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LSG Floor Report For POSTPONED BUSINESS - Sunday, May 23, 2021

<p>SB 1365</p> <p>By: Bettencourt</p> <p>Sponsor: Huberty Dutton King, Ken Murphy Oliverson</p>	<p>Relating to public school organization, accountability, and fiscal management.</p>	<p>Public Education</p> <p>Votes: 7 Ayes, 5 Nays, 1 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>This is the analysis of SB 1365 as passed out of committee. The analysis of the floor substitute can be found on the Pre-Filed Amendment report that will be sent out later in the day.</p> <p>This bill stems from a 2020 court ruling by the Third District Court of Appeals that found that the commissioner of education did not follow laws and procedures that would give him the authority to temporarily replace HISD’s school board with a state-appointed board of managers. SB 1365 addresses the specific statutory provisions that halted the commissioner from taking over the school district based on a high stakes accountability rating system that only affected one school within the district.</p> <p>The current version of SB 1365 attempts to rewrite the state’s high-stakes accountability A-F rating system. It clarifies the commissioner’s power in the event that interventions or sanctions are warranted based on the low-performance ratings of schools and adds some additional measures regarding charter schools and the appointment of a board of managers.</p> <p>SB 1365 requires the Commissioner to assign each district and campus an overall performance rating between A-F and a separate domain performance rating. The bill provides that a reference in law to an unacceptable performance rating includes an overall or domain performance rating of F and under certain provisions D or performance that needs improvement. The bill redefines “unacceptable” performance to include campuses and districts with multiple D ratings. Previously, a campus had to receive an F to be considered “unacceptable.” This accelerates the rate at which the commissioner can take over an elected school board.</p> <p>Letter grades are sometimes considered an objective measure for allowing enforcement of improvements in low-performing schools; however little research has been done to determine the reliability or validity of using the A-F school rating system. Tying school funding and allotment of resources based on letter grades determined by high stakes test scores does not account for various factors that contribute to a</p>	<p>Unfavorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Phuong Nguyen (832) 302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org</p>
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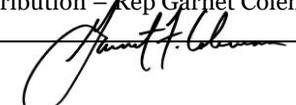
OK for Distribution - Rep Garnet Coleman

		<p>school performance, including factors that are out of an educator’s control. True improvement happens when resources are provided to those students with the highest needs, and not by teaching students how to pass a high stakes test.</p> <p>SB 1365 establishes that the commissioner has the power to delegate executive functions to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) staff, department leaders, and any other employees to perform TEA duties regardless of any other law. The bill sets up a permanent basis that any final determination or order relating to public education cannot be appealed by any interlocutory, intermediate order expanding the commissioner’s authority to mandate a special investigation. The bill gives the commissioner of education the unilateral authority to create and adopt his own rules for evaluating schools for the upcoming year. It codifies that the commissioner’s determination is final and unappealable and allows TEA to classify a witness whose complaint may spark an investigation as “confidential” and is not subject to disclosure. SB 1365 would remove elected oversight of the commissioner’s decision, create a conflict of interest regarding the commissioner’s roles, and undermine due process for school districts that cannot appeal the commissioner’s decision.</p> <p>With regards to the powers and duties of the conservator or management team, SB 1365 clarifies that the conservator or management team may exercise the duties of these provisions regardless of whether they were appointed to oversee the operations of the school district entirely. The bill states that the implementation of a school improvement plan would remain in place until each campus in the district receives an acceptable performance rating for the school year or when the commissioner determines a conservator is no longer necessary. These broad provisions leave the commissioner to solely determine whether a school district is acceptable. SB 1365 also authorizes exemptions for charter schools from investigation and interventions, subjecting public school districts to a higher level of scrutiny. Schools that access public funding should be subjected to the same regulation to ensure equity.</p> <p>In an attempt to circumvent the court’s ruling, SB 1365 would give the Commissioner of Education unilateral power to take over an entire school district based on one school’s low performance and appoint conservatorship. This would fabricate a “solution” in the expansion of charter schools instead of concentrating resources and investing in the hardest to educate with evidence-based practices that have been proven to work such as local control, wrap-around services, and community schools.</p> <p>SB 1365 does not improve the accountability system in a way that would help educators meet their students’ needs. An additional note to consider is that SB 1365 did not receive a public hearing in the House public education committee, although the bill is somewhat different than its House companion. The purpose of the school accountability system should be to serve the schools with the most needs ensuring the education of those students is equitable in comparison to their counterparts. SB 1365 does not put resources in the hands of those students and will continue to create a system that fails to meet their needs.</p>	
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<p>SB 766 By: Huffman Sponsor: Leach Thompson, Senfronia Hunter</p>	<p>Relating to sexually oriented businesses, including a requirement to participate in the federal electronic verification of employment authorization program, or E-verify, and restricting the age of persons employed by or allowed on the premises, creating criminal offenses</p>	<p>Licensing & Administrative Procedure Vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>Research shows the environment of sexually-oriented businesses (SOBs) negatively impacts the lives of young people by causing detrimental trauma and allowing human trafficking to flourish. Alcohol sales are a major source of revenue for these clubs and minors under 21 are often encouraged to drink with customers so they will spend more money, which has resulted in many fatal drinking and driving accidents impacting the lives of young women and their families. Human trafficking is promoted by the business model: sex buyers prefer the controlled environments of these clubs, specifically targeting young people under the premise they do not have sexually transmitted diseases. Many start as dancers needing short-term financial solutions but are then groomed and trafficked by club regulars. Research also shows nearly all dancers experienced physical and sexual abuse at SOBs. All these issues can result in serious legal ramifications, carceral recidivism, and trauma that impacts people for the rest of their lives.</p> <p>There is a dire need to better protect young people from damage caused by negligent SOBs. SB 766 promotes better public safety by requiring people employed by SOBs to be at least 21 years old, prohibiting people under 18 years old to be on the premises of an SOB, and requiring these businesses to participate in the E-Verify program to quickly identify fake documents or identification cards often used in human trafficking. These changes will potentially reduce the harm and trauma caused by sexually-oriented businesses currently impacting the lives of many young people in Texas.</p> <p>The bill prohibits any permit or license holder under the Alcoholic Beverage Code from knowingly or recklessly allowing individuals younger than 18 on premises where an SOB is operating, which would be punishable by Class A misdemeanor. The Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission is required to completely cancel licensure or suspend a license for 30 or 60 days depending on the number of violations or the nature of findings. A person would be categorized as maintaining a common nuisance under civil law if they perpetuate an environment where people knowingly tolerate or do not make reasonable attempts to stop activities related to hiring employees under 21 years of age or permits people younger than 18 years old on the premises of an SOB.</p> <p>SB 766 changes the prohibited age for individuals an SOB may hire from younger than 18 to younger than 21 years of age punishable by Class A misdemeanor, except for independent contractors solely performing repairs, maintenance, or construction services. For purposes of employment considered harmful to children, the Penal Code definition of “child” is conformingly changed to a person younger than 21 years of age. The bill establishes an offense if SOBs fail to register and participate in the E-Verify program to confirm the identity documents of their employees. Authority is expanded for the Attorney General, Texas Workforce Commission, or law enforcement agencies to inspect employment records and use E-Verify to establish whether the SOB hired an individual under 21 years of age.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>
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LSG Floor Report For MAJOR STATE CALENDAR- Sunday, May 23, 2021



<p>SB 2</p> <p>By: Hancock</p> <p>Sponsor: Paddie</p>	<p>Relating to the governance of the Public Utility Commission of Texas, the Office of Public Utility Counsel, and an independent organization certified to manage a power region.</p>	<p>State Affairs</p> <p>Vote: 13 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Following the outcry of the inadequate response to Winter Storm Uri, SB 2 makes changes to Texas’s independent grid operator’s (ERCOT’s) governing structure.</p> <p>The bill requires that all ERCOT members - which currently includes the presiding officer of the Public Utility Commission (PUC), the chief executive of the Office of the Public Utility Counsel, the ERCOT CEO, eight members representing market participants and industrial and large commercial customers, and five unaffiliated members - must reside in Texas, and prohibits legislators from serving as board members. Additionally, the bill provides elected officials and PUC commissioners authority to approve board-selected unaffiliated members. It adjusts member terms to avoid abrupt changes or losses in experience and organizational memory and requires that the presiding officer and vice presiding officer of the ERCOT board be unaffiliated members, who are meant to provide more objective expertise. To ensure objectivity, board members must prioritize in a candidate for an unaffiliated position broad executive experience and may not select a lobbyist.</p> <p>Currently, the PUC may delegate to ERCOT responsibility for adopting and enforcing rules relating to the state’s electricity network reliability and generation, subject to oversight. This bill clarifies that delegated responsibility may not take effect without active PUC approval. Finally, this bill requires ERCOT to establish a formal process for adopting or revising protocols, accompanied by a market impact statement, and approved by the PUC.</p> <p>While concerns arise around barring the inclusion of non-Texans, especially those with expertise in cold-weather preparation, SB 2 strengthens ERCOT officials’ accountability to elected officials, the PUC, and the people of Texas. However, this bill is missing an important element of its House counterpart, HB 10, that adds at least one member to represent residential consumers.</p>	<p><u>Favorable with Concerns</u></p> <p>Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 3</p> <p>By: Schwertner</p> <p>Sponsor: Paddie</p>	<p>Relating to preparing for, preventing, and responding to weather emergencies and power outages; increasing the amount of administrative and civil penalties.</p>	<p>State Affairs</p> <p>Vote: 13 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Following the devastating power outages caused by failures to prepare for extreme winter weather across Texas, SB 3 proposes several improvements to Texas’s emergency management operations and its electricity, natural gas, and water services. While most of its provisions move Texas in the direction of more meaningful oversight and greater electric grid reliability, several concerns stand out that could hamper the bill’s impact. The provisions of SB 3 related to natural gas infrastructure relates specifically to facilities within the electricity supply chain, rather than all facilities. To ensure reliability of all utilities, across the board weatherization should be required - with a clear deadline for completion and penalties high enough to ensure compliance. Additionally, the vague language around ancillary services and dispatchable generation raises concerns for their potentially punitive impacts on renewable generators and lack of clarity for energy storage facilities, which also promote reliability. Further, the bill’s extensive provisions largely fail to address consumer-side reliability measures, such as home weatherization, energy efficiency, and demand response programs, which are key to reducing overall demand, protecting human life in the event of an emergency, and stabilizing the grid over the long term.</p>	<p><u>Favorable with Concerns</u></p> <p>Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org</p>



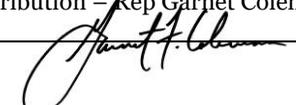
			<p style="text-align: center;">Texas Energy Disaster Reliability Council</p> <p>SB 3 incorporates nearly identical language to HB 13, which passed out of the House on March 31, creating the Texas Energy Disaster Reliability Council to ensure collaboration in the prevention of extended disaster-related power outages and natural gas supply failures. The slightly different language is the SB 3 clarifies the definition of a gas provider.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Emergency Alerts & Management</p> <p>In collaboration with several state agencies, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) shall develop and implement an alert to be activated when the power supply may be inadequate to meet demand. It must include a statement that electricity customers may experience a power outage. The PUC must establish criteria for the content, activation, and termination of the alert. The Texas Department of Transportation shall also establish a plan for providing relevant information to the public through an existing system of message signs located across the state. The bill directs TDEM to create a list of suggested actions for state agencies and the public to take to prepare for winter storms, organized by severity of storm based on a national index.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Electricity Supply Chain Mapping</p> <p>SB 3 incorporates language similar to HB 14, which passed out of the House on April 20. It would create the Texas Electricity Supply Chain Security and Mapping Committee responsible for mapping the supply chain, including relevant natural gas facilities, recommending best practices for weatherization and collaborative communication, and identifying critical infrastructure. This differs from the house bill in that it only requires the mapping of natural gas facilities that are identified to be within the electric supply chain, whereas the house bill requires mapping of the entire natural gas delivery system.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Critical Infrastructure & Customer Designation</p> <p>SB 3 incorporates nearly identical language to HB 3648, which has passed out of both houses, instituting a process for the PUC and RRC to adopt agency rules that designate certain gas facilities as critical to maintaining or restoring electricity service during an emergency. SB 3 stipulates only facilities that are prepared to operate during a weather emergency may be designated as critical.</p> <p>The bill also requires electric utilities and retail electric providers (REPs), municipally owned utilities, and electric cooperatives to notify customers of their procedures for implementing involuntary load shedding initiated by ERCOT; information on the types of customers who may be considered critical care residential customers (those who are dependent upon electricity for a life-sustaining medical device), critical load industrial customers (those for whom an interruption of electric service would create dangerous conditions), or other critical customers designated by PUC rules; procedures for a customer to apply for designation as a critical customer; and information about reducing electricity use at times when involuntary load shedding events may occur.</p>	
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		<p style="text-align: center;">Weatherization, Enforcement, & Agency Reports</p> <p>SB 3 requires all facilities in the electricity supply chain - private, municipal, or cooperatively owned - to implement measures to operate during a weather emergency. This includes natural gas facilities on the supply chain map, electric generators, and transmission infrastructure, but not natural gas utilities or gas facilities that do not currently service generators, despite these facilities also being critical to the needs of Texans. The appropriate agency, either the PUC, RRC, or ERCOT, shall inspect facilities for compliance, with priority for inspections based on risk level. An operator of a facility that experiences repeated or major weather-related forced interruptions of production must have a third party assess the operator's weatherization procedures, the recommendations from which the appropriate agency may require the operator to implement. After being given a period of time to remedy noncompliance, an operator will be subject to financial penalties, though there is no specific timeline described for meeting these requirements, and there is no requirement to weatherize based on future weather conditions, which are expected to become more extreme.</p> <p>The bill enacts and raises penalties for electric or related gas facilities that violate a provision of a rule regarding weatherization to at most \$1 million for each offense, which is 40 times higher than the current maximum penalty for utilities. For weatherization violations specific to gas facilities, the RRC shall establish a classification system for court-ordered penalties, with consideration for the amount necessary to deter future violations and other factors. Only the highest class of offense may result in a penalty over \$5,000, though there are concerns that lower penalties are not enough to compel compliance. This bill requires the PUC and RRC to each submit biennial reports assessing the weatherization preparedness and emergency operations plans (EOPs) of electric industry participants and natural gas facilities included on the electricity supply chain map. If a filed EOP is determined to be inadequate, the relevant agency must require an updated EOP.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The State Energy Plan Advisory Committee</p> <p>This bill establishes the State Energy Plan Advisory Committee, composed of 12 members appointed by the governor and each house's leader, to prepare a comprehensive state energy plan that addresses faults in the current market structure by September 2022. The plan must evaluate barriers in the electricity and natural gas markets that prevent sound economic decisions, methods to improve the reliability and affordability of electric service in Texas, and the state's current electricity market structure and pricing mechanisms, including the ancillary services market and emergency response services.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Load Management & Load Shed Preparedness</p> <p>The PUC shall allow a TDU to operate a load management program for nonresidential customers to be used during extreme weather emergencies, for which the utility may recover costs. Load management involves the use of technology or other tools to reduce or shift a customer's demand during peak periods to off-peak hours to avoid straining the grid. When load shedding is required during an energy emergency,</p>	
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			<p>this bill directs the PUC to adopt a system to allocate load shedding amongst all MOUs, co-ops, and TDUs in ERCOT and categorize types of customers to be prioritized for power restoration. The transmission entities must provide lists to the PUC and ERCOT of designated critical load customers and a plan for load shedding. They must also encourage and maintain lists of customers willing to participate in voluntary load reduction, or demand response. After each load shedding event, the PUC may examine the implementation of load shedding, including whether each entity complied with its filed plan. This bill directs the PUC and ERCOT to conduct simulated load shedding exercises, one during summer months, and one during winter months. with providers of electric generation and transmission/distribution service in the ERCOT region.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ancillary Services & Dispatchable Generation</p> <p>Ancillary services are supplemental tools that help ERCOT maintain grid reliability by accounting for real time fluctuations in supply and demand. This bill directs the PUC to review the state’s ancillary service capacity and evaluate whether additional tools are needed to meet peak demand and enhance reliability. The PUC must also ensure that all generation and storage facilities and loads have the option of offering ancillary services, which will facilitate greater capacity to get electricity to customers.</p> <p>This bill directs the PUC to ensure that ERCOT establishes reliability standards to meet Texas’s generation needs; periodically determines and procures the ancillary or reliability services needed to ensure reliability during extreme weather conditions and during times of low non-dispatchable power production (primarily renewable generation); develops appropriate qualification and performance requirements for providing services, including appropriate penalties for failure to provide the services; and sizes the services procured to prevent prolonged rotating outages due to net load variability in high demand and low supply scenarios. The PUC shall ensure that resources that provide ancillary services are dispatchable and able to meet continuous operating requirements. These directives raise concerns for renewable energy generators, which provide significant energy to the state’s grid and have in many cases been beneficial to supplementing underperforming thermal resources or affordably meeting peak demand. Clarity is needed regarding the intent and implementation of these ancillary service requirements and penalties.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Distributed Generation</p> <p>Distributed energy generation refers to customer-side generation equipment or facilities that can provide back-up electricity on the customer’s premises or to the electric grid. This includes resources such as rooftop solar panels, small- and community-scale wind turbines, fuel cells that run on hydrogen, and natural gas, gasoline, or diesel generators. This bill directs ERCOT to require an owner or operator of distributed generation not serving a residential property to register and provide to ERCOT and a TDU information to interconnect with a TDU, which would facilitate interconnection to reduce strain in emergencies.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Wholesale Indexed Products</p>	
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			<p>SB 3 regulates wholesale indexed product, which are electricity plans that directly pass on to customers the real time prices of the wholesale market, differently than HB 16, which passed in both houses. Whereas HB 16 prohibited REPs from offering these products to residential and small commercial customers, SB 3 allows it under certain conditions; the monthly average price per kilowatt hour of electricity may not exceed 200% more than the monthly average price in Texas during the same month the prior year. The REP must also be transparent with customers about the highest possible bill they could receive and provide customers the opportunity to switch to a fixed rate plan without penalty.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Water & Natural Gas Utility Emergency Operations</p> <p>This bill requires an affected water utility, if feasible, to ensure operation during an extended power outage at a water pressure level approved by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) as soon as practicable following a natural disaster; and to adopt and submit to the TCEQ an emergency preparedness plan (EPP) and a timeline for implementation. An EPP shall ensure the utility can maintain or rapidly restore water service during emergencies. Water and wastewater utilities shall defer collection of the full payment of bills due during a cold weather emergency until after the emergency and shall work with customers to establish a pay schedule for deferred bills. TCEQ shall establish a penalty classification system to be used for violations of this requirement. Additionally, current statute prohibits disconnections and bill collection during an emergency for natural gas utility providers. This bill also institutes a penalty classification system through the RRC for violations of these requirements and raises the maximum penalty for violation to \$1 million.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Conflicts of Interest</p> <p>Agencies are often tasked with balancing industry expertise with financial or personal conflicts of interest. The PUC and ERCOT shall annually review statutes, rules, and bylaws that apply to conflicts of interest for commissioners and board members and submit to the legislature a report on the effects they have on these agencies' abilities to fulfill their duties. RRC is not included in this requirement, despite reports of commissioners' potential conflicts of interest influencing their work.</p>	
<p>SB 25 By: Kolkhorst Bettencourt Birdwell Blanco Buckingham Campbell Creighton Gutierrez Hall Hinojosa Huffman </p>	<p>Relating to the right of certain residents to designate an essential caregiver for in-person visitation.</p>	<p>Human Services Vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>For residents of long-term care facilities, visits from family and friends outside of the facilities provide necessary social and emotional support, as well as hands-on care that may supplement the care provided by staff. During the COVID-19 pandemic, long-term care facilities closed their doors and prohibited visitations for residents as a preventative measure to keep the virus out of facilities. Due to these policies, residents and their loved ones went months without in-person contact, often resulting in residents' physical and mental decline. SB 25 aims to allow residents of long-term care facilities to designate an essential caregiver whom facilities may not prohibit from conducting in-person visitations.</p> <p>SB 25 prohibits a state-supported living center, nursing facility, assisted living facility, or intermediate care facility from denying in-person visitation of an essential caregiver that has been designated by a resident, resident's guardian, or resident's legally authorized representative. The bill requires the executive commissioner of HHSC to establish rules and guidelines to assist facilities and program providers in</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org</p>



