductibles.</p>	<p>Will of the House w/ Concerns Evaluated by: Elizabeth Hann 210-382-4295 Elizabeth@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 3868 By: Smithee</p>	<p>Relating to the vote to authorize background and criminal history checks on tenant applicants by a property owners' association.</p>	<p>Business & Industry</p>	<p>If there is approval in an affirmative vote from a majority of owners, a property owners’ association (POA) may require background and criminal history checks in applications for long term or short term tenancy for a property in the subdivision. This would have serious negative effects this has on a person’s ability to find housing when they have a criminal record. The only way that someone with a criminal history can often times find rental housing is through a direct relationship with the owner, as opposed to filing an application with a leasing company. For example, Texans with a criminal history may use “Craigslist” or “Austin Home Search”, find properties for lease and then speak directly with the owner. They present evidence of rehabilitation and good standing, such as gainful employment. If that owner is part of an owners’ association, and wants to exercise their right to lease their property, and it so happens the lessee has a criminal history, then HB 3868 may prevent them from doing so. Additionally, this bill potentially allows checking of anything in a person’s background, which might include work history, salary, being a victim of domestic violence, and so on. It is a huge invasion of privacy.</p> <p>It is imperative to public safety and to breaking cycles of poverty and incarceration that housing is provided to persons with a criminal history. Working class people and people of color are disproportionately affected by our criminal justice system. In order to stop this vicious cycle, there needs to be policies that promote their advancement. People deserve to be seen as individuals with specific life</p>	<p>Unfavorable Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org</p>