<p>Hughes Johnson Lucio Menéndez Miles Nelson Nichols Paxton Perry Powell Schwertner Seliger Springer Zaffirini</p> <p>Sponsor: Frank Sanford Hernandez Metcalf</p>			<p>establishing their own essential caregiver visitation policies and procedures. The guidelines must require facilities and programs to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allow the designation of an essential caregiver for in-person visitation in the same manner that a resident would designate a power of attorney • establish a visitation schedule that allows essential caregivers two hours daily visitations • establish procedures to allow physical contact between a resident and their essential caregiver • obtain the essential caregiver’s signature certifying they will follow the safety protocols and rules <p>If there is a safety protocols violation, the facility may revoke an individual’s essential caregiver status and a new caregiver may be appointed immediately by the resident or the resident’s legal representation. In addition, the bill clarifies that a facility may not interpret this legislation as requiring or being able to require an essential caregiver to provide necessary care to a resident.</p> <p>SB 25 requires that safety protocols for essential caregivers may not be more stringent than the protocol for the facility’s staff. If there is a serious health risk, the facility may petition HHSC to suspend essential caregiver privileges for seven days. If the health risk remains, the facility may request an additional seven days only and must request the additional extensions separately. If HHSC determines there is no health risk the request may be denied, and the facility may not suspend in-person essential caregiver visitation for more than 14 days in any year.</p>	
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LSG Floor Report For CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS CALENDAR- Sunday, May 23, 2021

<p>SJR 35</p> <p>By: Campbell Bettencourt Blanco Gutierrez Hall Hancock Hinojosa Huffman Lucio Menéndez Paxton Perry Powell Schwertner Seliger Springer Whitmire</p>	<p>Proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide for an exemption from ad valorem taxation of all or part of the market value of the residence homestead of the surviving spouse of a member of the armed services of the United States</p>	<p>Ways & Means</p> <p>Vote: 9 Yeas, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>The enabling legislation for this bill is SB 611, which was heard on second reading on the House floor on May 20th.</p> <p>The Texas Constitution entitles surviving spouses of military service members killed in action to a total residence homestead property tax exemption, but the current phrasing of this exemption disqualifies surviving spouses of military members who pass away during service from injuries not related to combat. SJR 35 proposes a temporary constitutional amendment to include the surviving spouse of a U.S. armed services member killed or fatally injured in the line of duty, rather than someone killed in action as currently written. This change would expand the scope of entitlement for a partial or total property tax exemption for surviving spouses of military members. The bill would take effect January 1, 2022 and is set to expire January 1, 2023.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>
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Sponsor: Lopez	who is killed or fatally injured in the line of duty.			
LSG Floor Report For GENERAL STATE CALENDAR- Sunday, May 23, 2021				
<p>SB 6</p> <p>By: Hancock Bettencourt Campbell Creighton Huffman Nelson Paxton Perry Springer</p> <p>Sponsor: Leach</p>	<p>Relating to liability for certain claims arising during a pandemic or disaster related to a pandemic.</p>	<p>Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence</p> <p>Vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, small businesses, large corporations, hospitals and healthcare providers, schools, nursing homes, etc., made good faith efforts to comply with appropriate guidelines in order to remain open and help prevent the spread of COVID-19. However, there are a small number of lawsuits that have been filed to try and hold these businesses, healthcare providers, schools, etc., accountable for either exposing individuals or failing to treat COVID-19. SB 6 seeks to provide liability protections for certain individuals, organizations, and institutions that attempted to follow applicable governmental guidelines as an attempt to minimize the spread of a pandemic disease and establish standards on how such lawsuits could proceed. However, only a small number of lawsuits have been filed that relate to cases such as these, causing many to see this bill as a solution to a problem that does not exist.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Liability of Healthcare Providers</p> <p>SB 6 limits the liability of a physician, health care provider, or first responder in instances of injury or death arising from care or failure to provide care relating to a pandemic disease except in cases of reckless conduct or intentional, willful, or wanton misconduct. In order to be exempt from liability these healthcare providers must prove by a preponderance of the evidence that a pandemic disease was the producing cause of the care or failure to provide care that caused the injury or death or that the individual who suffered injury or death was diagnosed at the time of care or lack thereof. The bill also lays out a list of items that are included when referring to care, treatment, or failure to provide care or treatment relating to a pandemic disease. SB 6 also provides that the defense of liability is in addition to any other defense, immunity, or limitation of liability provided by law and that the bill's provisions do not constitute a waiver of sovereign immunity of the state or governmental immunity of a political subdivision.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Products Liability</p> <p>SB 6 states that a person who designed, manufactures, sells, or donates a product that is related to a pandemic emergency is not liable for personal injury, death, or damage that is caused by the product. Some of these products include clothing or equipment worn, such as PPE or masks, medical devices, drugs, vaccines, and disinfecting supplies. The only way a person could be held liable in this instance is if the person had actual knowledge of a defect in the product, acted with malice, or if the product presents an unreasonable risk of substantial hard to an individual using the product. They would also not be liable for injury, death, or damage caused by failure to warn or provide adequate instruction</p>	<p>Will of the House Evaluated by: Victoria McDonough (251)422-0558 Victoria@TexasLSG.org</p>



			<p>regarding the use of a product unless the person acted with actual malice or if failure to warn presented an unreasonable risk of harm to an individual using the product.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Liability for Causing Exposure</p> <p>SB 6 limits the liability of a person who exposed an individual to a pandemic disease. Encompassed in the word “person” also includes businesses, corporations, and singular individuals. Under SB 6 a person who exposed the individual could be held liable if they knowingly failed to warn the individual of or remediate a condition that they knew was likely to result in the exposure of an individual to the disease. Additionally, a person who exposed an individual could be held liable if the person knowingly failed to implement or comply with governmental guidance intended to minimize exposure. If a claimant can establish reliable scientific evidence that the failure to warn the individual of the condition, or failure to comply with government guidance, was the cause of contracting the disease, a person could also be held liable. In this instance, the claimant must serve the defendant a report authored by at least one qualified expert that provides a factual and scientific basis for the assertion that the defendant’s failure to act caused the individual to contract the pandemic disease. If this report is not timely served, on the defendant’s motion, the court shall dismiss the claim and award the defendant reasonable attorney’s fees.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Liability of Educational Institutions</p> <p>SB 6 states that an educational institution is not liable for damages or equitable monetary relief arising from a cancellation or modification of a course, program, or activity of the institution if the cancellation or modification arose during a pandemic emergency and was caused in whole or in part, by the emergency. This section arises mainly from tuition lawsuits that have been filed in response to the modification of courses brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.</p> <p>While many of the concerns that surrounded SB 6 were addressed through a committee substitute, some stakeholders still have concerns. Under the bill, “healthcare providers” includes nursing homes, which were a source of many outbreaks of COVID-19. Some stakeholders have concerns that extending liability protections to nursing homes will prevent nursing homes from being held accountable for the part they may have played in these outbreaks of COVID-19. Again, relatively few lawsuits related to matters laid out in SB6 have been filed and, due to how difficult it is to factually prove where and how someone contracted COVID-19, it would be difficult to hold someone liable.</p>	
<p>SB 24 By: Huffman</p>	<p>Relating to the procedures required before a law enforcement</p>	<p>Homeland Security & Public Safety</p>	<p>In many high profile police brutality cases, investigations reveal the officer had a history of misconduct or use of force violations at other law enforcement agencies, but the most recent agency was unable to access past employment records regarding the officer’s true behavior pattern. Some local agencies only allow access to employment records in-person and will not provide electronic</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388</p>



<p>Sponsor: Bonnen</p>	<p>agency hires certain persons.</p>	<p>Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>copies. Smaller agencies do not have enough resources or personnel to travel throughout the state, and as a result, often hire potentially dangerous officers with poor employment histories. SB 24 could help restore trust between officers and their communities in addition to preventing the hiring of bad actors by requiring agencies to provide access to important employment records.</p> <p>SB 24 establishes new pre-employment screenings required for any law enforcement agency hiring a peace officer licensed by the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), and requires each agency to confirm they made a good faith effort to contact each individual necessary to obtain information and review the information provided by submitting a confirmation form. The head of a law enforcement agency or their designee is required to sign each confirmation form before they are submitted to TCOLE. The bill establishes that failure to do so is grounds for TCOLE to suspend an agency head's peace officer license.</p> <p>The bill exempts law enforcement agencies from civil liability resulting from making a person's information available to an agency for hiring purposes, and all information is confidential under public information laws. Agencies must document any request refusals and submit them to TCOLE. The commission will require the hiring agency to obtain written consent for permission to review the following information from any applicable agency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • personnel files and records, including the initial application, from each previous employer who is a law enforcement agency • TCOLE employment termination reports and service records • verification the applicant meets minimum qualifications to enroll in a TCOLE training program including military discharge and criminal history records • any information on pending warrants available through the Texas Crime Information Center and National Crime Information Center alongside driver motor vehicle records from the Department of Public Safety • proof of citizenship • background information from at least three personal and two professional references <p>By January 1st, 2022, TCOLE must establish procedures for making employment records electronically available to hiring law enforcement agencies, privacy and security protections, and a rule specifically prohibiting agencies from including confidential identifying information on confirmation forms submitted to TCOLE. Forms must be posted on the TCOLE website and records must be maintained for each confirmation form.</p>	<p>Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1831</p>	<p>Relating to the punishment for</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>The trafficking of children and youth continues to be a significant, persistent, and dangerous issue. As more is understood about the tactics used to traffic individuals, we have learned that more than</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by:</p>



<p>By: Taylor Sponsor: Thompson, Senfronia</p>	<p>trafficking of persons, online solicitation of a minor, and prostitution and warning signs regarding certain penalties for trafficking of persons; increasing criminal penalties.</p>	<p>Votes: 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>half of victims reported that they were trafficked while they were in school, and case studies indicate that trafficking operations frequently operate on or around school premises and online.</p> <p>SB 1831 increases the level of offense to the next highest category for the trafficking of persons and a specific form of a prostitution offense if the actor committed the offense on the premise or within 1,000 feet of a public or private primary or secondary school, a school-sanctioned event, or a University Interscholastic League (UIL) sponsored or sanctioned event. The bill also enhances the punishment for a trafficking of persons that took place in the aforementioned locations to a life sentence or a de facto life sentence.</p> <p>SB 1831 increases the level of offense to the next highest category for an online solicitation of a minor offense if the actor committed the offense during regular school hours and the actor knew or reasonably should have known that the minor was enrolled in primary or secondary school.</p> <p>Under this bill, a public or private primary or secondary school is required to post warning signs regarding the trafficking of person offense enhancement in specific locations. The Texas Education Agency (TEA), in consultation with the human trafficking prevention task force, is required to adopt rules regulating the display specifications and maintenance procedures for the warning signs.</p>	<p>Phuong Nguyen (832)302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1955 By: Taylor Sponsor: Burrows</p>	<p>Relating to exempting learning pods from certain local government regulations.</p>	<p>Public Education Votes: 12 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Learning pods are small groups of students, typically consisting of three to ten kids who join a group to learn outside of a traditional classroom. Participation in these learning pods has increased during the pandemic due to school closures and the switch to remote learning. As the pandemic subsides, some parents have chosen to maintain these pods even as schools have opened and moved toward full in-person learning. Learning pods are not different than homeschooling pods, except when private companies or private individuals choose to offer education services at a cost to the student or family. Homeschooling pods usually are conducted by a parent and the cost is minimal and related to purchasing resources. In a learning pod, an individual or a company can offer a teaching service and charge the homeschooling families tuition. SB 1955 seeks to ensure that local education agencies (LEAs) do not institute regulations of learning pods.</p> <p>SB 1955 exempts a learning pod from local government ordinances, rules, regulations, policies, or guidelines that apply to a school district campus or child-care facility including requirements regarding staff-to-child ratios, staff certification, background checks, physical accommodations, or building or fire codes. The exemption includes any group, building, or facility associated with a learning pod.</p>	<p>Will of the House Evaluated by: Phuong Nguyen (832)302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org</p>



			<p>SB 1955 prohibits LEAs or other local government agencies from initiating or conducting a site inspection, investigation, or visit to a learning pod. It prevents LEAs from acting against, denying benefits to, discriminating against, or distinguishing any child or parent that participates in a learning pod. It prohibits any requirement of registry or providing reports with the school district and prevents this law from altering a parent’s right to choose a home-school setting or affect the regulation of a child-care facility.</p> <p>Learning pods, homeschooling pods, and pandemic pods are protected under current homeschooling laws. A parent’s right to choose how to educate their student should be protected and already exists in statute. Again, while homeschooling is typically provided by parents or an individual at minimal cost, should learning pods seek to contract with a private company that charges tuition, without regulation, there could be a need for oversight should this education expand or evolve.</p>	
<p>SB 1356 By: Hughes Sponsor: Dutton</p>	<p>Relating to the participation by members of nonprofit teacher organizations in a tutoring program for public school students and related retirement benefits for certain tutors participating in the program.</p>	<p>Public Education Votes: 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>With the impact on students' learning during the pandemic, coupled with a nationwide teacher shortage, Texas schools are faced with the challenge of providing quality instruction and addressing learning loss caused by COVID-19. Currently, some school districts’ policies restrict an active teacher from tutoring a student for compensation outside of instructional school hours and retired teachers may be subject to their monthly benefits being withheld for going back to work. SB 1365 creates a tutoring program that would harness the talents of active and retired teachers to address their students’ learning loss using existing resources.</p> <p>SB 1356 authorizes a member of a nonprofit teacher organization to participate in a tutoring program to provide supplemental instruction to students in K-12 on an individualized or small-group basis by an active or retired teacher. Active or retired teachers must apply for the position in a manner specified by the nonprofit organization. They must designate whether tutoring provided is for compensation, on a volunteer basis, or both and whether tutoring will be done in-person, online, or both. Teachers that wish to participate in the program are subjected to a criminal background check and cannot participate if they are on the registry of an ineligible person for employment by the school district.</p> <p>SB 1356 requires each public school district superintendent to oversee the tutoring program. The bill authorizes a district to use any available state or federal funds to provide compensation. The district must do the following, depending on the basis on which the teacher offers the tutoring services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the services of a teacher who is providing the services on a volunteer basis • employ a teacher who is providing the services for compensation if the district has state or federal funds for purposes of the program. 	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Phuong Nguyen (832)302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org</p>



			<p>SB 1356 requires each participating nonprofit organization to provide members a description of the tutoring program, guidance on how to participate, and the contact information of each person who oversees the program for the district in which the member resides and any adjacent districts.</p> <p>SB 1356 prohibits the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) from withholding a monthly benefit payment for a retiree if the retiree is employed in a Texas public educational institution as a tutor in the tutoring program and requires TRS to regularly provide information in an electronic format to members and retirees regarding the program.</p>	
<p>SB 1257 By: Birdwell Sponsor: Murphy</p>	<p>Relating to the information required to be provided by the chief appraiser of an appraisal district to the comptroller in connection with the comptroller's central registry of reinvestment zones designated and ad valorem tax abatement agreements executed under the Property Redevelopment and Tax Abatement Act.</p>	<p>Ways & Means Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>The Property Redevelopment and Tax Abatement Act, also known as chapter 312, provided cities, counties, and special districts with an economic development tool for attracting new industry and commercial enterprises by limiting any increase in all or part of a property's appraised value for a period not exceeding ten years. Areas receiving these agreements are sometimes designated as reinvestment zones. Appraisal districts are required to report certain information to the Comptroller related to chapter 312 agreements.</p> <p>Some feel there is a need to further increase transparency in tax abatement agreements and that providing the Comptroller with more information on proposed improvements could help increase efficiency in categorization and documentation. SB 1257 requires the chief appraiser of a district that appraises property for taxing units with abatement agreements or designated reinvestment zones to include the type, number, and location of all proposed property improvements within their report to the Comptroller to update the existing central registry on property tax abatement agreements. Notably, this change does not apply to school district property tax abatement agreements made under chapter 313.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 220 By: Zaffirini Sponsor: Smithee</p>	<p>Relating to notice and reporting requirements for vendor rebates under a contract listed on a</p>	<p>State Affairs Vote: 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>Currently, the comptroller may collect a rebate from a vendor under the Texas Multiple Award Schedule (TxMAS) program, which adapts contracts that federal or other governmental entities have competitively awarded to facilitate the procurement process for state agencies. If a purchase resulting in a rebate is made wholly or partly with federal funds, the comptroller is tasked with ensuring that the appropriate portion of the rebate is reported to the purchaser so that they may report and reconcile the amount proportionate to the federal funding agency. However, the comptroller does not have the ability to determine what amount of the contract was paid by the</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org</p>



	multiple award contract schedule.		<p>federal agency and so cannot fulfill this requirement. SB 220 would correct this issue and align statute with the comptroller’s current practice.</p> <p>SB 220 requires that the comptroller notify a state agency entering into a TxMAS contract of the percentage used to calculate the rebate so that the agency itself, which can determine what portion of the purchase was paid with federal funds, may calculate the appropriate amount of the rebate, and report it to the federal funding agency.</p>	
<p>SB 560</p> <p>By: Lucio</p> <p>Sponsor: Guerra Campos Lopez Morales Shaw Morales, Eddie</p>	<p>Relating to developing a strategic plan for the improvement and expansion of high-quality bilingual education.</p>	<p>Public Education</p> <p>Votes: 10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>Texas is a multicultural, multilingual state where twenty percent of all students in Texas public schools are English Learners, yet bilingual education is one of the leading teacher shortage areas in Texas. According to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) in the 2014-15 school year, there was only one qualified English Second Language (ESL) teacher for every 46 students who needed support. As Texas continues to grow and as Texas is the second-largest border state with a large Hispanic population, this issue will continue to grow if the state does not take a proactive approach to plan for the education of these bilingual students. SB 560 seeks to address this by developing a plan to mitigate the shortage of bilingual educators and help meet the needs of English language learners across the state.</p> <p>SB 560 requires TEA, in collaboration with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Workforce Commission, to develop a strategic plan that sets tangible goals and establishes timelines to increase the number of educators certified in bilingual education instruction, increase the number of dual language immersion/one-way and two-way program models used in public schools, educate families and district employees regarding the importance of bilingual education in early childhood, and adopt uniform processes. SB 560 also requires schools to identify students of limited English proficiency, monitor the bilingual learning of students, collect related data for students in prekindergarten through 12th grade, and increase the number of bilingual and multilingual high school graduates.</p> <p>SB 560 sets out provisions relating to the development of the strategic plan requiring TEA to consult and collaborate with representatives of certain stakeholders in developing the plan. The bill requires TEA to study the use of the Bilingual Target Language Proficiency Test to certify educators in bilingual education instruction. The bill requires TEA to submit the plan to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house of representatives, and each member of the legislative standing committees by December 1, 2022. The bill's provisions relating to the study expire on January 1, 2023.</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Phuong Nguyen (832)302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 73</p>	<p>Relating to providing access</p>	<p>Human Services</p>	<p>Local public health entities provide essential localized public health services and health infrastructure to their communities. These entities are run by either the local municipal or county government but</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by:</p>



<p>By: Miles Sponsor: Klick</p>	<p>to local public health entities and certain health service regional offices under Medicaid.</p>	<p>Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>are not established as a Department District. Local health entities participated in the 1115 waiver program but were not listed as a provider type under Medicaid, thus they are not eligible to receive reimbursement for services provided to Medicaid recipients. SB 73 aims to ease barriers preventing local public health entities from being eligible to participate in Medicaid.</p> <p>SB 73 requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to establish a separate provider type for a local public health entity, including a health service regional office acting in the capacity of a local public health entity, to allow them to enroll as a provider for Medicaid and receive reimbursement. The bill also provides definitions for “health service regional office” and “local health unit”.</p>	<p>Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1524 By: Hughes Sponsor: Guillen</p>	<p>Relating to a sales and use tax refund pilot program for certain persons who employ apprentices.</p>	<p>Ways & Means Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV 2 Absent</p>	<p>To incentivize apprenticeship programs in emerging and diversified fields, SB 1524 establishes a pilot program offering sales and use tax refunds to employers who hire apprentices. A qualified apprenticeship would be certified by an entity meeting U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) criteria, or a program already registered with the DOL as part of the state’s adult career and technology education apprenticeship programs eligible to receive federal funding provided through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). People who were employed by the same employer before entering the apprenticeship are ineligible to receive the refund.</p> <p>People eligible for the refund, which covers sales and use taxes paid during a calendar year, must be certified by TWC as capable of employing apprentices and must employ at least one apprentice for 7 months or more during that year. The executive director of TWC would be responsible for handling apprenticeship applications and certifications. The number of people who can be certified at one time is capped at 100 applicants, who would be selected using merit-based criteria if TWC receives over 100 applications.</p> <p>After receiving a certification, the bill requires an application for the refund to be handled through the Comptroller and sets out provisions for required information. Refund amounts are capped at \$2,500 per calendar year for each qualifying apprenticeship and people are limited to receiving a refund for one apprentice, but that cap is increased to six if at least half of the apprentices are women, veterans or their spouses, or foster children transitioning to independent living.</p> <p>SB 1524 requires TWC’s executive director to submit a report evaluating employment outcomes and recommendations for continuing the program to the lieutenant governor, speaker of the House, and members of applicable standing legislative committees in the House and Senate. The bill expires December 31st, 2026.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>



<p>SB 959</p> <p>By: Zaffirini</p> <p>Sponsor: Romero, Jr.</p>	<p>Relating to student success-based funding recommendations for certain continuing workforce education courses offered by public junior colleges.</p>	<p>Higher Education</p> <p>Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>Community colleges offer a wide array of workforce education courses, including licensing or certification courses for high-demand occupations. However, not all of these courses are included in funding formulas, which may result in these courses not being maintained or expanded. Since these courses do not contribute to revenue from incentive-based funds, the institutions must increase tuition to have the funding which increases pressure for low-income students to attain postsecondary development or enhancement of skills. SB 959 addresses this issue by ensuring more continuing workforce education courses are considered for funding recommendations.</p> <p>Student success measures from continuing workforce education courses are currently not considered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) while making recommendations regarding institutional appropriations of incentive-based funds if the courses do not meet certain specifications. SB 959 requires the THECB to include these student success measures when making recommendations to the legislature regarding performance-based funds for public junior colleges. The bill establishes course qualities for student success measures that THECB must consider.</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Devan Daniel (419) 566-5465 Devan@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 873</p> <p>By: Hancock</p> <p>Sponsor: Button</p>	<p>Relating to disclosure by the comptroller to the purchaser of a business of the amount of tax due.</p>	<p>Ways & Means</p> <p>Vote: 11 Yeas, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>When selling a business, the owner is required to settle any taxes owed on the business entity, and a purchaser is required to withhold the amount of taxes due from the total price of the business until the seller provides a receipt or the Comptroller issues a certificate confirming no taxes are owed. Purchasers who do not withhold the amount of taxes owed from what they provide the business seller are liable to pay the taxes due for the business. Purchasers can request a statement from the Comptroller detailing the amount owed on the business they are purchasing, but the current practice of issuing statements contradicts other confidentiality provisions prohibiting the Comptroller from releasing certain tax information. To fix tax code inconsistencies and better protect sensitive taxpayer information, SB 873 authorizes the Comptroller to disclose a business tax statement only if a business successor requests it by affidavit.</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 623</p> <p>By: Blanco</p> <p>Sponsor: Minjarez</p>	<p>Relating to the investigation and punishment of certain sexual offenses, to protective orders issued on the basis of certain sexual offenses, to crime victims' compensation, and to the</p>	<p>Defense & Veteran Affairs</p> <p>Vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>The Texas state military force of nearly 24,000 members, is the largest state military force in the nation. Currently, there is no independent criminal investigator for sexual assault allegations within the Texas Military Department (TMD) for state military forces. This leaves victims open to further retaliation from fellow service members or commanding officers, or results in a proper investigation never being conducted. This often results in the victim's career being destroyed and allows the perpetrator to commit these heinous acts again in the future without fear of punishment. SB 623 aims to establish a state sexual offense prevention and response program that is outside of the chain of command of state military forces.</p> <p>SB 623 requires TMD to establish a state sexual offense prevention and response program to investigate sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, and indecent assault committed by persons subject to the Texas Code of Military Justice. TMD must employ or designate a state sexual offense</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org</p>



	<p>establishment of a state sexual offense prevention and response program for the Texas Military Department.</p>		<p>response coordinator to perform victim advocacy services, including ensuring that persons who are victims of sexual assault or indecent assault receive appropriate responsive care and understand the options they have to report the assault.</p> <p>SB 623 establishes the duties of the coordinator to include accepting reports for alleged offenses and notify each person who is a victim of a reported sexual assault that they qualify for crime victims' compensation. The coordinator must allow a member of the Texas military forces who is the victim of an alleged offense to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • file a restricted or unrestricted report, or a restricted report with the ability to later convert the report to unrestricted, with the coordinator • participate in the United States Department of Defense Catch a Serial Offender program • be notified when the coordinator is made aware that the accused has been subsequently accused of another offense by another service member or any other person. <p>SB 623 requires the coordinator to refer an unrestricted report to the Texas Rangers division of the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for investigation and refer unrestricted reports to the appropriate local law enforcement agency for the initial collection of evidence. The local law enforcement agency will then transfer all relevant evidence and information to the Texas Rangers division within DPS. The Texas Rangers division will assign an officer to investigate reports referred to the division. If the investigation shows probable cause that an offense was committed then the investigator will refer the matter to the appropriate local district attorney, criminal district attorney, or county attorney with criminal jurisdiction.</p> <p>With the consent of the victim, SB 623 allows the coordinator to file an application for a protective order on behalf of the victim. The coordinator or adjutant general will use state data they have collected to compile a report that analyzes the implementation and effectiveness of policies and procedures to prevent and respond to reports of sexual assault within TMD. Information provided in the report regarding restricted cases will be limited to aggregated statistical data to respect victim's privacy. Unrestricted case data will provide more in depth information, such as statistics relating to victims and accused persons and the status of investigations. The report will be distributed to the governor, lieutenant governor, speaker of the house of representatives, and the chairs of the standing committees in both house and senate with primary jurisdiction over the department.</p>	
<p>SB 1113 By: Bettencourt </p>	<p>Relating to a registrar's failure to cancel voter registrations</p>	<p>Elections Votes: 5 Ayes,</p>	<p>SB 1113 adds a new section to Texas Election Code (TEC) that will allow the Secretary of State (SoS) to withhold both state and federal funding for election administration when a voter registrar fails to "timely perform a duty" relating to voter purges. The bill would give the SoS the authority to</p>	<p>Unfavorable Evaluated by: Joy Fairchild (713)817-3842</p>