			histories and circumstances, rather than solely as a person with convictions. Furthermore, HUD last year expressed that landlords and home sellers who turn down tenants or buyers based on their criminal records may violate the Fair Housing Act. From the perspective of homeowners, it interferes with property rights to chose what tenant to rent to. Property owners have been renting homes in subdivisions without this sort of regulation for decades. From the perspective of tenants, there are potential fair housing violations. There is no demonstrative need for this legislation. This bill is simply not a step in the right direction for Texas and for working families.	
HB 1009 By: Alonzo	Relating to the regulation of firefighters and fire departments by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection.	Urban Affairs	This bill prohibits an employee of a municipality who has adopted the firefighters civil service laws from performing duties on wildland fires, including prescribed burning, unless the individual is a full time civil service employee regularly assigned to such duties. Currently civil service employees who hold a certificate by the Texas Commission on Fire Protection may perform such duties as prescribed burning without having to regularly performing firefighting duties. This has lead to safety concerns regarding fires in densely populated urban areas. An employee of the municipality who is not regularly assigned to such duties is prohibited to perform these duties, though the bill make an exception if they are performing such duties outside of their employment and under a voluntary fire department. With Austin and Houston ranked 3rd and 10th in the nation, respectively, for wildfires it is necessary to address the causes of wildland fires in highly populated areas.	Favorable Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 Kylie@Texaslsg.org
HB 3859 By: Frank/ Cook/Dale/ Bonnen, Greg/ Sanford	Relating to the rights of conscience for child welfare services providers.	State Affairs	CSHB 3859 offers protections for the rights of conscience of child welfare service providers in an attempt to maintain a diverse network of available providers. The bill states that governmental entities or persons contracting with governmental entities to refer or place children with a child welfare agency may not take adverse action against the child welfare agency on the basis that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The provider has declined or will decline to provide child welfare services to an individual under circumstances that conflict with the provider’s sincerely held religious beliefs • The provider intends to provide children under their control or care with a religious education • The provider has declined or will decline to provide, facilitate, or refer a person for abortions, contraceptives, or drugs that are potentially abortion inducing The bill also protects child welfare service providers from being required to provide any service that conflicts with the provider’s sincerely held religious beliefs. It mandates that child-placing governmental entities ensure the availability of a secondary child welfare service provider in the area that can provide the service that the primary provider chooses not to provide. For example, if a foster home refuses to provide contraceptives to a teen girl under its care, the governmental entity is responsible for securing a secondary agency to provide the contraceptives. Child Protective Services (CPS) workers are exempted under this bill, as they are government employees. CSHB 3859 entitles a child welfare services provider who successfully asserts a claim under the bill’s provisions to obtain declaratory relief under the Civil Practice and Remedies Code or injunctive relief to stop the adverse action being taken against them. Finally, the bill includes provisions relating to the applicability of the law in relation to existing State and Federal laws. <u>Concerns</u> CSHB 3859 raises a number of legitimate concerns, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bill’s broad definition of “child welfare provider” applies to any nongovernmental entity or person involved in any way with providing a social service to children - this grants a significantly large group of people an unprecedented right to deny service based on a personal belief • “Sincerely held religious belief” is a low-bar to establish in a court of law, do to the difficulty associated with finding someone’s religious belief “insincere” - this could allow for abuse of the rights granted until this law 	Unfavorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The bill does little to extend protections to the individuals adversely affected by it. Its anti-discrimination clause only applies to individual’s “race, ethnicity, or national origin” - it does not explicitly prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation, gender identity, sex, or religion • The religious refusal rights granted under this bill are broad and bear little resemblance to religious accommodations authorized under existing civil rights laws • “Best interests of the child” are a right without a remedy - the bill does not provide an avenue by which a child who feels they have been wrongfully discriminated against under this bill can file a complaint <p><u>Legality of CSHB 3859</u></p> <p>While preserving religious liberty is paramount, it is just as important to insure that people’s religious liberties do not impose on the health and safety of others, including children. People have the right to reasonable religious accommodation under the Texas Religious Freedom Restoration Act (TRFRA), but this right is to meant to be balanced against other considerations such as public health and compelling state interests. This bill does not attempt to strike that balance and instead makes expanded considerations for one group: private child welfare service providers. Additionally, this bill violates a standard set in the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment that any law seeking to promote reasonable religious accommodations cannot single out certain faith traditions for favored treatment while disfavoring the rest. Certain provisions of this bill extend expansive rights for those who subscribe to favored faith traditions: for example, the bill explicitly protects the faith traditions of those who object to abortion and contraception, while extending no such protections to the many faith traditions that hold opposing beliefs.</p> <p>There are many possible scenarios in which this bill could be used as justification for prioritizing the religious accommodation for a certain group above the compelling state interest of caring for abused and neglected children. Some examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A foster family could refuse to offer critical medical care, including reproductive health care, vaccines, or hormone therapy, to a child under their care, which compromises the child’s health and safety • An adoption agency could refuse to work with qualified prospective adoptive couples who do not share the faith principles of the agency • A counselor could refuse to provide counseling or family reunification services to a parent who is divorced or who is non-religious • A child placing agency could place a child with strangers instead of a close relative if that relative is LGBTQ <p>Fundamentally, this bill prioritizes the needs of child welfare service providers over the needs of vulnerable children in the child welfare system. It opens the door for discrimination against marginalized populations, specifically LGBTQ children, to take place under the auspice of religious freedom. It allows child welfare providers (including foster parents) to be selective in choosing what types of children to serve and what types of services to provide when they should be offering holistic services to all children in need of assistance. This is especially concerning, as the state is moving toward privatization of certain child welfare services. While CSHB 3859 may expand the number of child welfare service providers, it does so in a way that is inequitable and inconsistent. The focal point of any effort to improve child welfare service provision should be the children in the system; this bill does not prioritize children, and its unintended consequences could have lasting negative impacts on children and families who interact with the child welfare system.</p>	
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<p>HB 3591 By: Thompson, Ed</p>	<p>Relating to the composition of the aviation advisory committee.</p>	<p>Transportation</p>	<p>This bill grants the Texas Transportation Commission broader authority in appointing members to the Aviation Advisory Committee. The minimum number of members for the committee is set at six, although a greater number is authorized. Presumably, TTC would settle on an uneven number of members to avoid potential gridlock. The other specified requirements for committee membership, namely five years of minimum experience within the aviation field, remain in place.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Andrea Elizondo 210-382-4295 Andrea@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 2697 By: Price/ Coleman/ Springer/et al.</p>	<p>Relating to telemedicine and telehealth services.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>Telemedicine and telehealth services are health care services provided by a physician using telecommunications or information technology; there are many benefits to utilizing telemedicine, including increased accessibility and cost-savings. Currently, a practitioner has to have established a patient-practitioner relationship in person to utilize telehealth; establishing this relationship is critical to ensure that there is adequate communication and cooperation between the practitioner and the patient, however, evidence shows the relationship can be effectively established through telecommunication. CSHB 2697 strikes language requiring the in-person establishment of this relationship and provides a clear regulatory structure for the establishment of a valid practitioner-patient relationship via other telecommunications methods.</p> <p>In order for the practitioner-patient relationship to be valid under HB 2697, the practitioner must provide a standard of care that is equal to that of the same health care service if it were being provided in person. Additionally, all communication with the patient should be pursuant to a call coverage agreement that is in accordance with established Texas Medical Board rules. The bill outlines acceptable forms of telecommunication technology to be utilized for the provision of telehealth services. It also instructs the practitioner providing the service to provide the patient with guidance on follow-up care and to provide relevant information to the patient’s primary care provider about the telemedicine services rendered, should the patient consent to the information transfer.</p> <p>The bill also instructs the Texas Medical Board, Texas Board of Pharmacy, Texas Board of Nursing, and Texas Physician Assistant Board to jointly adopt rules that establish valid prescribing practices to be utilized via telemedicine and to publish these rules in a “frequently asked questions” section on each respective Board’s website. HB 2697 explicitly prohibits a practitioner from utilizing telemedicine to prescribe an abortifacient or any other drug or device that would result in termination of a pregnancy. It also specifies that the provisions of this bill are not applicable for the delivery of mental health services.</p> <p>Lastly, HB 2697 states that a health benefit/insurance plan may not exclude telemedicine services from coverage of a health service or procedure delivered by a preferred health professional to a covered patient solely because the service is not provided through an in-person consultation. Health benefit plans may still require a deductible or a copay for a covered telemedicine healthcare service. The bill does not require health benefit plans to provide coverage for telemedicine and telehealth services, but offers provisions to clarify the manner in which telemedicine services can be covered. To ensure coverage transparency, each issuer of a health benefit plan is required to adopt and display the issuer’s policies and payment practices for telemedicine services in a conspicuous location on the plan’s website.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 852 By: Parker/ Shaheen/ White/</p>	<p>Relating to an adult high school diploma and industry certification charter school pilot program.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>The Goodwill Excel Center is a free public charter high school that provides adults, ages 17-50, the opportunity to earn their high school diploma. Since their inception, they have graduated 205 adults who now have more job opportunities and a higher earning potential. Ninety-eight percent of their students are economically disadvantaged and thirty-eight percent of their students enrolled in college after earning their high school diploma. HB 852 specifically removes the statutory cap that limits The Goodwill Excel Center’s</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 201-382-4295</p>