<p>Creighton Hall Kolkhorst Schwertner</p> <p>Sponsor: Cain</p>	<p>under applicable law.</p>	<p>4 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>indiscriminately withhold state voter registration funding and federal Help America Vote Act funding from counties. "Timely," however, is not defined in the bill.</p> <p>Voter registrars are, in most cases, permitted 30 days to investigate the need for a cancellation of a registration and an attempt at reconciliation. Currently the Secretary of State may only withhold state funding from a county if the voter registrar is not in compliance with certain regulations requiring the cancellation of a voter's registration when their name appears on a list prepared for voter purges. Additionally, voter registrars are already monetarily incentivized to comply with requirements to update or cancel registrations, more so than to enter new registrations.</p> <p>Further, Texas election departments are often understaffed and under-resourced. In rural counties, it is not uncommon for only one staff member to run the entire operation. This bill would provide the SoS overreaching authority and threaten harm to already stretched election departments across the state. This bill will not encourage more timely compliance with these rules - by providing the SoS overreaching authority to withhold funds, already stretched election departments across the state will have an even harder time fulfilling their duties to the people of Texas. Considering there have been few to no cases of widespread voter fraud, this bill will create an overly punitive solution to a problem that does not exist.</p>	<p>Joy@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 2124</p> <p>By: Blanco</p> <p>Sponsor: Lucio III</p>	<p>Relating to the authority of a health benefit plan sponsor to consent to electronic delivery of certain communications on behalf of a party enrolled in the plan.</p>	<p>Insurance</p> <p>Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>On an annual basis, insurance policyholders receive a series of documents to renew and gain insight into certain health plan benefits provided by their employer. Since documents are often delivered in series of multiple pages, many policyholders skim over the fine print. Despite the incremental shifts toward electronic communications, employers are currently unable to opt-in policyholders to certain electronic communications.</p> <p>SB 2124 gives employers or "plan sponsors" the authority to consent, on behalf of their employees, to certain health benefit plans' paperless delivery as an automatic default. Before a plan sponsor provides consent, the employer must provide the policyholder with certain required statements - such as the hardware or software required for access, confirm that the policyholder routinely utilizes electronic communication throughout the workday, and maintain the ability for policyholders to opt-out, at any time, and continue traditional USPS delivery. Also, SB 2124 includes the ability for plan sponsors to apply these provisions to certain vision and dental benefits. SB 2124 will ease communication between policyholders and insurers and reduce mail-related expenses for both parties.</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Chelsea Dalton Pederson 512-661-9708 Chelsea@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1421</p> <p>By: Bettencourt</p>	<p>Relating to the correction of an ad valorem tax appraisal roll and</p>	<p>Ways & Means</p> <p>Vote: 9 Ayes,</p>	<p>The tax code generally prohibits appraisers from changing information on the appraisal roll aside from certain circumstances. This can create difficulties in business personal property taxes because valuations include the description, location, cost, and acquisition dates of tangible personal property, which can be difficult information to correctly document. These business personal property reports,</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388</p>



<p>Sponsor: Thierry</p>	<p>related appraisal records.</p>	<p>0 Nays 0 PNV 2 Absent</p>	<p>known as rendition statements, are due around Tax Day, which is the busiest and easiest time of year for appraisal districts to make mistakes.</p> <p>Upon written request of a taxpayer or chief appraiser, SB 1421 allows appraisal review board (ARB) members to correct errors in appraisal rolls or related records for the appraised value of tangible personal property in rendition statements for the current or past two tax years. The bill prohibits changing the appraisal roll in the following circumstances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the property owner received a penalty for missing the rendition statement or property report deadline • the property was involved in a taxpayer protest in which a final determination was made by the ARB • a previous motion to correct the roll was filed and the chief appraiser agreed to corrections, the ARB decided on the request, or the owner forfeited their right to a final determination for failing to comply with prepayment requirements • the property owner or their agent and the appraisal district established an agreement in writing on the appraised property's value 	<p>Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 224 By: Perry West Sponsor: Walle Meza Morales, Eddie Ortega</p>	<p>Relating to simplified certification and recertification requirements for certain persons under the supplemental nutrition assistance program.</p>	<p>Human Services Vote: 6 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Texas' Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides food and aims to reduce hunger for low-income seniors. It allows low-income seniors to focus scarce cash resources on other necessities. However, a lengthy and computerized certification and recertification process creates barriers for seniors in need of food assistance. Lack of technological access and proficiency, as well as cumbersome 6 month eligibility periods that require regular recertification make it hard for seniors to access and remain in the program. A single lapse during the recertification can lead to a senior being without assistance for months. SB 224 seeks to address these concerns by implementing a simplified certification and recertification process for seniors.</p> <p>SB 224 requires the Health and Human Services Commission to develop and implement simplified certification and recertification requirements for SNAP recipients who are 60 years or older and reside in a household in which every resident is 60 years or older. The simplified requirements allow these individuals to waive recertification interview requirements, reduce the number of verification requirements, and extend the eligibility period for a recipient to 36 months.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 291 By: Schwertner Sponsor:</p>	<p>Relating to the posting of certain project information at a commercial</p>	<p>Business & Industry Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays,</p>	<p>Transparency in commercial development allows the public to determine if such projects should continue in their community. This is especially true if the project in question would impact the safety, traffic, noise, or air pollution of the surrounding area. SB 291 requires developers of commercial building projects to visibly post the name, the developer's contact information, and a brief description of the project at the construction site's entrance. The bill stipulates that as soon as the project starts,</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Devan Daniel (419) 566-5465 Devan@TexasLSG.org</p>



Bucy	building construction site.	0 PNV, 4 Absent	the information must be posted. SB 291 allows for this transparency between commercial developers and local landowners to foster mutual trust and open communication.	
SB 288 By: Seliger Sponsor: Wu Anchía Dean Ordaz Perez Allen	Relating to preventing the loss of benefits by certain retirees of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas who resume service.	Pensions, Investments & Financial Services Votes: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Teacher Retirement System (TRS) members who return to work for a TRS-covered employer run the risk of incurring costly penalties if they are in violation of the current TRS retirement rehire regulation. Often retirees are unaware that they are in violation of these regulations resulting in loss of monthly benefits that they rely on for living expenses. Even when the violation occurs in error, TRS is unable to provide recourse or warning to the retirees. SB 288 seeks to create a system that would mitigate these errors so that retired teachers are better able to comply with TRS retirement rehire regulations. SB 288 creates a three-strike system to offer TRS the ability to allow retirees to correct violations they have made in error. For retirees with a service retirement annuity, who are qualified for an exception withholding, and have resumed service, SB 288 authorizes TRS to issue a written warning regarding the first violation notifying the retiree before monthly benefits can be withheld. Upon the second violation, the additional benefits must be paid back to TRS by the retiree in violation. Upon the third violation, TRS is authorized to withhold the retiree's monthly benefits.	Favorable Evaluated by: Phuong Nguyen (832)302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org
SB 20 By: Campbell Bettencourt Buckingham Creighton Gutierrez Hall Hinojosa Huffman Hughes Kolkhorst Lucio Nelson Paxton Perry Schwertner Seliger Springer Taylor	Relating to carrying and storing a handgun or handgun ammunition by a hotel guest.	Homeland Security & Public Safety Vote: 7 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	In Texas, hotels are permitted to restrict weapons on their property and are required to post notice regarding any related policies. Gun owners wishing to transport their firearms in and out of hotel rooms while traveling must check to ensure a hotel allows the presence of firearms, and though this can pose a minor inconvenience, people have a right to determine what they allow on their own private property. Many hotels already permit weapons to be stored in hotel rooms, meaning gun owners are not limited in their choice of lodging: private property rights and the 2nd amendment right to bear arms can currently coexist without infringing on the liberties of either group in these circumstances. SB 20 prohibits Texas hotels, motels, inns, or lodging with ten or more rooms from adopting policies restricting guests from possessing or transporting handguns and ammunition on hotel property, but still permits these businesses to adopt any firearms policy requiring guests to carry weapons in a concealed manner or in a case. Hotel is defined to include a hotel, motel, inn, or lodging with 10 or more rooms. The bill creates several defenses to prosecution so that people cannot be charged for criminal trespass or criminal trespass by a License to Carry (LTC) or Concealed Carry permit holder if they possess or carry weapons on hotel property where a firearm is forbidden. Since the 2017 Las Vegas shooting in which the perpetrator transported over 22 firearms to his hotel room before open firing on a music festival, many hotels are apprehensive about allowing weapons in	Unfavorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org



<p>Sponsor: Hefner</p>			<p>rooms. Private sector businesses should have the authority to determine whether or not weapons are permitted on their property to ensure the safety of staff and guests.</p>	
<p>SB 23 By: Huffman Sponsor: Oliverson Harless</p>	<p>Relating to an election to approve a reduction or reallocation of funding or resources for certain county law enforcement agencies.</p>	<p>State Affairs Vote: 8 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>SB 23 directs certain counties that make certain decisions regarding their law enforcement budgets to hold an election before implementing proposed budget changes. Changes that would require voter approval include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reductions in the law enforcement agency’s budget or its percentage of the county’s overall budget, depending on whether or not the overall budget decrease • reductions in total officers employed or in officers per 1,000 residents employed, depending on whether the county’s population has decreased • reductions in funds for recruitment or training per new or vacant officer position • reallocations of funding or resources from the agency primarily charged with policing, criminal investigation, and answering calls for service to another law enforcement agency <p>This applies only to counties with populations over one million, with exceptions for disaster-related budget reductions - not including drought or pandemic disasters. The election would not be required to take place on uniform election dates. As is typical of ballot measures, the county may not use public money on promotional campaigns or advocacy related to the proposed reduction or reallocation, though an official may communicate factual information and the reasoning behind the change.</p> <p>A resident is permitted to file a complaint with the governor’s criminal justice division if the county does not comply with the voter approval requirement. The division must provide the county time to correct its noncompliance, if applicable, and the comptroller shall investigate a complaint if the division requests. The penalty for noncompliance is a prohibition on the county adopting a property tax rate that exceeds its no-new-revenue tax rate until the unauthorized reduction or reallocation is addressed.</p> <p>While this bill is a significant improvement from other proposed legislation addressing local reductions or reallocations of law enforcement budgets, it still presents concerns. These large counties would have to go through the expensive process of holding a standalone election, costing hundreds of thousands or even over a million dollars, on a single budget issue, forever separating this component out from the rest of the budget. Additionally, restricting a county’s tax revenue could harm the very residents it is purporting to protect by making it more challenging to comply with this bill’s requirements and fund other priorities.</p> <p>This bill fails to consider the improvements to public safety that could be gained from reallocating specific responsibilities like mental health crisis response to more suitable agencies and investing in</p>	<p>Unfavorable Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org</p>



			alternative methods of crime reduction such as community development and support services. Further, it adds an unnecessary expense to counties - and ultimately to taxpayers - who may have found more efficient ways to operate their police departments. County officials are elected to manage county budgets - if the community is unhappy with that management, they can remove the individual from office using the methods that are already available.	
SB 480 By: Miles Sponsor: Coleman	Relating to the student union fee at the University of Houston.	Higher Education Vote: 6 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent	Student unions are often the central hub for student and campus activity, which means plenty of programming is offered in the space to promote student well-being and mental health. Currently, the University of Houston levies a fee for the student union to cover a variety of costs for construction, improvements, and other operational costs but cannot use revenue from this fee to pay for programming. SB 480 rectifies this by expanding the list of functions this fee can financially cover. The bill expands the use of fees levied by the University of Houston for the student union to be used to provide programming at a student union building. In this instance the programming they intend to so is mental health services for students.	Favorable Evaluated by: Devan Daniel (419) 566-5465 Devan@TexasLSG.org
SB 59 By: Zaffirini Sponsor: Geren	Relating to the advertising and promotion of a state purchasing program for local governments.	State Affairs Vote: 13 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Local governments have the opportunity to participate in a purchasing program with the comptroller, which can reduce procurement costs and increase efficiency for local governments and vendors. The program's reach, and thus its cost savings to local governments and ultimately taxpayers, could be extended by marketing and public outreach. SB 59 provides the comptroller statutory authority to advertise and promote the state purchasing program for local governments in order to further the program's purposes.	Favorable Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org
SB 827 By: Kolkhorst Alvarado Bettencourt Blanco Campbell Eckhardt Hinojosa Huffman Hughes Lucio Menéndez Miles Paxton West Zaffirini Sponsor: Lucio III	Relating to health benefit plan cost-sharing requirements for prescription insulin.	Insurance Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	In Texas, medical expenses for individuals with a diabetic diagnosis continue to rise. If the state does not immediately put protective measures in place, emergency departments will see a rise in diabetic-related visits and even death from insulin rationing. SB 827 reinforces an insured consumer's out-of-pocket costs will remain affordable by capping the cost-sharing for prescription insulin, with the exception of insulin administered intravenously, at \$25 per 30-day supply. The bill also sets provisions for the insurer's formulary by requiring them to include at least one form of insulin from each therapeutic class of the formulary. SB 827 will likely alleviate insulin rationing occurrences and ensure some insured patients can continue safely treating their diabetic health needs.	Favorable Evaluated by: Chelsea Dalton Pederson 512-661-9708 Chelsea@TexasLSG.org



<p>SB 1164</p> <p>Author: Campbell</p> <p>Sponsor: Collier</p>	<p>Relating to the prosecution of the offense of sexual assault.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p> <p>Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>In the 2017 Legislative Session, the legislature expanded sexual assault to include improper relationships between educators in the public school system. However, other circumstances have arisen that lead to concern - evoking the legislature to expand further. SB 1164 expands 4 new considerations for non-consensual sexual assault if the actor:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • knows the victim is intoxicated by any substance that makes the victim incapable of consent • knows that the victim has withdrawn consent and the actor continues • is a coach or tutor causes to submit or participate by using influence to exploit an unequal dependent relationship • hired to, or to assist in, providing daily care to the victim - exploiting dependency <p>SB 1164 includes additional circumstances to ensure as many forms as possible of non-consensual sexual assault are covered by the law and liable to prosecution.</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Chelsea Dalton Pederson 512-661-9708 Chelsea@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 181</p> <p>By: Johnson</p> <p>Sponsor: White</p>	<p>Relating to suspension of a driver's license for persons convicted of certain offenses and the educational program required for reinstatement of a license following certain convictions; authorizing a fine.</p>	<p>Homeland Security & Public Safety</p> <p>Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>The federal government enacted a law over three decades ago incentivizing states to implement an automatic 6 month driver's license suspension for anybody convicted of a drug offense, including misdemeanors. States not implementing such laws are penalized with federal highway funding reductions. Having a suspended license reinstated is a costly and burdensome process many cannot afford to navigate, leaving people unable to legally drive to work when they already face difficulties gaining meaningful employment due to drug charges. These compounded problems lead to carceral recidivism and detrimentally affect people's lives over outdated laws from what we now know as war on drugs. Today, there is no evidence to support the idea that license suspension deters drug use in any way.</p> <p>States can waive the mandate and avoid the loss in federal funding by going through specific procedures, and Texas is currently one of only four states currently maintaining an automatic license suspension for drug offenses. In tandem with SCR 1, which is currently waiting on the Governor's signature, SB 181 is part of the process for eliminating automatic license suspension or denial for substance-related offenses without losing any state highway funding. The bill provides exceptions in which a person's license may still be suspended, caps the total suspension or denial period at two years, and provides for people impacted by current law to have their license reinstated by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) starting 180 days after the bill's effective date.</p> <p>SB 181 replaces the automatic license suspension penalties imposed on a person convicted for substance-related offenses with a \$100 fine in addition to any other fees under state law, and fine revenue will be allocated to the Texas Mobility Fund. Courts would be required to waive the fine under certain circumstances. The bill still permits the automatic suspension or denial of a driver's license when a person finally convicted of a misdemeanor substance-related offense has also been convicted of a previous drug charge within 36 months prior to the offense in question. The automatic license</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>



			<p>suspension and denial periods are reduced from 180 days to 90 days after conviction. Courts would be authorized to provide a written determination that a suspension is in the best interest of public safety and order DPS to suspend a license upon final conviction in those circumstances.</p> <p>In compliance with the Federal process for waiving automatic license suspension requirements, the bill specifies its provisions will take effect on the 91st day after the Attorney General’s Office publishes a finding in the Texas Register that required actions have been taken by the legislature and the governor resulting in the U.S. Secretary of Transportation certifying highway funds will not be withheld.</p> <p>The bill additionally reenacts certain legal provisions relating to driver’s educational programs people must complete to have their license reinstated to allow an online course offering and make conforming changes with legislation previously passed making the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation responsible for overseeing this program.</p>	
<p>SB 2188 By: Seliger Gutierrez Sponsor: Hernandez</p>	<p>Relating to the municipal or county regulation of residential detention facilities for immigrant or refugee children.</p>	<p>State Affairs Vote: 13 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>There have been concerns over the operation and conditions of residential child detention facilities, which in this bill is defined as private facilities not licensed by the state of Texas that operate under a contract with federal immigration and human service agencies to house unaccompanied immigrant or refugee children, of which there are only two. Particularly in Midland County, local officials were not notified of a change in land use to operate one of these facilities, hindering their ability to ensure water quality, emergency preparation, and security that would facilitate adequate conditions for the 500 children housed in this facility. While local officials cannot regulate whether a federal agency leases property and enters into these contracts, they should be notified and have the authority to require that residents are living in safe and healthy environments, just as would be required for a childcare facility licensed by the state.</p> <p>SB 2188 would authorize cities and counties to adopt and enforce regulations related to residential child detention facilities that may require the facility to provide adequate water, wastewater, or other utility service and to meet reasonable minimum standards that promote residents’ health, safety, and welfare. This may include requirements such as water permits, fire exits, and physical security measures. The bill also requires that, before entering into a contract with a federal agency to operate a residential child detention facility, an individual must notify the city or county government in which the facility would be located and meet relevant requirements adopted by that government. This will provide protection to an incredibly vulnerable population that has for too long been subjected to substandard care from the government.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 179 By: Lucio</p>	<p>Relating to the use of public school</p>	<p>Public Education</p>	<p>A comprehensive school counseling program focuses on the needs of students to ensure they make the most of their educational experience. The program addresses key aspects of academic achievement, career guidance, and support for social and emotional challenges. In theory school counselors should</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Phuong Nguyen</p>



<p>Sponsor: Huberty González, Mary</p>	<p>counselors' work time.</p>	<p>Votes: 8 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent</p>	<p>provide guidance and support for all aspects of a child’s development, but due to staffing requirements school counselors spend most of their time working on student course schedules and administrative work rather than the holistic guidance of their students. The pandemic revealed that in a school community it is not enough to just provide academics. Counselors are a key component in guiding a student’s social and emotional development. SB 179 seeks to address the focus of the school counselor’s work hours to address the full needs of the students they serve.</p> <p>SB 179 requires the public school district board of trustees to adopt a policy that requires a school counselor to spend at least 80% of their work time on duties that are components of the school’s comprehensive school counseling program. SB 179 requires each district to implement and maintain a copy of the policy in the school office made available on request.</p> <p>The bill prohibits a district from including a provision in a school counselor's employment contract that conflicts with the adopted counselor workload policy. SB 179 requires each district to annually assess its compliance with the adopted counselor workload policy and, on request, provide a written copy of the assessment to the Texas Education Agency. SB 179 empowers school counselors to meet all the needs of a developing student.</p>	<p>(832)302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 48 By: Zaffirini Sponsor: Lucio III</p>	<p>Relating to conditions of community supervision for defendants convicted of certain criminal offenses involving animals.</p>	<p>Correction s Vote: 5 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>Currently, judges hold the discretion to grant community supervision, which includes attending psychological counseling and prohibits possessing or exercising control over an animal for those convicted of bestiality.</p> <p>SB 48 adds additional offenses, including attacking assistance animals, cruelty to non-livestock animals, dogs, and cockfighting to the list of community supervision provisions that allow judges to: require custody of any animals to be relinquished; prohibit possession, habitation, or exercising control over any animals; and/or require participation in a psychological counseling or other appropriate treatment program. SB 48 codifies tools available to judges for these convictions.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Chelsea Dalton Pederson 512-661-9708 Chelsea@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 2116 By: Campbell Hall Sponsor: Parker</p>	<p>Relating to prohibiting contracts or other agreements with certain foreign- owned companies in connection with critical infrastructure in this state.</p>	<p>State Affairs Vote: 13 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>SB 2116 would prohibit government and business entities from entering into contracts or agreements relating to critical infrastructure with companies owned or controlled by certain entities that may present a security threat to the state. A contract would be prohibited if it gave the company direct or remote access to a communication infrastructure system, cybersecurity system, electric grid, hazardous waste treatment system, or water treatment facility in Texas, and if the company was owned or controlled by citizens of or companies and other entities controlled by a citizen or government of China, Iran, North Korea, Russia, or another country designated by the governor as a threat to critical infrastructure.</p>	<p>Will of the House with Concerns Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org</p>



			While the countries outlined in this bill do currently pose security threats to the U.S., security concerns are frequently subject to change and this list is subject to adding additional countries at little more than the governor’s whim. Listing out specific countries in this manner will almost certainly require legislative changes as conditions change, instead of tying the list to objective factors like intelligence and security determinations made by our national security agencies. Further, citizens of these designated countries live and work in Texas just as American citizens do. A blanket ban on doing certain business with these foreign nationals without further evidence of or investigation into any particular security threat could unintended consequences.	
SB 1270 By: Seliger Sponsor: Thompson, Ed	Relating to the procurement of certain goods and services related to highways by the Texas Department of Transportation.	Transportation Votes: 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) manages the safety, traffic flow, and maintenance of roads and highways across the state. Currently, the road maintenance contracting process entails soliciting the lowest bid, which can take up to two months creating project delays. SB 1270 changes the transportation code to allow road maintenance materials to be purchased with the same process as safety or traffic control materials. The bill stipulates that a contract must be within the amount TxDOT is authorized to spend and that the current bid process is not practical for this purchase. This bill would allow TxDOT the ability to complete road maintenance projects more efficiently.	Favorable Evaluated by: Joy Fairchild (713)817-3842 Joy@TexasLSG.org
SB 367 By: Miles Sponsor: Reynolds	Relating to the requirements for an application for a permit to drill an oil or gas well at a site adjacent to a well blowout site.	Energy Resources Vote: 10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	SB 367 is a response to a situation in Fort Bend County where an oil and gas operator responsible for a 2017 oil well blowout - the uncontrolled release of oil and gas fluid caused by a loss of well control - applied to the Railroad Commission (RRC) for an additional drill permit near the site of the blowout while it was still under investigation from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. A blowout may signal problematic conditions in the geologic formation or operational issues that the RRC should be aware of before issuing a permit, but there is currently no requirement for an operator to report past blowouts when applying for a new permit. SB 367 directs the RRC to implement rules requiring an applicant for a drill permit in a county with a population over 750,000 to disclose certain information in the application. The applicant must disclose whether it had in the past operated a well that experienced a blowout in a site adjacent to and in the same geologic formation as the proposed well. This will provide the RRC with important details that are directly relevant to community and environmental wellbeing and will facilitate better informed permitting decisions.	Favorable Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org
SB 1605 By: Huffman	Relating to directing payment, after approval, of certain	Appropriations Vote: 25 Ayes,	To settle outstanding claims and judgments the state is obligated to pay at the end of the fiscal biennium, SB 1605 appropriates money from the general revenue (GR), state highway, and lottery GR funds, as well as the designated trauma facility and emergency medical services GR account to pay for claims and judgements against the state.	Favorable Evaluated by: Audrey Erwin (928) 210-4303 Audrey@TexasLSG.org



<p>Sponsor: Bonnen</p>	<p>miscellaneous claims and judgments against the state out of funds designated by this Act; making appropriations.</p>	<p>0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>There are outstanding claims that include court settlements that will likely carry large amounts such as Women’s Whole Health v John Hellerstedt - challenging the constitutionality of barriers to access to abortion procedures in Texas - this case alone cost \$2.6 million. In addition, the Department of Family and Protective Services has \$6.3 million for one of their settlement cases and \$15.3 million for civil claims from issues with SNAP program management.</p>	
<p>SB 798 By: Nelson Sponsor: Neave</p>	<p>Relating to the issuance of a birth record, driver’s license, or personal identification certificate to victims and the children of victims of family and dating violence.</p>	<p>Juvenile Justice & Family Issues Vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Survivors of dating or family violence often face many challenges when rebuilding their lives. These challenges can include finding work, housing, a new support system, etc. When seeking work or housing, survivors face significant difficulty if they do not have vital documentation such as a driver’s license or a birth certificate. Such circumstances impede a survivor’s recovery and ultimate success after surviving their trauma. SB 798 helps these survivors by removing barriers to obtaining vital documentation.</p> <p>SB 798 requires the state registrar, a legal registrar, or a county clerk to issue an individual’s certified birth certificate if they were a survivor of family or dating violence or if they are a child of the survivor. The bill authorizes these survivors or their children to apply for a personal identification certificate with a certified birth certificate and, if the person is homeless, a letter verifying their homeless status. SB 798 also requires the Texas Department of Public Safety to exempt these victims from any issuance fee for a personal identification certificate or a driver’s license.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Devan Daniel (419) 566-5465 Devan@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1590 By: Bettencourt Sponsor: VanDeaver</p>	<p>Relating to rules by the State Board for Educator Certification regarding virtual observation options for field-based experiences and internships required for educator certification.</p>	<p>Public Education Votes: 9 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>The State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) is the governing body over the education profession. They oversee all aspects of the preparation, certification, and standards of conduct of public school educators. SBEC requires teacher candidates to complete an educator preparation program and meet observation hour requirements to become a teacher. Ideally, these teaching observation hours are in the classroom during actual school hours, observing effective teachers perfect their craft. Through observation and learning from the experienced teacher and administrator, a new teacher learns the skills needed to become an effective teacher. During the pandemic, SBEC allowed observation hours to be met virtually. SB 1590 seeks to maintain this practice of virtual observation to provide flexibility in becoming a teacher.</p> <p>SB 1590 requires the State Board of Educator Certification (SBEC) to propose rules that provide flexible options for any field-based experience or internship required for certification. These options include for candidate observations to be two observations to occur in person and two additional observations to</p>	<p>Will of the House Evaluated by: Phuong Nguyen (832)302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org</p>



			<p>occur in virtual settings that are equivalent in rigor to in-person options or three observations to occur in person.</p> <p>While the pandemic shifted certain practices to accommodate the need to mitigate the spread of the virus, it also revealed what best practices are required. As the pandemic slows and the school will fully open in person, the opportunity for the teacher candidate to gain effective learning is best done in the classroom setting, in the same way student learning is best done in the classroom. Teaching is not only about the ability to disseminate information, but it is about relationship building and the acquiring of interpersonal skills. There is no better way to learn that but through in-person experience. Virtual observation does not lend itself to being in the classroom and could not give young new teachers the hands-on experience to become highly effective teachers.</p>	
<p>SB 263</p> <p>By: Menéndez</p> <p>Sponsor: Minjarez</p>	<p>Relating to the ability of certain relative caretakers of dependent children to receive supplemental financial assistance and be assigned as protective payees for financial assistance payments.</p>	<p>Human Services</p> <p>Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent</p>	<p>Currently, only grandparents who meet specific requirements can qualify to receive a supplemental Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) onetime payment of \$1,000. These narrow restrictions exclude a large pool of relatives who may find themselves as caretakers for a child who may otherwise end up in foster care and needs financial assistance. SB 263 seeks to expand the qualifications of those who can receive a supplemental TANF payment as a relative caretaker to provide financial assistance to relative caretakers of children who may otherwise end up in the foster care system.</p> <p>SB 263 makes certain changes to the eligibility requirements for the TANF supplemental grandparent payment that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lowers the minimum age requirement from 45 year of age to 25 years of age expands the pool of relatives that qualify to include an aunt, uncle, sister, or brother. <p>The bill also includes an aunt, uncle, sister, or brother to the list of relatives that can serve as a protective payee of a child receiving TANF as long as that person is at least 25 years of age.</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 50</p> <p>By: Zaffirini</p> <p>Sponsor: Neave</p>	<p>Relating to a competitive and integrated employment initiative for certain Medicaid recipients.</p>	<p>Human Services</p> <p>Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>State and federal law require Texas state agencies to implement employee first policies, policies that promote competitive employment opportunities that provide a living wage for individuals with disabilities, for individuals receiving state benefits. However, more than 80% of persons with disabilities are unemployed in the state and only 1.7% currently utilize the employment services available to them through the Medicaid waiver programs. SB 50 aims to address these low percentages by establishing a process to evaluate the opportunities and services available to persons with disabilities enrolled in the Medicaid waiver programs.</p> <p>SB 50 requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to develop a uniform process to assess the goals of competitive and integrated employment opportunities,</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org</p>



			<p>work performed by individuals with a disability at a wage that is comparable to individuals without disabilities, and identify available opportunities and services to direct an individual’s plan of care be developed or renewed under:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Home and Community-based Services (HCS) waiver program • the Texas Home Living (TxHmL) waiver program • the Deaf-Blind with Multiple Disabilities (DBMD) waiver program • the Community Living Assistance and Support Services (CLASS) waiver program • the STAR+ PLUS Home and Community-based Services (HCBS) waiver program <p>By rule, SB 50 requires the executive commissioner to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify strategies to increase the number of individuals who are receiving employment services from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) or through a waiver program • determine a reasonable number of individuals to receive employment services and ensure they have received those services during the next fiscal biennium • ensure each individual who indicates a desire to work is referred to employment services from TWC <p>SB 50 requires the executive commissioner to compile a report outlining the number of individuals receiving employment services, whether TWC, a waiver program, or both are providing the services, and the number of individuals who have obtained competitive and integrated employment.</p>	
<p>SB 1679 By: Alvarado Sponsor: Johnson, Jarvis</p>	<p>Relating to the creation of an urban land bank by certain municipalities.</p>	<p>Urban Affairs Vote: 7 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>The Houston Land Bank was established in 1999 to acquire and maintain problem properties and then transfer them back to responsible ownership as productive properties, such as affordable housing. However, it has never been fully implemented because it is currently governed by a web of statutes instead of a clearly outlined single piece of legislation. SB 1679 aims to remedy this by consolidating the statutes for the Houston Land Bank into one codified piece of legislation. This will allow the Houston Land Bank to operate to its fullest capacity like other municipal land banks across the state.</p> <p>SB 1679 authorizes a municipality with a population size of 2 million or more to establish an urban land bank to acquire, manage, and dispose of properties that are vacant, abandoned, deteriorated, non-revenue generating, and non-tax producing. The land bank would convert these properties into productive ones, such as housing services. The bill lays out the operating functions of the land bank as well as the provisions for a board of directors who shall oversee the land bank to ensure it is operating as intended</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1692 By: Miles</p>	<p>Relating to licensing requirements to</p>	<p>Public Health</p>	<p>Access to dialysis treatment is integral for proper renal disease care and is lifesaving for those at end stage renal disease. Expanding who is able to provide such treatment will increase access. SB 1692</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Devan Daniel</p>



<p>Sponsor: Longoria</p>	<p>operate an end stage renal disease facility and the provision of home dialysis care by a dialysis technician.</p>	<p>Vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>permits such an expansion to trained professionals to provide this lifesaving care under the direct supervision of a registered nurse.</p> <p>SB 1692 authorizes dialysis technicians to provide home dialysis care, including hemodialysis, in a nursing facility if these specific conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provided care is under a registered nurse’s personal - physically present in the room - supervision that is trained and competent in end stage renal disease care per Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) rules and employed by the same employer as the technician. the dialysis technician is compliant with all HHSC training and competency requirements for the occupation. <p>The bill exempts home and community support services facilities and physicians’ offices from being licensed as an end stage renal disease facility if they do not serve more than a total five dialysis patients at a time or if they are licensed to be an end stage renal facility under Medicare by the Centers of Medicare and Medicaid Services.</p>	<p>(419) 566-5465 Devan@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1827 By: Huffman Nelson Sponsor: Holland</p>	<p>Relating to the creation of the opioid abatement account, an opioid abatement trust fund, and a statewide opioid settlement agreement.</p>	<p>Appropriations Vote: 23 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent</p>	<p>The attorney general (AG), in a joint effort between counties and municipalities, represented Texas in bringing civil action against opioid manufacturers, distributors, and retailers for the devastating harm they caused. The legal case has grown to involve nearly every state and the global settlement is estimated to be roughly \$28 billion. SB 1827 seeks to address how settlement funds will be managed and allocated fairly to combat the opioid epidemic throughout the state. The bill establishes a plan that includes not only experts in hospitals and academia but also those who work in communities combating the opioid crisis.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Texas Opioid Abatement Fund Council</p> <p>SB 1827 establishes the Texas Opioid Abatement Fund Council (Council), tasked with ensuring money received in the settlement by the state is allocated fairly. The council will be composed of 14 members experienced in opioid-related harm and interventions: 6 from healthcare partners in different regions that are nominated by the political subdivisions involved in the suit, a member of a law enforcement agency, 6 nominated by the AG, Governor, Lt. Governor, and Speaker, and the comptroller, or a person they appoint, to preside over the council.</p> <p>The council would be granted authority for rulemaking and allocation of funds to carry out their duties, which include identifying and approving evidenced-based opioid abatement strategies and allocation methodology, developing an application and award process, managing grant applications, awards, allocations, and monitoring grant agreement compliance, and determining what percentage of funds are to be used towards prevention and intervention efforts. In order to ensure communities, have significant</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Audrey Erwin (928) 210-4303 Audrey@TexasLSG.org</p>