VanDeaver/ Koop/ et al.			capacity to 150 students. Effectively, HB 852 would allow this school to expand and provide more adults the opportunity to go back to school and earn their high school diploma.	Arielle@Texaslsg.org
HB 4011 By: Burrows	Relating to prohibited reporting of information regarding debt incurred for nonemergency medical care.	Business & Industry	<p>HB 4011 prohibits health care providers from transmitting to consumer reporting agencies information regarding a consumer's unpaid amounts if the provider did not obtain a signed disclosure in the form prescribed by the executive commission of the Health and Human Services Commission prior to billing, and waits at least 180 days after the consumer receives a bill for medical charges. The disclosure form must include an itemized statement of the amounts to be billed for the nonemergency medical care.</p> <p>HB 4011 protects Texans who struggle with nonemergency health care debt by affording them relief from negative credit reporting on unpaid, nonemergency health care services unless the provider gives the patient information on how much the care would cost and obtains the patient's signature. In the Commonwealth Fund survey, one fifth of Texans said they were contacted by a collection agency in 2014 because of an unpaid medical bill, and 4 of 10 adults reported that they had trouble paying their medical bills. 43% of Texans said that they did not see a doctor when sick, did not fill a prescription, skipped a test, treatment, or follow-up visit.</p> <p>HB 4011 may help in leading to more providers giving health care cost information up front allowing consumers know what to expect. Even if this bill does not help with that, then at least consumers who later have trouble paying their bill would not have the debt appear on their credit report. Credit report information has a significant impact on an individual's finances as it is used to determine eligibility for jobs, access to rental housing and mortgages, insurance premiums, and access to credit in general. This bill mandates some common sense protections by preventing medical debt from hurting a consumer's credit rating when the person was not informed up front about the costs.</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org</p>

LSG Floor Report For Emergency Calendar- Tuesday, May 9, 2017

Bill	Caption	Committee	Analysis & Evaluation	Recommendation
HB 39 By: Wu/ Raymond/ Davis, Sarah /Rose/et al.	Relating to the child protective service functions of the Department of Family and Protective Services.	Human Services	<p>CSHB 39 addresses certain functions of child protective services (CPS) within the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS). While much has been done to address the nature of foster care in Texas, the culture and regulations around CPS remains mostly untouched. High turnover rate and limited foster capacity continue to plague the child welfare system. This bill aims to help both children and case workers by ensuring they receive adequate trauma informed care training. It also aims to reduce any inequity of caseload distribution. CSHB 39 codifies provisions on emergency placements for children who need temporary placement for not more than 30 days. This bill seeks to develop and regulate several responsibilities of CPS and DFPS.</p> <p>Medical Examinations</p> <p>This bill requires that a child receive a medical examination within three days after a child enters into state conservatorship. Rural communities would be afforded 7 business days to conduct the initial medical examine for the child. Rural communities often do not have the same resources as others, so allowing them extended time will benefit both the community and the child who may have to travel for the proper provider.</p> <p>Foster Care Provider Recruitment Plan</p> <p>CSHB 39 requires DFPS to collaborate with current foster and adoptive parents to create a foster care provider recruitment plan. The required criteria of the plan are laid out in the bill. This will serve to mitigate the foster care capacity crisis in our State and help those overwhelmed foster parents take on less children.</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 Kylie@Texaslsg.org</p>



			<p>Career Development and Education Program DFPS would be required to partner with certain stakeholders involved with CPS or education, including foster care youth to develop a program to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in obtaining a diploma or GRE. • Career guidance, including assisting with necessary trade certifications. • Provide information on tuition and fee waivers for higher education. • Provide information on housing, education or assistance for transitioning into independent living <p>It has been found that up to 20-25% of children who age out of foster care fall into homelessness in their struggle to transition into independent living. This will help those children who may turn 18 while in state conservatorship to build skills to transition.</p> <p>DFPS Employee Confidentiality This bill requires that any personal information of a current or former DFPS remain confidential. This will help to protect those from threats or actions taken upon them by former or current clients.</p> <p>Caseworker Caseload Management System This bill would create a management system that would aim to assess cases in order to determine the appropriate number of cases assigned to each case manager. This will promote equity of caseloads by ensuring that any one case manager is not overburdened by a high caseload with mostly cases assessed to be high risk. This will help caseworkers manage stress as well as reduce some of the vicarious trauma this type of work can put upon a worker.</p> <p>CSHB 39 will potentially increase the capacity of foster parents. The bill promotes interagency collaboration as well as CPS employees equal distribution of cases and peace of mind. For children in the system this will help to reduce the number of homeless former foster youth and encourage the care and attention they need.</p>	
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LSG Floor Report For Constitutional Amendments Calendar- Tuesday, May 9, 2017

<p>HJR 73 By: Burns/ Ashby/ Kacal/Shine / et al.</p>	<p>Proposing a constitutional amendment to restrict the power of the legislature to mandate requirements on a municipality or county</p>	<p>State Affairs</p>	<p>HJR 73 proposes a constitutional amendment requiring the Legislature to appropriate funds to cover any mandate made to a municipality or county by the Legislature after the date this act goes into effect. Funds appropriated cannot come from a source that already funds that county or municipality. These provisions attempt to address the issue of unfunded mandates, which can be financially burdensome to counties.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HJR 113 By: Capriglione</p>	<p>Proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to exempt from ad valorem taxation precious metal held in the Texas Bullion Depository.</p>	<p>Ways & Means</p>	<p>HJR 113 proposes a constitutional amendment authorizing the Legislature to exempt precious metal held in the Texas Bullion Depository from ad valorem taxation. The Legislature would be allowed to provide a definition of what constitutes “precious metal” for purposes relating to this amendment. The Legislative Budget Board does not anticipate a statistically significant burden regarding the overall distribution of a state tax or fee for individuals and businesses contingent on the passage of HJR 113. The Texas Bullion Depository provides storage space for precious metals of both individuals and institutions.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@Texaslsg.org</p>