			<p>input, at least 4 council members from the 6 healthcare partners and 4 from the other council members must approve the decisions and strategies made by the council.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Management of Opioid Abatement Funds</p> <p>SB 1827 establishes the Opioid Abatement Trust Fund, administered by the Texas Treasury Safekeeping Trust Company (TTSTC) and the Opioid Abatement Account, a general revenue-dedicated account (GR-D account), administered by the Comptroller, and directs 15% to the GR-D account and 85% to the trust from the settlement agreement into each. The trust fund is held outside the state treasury, including any income the trust fund makes in investments as well and future settlements. Of the settlement amount received, TTSTC would be required to allocate 15% to local government entities to address opioid related harms in their communities and 70% to the council. The Council is to allocate 1% to the comptroller for administrative costs, 15% to hospital districts, and the remaining on opioid abatement strategies developed by the council.</p> <p>Funds from the GR-D account can only be appropriated to a state agency to address opioid related harms and to keep funds 100% dedicated they are exempt from being consolidated with other state funds. State agencies may only use these appropriated funds on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs and services geared at reducing risk of opioid use through evidenced-based education and prevention efforts, like school-based prevention, and efforts to provide tools to healthcare providers to use to inform and protect the public • Efforts to prevent or reduce opioid-related overdose deaths or other harms, such as increasing the availability or distribution of opioid antagonists like naloxone. • Creating and providing training programs on opioid disorder treatment, including medication-assisted treatment, detoxification, treatment planning and recovery supports. • Providing opioid use disorder treatment for youths and adults, including efforts to provide treatment alternatives like mobile health services and telemedicine for individuals with physical barriers to treatment, particularly in rural areas. • Efforts to address the needs of people involved in the criminal justice system, the unattended deaths in rural counties, and any other related authorized purpose. 	
<p>SB 1907 By: Blanco Sponsor: Martinez</p>	<p>Relating to a feasibility study on the colocation of federal and state motor vehicle inspection</p>	<p>Transportation Votes: 12 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV,</p>	<p>SB 1907 would require Texas A&M Transportation Institute, Texas Department of Transportation, and the Department of Public Safety to conduct a study on the feasibility of building and maintaining a shared federal and state inspection station at each Texas port of entry. This would address concerns regarding the efficiency of the inspection process for commercial vehicles raised by importers, exporters, and other stakeholders from the trucking industry involved in international trade.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Joy Fairchild (713)817-3842 Joy@TexasLSG.org</p>



	facilities at ports of entry.	1 Absent	The study will look into past efforts in Texas to maintain a shared inspection station, current efforts using shared or separate stations in other states, the advantages and disadvantages of shared inspection stations, the federal agency’s perspective on the advantages and disadvantages, and potential scenarios at each Texas port of entry. This can help project ways to decrease inspection wait times and increase efficiency for stakeholders.	
SB 2046 By: Menéndez Sponsor: Gervin-Hawkins	Relating to a compliance history assessment made for purposes of allocating certain financial assistance administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs.	Urban Affairs Vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	Public housing authorities are authorized to enter public-private partnerships with private entities for low-income housing tax credit developments. In this partnership, the private entity is given the financial guarantees and manages the property for compliance, but still leaves the public housing authority vulnerable to demerits from the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) if there are compliance violations. This occurs even if the authority is not the managing entity or has the ability to correct the issues. In response to this, TDHCA established rules that prohibit TDHCA from including these noncompliance instances in their compliance reviews for program funding applications if the authority verifies that they were not the project’s managing entity. SB 2046 seeks to codify these internal rules into state statute to align the two. SB 2046 prohibits TDHCA from including noncompliance instances associated with a project in its compliance assessment if the public housing authority or their affiliate submits documentation verifying that another participant or related party was responsible for project compliance. The bill clarifies that the TDHCA will report application approvals despite instances of noncompliance under the condition that these instances were reported in the board’s compliance assessment. This would ensure that public housing authorities are not unjustly penalized and be approved to continue the applied project.	Favorable Evaluated by: Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org
SB 776 By: Lucio Sponsor: Dominguez Martinez Lucio III Guillen	Relating to the creation of an inclusive sports program by the University Interscholastic League to provide students with intellectual disabilities access to team sports.	Public Education Votes: 12 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The University Interscholastic League (UIL) is the organization that creates rules for and administers almost all athletic, musical, and academic contests for public primary and secondary schools in the state of Texas. Currently, UIL does not offer competitive, adaptive opportunities for students with disabilities. Students with disabilities that wish to participate in a team sport or compete in sports programs do this through the Special Olympics, which only offers programs that last for less than a month. Parents of students with disabilities would like to provide the same opportunities in athletics as their peers. SB 776 seeks to provide this opportunity for students with disabilities. SB 776 requires UIL to establish and maintain an inclusive sports program giving students with disabilities an opportunity to participate in team sports. The bill requires the UIL to adopt rules as necessary to establish, maintain, and expand the program in participating public middle schools, junior high schools, and high schools. Rules must identify best practices, and incorporate inclusive activities that promote specified values, such as bullying prevention. SB 776 sets out the guidance, information, and input the UIL must consider and incorporate in adopting those rules, including guidance by impacted stakeholders such as parents to students with disabilities.	Favorable Evaluated by: Phuong Nguyen (832)302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org



			<p>The bill requires the UIL to subject students who participate in inclusive sports programs to the same rules and requirements as students who participate in other athletic programs including certain grade, disciplinary, and student safety requirements related to athletic activities. It further requires that team sports provided through the program be organized similarly to other athletic programs offered by the UIL. SB 776 authorizes the UIL to seek and accept gifts, grants, or donations of money from public and private sources to establish or expand the program in addition to funding appropriated.</p> <p>SB 776 aims to provide students with disabilities the opportunity to participate in team athletic activities.</p>	
<p>SB 1444 By: Taylor Sponsor: Bonnen</p>	<p>Relating to participation in the uniform group coverage program for active school employees and to a study concerning health coverage for school district employees.</p>	<p>Pensions, Investments, & Financial Services</p> <p>Votes: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Some school districts require their employees to participate in the uniform group coverage program established under the Texas School Employee Uniform Group Health Coverage Act. Some stakeholders contend that this lack of choice could lead to high costs and reduce benefits for teachers. SB 1444 seeks to add more options to health care coverage for educators.</p> <p>SB 1444 authorizes a participant in the uniform group coverage program for active school employees to be able to choose to discontinue their participation in the program through written notice to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) no later than December 31 of the year preceding the plan's effective date. The bill specifies that if the participant chooses to discontinue the plan, they may not re-enroll in the plan for five years from the day they discontinued participation, and if they re-enroll in the plan, they may not discontinue the plan for five years from the date they re-enrolled. SB 1444 requires a participant who chooses to participate in the uniform group coverage plan to provide written notice to TRS no later than December 31 of the year preceding the plan's effective date. The participant who chooses to participate in this plan cannot choose to discontinue the plan's start date for five years.</p> <p>SB 1444 gives employees a choice in health insurance coverage. The provisions offer educators the option to research and choose the insurance coverage that best meets their needs. In addition, the five-year requirement for selecting to participate or to discontinue the plan will mitigate the fiscal impact to TRS and its members, allowing time for adjustments.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Phuong Nguyen (832)302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1258 By: Birdwell Sponsor: Goldman</p>	<p>Relating to the duty of a lessee or other agent in control of certain state land to drill an offset well, pay compensatory royalty, or</p>	<p>Energy Resources</p> <p>Vote: 9 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Certain public lands may be leased for oil and gas production, for which the school land board may collect royalties for the state, including the Permanent School Fund. Currently, an operator that drills within 1,000 feet of these leased public lands may actually be draining the public oil and gas resources. In this case, the lessee is required to drill an offset well on the leased land to prevent further drainage of state resources or must pay the state compensatory royalties at the determination of the land commissioner.</p> <p>Changes in drilling technology have mitigated the possibility of an operator draining resources as far as 1,000 feet away. SB 1258 clarifies that, for horizontal drain hole wells located in an unconventional</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org</p>



	otherwise protect the land from drainage of oil or gas by a horizontal drainhole well located on certain land.		fracture treated field - where the drainage area is significantly smaller - a lessee is only required to drill an offset well if oil and gas is being produced within 330 feet of the public land or another appropriate distance determined by the Railroad Commission, whichever is further. This will modernize statute to align with changes in technology and maintain the state's ability to collect its due royalties.	
SB 2185 By: Hinojosa Sponsor: Canales	Relating to procedures for the dissolution of the Hidalgo County Water Improvement District No. 3.	Urban Affairs Vote: 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	Water control and improvement districts (WCID) are political subdivisions of the state that purchase, construct, operate, and maintain everything necessary to provide water, wastewater, and drainage services. The Hidalgo Water Improvement District No. 3 was formed in 1921 to provide water to serve the agricultural land in the area. Since its creation, a majority of the district has been urbanized, but a portion of the district still serves as agricultural land. There are concerns that because a majority of the district services an urbanized area it should be dissolved. SB 2185 seeks to dissolve the Hidalgo County Water Improvement District No. 3. While it is normal for a district to be dissolved through legislative action, there are concerns about what impact dissolving the district will have on farmers and residents who rely on the district outside of McAllen. SB 2185 dissolves the Hidalgo County Water Improvement District No. 3 and transfers the assets, debts, and contractual rights and obligations of the district to the city of McAllen. The bill requires the city of McAllen to inform the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) of when the district is dissolved and of when the transfer of any certificate of adjudication occurs.	Favorable Evaluated by: Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org
SB 1896 By: Kolkhorst Sponsor: Frank Minjarez	Relating to the provision of health and human services by the Department of Family and Protective Services and the Health and Human Services Commission.	Human Services Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	Safety concerns regarding foster placements of children within the conservatorship of Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) have been highlighted by the findings of <i>M.D. v. Abbott</i> . The Federal court has ordered DFPS to increase the safety of their placements. However, there has been a decrease in the number of placement options for children with serious behavioral or mental health needs, resulting in children and youth staying in inappropriate settings like office spaces. Concerns have also been raised that current law does not address a large amount of contracting practice, procurement and performance measures for a community-based care model, or the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act. SB 1896 aims to address these concerns by implementing new measures and increasing the efficiency of the foster care system. SB 1896 makes several substantial changes regarding the department's transition to a community-based care model and regarding placement and care of children within the conservatorship of DFPS. This bill: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prohibits placing children within DFPS offices overnight • decreases employment restrictions for single parents and expanding the age of children eligible for a treatment foster care placement to include children 10 years or older 	Favorable Evaluated by: Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requires DFPS to collaborate with local governmental entities, faith-based, and community-based organizations to examine the feasibility of a volunteer mentor program for those in residential homes • requires HHSC to collaborate with DFPS and all single source continuum contractors (SSCC) to develop a plan to increase placement capacity across the state, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ whether contracting for additional capacity at residential treatment centers would provide the best methods for meeting capacity shortages ○ any plan developed which utilizes beds at any residential treatment facilities, inpatient or outpatient, must require the facility to discharge a child placed there within 72 hours after the health care provider determines it is not medically necessary for the child to remain there. • requires DFPS by the last day of the state’s fiscal biennium to have established the next phase of rolling out community-based services for catchment areas and regions that have not implemented this service • establishes a joint legislative oversight committee for the transition to community-based care • establishes the office of Community-Based Care Transition as an independent state agency administratively attached to DFPS. The office will expire once the transition to community-based care is complete. • requires HHSC to annually evaluate the use of the STAR Health program offered to children in foster care and provide recommendations to DFPS and SSCCs • requires HHSC to collaborate with residential child-care providers to evaluate unmet medical and behavioral health needs. HHSC will also identify options to obtain funding under Medicaid to provide for a safe home-like or community-based residential setting for children in foster care who meet specific criteria such as those with a serious behavioral or mental health condition, victim of serious abuse or neglect, or a traditional placement is not available or would denigrate the child’s behavioral or mental health condition. • requires DFPS to transition to a fully electronic case management system • requires DFPS to develop capacity for certain placement settings for specific youth that are eligible for federal financial participation. While developing capacity DFPS must <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ promote the use of nationally recognized tools, such as the Commercial Sexual Exploitation-Identification Tool, and other best practices or treatment models to prevent sex trafficking victimization and use providers that meet certain criteria. • requires the executive commissioner of HHSC to allow child-placing agencies to issue a provisional license for kinship providers that meet basic safety requirements. • requires DFPS to utilize collected data analytics regarding residential child-care providers to develop a multi-point severity scale early warning system to identify at-risk providers most in need of technical support and promote corrective actions and minimize standard violations 	
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> requires DFPS to develop a strategic plan for improving educational service to children placed in a general residential operation requires each general residential operation providing treatment service to submit information on the operation’s treatment model to DFPS. The treatment model must address all aspects of a child’s care, including their therapeutic needs. A treatment model may be changed only after HHSC has been notified and the new model submitted a general residential operation must evaluate a proposed placement of a child in the operation using specific criteria to determine if the placement is the best option for the child if a general residential operation providing treatment services is not yet licensed, then their contract with DFPS or a SSCC must limit the number of children and limit the number of children with service level specialization that may be placed there until a license is obtained authorizes HHSC, instead of DFPS, to issue a provisional child-care administrator’s license to applicants in another state 	
<p>SB 900</p> <p>By: Alvarado</p> <p>Sponsor: Paddie Perez Burns</p>	<p>Relating to the safety of storage vessels.</p>	<p>Environmental Regulation</p> <p>Votes: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>The International Terminals Company (ITC) chemical fire exposed the need for increased safety measures for above ground storage tanks. The fire caused multiple explosions and took a days-long effort to suppress. In addition to burning hazardous chemicals, the fire suppressants also created ecological harm by releasing chemicals into surrounding bodies of water. SB 900 creates regulatory oversight for owners and operators of above ground storage tanks to comply with national consensus standards and safety measures delineated in federal regulations. The bill provides significant oversight in above ground storage tank regulations that hold hazardous chemicals, petroleum, and natural gas and will move Texas communities closer to having clean water and air.</p> <p>SB 900 creates regulations for certain aboveground storage tanks that hold large amounts of hazardous chemicals or petroleum-related storage tanks. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) will be required to establish the Performance Standards for Safety at Storage Vessels Program (PSSSVP) to protect water from toxic substances. The bill would create regulations on tank inspection, repairs, alterations, and reconstruction, internal and external evaluation of tanks, overfill prevention systems, including remote emergency valves and fire suppression systems. TCEQ will create a fee schedule for the PSSSVP to pay for the review, inspection, and enforcement of these regulations. The bill restricts compliance of standards only to large tanks and does not allow for safety measures beyond the limited purview in this bill to be regulated.</p> <p>By 2027 owners and operators will register, report compliance levels, and be inspected every 5 years with the PSSSVP requirements, but facilities will have until 2037 to be fully compliant, which creates a 15 year vulnerability period. They will only be recertified every 10 years. In addition, the bill allows consequence analysis reports and security information to remain private. SB 900 allows exceptions if</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Joy Fairchild (713)817-3842 Joy@TexasLSG.org</p>



			an entity can demonstrate that natural disasters and hazard risks do not warrant regulation in a request to TCEQ. If a cost-benefit analysis shows that an alternative safety standard would sufficiently protect citizens, then TCEQ would be able to change compliance rules.	
<p>SB 993</p> <p>By: Hancock</p> <p>Sponsor: Klick Canales</p>	<p>Relating to the practice of therapeutic optometry.</p>	<p>Public Health</p> <p>Vote: 9 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Texas faces a potential shortage of optometrists or ophthalmologists. It is reported that optometrists are leaving Texas to work in other states that allow them to perform a wider array of functions. SB 993 allows Texas to be more competitive to retain and attract more optometrists to practice in this state by expanding the functions available to optometrists as well as updating complaint review processes to ensure proper care of Texas patients.</p> <p>SB 993 requires the Texas Optometry Board (TOB), in collaboration with the Texas Medical Board (TMB), to update procedures for investigations and complaint reviews regarding a therapeutic optometrist's treatment of glaucoma. These updates need to ensure that the complaints explain the allegation, are reviewed by TOB prior to dismissal and are resolved within 6 months, and that TMB is notified about a complaint's receipt and disposition. TOB is required to find an ophthalmologist to review the case, determine if an ophthalmologist would be violating their standard of care under the same circumstances, and submit a written report to TOB. If this report states that a violation was determined, then an expert panel constructed by both TOB and TMB will review the complaint and make the final decision if disciplinary action is to take place and what the action should be. SB 993 requires that TOB release online and maintain information about these complaints and their disposition and have a searchable list of therapeutic optometrists that had their optometric glaucoma specialist certificate suspended or revoked.</p> <p>SB 993 removes specific requirements for therapeutic optometrists regarding procedures for diagnosing and treating glaucoma. The bill removes the requirement that a therapeutic optometrist must do a co-management consultation with an ophthalmologist to do an individual treatment plan. The bill adjusts when a therapeutic optometrist is required to refer to a physician or ophthalmologist and removes the requirement that a therapeutic optometrist must have a co-management consultation to create an individual treatment plan for the patient. SB 993 removes restrictions on therapeutic optometrist oral prescription authority, but still maintains the three-day supply limit for Schedule III, IV, and V controlled substances.</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Devan Daniel (419) 566-5465 Devan@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1648</p> <p>By: Perry</p> <p>Sponsor: Krause</p>	<p>Relating to the provision of benefits to certain Medicaid recipients with complex medical needs.</p>	<p>Insurance</p> <p>Vote: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>SB 1648 seeks to clarify continuity of care provisions for medically dependent children with Medicaid coverage, regardless of additional third-party coverage. the bill adds provisions to allow for single-case agreement negotiations between managed care organizations (MCOs) and specialty providers.</p> <p>SB 1648 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to develop a process for allowing Medicaid recipients with complex medical needs to remain with specialty providers they have established relationships with through a managed care program, regardless of if they have additional third-party coverage. For Medicaid recipients without additional third-party insurance, if</p>	<p>Favorable</p> <p>Evaluated by: Audrey Erwin (928) 210-4303 Audrey@TexasLSG.org</p>



			they want to remain with specialty providers who are no longer covered, the MCO is required to negotiate a single-case agreement with the specialty provider and the agreement would not be considered using out-of-network care when accessing the MCOs adequacy requirements. This would allow for medically dependent children to continue to receive the best care with a doctor they trust.	
SB 56 By: Zaffirini Sponsor: Collier	Relating to the availability of personal information of a current or former federal prosecutor or public defender.	Criminal Jurisprudence Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Currently, the personal information of some prosecutorial, judicial, and other federal-to-district level personnel is available to view in various public record sources. Since 2020, there has been an increase in safety-related fears involving these officials, creating a need for increased confidentiality. SB 56 will ensure these officials remain safe from potential retribution. SB 56 adds exceptions for public information for current or former federal attorneys and assistants, public defenders, deputy public defenders, or assistants - and - the spouse or child, regardless of whether the official takes the exception themselves. The confidential information extends to home addresses, telephone numbers, social security numbers, personal family information, information of peace officers, and other officials performing sensitive governmental functions.	Favorable Evaluated by: Chelsea Dalton Pederson 512-661-9708 Chelsea@TexasLSG.org
SB 1047 By: Seliger Sponsor: Smithee	Relating to the execution of a search warrant for taking a blood specimen from certain persons in certain intoxication offenses.	Criminal Jurisprudence Vote: 6 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	Several Texas municipalities are located in more than one counties. These municipalities create unique challenges for the issuance of search warrants if these warrants are not issued in the same county where the offense took place. One specific example is the issuance of a search warrant for a blood specimen while investigating alcohol-related driving offenses. SB 1047 authorizes search warrants issued to collect a blood specimen from a person suspected of committing certain intoxication related offenses to be executed in adjacent counties of the issuing county and by any law enforcement officer authorized to make arrests in the executing county.	Favorable Evaluated by: Chelsea Dalton Pederson 512-661-9708 Chelsea@TexasLSG.org
SB 64 By: Nelson Sponsor: White	Relating to a peer support network for certain law enforcement personnel.	Homeland Security & Public Safety Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Law enforcement officers (LEOs) in the U.S. die by suicide at an alarming rate, and 34 LEOs have passed away from suicide in Texas since 2019. Officers are repeatedly exposed to severely traumatizing events, and often continue working without any support or behavioral health services to process their experiences. SB 64 requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) to develop a peer-to-peer support network for LEOs, which would include peer service coordinators and peer training, technical assistance for program development and peer support network personnel and retaining mental health professionals. TCOLE is required to solicit and ensure all peers receive specialized training prior to providing peer-to-peer support or services under the network. The bill authorizes TCOLE to contract with higher education institutions that have mental health or law enforcement expertise to develop the network and they must ensure both urban and rural LEOs have peer-to-peer support program capabilities. Information related to a LEO's participation in any peer-to-peer services would be confidential and any disclosure is prohibited by TCOLE and any employing state agency	Favorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org



			or political subdivision. When considering license suspension or revocation, an officer’s participation in the program cannot be considered during any proceedings or used as justification to act on a license. TCOLE is required to submit an annual reporting regarding participation, outcomes, and improvement recommendations that result from the program.	
SB 398 By: Menéndez Sponsor: Deshotel	Relating to distributed renewable generation resources.	State Affairs Vote: 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	SB 398 provides protections to residential and small commercial consumers who install distributed renewable generation equipment, primarily rooftop solar panels, on their property. These devices can support the state’s electric grid reliability by allowing customers to generate their own electricity and potentially distribute it to others, decreasing demand on other sources. In 2015, legislation passed that barred homeowners’ associations from unduly restricting the installation of solar panels. This bill clarifies that municipalities may not adopt more restrictive policies than are allowed HOAs. Specifically, a city may not restrict or prohibit property owners from installing solar energy devices without reason authorized in statute, such as safety and aesthetic concerns or a lack of prior authorization. The bill also permits cities to restrict these devices, particularly their interconnection to the electric grid, to the extent that municipally-owned utilities, the Public Utility Commission, or ERCOT limit their installation due to reliability, power quality, or safety concerns for the electricity distribution system that may arise from intermittent or excess generation. SB 398 also requires that individuals who sell or lease a distributed renewable generation resource to a residential or small commercial customer disclose detailed contact, equipment, pricing information, and terms of the lease, if applicable.	Favorable Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org
SB 331 By: Johnson Sponsor: Button	Relating to eligibility to serve as an interpreter in an election.	Elections Votes: 5 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	Currently voters who require interpreters’ assistance to communicate with election workers and read the ballot are only permitted to select an assistant who is a registered voter in the same county. A court found in 2018 that this statute impermissibly narrows the right to vote according to the Voting Rights Act. SB 331 will address this by expanding access to translators for those who need assistance. SB 331 allows a voter to select an interpreter who is registered to vote in adjacent counties in addition to their own. An interpreter must also take the assistance oath stating that they are not frauding the voter or Texas. The bill also allows an election officer to appoint a translator if the individual does not have one or the translator does not meet the qualifications.	Favorable Evaluated by: Joy Fairchild (713)817-3842 Joy@TexasLSG.org
SB 790 By: Zaffirini Sponsor: Howard	Relating to county authority to balance bill for county air ambulance services	County Affairs 7 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV 1 Absent	Travis County operates STAR Flight, a public emergency helicopter service that conducts air ambulance, technical rescue, firefighting, and law enforcement support missions in a number of Central Texas counties. As emergency services providers, air ambulances, including STAR Flight, often are out-of-network for their patients, which can lead to balance billing. While Travis County may prefer as a public entity simply to not balance bill for STAR Flight services, it has been reported that the county’s interpretation of state law is that it must attempt to recoup any and all money owed to the county.	Favorable Spencer Carruth (512)463-0760 Spencer.Carruth_HC@House.Texas.gov



			SB 790 authorizes a county to consider a health benefit plan payment towards a claim for air ambulance services provided by the county as payment in full for those services regardless of the amount the county charged for those services. The bill prohibits a county from practicing balance billing for a claim for which the county makes this election and defines "balance billing" as the practice of charging an enrollee in a health benefit plan to recover from the enrollee the balance of a health care provider's fee for a service received by the enrollee from the provider that is not fully reimbursed by the enrollee's health benefit plan.	
SB 1427 By: Bettencourt Sponsor: Shine	Relating to the applicability of the temporary exemption from ad valorem taxation of a portion of the appraised value of certain property damaged by a disaster.	Ways & Means Vote: 8 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV 2 Absent	<p>Legislation passed last session provided for a temporary property tax exemption for a portion of appraised value on certain property damaged by a disaster. Applicable properties include tangible personal property used to produce income <i>which is specific to small businesses</i>, improvements on real property, or manufactured homes. Property owners must provide evidence their property sustained at least 15% damage from the prior tax year before the disaster. The amount of the exemption is determined through four different tiers that are assigned to qualifying property based on percentage of damage, and while the second, third, and fourth tiers explicitly identify certain physical property damage, the first tier does not.</p> <p>Small businesses would have greatly benefited from receiving this exemption during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, many of the over 2,000 businesses that applied for the temporary property tax exemption based on economic damages they suffered were denied the exemption and subject to taxpayer protests, which greatly impacted appraisal districts in both time and money. The Attorney General issued an opinion on the matter stating that the temporary property tax exemption could only be applied to physically damaged property. SB 1427 codifies that ruling by clarifying that applicable property tax exemptions in disaster areas may only be applied to physically damaged property.</p> <p>The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in unprecedented action forcing the closure of businesses across the state. Businesses forced to close for circumstances outside their control lost food supplies, which is tangible personal property, that caused damage to their revenue due to these closures. Similarly, many people added improvements to their property under the assumption they would be financially secure to pay more taxes with no ability to foresee the closure of food service and other businesses they rely on for their income. While the legislative intent of these tax code provisions may have been to cover losses from natural disasters, the COVID-19 pandemic identified a need to ensure businesses are supported by the state in any way possible to prevent further economic damage in the event of forced closures. The first tier is the lowest level of property tax exemptions and allowing businesses to receive a 15% to 30% discount on their taxes could help thousands of Texans financially recover.</p>	Unfavorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org
SB 335	Relating to the taking of a	Criminal Jurisprudence	SB 335 would reform the procedures for providing notice of intent to dispose of toxicology evidence and the disposal procedures. The current law is not clear as to whether the court can issue notice of	Favorable Evaluated by:



<p>By: Johnson Sponsor: Wu</p>	<p>specimen to test for intoxication and retention and preservation of toxicological evidence of certain intoxication offenses.</p>	<p>Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>intent to dispose of toxicology evidence after the mandated retention period ends and has led entities to either retain evidence indefinitely or dispose of it under legally ambiguous circumstances.</p> <p>SB 335 requires the assigned court or the entities (law enforcement agency, prosecutor's office, or crime laboratory) responsible for collecting, storing, preserving, analyzing, or retrieving toxicology evidence to notify the person evidence was collected from, or their guardian if a minor, how long evidence may be retained. Notice must be given as soon as possible in writing and delivered by hand, email, or first class mail or both orally and in writing by law enforcement prior to requesting the specimen during a DUI arrest. SB 335 codifies that entities may destroy toxicology evidence at the end of the retention period if notice was given as outlined above and with written approval from the prosecutor's office when necessary. SB 335 adds that law enforcement officers are required to have an individual sign documentation showing informed consent when having blood specimens taken.</p>	<p>Audrey Erwin (928) 210-4303 Audrey@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 477 By: Nelson Sponsor: Meyer</p>	<p>Relating to the administration and collection of sales and use taxes and certain fees applicable to sales involving marketplace providers.</p>	<p>Ways & Means Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV 2 Absent</p>	<p>The 86th Legislature amended the tax code to require marketplace providers, such as Amazon or Walmart, to collect and remit state and local sales tax on all applicable items sold in Texas. SB 477 provides online marketplace participants with needed clarity regarding exemptions and industry-specific fees so that each party understands their responsibility to collect and remit sales and use taxes.</p> <p>SB 477 clarifies that taxable items sold using a marketplace are considered consummated where the sale is made for the purpose of collecting municipal and county sales and use taxes, in the same manner as items not sold through a marketplace. The bill further establishes that the state sales and use tax exemption for occasional sales, originally designed for garage sales and other similar events, does not apply to sellers offering taxable items through a marketplace.</p> <p>Industry-specific sales and use tax provisions are clarified in regard to marketplace providers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sellers must certify collecting state sales and use tax for tickets or other admission documents sold through a marketplace, and marketplace providers accepting a seller's certification shall deduct the adjusted value of the resold ticket or admission document. • Marketplace providers processing payments or sales of lead-acid batteries are required to collect fees for nonexempt battery sales in the same manner as wholesale or retail battery dealers. • Marketplace providers must collect the wireless 9-1-1 emergency services fee on phone sales made through a marketplace on the seller's behalf - the provider must remit the fee but can still deduct and retain two percent of the fee as already in place under current law. 	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 794 By: Campbell</p>	<p>Relating to eligibility for the exemption from ad valorem taxation of the</p>	<p>Ways & Means Vote: 10 Ayes, 0 Nays,</p>	<p>In Texas, veterans who are designated by the VA as 100% disabled, receiving 100% disability compensation, or unable to work due to a service-related disability, are entitled to a property tax exemption for their residence homestead. Current law is written so that appraisal districts provide the exemption to a veteran with disabilities who "receives" 100% disability compensation from the VA. However, veterans sometimes have money taken out of their disability check for retirement benefits or</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>



<p>Sponsor: Meyer</p>	<p>residence homestead of a totally disabled veteran.</p>	<p>0 PNV 1 Absent</p>	<p>debt payments, and this has led to denials for property tax exemptions because the person is technically not receiving the full amount.</p> <p>To ensure all veterans with service-related disabilities receive the property tax exemption they are entitled to, SB 794 clarifies the exemption applies to anyone who has been awarded a 100% disability rating and compensation from the VA, rather than anyone who receives the full amount of 100% disability compensation.</p>	
<p>SB 797 By: Hughes Sponsor: Oliverson Huberty Hefner</p>	<p>Relating to the display of the national motto in public schools and institutions of higher education.</p>	<p>Public Education Votes: 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 4 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>SB 797 will require the display of the motto “In God We Trust” in public schools and public institutions of higher education in each building on a durable poster or framed copy of the motto in a visible place. The bill establishes that such a poster or a framed copy must contain both a representation of the United States flag centered under the motto and a representation of the Texas flag and may not depict any words, images, or other information other than those representations. The bill allows the school to accept private donations for this purpose.</p> <p>Schools are already allowed to display the motto if they choose to, this bill makes it mandatory and along with other bills seek to micromanage every aspect of our schools, instead of letting our schools do what is best for their students. This a dangerous precedent set by this legislature. Additionally, there are concerns over what qualifies as a building. This bill may require each school portable, equipment shed, or other small ancillary buildings to have the motto displayed.</p>	<p>Unfavorable Evaluated by: Phuong Nguyen (832)302-9940 Phuong@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1281 By: Hancock Sponsor: King, Phil</p>	<p>Relating to a reliability assessment of the ERCOT power grid and certificates of public convenience and necessity for certain transmission projects</p>	<p>State Affairs Vote: 12 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>It is estimated that Texans have paid over \$1 billion a year in grid congestion costs, which are incurred by retail electricity providers when electricity demand exceeds what transmission lines can physically handle without malfunctioning. These costs may be directly or indirectly passed on to customers. During February’s winter storm, transmission congestion prevented some generators from sending out available electricity to customers, contributing to the widespread, extended outages that resulted in the loss of life. Texas’s population and industrial growth will require an expedient expansion of transmission infrastructure to maintain the electric grid’s reliability and cost-efficiency.</p> <p>SB 1281 seeks to facilitate the construction of additional transmission infrastructure that will enhance grid reliability. It updates the criteria that the Public Utility Commission (PUC) must consider when granting certificates of convenience and necessity (CCNs) to transmission and distribution utilities (TDUs) for certain reliability projects to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • historical load, forecasted load growth, and additional load currently seeking interconnection • predictive models for a reasonable range of power generation dispatch scenarios, including reliability limitations during high and low renewable generation output • costs to consumers of a new project compared to reduced congestion costs • current and future expected congestion levels and the transmission project’s ability to reduce those congestion levels. 	<p>Favorable with Concerns Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org</p>