LSG Floor Report For General State Calendar- Tuesday, May 9, 2017



<p>HB 1747 By: Minjarez/ Villalba/ Larson</p>	<p>Relating to the creation of the offense of mail theft.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p>	<p>HB 1747 creates the felony offense of mail theft, in which commission of the offense pertains to a person appropriating pieces of mail that, in the aggregate, are addressed to at least three persons other than the actor. The classes of offenses for mail theft include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A state jail felony if 10 or fewer pieces of mail are stolen, • A third-degree felony if more than 10 but fewer than 50 pieces of mail are stolen, and • A second-degree felony if 50 or more pieces of mail are stolen. <p>Mail theft is currently charged under property theft laws, in which a dollar amount is attached to the theft. As there are no specific offenses pertaining to mail theft in Texas, there is little to deter repeat offenders who attempt to commit fraud or identity theft. HB 1747 will authorize law enforcement officers to prosecute persons committing mail theft as necessary.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 3261 By: Geren</p>	<p>Relating to the registration and regulation of appraisal management companies; authorizing fees; expanding the applicability of an occupational registration.</p>	<p>Licensing & Administrative Procedures</p>	<p>This bill updates Chapter 114 of the Occupations Code to update definitions and conform to federal law concerning appraisal management companies. These companies are regulated at the federal level with state oversight limited to registration and reporting requirements through the Texas Appraisers Licensing and Certification Board (TALCB), and employ individual appraisers who are licensed through the same Board. HB 3261 only adds one notable provision to statute relating to the collection of fees. The TALCB is authorized to collect registration fees on behalf of the federal Appraisal Subcommittee, and this bill expands that authority to include a subgroup of federally regulated AMCs regulated by the Federal Reserve System and Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 1643 By: Springer</p>	<p>Relating to the prosecution of the offense of operation of an unmanned aircraft over certain facilities.</p>	<p>Homeland Security & Public Safety</p>	<p>This bill expands the definition of critical infrastructure facilities to include telecommunications structures (i.e. cell phone towers) and concentrated animal feeding operation (i.e. industrial livestock facilities) for the purpose of prohibiting the use of unmanned aircraft in their airspace. The use of drones near these types of facilities risks disruption to their normal operation for different reasons -- the potential for crashes that could damage cell phone towers and affect telecommunications access, and for the disruption to the environment of livestock including cattle, pigs, and poultry. More than a quarter of cattle in the United States are raised in Texas and represent a \$19 billion industry, a crucial segment of the state's economic portfolio. Drone technology is a burgeoning field whose growth could not have been anticipated when the original definitions of critical infrastructure facilities were drafted, making it necessary to adjust statute now that their potential impacts are better understood.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Andrea Elizondo 210-382-4295 Andrea@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 2591 By: Herrero/ Guillen</p>	<p>Relating to the exemption from taxes and special assessments of property of a navigation district.</p>	<p>Ways & Means</p>	<p>This bill amends the Water Code to exempt navigation districts from taxation. Navigation districts are a political subdivision responsible for the maintenance of ports and waterways that do not currently pay taxes because of their public benefit. The state Tax Code already contains exemptions, so HB 2591 creates consistency across statute regarding this topic. The exemption only applies to the navigation districts themselves, leaving companies that lease property within their boundaries responsible for taxation as applicable. Texas ports and waterways are intimately tied to commerce in the state, and HB 2591 codifies an existing practice in support of their maintenance and operation by navigation districts.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 3296 By: Klick</p>	<p>Relating to persons required to establish nursing peer review committees.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>Nursing peer review is a process that is utilized to address nurses' minor errors or infractions that do not warrant an official disciplinary complaint with the Texas Board of Nursing (BON). The peer review process allows for minor nursing issues to be at the nurse's place of employment, ensuring that the proposed solution is tailored to that specific nurse's scope of practice. Nursing peer review also offers vital workplace protections to nurses who feel that they have been asked to perform a service that is in violation of the Nurse Protection Act (NPA) , a Federal law that seeks to reduce occupational hazards for nurses. If a nurse feels they have been asked to do something in violation of the NPA, they can request for a "Safe Harbor" peer review process to take place to determine the nurse's duty to perform the requested service. Finally, Nursing Peer Review allows minor cases to be handled locally, freeing up the BON to focus on more serious cases, such as when a nurse is accused of causing harm to a patient.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org</p>



			Currently, only organizations with 10 or more nurses on staff are required to offer nursing peer review. CSHB 3296 expands access to nursing peer review by requiring it to be offered by organizations that employ 8 or more nurses. This minor change will expand nurse’s access to peer review, offering workplace protections and an avenue within which to address complaints without going through a formal disciplinary process with the BON.	
HB 2032 By: Gervin-Hawkins/ et al.	Relating to increasing the criminal penalty for certain offenses committed in a vehicle operated by a public transportation system.	Criminal Jurisprudence	HB 2032 increases criminal penalties for sexual offenses, assaultive offenses, and robbery committed in a vehicle operated by a public transportation system. Within the bill, the commission of an offense on a vehicle operated by a public transportation system would be punished as prescribed for the next higher offense, with the exception of a first-degree or capital felony. HB 2032, “The Passenger Protection Act”, seeks to increase deterrents for individuals endangering passengers and operators of public transportation. Those relying on public transportation to get to work, school, or other places should have the protection of increased public safety from violent and violating offenses.	Favorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@Texaslsg.org
HB 1661 By: Phelan	Relating to a withdrawal of a candidate.	Elections	HB 1661 allows for the ballot printing authority to withdraw a candidate’s name from a ballot and certification for unopposed status may be implemented. If the candidate withdrawals from the race and meets all of the requirements for withdrawal with the exception for untimely withdrawal, if the ballots have not been printed, the authority may omit the name. Additionally, a certification for unopposed status may be added. This provision would be applied to elections for non state and county officers.	Favorable Evaluated by: Erin Ericksen 210-382-4295 Erin@Texaslsg.org
HB 162 By: Lucio III	Relating to conditions of community supervision for defendants convicted of certain criminal offenses involving animals; authorizing fees.	Criminal Jurisprudence	HB 162 allows a judge to require a person convicted of an offense relating to animal cruelty to complete an online responsible pet owner course as a condition of community supervision. The offenses eligible for the online responsible pet owner course include cruelty to livestock and non-livestock animals, attacks on an assistance animal, and dog fighting. The bill requires the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation, or the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation as appropriate, to create rules by March 1, 2018 regarding administration, approval, and certification of the course and course providers. HB 162 seeks to reduce the occurrence of animal cruelty crimes and offer a rehabilitative and informative opportunity.	Favorable Evaluated by Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@texaslsg.org
HB 3854 By: Morrison, Geanie W./ Martinez, “Mando”/ Paddie/ Bonnen, Dennis/ Deshotel/ et al.	Relating to the movement of certain vehicles transporting an intermodal shipping container; authorizing a fee; creating an offense.	Transportation	This bill would authorize the TxDMV to issue an annual permit authorizing the movement of sealed intermodal shipping containers, which are enclosed, standardized, reusable containers. The bill would establish certain restrictions regarding axle weight and configurations and other conditions for vehicles that may operate under this permit. An applicant for a permit would be required to designate each counties and municipality in which the permit would be used. This legislation would require an applicant to pay a permit fee of \$5,000, of which 60% would be deposited to the State Highway Fund (SHF), 35% would be divided equally among and distributed to the counties designated in the permit application, and 5% would be divided equally among and distributed to the municipalities designated in the permit application. The bill would require the Comptroller to send amounts due to the counties at least once each fiscal year for deposit to the credit of the county road and bridge fund. The bill would create a Class C misdemeanor for certain offenses related to the permit. HB 3854 will unnecessarily jeopardize the safety of the traveling public, provide certain business interests with a significant competitive disadvantages for small businesses, and potentially create a number of enforcement challenges. Trucks with higher gross vehicle weight allowances compromise margins of safety, they are harder to handle and maneuver, and additional axles or different axle configurations will not entirely mitigate infrastructure damage. The overweight trucks described in this bill were found to have a 18% higher out-of-service rates for brake violations and are 362% more likely to be involved in a crash (U.S. Department of Transportation, and Institute for Highway Safety). Profit should not come at the expense of public safety, the deterioration of roads and bridges, nor smaller businesses of the trucking industry going out of business. Instead, the state	Unfavorable Evaluated by: Andrea Elizondo 210-382-4295 Andrea@Texaslsg.org