			<p>The bill also permits a utility to construct limited new transmission lines without going through the lengthy process of amending its CCN, so long as relevant landowner’s consent. Finally, the bill directs ERCOT to conduct an annual assessment of the grid’s reliability in extreme weather scenarios that considers the variable performance of thermal and renewable resources and makes recommendations for future transmission projects to increase reliability.</p> <p>This bill will encourage transmission projects to be approved and constructed based on actual costs and benefits to customers, now and in the future. It places reasonable considerations on the intermittent nature of renewable generation without restricting its rapid and necessary growth. However, there are concerns that renewable generation facilities’ ability to connect to the grid may be disadvantaged by the requirement for the PUC to directly consider the costs to customers of new transmission lines when deciding on CCNs, since these facilities are often located in more remote, and therefore costly, areas where renewable resources are more plentiful.</p>	
<p>SB 1387 By: Creighton Sponsor: Clardy Hefner Cain</p>	<p>Relating to a requirement that a voting system used in an election in this state be manufactured, stored, and held in the United States by a company headquartered in the United States.</p>	<p>Elections Votes: 5 Ayes, 4 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Some believe voting machines with software or hardware acquired outside the United States are vulnerable to security breaches, although this has not been credibly shown to have happened. There is currently a shortage of semiconductors and computer chips used for voting machines in the United States without any restrictions on where parts may be purchased.</p> <p>SB 1387 requires electronic voting systems in Texas elections to be owned entirely by companies with a main headquarters in the United States and that voting machines be assembled, and software installed then tested in the US. The bill also issues a feasibility study reported to the legislature by January 2023 to require these systems and their components to be entirely manufactured, stored, and held in the US. These changes are impractical, expensive, and based on false allegations of fraud that ignore urgent needs for expanded voting access to citizens in Texas.</p>	<p>Unfavorable Evaluated by: Joy Fairchild (713)817-3842 Joy@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1111 By: Bettencourt Birdwell Creighton Hall Kolkhorst Schwertner Sponsor: Paul</p>	<p>Relating to the residence address of a voter for purposes of a response to a confirmation notice sent by the voter registrar.</p>	<p>Elections Votes: 5 Ayes, 4 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Election integrity in Texas is protected by a thorough statutory code that is so adept at preventing voter fraud the Secretary of State’s office testified that the 2020 election was the most secure in modern history. Despite these facts, and an absence of evidence otherwise, it has been alleged that some voters manipulate local elections through residency fraud.</p> <p>SB 1111 prohibits a voter from establishing a residence to influence a certain election, or list a residence where they have not lived, or previously lived. In addition, this bill requires a voter registrar to send a form for residency confirmation, that must be returned within 30 days of the form being mailed for a person to remain registered, to an address if it is a PO box. They must include all of their voter registration and proof of residency either by an affidavit, photocopy of unexpired state ID with the residence address, or a government issued bill with a corresponding address. If a voter has no listed voting address, they may deliver an affidavit describing their residence to the voter</p>	<p>Unfavorable Evaluated by: Joy Fairchild (713)817-3842 Joy@TexasLSG.org</p>



			<p>registrar. The bill excludes military, full-time on-campus college students, federal judges, and those who are protected from providing an address.</p> <p>This bill creates additional burdens on county election officials to manage more paperwork. Providing only providing 30 days from the time a residency confirmation is sent is a prohibitive time frame for voters to correct and have the verification returned through the U.S. Postal Service. This bill will lead to qualified voters being unduly removed from registration lists.</p>	
<p>SB 109 By: West Sponsor: Meyer</p>	<p>Relating to the criminal offense of fraudulent securing of document execution.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence Vote: 6 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>SB 109 amends current language for the act of fraudulently, and without effective consent, harming someone through obtained or secured documentation. The bill removes the specification that conduct must be committed by deception. This offense occurs when an actor causes another individual or public servant to sign, execute, file, or record the document without that person's or the public servant's effective consent. By bringing clarity to various codes and defining effective consent, SB 109 could alleviate any other loopholes to ensure actors are held accountable.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Chelsea Dalton Pederson 512-661-9708 Chelsea@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 678 By: Alvarado Sponsor: Button</p>	<p>Relating to the creation of the small business disaster recovery loan program.</p>	<p>International Relations & Economic Development Vote: 5 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>The COVID-19 pandemic hit small businesses hard with forced closures, leaving many facing the hard decision of letting employees go or even having close down permanently. Unfortunately, Texas lacks a dedicated assistance program to provide short-term loans for disaster recovery to small businesses, and the federal disaster assistance programs can be slow to roll out. SB 678 aims to establish a small business disaster recovery loan program to provide that immediate, short-term financial assistance to Texas's small businesses.</p> <p>SB 678 requires the Texas Economic Development and Tourism Office (TEDTO) to establish a small business disaster recovery loan program for small businesses in an area under a disaster declaration. The business may only apply for the loan during the period in which the declaration is in effect and may only use the loan to pay payroll costs, including costs related to health care benefits for employees. The bill also establishes a revolving fund outside of the state treasury to be administered by TEDTO.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Maddox Hilgers (512) 739-4885 Maddox@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 1531 By: West Sponsor: Turner, Chris</p>	<p>Relating to formula funding for excess undergraduate credit hours at public institutions of higher education and to the tuition rate that may be</p>	<p>Higher Education Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>SB 1531 works to incentivize that public higher education institutions are monitoring excess credit hours by capping excess credit hours eligible for formula funding.</p> <p>SB 1531 lowers the threshold a public higher education institution may charge a higher rate of tuition for students with credit hours that exceed an associate degree requirements from 30 hours to 15 hours. The bill establishes that a student is assumed to be enrolled in a bachelor's degree program if the student is not officially enrolled into a degree program. The bill makes conforming changes to reflect these updates in formula funding calculation provisions. These changes do not apply to credits that were earned via examination like AP high school courses, college preparatory course credits, workforce education courses,</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Devan Daniel (419) 566-5465 Devan@TexasLSG.org</p>



	charged for those credit hours.		technical courses, other courses that would not earn credit towards a degree program, or courses from an out-of-state or private institution.	
SB 1582 By: Hughes Sponsor: White	Relating to examinations for applicants for or holders of licenses or registrations to perform certain activities pertaining to compressed natural gas or liquefied natural gas.	Energy Resources Vote: 10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The licensing and registration of activities involving compressed or liquified natural gas is overseen by The Railroad Commission (RRC). Under current statute there are several barriers that exist when seeking to obtain such a license or certification. The examination to obtain a license requires a fee, is paper based, and must be administered in person by RRC staff. There have been calls to make the process to obtain a license involving the use of compressed or liquified natural gas more convenient. SB 1582 authorizes the RRC to also administer an examination by a third-party proctoring service, which may be offered online, to offer applicants and agency staff more flexibility. The bill also removes language that states if an examination is administered by a testing service, the testing service shall collect a fee for the examination before it is administered and shall forward the fee to the RRC. SB 1582 would remove this inefficient transfer process and direct the fee be paid directly to the RRC. These provisions will allow for a more efficient process when obtaining a license and provide a greater convenience to license and registration applicants and RRC staff.	Favorable Evaluated by: Victoria McDonough (251) 422-0558 Victoria@TexasLSG.org
SB 1816 By: Seliger Sponsor: Thompson, Ed	Relating to certain temporary vehicle permits and tags.	Transportation Votes: 12 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The Texas web DEALER eTAG system was created to make processing electronic temporary tags for dealers and buyers convenient for dealerships. However, there are concerning reports of thousands of fraudulent tags being issued and reports to Texas Department of Motor Vehicle (TxDMV) by law enforcement in Texas and other states regarding the misuse of temporary tags. TxDMV lacks a mechanism to detect fraud and address the abuses of the eTag system at this time. SB 1816 seeks to address this by giving TxDMV the authority to set a maximum number of temporary tags that a motor vehicle dealer may lawfully obtain. SB 1816 gives TxDMV the rule making authority to manage the real-time temporary tag database and establish a maximum number of temporary tags a dealer or converter can obtain based on their anticipated need for temporary tags. To identify the entity's anticipated need, TxDMV would consider for each entity their time in operation, sales data, and expected growth; expected changes to their market; and any temporary conditions that may affect sales. TxDMV may authorize additional temporary tags upon request and demonstration of need by the dealer or converter, and denials can be overturned if the entity proves it is more probable than not that their claim is valid.	Favorable Evaluated by: Joy Fairchild (713)817-3842 Joy@TexasLSG.org
SB 1668 By: Hughes Sponsor: Raney	Relating to certification and examination requirements for persons engaged in liquefied	Energy Resources Vote: 10 Ayes, 0 Nays,	The Propane Education and Research Council (PERC) provides guidelines for training and certification requirements for individuals who dispense liquified petroleum gas, otherwise known as propane. The licenses needed to engage in liquified petroleum gas activities in Texas are overseen by the Railroad Commission (RRC). It has been noted that under current statute, individuals may have demonstrated competence in propane activities but cannot work in Texas without going through the state-specific licensing process, which takes significant time and resources. Due to these obstacles, it is difficult for retail	Favorable Evaluated by: Victoria McDonough (251) 422-0558 Victoria@TexasLSG.org



	petroleum gas activities.	0 PNV, 1 Absent	stores to find and employ individuals who are licensed, causing their propane cylinders to remain unfilled, which restricts opportunities for customers to refill at lower prices and convenient times. SB 1688 states that RCC shall waive course instruction, examination, and seminar license requirements for an applicant for a certificate for cylinder filling if they have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completed trainings consistent with guidelines established by PERC and submit completion of the training • applied for certification and paid the fee • completed an approved examination and submitted proof of completion of the exam to RCC These changes in statute will permit out-of-state license holders to work in Texas without having to undergo additional training and examination, which will ensure that retail stores are able to find qualified workers to keep their propane cylinders full and provide more convenience for Texans.	
SB 566 By: Buckingham Sponsor: Cain	Relating to electricity service provided by certain municipally owned utilities.	State Affairs Vote: 9 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	SB 566 would subject only Austin Energy, a municipally-owned electric utility (MOU), to a retail rate review process not currently required of any MOUs. MOUs are managed and their rates are set through a transparent process that provides ample opportunity for public input. City residents can advocate for rate changes and even remove city council members should their oversight of the process be inadequate, rendering rate review proceedings through the Public Utility Commission (PUC) - which can be lengthy and costly to all parties involved - unnecessary. This bill would permit primarily industrial customers to file a petition with the PUC to review Austin Energy’s current or proposed rates as they apply to the petitioning customers. The PUC must initiate a proceeding to determine whether the rates are consistent with those available to similarly situated customers in areas that, unlike Austin and other areas served by MOUs or electric cooperatives, can choose their electric providers - and where electric providers are less incentivized to invest in reliability. The bill does not define “similarly situated customers,” which is problematic considering that no two electric utilities have the same “situations” related to contracts and costs. If the PUC determines Austin’s rates are inconsistent with other areas, or simply does not deny the petition, Austin Energy must file a rate application with the commission to begin the formal PUC review, which will either result in a petition denial or the PUC setting Austin Energy’s rates, despite this being outside the norm for all other MOUs. This process would cost taxpayers significant amounts of money and disrupt the state’s electric utility structure, punishing one utility that fared far better during the winter storm than most, for no reason other than a large customer was unhappy with their electricity bill.	Unfavorable Evaluated by: Hannah Hall (832) 425-1224 Hannah@TexasLSG.org
SB 165 By: Blanco	Relating to an exception to dropped course limitations at public institutions	Higher Education Vote: 9 Ayes,	COVID-19 caused many college students to withdraw from classes due to unprecedented and unforeseen circumstances. However, dropping these courses still counted towards the maximum number of dropped courses allowed by the school.	Favorable Evaluated by: Devan Daniel (419) 566-5465 Devan@TexasLSG.org



<p>Sponsor: Fierro</p>	<p>of higher education for courses dropped during a disaster that results in a bar or limit on in-person course attendance.</p>	<p>0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>SB 165 requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to adopt rules that would have public higher education institutions permit students to drop more than the permitted maximum of courses. This will take place if the governor declares a state of disaster which results in a barring or limitation of attendance of in-person classes at an institution. The bill will also prohibit an institution counting courses towards the permitted number of dropped courses if these courses were dropped during the 2020 spring and summer semesters or the 2020-2021 academic year because of restricted or barred attendance due to COVID-19.</p>	
<p>SB 1764 By: Bettencourt Sponsor: Shine</p>	<p>Relating to the payment of delinquent ad valorem taxes on property subject to a tax sale.</p>	<p>Ways & Means Vote: 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV 0 Absent</p>	<p>Currently, tax collectors are required to accept check or credit card payment for property taxes, which can create problems when accepting payments for delinquent taxes. Checks are sometimes not honored by financial institutions due to insufficient funds and people can dispute charges with credit card companies to avoid the delinquent tax payment. SB 1764 aims to prevent this recurring fraudulent activity by authorizing tax collectors to adopt written policy requiring delinquent taxes, penalties, interest, and recoverable expenses on certain properties to be paid only with cash, a cashier's check, a certified check, or an electronic transfer. Applicable payments must be related to seized personal property, property subject to a tax sale order, or real property seized by a municipality or county and the amount secured by a municipal health or safety lien on the property.</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>
<p>SB 112 By: West Sponsor: Harless White</p>	<p>Relating to the procedures for the installation and use of tracking equipment and for access to certain communications and location information by law enforcement and the admissibility of certain evidence obtained through those procedures.</p>	<p>Homeland Security & Public Safety Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Law enforcement agencies can request information from private companies utilizing cellular data to locate fugitives quickly and efficiently or handle more urgent, life-threatening crimes. There have been reports that companies such as Facebook or other social media sites have been ignoring or denying warrants under the justification that the cellular data portion of the law does not cover immediate cell site location information. Though it is important law enforcement agencies are provided access to information that could save the lives of innocent people, it is also recognized that limiting law enforcement's access to private citizen location information would also protect citizens. SB 112 establishes state law governing law enforcement warrants requesting location information and clarifies when mobile tracking devices may be installed.</p> <p>SB 112 requires a warrant for disclosure of location information held in electronic storage by electronic communications service providers or remote computing service providers created after the warrant is initially issued. These warrants would be subject to statutory provisions related to the execution of and compliance with a warrant requesting access to cellular data from a service provider. "Location information" is defined as data or relevant information capable of identifying the real-time or prospective geographic location of someone using a communication device created by or accessible to applicable service providers.</p> <p>Warrant applications must be filed by authorized law enforcement personnel or on a motion of a prosecutor or their assistant in a county within the prosecutor or requesting law enforcement</p>	<p>Favorable Evaluated by: Cassidy Kenyon (760)429 8388 Cassidy@TexasLSG.org</p>



		<p>agency’s judicial district and must include a sworn affidavit establishing sufficient facts for determining probable cause. SB 112 prohibits issuing warrants unless evidence establishes probable cause the provider has access to the information requested by the warrant and that disclosing the information would produce evidence for an investigation or result in the apprehension of a fugitive. The state would also be prohibited from using any disclosed location information in a criminal proceeding unless the bill’s warrant provisions are met.</p> <p>District judges would be authorized to issue a warrant for purposes of obtaining disclosed location information from domestic or Texan entities or companies contracted to do business in Texas regardless of whether the information is in-state. Warrants are valid for 60 days unless another 60-day extension is granted by the court and must be executed within 10 days after the initial issue date, but magistrates would be permitted to require a shorter execution period depending on the circumstances of the warrant. The bill would require district courts to seal records for warrants and applications they issue until after the warrant’s expiration date.</p> <p>SB 112 allows authorized peace officers to require emergency disclosure of location information without a warrant in certain circumstances, but officers would still be required to obtain a related warrant within 48 hours after requiring the information disclosure without one. The bill creates the following requirements for these instances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The officer must reasonably believe an immediate life-threatening situation, which is defined as a hostage, barricade, or other circumstance threatening death or bodily harm, is happening within their jurisdiction that must be addressed before a warrant could practically be obtained and • There is sufficient evidence establishing probable cause under the bill’s provisions <p>Finally, SB 112 changes the evidence standard for a peace officer to order the installation of a mobile tracking device from reasonable suspicion to probable cause, for which evidence must be provided establishing that criminal activity has happened or will occur and installing a mobile tracking device is likely to aid in that investigation.</p>	
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