			should be more focused on addressing its structurally deficient bridges, the poor condition of public roads since there is a major backlog in highway maintenance and capital improvement projects.	
HB 245 By: Johnson, Eric	Relating to certain reporting requirements for law enforcement agencies; providing a civil penalty.	Homeland Security & Public Safety	This bill creates a civil penalty for law enforcement agency that fails to submit a report to the Office of the Attorney General regarding an officer-involved injury or death. Agencies are currently required to submit these reports but there is no enforcement mechanism, so HB 245 requires the attorney general to investigate any claim of an unfiled report. When the results of those investigations indicate that an agency has failed to follow the reporting procedures, they will be assessed \$1000 for each day the report is unfiled; repeat offenses under this statute result in an additional \$10,000 fine. Agencies can be understandably reluctant to release details following a high-profile incident involving one of their officers, but law enforcement’s duty of public service carries with it an expectation of openness. HB 245 provides one step in the process of increasing accountability regarding agency operations.	Favorable Evaluated by: Andrea Elizondo 210-382-4295 Andrea@Texaslsg.org
HB 472 By: Dale/Villalba	Relating to judicial review of protective orders and the duration of those orders.	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence	Limits motions to review a protective order for determination of continuing need. Currently, in motions to terminate sexual assault or human trafficking protective orders (POs), victims must prove a continuing need in order to maintain the PO. However, the victim did not have to prove this continuing need when they established the PO because the trauma from these crimes can be lifelong and severe. For example, there was a case where a court ruled that a man had repeatedly raped his 9-year-old daughter for years. She was issued a 10-year PO against the father. Three years later, he petitioned to terminate the order early, and because the victim could not prove “continuing need”, the court rescinded the PO. HB 472 ensures that civil protective order laws in Texas serve the purpose of protecting survivors of sexual assault and abuse, rather than allow perpetrators to use the courts as weapons of control and intimidation. This bill corrects the evidentiary imbalance between the standard for obtaining a PO based on sexual assault or abuse, stalking, or human trafficking, and the standard for modifying or terminating that PO. It additionally limits the motion for review to one.	Favorable Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org
HB 108 By: Alvarado/ Button/ Bernal/ Paddie/ Gonzales, Larry	Relating to the use of the skills development fund to facilitate the relocation to or expansion in this state of employers offering complex or high-skilled employment opportunities.	Economic & Small Business Development	Texas’ multiple economic business-incentives make it an appealing state for businesses to relocate to; the lack of workforce training and support services for these businesses, however, can discourage them from ultimately deciding to bring their company to Texas. HB 108 authorizes the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to utilize funds from the Skills Development Fund to provide training and support for employers looking to relocate to Texas, with a focus on recruiting employers who will provide high-skilled employment opportunities for Texans. Under the bill, TWC is authorized to use funds to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide leadership and direction to out-of-state employers • Provide linkage between out-of-state employers and economic development organizations, local workforce development boards, public junior colleges, and public technical institutes, allowing these entities to collaboratively address employer’s needs • Address employers’ needs for high-skilled workers by collaborating with Texas public junior and technical colleges to deliver targeted workforce training • Award grants to public junior and technical colleges to develop, obtain equipment for, or implement targeted workforce training This bill does not create a new grant program, but creates flexibility in what existing skills development grant funds can be used for. Investing skills development funds in training that will incentivize businesses to relocate to Texas will have a positive impact on our economy and create valuable high-skill jobs for many Texans.	Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org



<p>HB 525 By: Villalba/ Alvarado/ Morrison, Geanie W./ Thompson, Senfronia/ et al.</p>	<p>Relating to a central database containing information about offenders who have committed certain violent offenses against children or offenses involving family or dating violence.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p>	<p>HB 525 requires the Department of Public Safety to maintain a computerized central database of persons who have on three or more occasions been convicted of an offense regarding dating violence, family violence, unlawful restraint of children or kidnapping of children. The information contained in the database is public information, with the exception of any information regarding: 1) the social security, telephone or driver’s license number, and 2) information that would identify the victim. The database must contain certain information including the person’s name, date of birth, physical description, a recent photograph and a list of offenses related to family or dating violence or violence against children.</p> <p>HB 525 addresses the terrifying problem of violence against children, and family violence. A central, public database establishes a mechanism for Texans and Texas families to have more knowledge for the purposes of ensuring the safety of themselves, their children and loved ones. There is a concern that the bill may otherwise focus more on being punitive rather than rehabilitative. Additionally, there is a concern that it may have an unintended consequence of targeting low-income communities.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 816 By: Bernal/ Uresti, Tomas</p>	<p>Relating to a school district assigning a mentor teacher to a new classroom teacher.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>HB 816 amends the Education Code to set out requirements for teacher mentoring. The bill requires districts to provide training to mentor teachers to be completed before the beginning of the school year as well as supplemental training during the school year. The bill specifies that the training must include content related to best mentorship practices, and it delineates requirements regarding mentoring session topics and session frequency. HB 816 also creates a mentor program allotment to fund districts that implement a mentoring program as described in this bill. Effectively, HB 816 strengthens the Texas teaching workforce and reduces the millions of dollars spent on teacher attrition.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 539 By: VanDeaver/ Bernal/ Casper/ Gonzalez, Mary/ Sheffield</p>	<p>Relating to the ability of certain dependents of members of the United States military to enroll full-time in courses provided through the state virtual school network.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>HB 539 expands the eligibility requirements for enrolling full-time in courses provided through the state virtual school network to accommodate students in military families who transferred to this state as a result of a deployment or transfer, and was enrolled in a publicly funded school out-of-state in the preceding school year. This will help military children who relocate to Texas continue their education with as little delay as possible.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 849 By: Murr</p>	<p>Relating to notice to certain lienholders of cancellation of certain personal automobile insurance coverages.</p>	<p>Insurance</p>	<p>This bill requires that automobile insurance providers send notice to the lienholder on the vehicle if they cancel the policy. These notifications are already considered best practice among insurance companies, but the absence of this requirement in statute can cause financial complications for other parties. The motivation for this bill involves a car salesman who sold a vehicle to an individual who totalled the vehicle after their policy was cancelled without notice, leaving him responsible for the outstanding balance on the loan. HB 849 is a straightforward adjustment to the Insurance Code that requires communication that should, and generally already does, happen within the industry.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Elizabeth Hann 210-382-4295 Elizabeth@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 884 By: King, Ken</p>	<p>Relating to a revision of the essential knowledge and skills of the public school foundation curriculum and proclamations for the</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>The instructional materials allotment (IMA) was created for the purchase of instructional materials, technological equipment, and technology-related services. School districts have flexibility over the use of IMA funds, but they are required by the Texas Education Agency to certify that they have spent sufficient funds on instructional materials that meet 100% of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) requirements. Districts typically purchase materials adopted by the State Board of Education (SBOE) in their proclamation, but the costs of the materials adopted by SBOE are so high that it leaves some districts with little to no money left over to purchase technological equipment, technology-related services, and other instructional materials. HB 884 would limit the proclamation by the</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>



	production of instructional materials.		SBOE to 75% of the IMA funding, and it would require the review and revision of TEKS for each subject and grade level of the foundation curriculum. Effectively, this would allow schools to use at least 25% of their IMA funding on technology or other instructional materials.	
HB 786 By: VanDeaver	Relating to the prohibition of certain employment discrimination regarding an employee who is a volunteer emergency responder.	Business & Industry	<p>Prohibits an employer from terminating or suspending the employment of, or in any other manner discriminating against, an employee who is a volunteer emergency responder when they are late or absent in responding to an emergency. HB 786 also provides entitlements for these employees if an employer violates this mandate. Many small cities and rural communities rely on volunteer firefighters and other emergency responders to respond to fires and other emergencies. They are sometimes the only trained resource for these communities, and they save taxpayers incredible amounts of money. These volunteer firefighters must be protected from punishment for missing work when responding to emergencies. This is a public safety concern.</p> <p>The only concern in this bill is that an employer may reduce the wages otherwise owed to the employee for any period that the employee took off responding to an emergency, except as authorized by a collective bargaining agreement. A volunteer emergency responder should not be penalized in their wages otherwise owed when called on to respond to an emergency.</p>	Favorable with Concerns Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org
HB 929 By: Miller	Relating to the time for returning ballots mailed by certain federal postcard applicants.	Elections	HB 929 extends the deadline for a ballot by mail to be counted for those serving in the armed forces and the merchant marines, their spouses, and dependents to arrive to the address on the carrier envelop by the sixth day after the date of the election. If the sixth day falls on a weekend or national holiday the deadline extends to the next regular business day. This bill also amends language requiring the local canvassing authority to meet be set by the canvassing authority presiding officer within the parameters described in statute.	Favorable Evaluated by: Erin Eriksen 210-382-4295 Erin@Texaslsg.org
HB 1974 By: Wray	Relating to durable powers of attorney.	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence	<p>Provides several clarification and modernization changes to the Texas Durable Power of Attorney Act, Chapter 751, under the Estates Code. These changes came as recommendations by the Real Estate, Probate and Trust Law Section of the State Bar of Texas, and were approved by the State Bar. A valid Durable Power of Attorney (DPOA) is a legal document that gives someone you choose the power to act in your place; for example, the trusted person you name will be permitted to take care of important matters to you, such as paying a bill, in the event that you are incapacitated.</p> <p>Many Texas citizens have been unable to effectively use the DPOA. Sometimes a DPOA is rejected for unexplained or arbitrary reasons. HB 1974 aims to clarify this Act, so as to simply prevent the continued spread of arbitrary refusal of DPOAs by some financial institutions. This will also meet the goal of reducing the need for guardianship proceedings, which is a very time-consuming and costly legal mechanism for one person to manage another person's affairs when they are incapacitated. DPOAs are specifically included as an alternative to guardianship in Section 1002.0015, Estates Code.</p> <p>A DPOA may be rejected by some financial institutions because they do not want to take a risk. This bill does not require someone to automatically accept a DPOA nor does it shift liability to those who do accept a DPOA. Rather, it provides a new liability protection to those who accept a DPOA by allowing them to rely on an agent's certification that the DPOA is valid for the purpose it is being presented, or an opinion of the agent's counsel who would be hired at the principal's expense. Additionally, it includes new procedures to follow to properly reject a DPOA. It provides numerous valid reasons to reject, some of which cannot be challenged by either the principal or the agent, and provides a mechanism to have a court decide any disputes.</p>	Favorable Evaluated by: Serena Ahmed 210-382-4295 Serena@Texaslsg.org



			Thirty other states have enacted similar legislation without disruption to financial institutions. A person who has a DPOA, and wants to pay their loved ones rent who is incapacitated, so that they are not evicted, should not have their DPOA rejected without explanation by a financial institution. HB 1974 is an important bill for working families planning for the possibility of incapacity by making a DPOA more effective and readily available.	
HB 978 By: Murr/ Moody	Relating to the terms of the board members of the Texas Indigent Defense Commission.	Criminal Jurisprudence	HB 978 extends term lengths of the Texas Indigent Defense Commission board members from two years to six years. The bill further allows one or two members' terms to expire February 1 of each odd-numbered year, striking the provision allowing three members' terms to expire February 1 of each even-numbered year. The Texas Indigent Defense Commission board is composed of volunteer members, and frequently experiences periods of seat vacancy due to lengthy processes of cultivating and vetting qualified candidates. Expanding term lengths for board members through HB 978 will address this issue.	Favorable Evaluated by: Katherine Kirages 210-382-4295 Katherine@Texaslsg.org
HB 1649 By: Munoz Jr.	Relating to the use of extrapolation by a health maintenance organization or an insurer to audit claims.	Insurance	This bill prohibits health maintenance organizations from using a mathematical algorithm to determine their projected claims amounts. This technique may be a cost-saving strategy for the insurance companies on their end, but it can be burdensome for providers to track and sort out discrepancies in their accounts billable when the results are inaccurate. HB 1649 shifts the burden to the insurance companies to ensure that their billing and accounting practices are sound and based on transactions that actually occur.	Favorable Evaluated by: Joel Kissell 210-382-4295 Joel@Texaslsg.org
HB 931 By: Miller/ Bonnen, Greg/ Zerwas/ Thompson, Senfronia/ Fallon/ et al.	Relating to liability of certain electric utilities and political subdivisions that contract for certain uses of land that the electric utility owns, occupies, or leases.	State Affairs	Hiking and biking trails offer recreational and public health benefits to Texans, but it can be costly for municipalities to obtain land to be used for these purposes. HB 931 would allow political subdivisions to contract with electric utilities for recreational use of the utility company's land. HB 200 of the 83rd Legislative Session allowed Harris County to implement this practice; it has allowed them to increase public biking trails while more efficiently utilizing lands owned by electric utility companies. This bill expands the practice so it can be implemented statewide, which could allow for the creation of new hike and bike trails in metropolitan areas for little to no cost to municipalities for the land. Political subdivisions are responsible for the costs associated with entering into an agreement with an electric utility under this subchapter. Liability of a political subdivision that arises from the use of an electric utility's property is limited to an amount not to exceed: \$350,000 for each person, \$700,000 for each single occurrence of bodily injury or death, \$100,00 for each occurrence for injury to or destruction of property, court costs, reasonable attorney's fees, or any other expense incurred in filing a cause of action against a political subdivision under this section.	Favorable Evaluated by: Tyler Anderson 210-382-4295 Tyler@Texaslsg.org
HB 1816 By: Metcalf	Relating to the operation of medical supply transport vehicles during a declared state of disaster.	Homeland Security & Public Safety	This bill expands the range of vehicles authorized to utilize roads within declared disaster areas to include medical supply transports. In situations facing a disaster declaration, medical facilities including hospitals and pharmacies often encounter shortages of critical supplies needed to treat casualties; the emergency response operations that follow such a declaration affect the resupply options available to these facilities. HB 1816 introduces a subchapter to the Transportation Code relating to emergency vehicles covering medical supply vehicles and requires the Texas Division of Emergency Management to adjust their procedures to accommodate their inclusion.	Favorable Evaluated by: Andrea Elizondo 210-382-4295 Andrea@Texaslsg.org
HB 1724 By: Guillen	Relating to the establishment of the commercial license buyback account managed by the	Culture, Recreation & Tourism	Creates one unified commercial license buyback account to replace the separate license buyback programs for the shrimp licenses, finfish, and commercial crab licenses. These buyback programs were established around 1995 and are voluntary programs that offer the opportunity for participants in these fishing industries to sell their licenses. Reducing the number of working licenses results in	Favorable Evaluated by: Fabeain Barkwell 210-382-4295



	Parks and Wildlife Department.		healthier and more productive ecosystems. HB 1724 simply unifies these separate license buyback programs into one account, and clarifies that their funding can only be used to buy back commercial licenses from willing license holders.	Fabeain@Texaslsg.org
HB 2766 By: Sheffield/ Zerwas/ Miller/ White/ Raymond/ et al.	Relating to the creation and administration of a reinvestment allowance for certain long-term care facilities.	Human Services	<p>CSHB 2766 aims to address underfunding in nursing homes in Texas, by creating the Nursing Facility Reinvestment Allowance (NFRA). For years Texas has been faced with a crisis for nursing home funding. Nationally our state is rank 49th in nursing home Medicaid funding. Medicaid reimbursement has been in a shortfall for sometime, resulting in a decrease in the quality of care due to cuts to caregiver wages. This bill implements the NFRA, which will draw down the additional federal Medicaid funding for nursing homes.</p> <p>In order to fund the NFRA, nursing home facilities would pay a fee assess of up to 6% of each facilities bed to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). The dollars paid to HHSC would be used to access federal available federal funding. Upon matching the federal dollars, HHSC would move the funds to Managed Care Organization's (MCO) to be in calculated with the Medicaid rate, MCOs would then pass down the reimbursement rate. This bill aims to address concern for provider payments to low or no-Medicaid providers by implementing a redistribution process. This bill ensure that fees cannot be passed to the residence and is paid for by the providers. CSHB 2766 also has a quality component for facilities who meet certain quality metrics standards outlined by HHSC. 50% of dollars can be used for quality payments.</p> <p>CSHB 2766 will address the nursing home funding crisis in the same manner that 43 other states are utilizing federal matching dollars. As our state begins to see an increase the aging populations and more nursing homes will be required to support our elderly, now is as an important time as ever to address the under funding. Nursing homes are a necessity in caring for our elders who often do not choose to leave their, homes and relinquish their independence. This bill will serve a great purpose in mitigating the nursing home Medicaid shortfall with no cost to the state, while still promoting quality care for those who need it most.</p>	Favorable Evaluated by: Kylie McNaught 210-382-4295 Kylie@Texaslsg.org
HB 1837 By: Springer	Relating to the authority of counties to require a person to notify a local governmental entity before starting an outdoor fire; creating a criminal penalty.	Springer	HB 1837 seeks to reduce the amount of unnecessary responses by firefighters, especially in rural counties where resources are limited. This bill establishes the authority of a commissioner's court to require residents of the county to notify a local governmental entity before creating an outdoor fire. Occasionally people start controlled fires without notifying any authority which results in a needless response from a fire department. Exemptions from the definition of "outdoor fire" include a campfire at a campsite, fire used in a grill or an outdoor fireplace or oven, as well as fire use to burn trash in a container. HB 1837 amends the Local Government Code so that a person in violation of this chapter would receive a Class C misdemeanor if the person is aware of this statute and does not notify an authority of their outdoor fire.	Favorable Evaluated by: Tiffany Williams 210-382-4295 Tiffany@Texaslsg.org
HB 2087 By: VanDeaver/ Fallon	Relating to restricting the use of covered information, including student personally identifiable information, by an operator of a website, online service, online application, or mobile application for a school purpose.	Public Education	HB 2087 amends the Education Code to provide several privacy protections for student data. The bill bans the sale or rent of student data as well as targeted advertising to students based on their use of educational services. It limits the disclosure of student information obtained by technology providers, and it requires educational technology providers to maintain reasonable security practices and procedures that protect student data. The bill provides other similar provisions that enhance the protection of student data. HB 2087 ensures that while digital learning resources and technology integration in the classroom continue to transform education, student privacy is maintained.	Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org



<p>HB 2722 By: Phillips/ Guillen</p>	<p>Relating to early voting by certain persons who have an employment hardship.</p>	<p>Elections</p>	<p>HB 2722 provides a new opportunity for voters with certain occupational hardships to cast their ballots by mail. A person whose job takes them offshore or away from home frequently can file an application to have their ballot sent to their employer or specific relatives to be sent to the voter at their present employment location. The voter will need file an application with the county clerk submitting an affidavit from the employer and an address of where the ballot is to be mailed within 60 days of the election. The ballot may be mailed to the employer, a relative of 2nd degree affinity or 3rd degree by blood. The ballots will be processed in the same manner as early voting ballots. This bill will allow those whose occupations make regular voting by mail difficult because their worksite location is never certain. This expands the opportunity for those people to vote.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Erin Eriksen 210-382-4295 Erin@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 2790 By: White</p>	<p>Relating to funding for certain apprenticeship training programs.</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>Current law only allows a public school district or a state postsecondary institution to sponsor apprenticeship training programs. HB 2790 amends the Education Code to also allow independent apprenticeship committees to conduct apprenticeship training programs. The bill requires the independent training program to maintain a clear audit trail and delineates the procedure for doing so. Effectively, this bill creates more opportunities for the expansion of apprenticeships to keep up with the growing demand of skilled labor.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Arielle Day 210-382-4295 Arielle@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 3083 By: Price/ Coleman/ Darby</p>	<p>Relating to repayment of certain mental health professional education loans.</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>HB 3083 amends the Education Code by adding Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors (LCDC) to the list of professionals that may be awarded repayment assistance grants under the Loan Repayment Program for Mental Health Professionals. Texas is experiencing a severe shortage of mental health professionals. By adding the additional group Texas is encouraging the improvement of designated health professionals. HB 3083 clarifies the limitations for the amount of assistance a student may receive from the state, and removed the two-year service requirement. Per the bill, a LCDC may receive \$10,000 in assistance from the state if that individuals have received an associates degree. The bill requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board to apply for federal matching funds to ensure that money is being fully utilized, by annually seeking the maximum amount of funds.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Fabeain Barkwell 210-382-4295 Fabeain@Texaslsg.org</p>
<p>HB 3735 By: Frank</p>	<p>Relating to an application for a new or amended water right submitted to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.</p>	<p>Natural Resources</p>	<p>HB 3735 modifies the Water Code for new or amended water rights and updates language within the chapter. The bill limits the scope the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) can consider when granting or amending a water permit to what under its purview through jurisdiction. Amending language in the bill also changes language so that a permit is now <i>not inconsistent</i> with the state water plan instead of consistent. The state water plan is what Texas uses as a road map for regional and statewide needs and recommendations. Allowing leeway to deviate from the measures put forth through the state water plan could weaken the foundation of the process.</p>	<p>Will of the House Evaluated by: Erin Eriksen 210-382-4295 Erin@Texaslsg.org</p>

