



# Texas Legislative Study Group

An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

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**LSG Floor Report For Major State Calendar – Tuesday, April 11, 2023**

<p><b>HB 8</b></p> <p>By:          VanDeaver            Kuempel            Buckley            Bonnen            Longoria</p>	<p>Relating to the administration, coordination, and support of public higher education, including the public junior college state finance program and a Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) program to enable certain students to enroll at no cost to the student in dual credit courses offered by certain public institutions of higher education.</p>	<p>Higher Education</p> <p>9 Ayes,          0 Nays,          0 PNV,          2 Absent</p>	<p>The 87th Legislature passed legislation creating the Texas Commission on Community College Finance (TxCCCF) to provide recommendations on how to better fund Texas community colleges. HB 8 implements the recommendations made by TxCCCF to ensure the state meets an increasing demand for technical skills as an influx of new businesses has increased the need for skilled workers. However, there are not enough qualified individuals to meet demand. By 2030, 62% of jobs in Texas will require at least some post-secondary education, but only 48% of adults in Texas have a postsecondary credential.</p> <p>Since the 1980s, state funding for public junior colleges has declined from 68% to 26% with increased tuition and local property taxes filling the gap. HB 8 increases overall funding for community colleges while implementing TxCCCF's recommendations on the state's financial systems, student affordability, and college capacity investment.</p> <p><i>Base Tier State Funding</i>          The bill establishes base tiered and performance tier formulas for all funding of community colleges. Under the base tier formula, the state would pay the difference between what the state gives colleges for student enrollment, college operations, and varying school characteristics, and what the college generates from tuition and local property taxes. Weighting full-time equivalent students allows the Legislature to base funding on the unique situations and demographics colleges serve, like adult learning, economically disadvantaged, and academically disadvantaged students, and the higher costs associated with operating smaller schools. Base tier funding allows community colleges with low tax bases to access funding by allocating a base amount to each school based on student enrollment and the type of contact hours taught in various programs.</p> <p><i>Performance Tier State Funding</i>          The outcome-based tier funding is based on the degrees, certificates, and other credentials or programs offered by the college, the number of students who transfer to a four-year university, and the student's completion of fifteen semester credit hours of dual credit courses applicable to academic or workforce requirements at the collegiate level.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b></p> <p>Evaluated by:          Stefanie Page          (512)-766-8477          Stefanie@texaslsg.org</p>
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HB 8 would create a dynamic funding system. As funding is currently set up, institutions can lose funding if they do not grow at the same rate as other institutions. Performance tier, however, creates a dynamic system because community colleges will be funded based on outcomes, defined as the following four items:

- Graduations with a credential of value;
- Graduate with a credential of value in a high-demand field;
- Transfer to a four-year university with 15 hours being earned at the community college, to ensure students’ furthered their potential future careers at the college before transferring out; and
- Completion of 12 hours of dual-credit that is a coherent sequence – meaning the dual-credit applied to academic or workforce degree.

To ensure the transition to an outcome-based funding model does not negatively impact students or community colleges, HB 8 stipulates that hold harmless funds be made available while implementing this model to help facilitate the transition.

*Grants*  
 In efforts to increase affordability for students, HB 8 would increase funding for Texas Education Opportunity Grants (TEOG), offer financial aid for dual credit students, and provide paid work-based learning opportunities. The goal of increased funding and linking state performance measures for eligible students through TEOG is to support at least 70% of qualified low-income students, increasing accessibility to high-demand postsecondary credentials. Targeted financial aid for dual credit would apply to academic or workforce education program requirements and work to minimize barriers to student participation.

HB 8 continues funding for the Texas Reskilling and Upskilling program (TRUE) provides one-time seed grants for programs in high-demand fields which are administered by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the Texas Workforce Commission. The grants support shared services to facilitate improvement and opportunity, like increasing the programs offered by individual colleges and providing high-quality non-credit credential programs, which improve the transferability of programs and give students greater opportunities.

HB 8 would also authorize an institutional collaboration center for the purpose of potentially sharing various classes or IT systems. The coordinating board would provide a central location for collaboration to happen.

The bill directs the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to jointly establish the Financial Aid for Swift Transfer (FAST) program. This program will allocate an estimated \$78.7 million in grant funding of General Revenue from the Foundation School Fund 193 for

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			<p>the 2024-25 biennium. This program must cover the cost of tuition for disadvantaged students enrolled in dual credit courses.</p> <p>These mechanisms recommended by the TxCCCF, in tandem with the expanded coverage of the Texas Education Opportunity Grant (TEOG) program, provide coverage to at least 70% of eligible students. This gives students greater access and affordability to degrees and credentials that make them more competitive in the workforce. HB 8 could allow more than 90% of state funding for community colleges to be outcome-based, which would incentivize community colleges to support their students to complete credentials, accomplish dual-credit courses, and successfully transfer to a four-year institution, ultimately leading to an increase in individuals qualified to enter the Texas workforce.</p>	
<b>LSG Floor Report For General State Calendar – Tuesday, April 11, 2023</b>				
<p><b>HB 492</b></p> <p>By: Craddick</p>	<p>Relating to the creation and operation of mental health services districts by the Midland County Hospital District of Midland County, Texas, and the Ector County Hospital District.</p>	<p>County Affairs</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>The 87th Legislature provided \$40 million in funding to establish a mental health facility in the Permian Basin. The Legislature required that the hospital be operated jointly by the Midland and Ector Hospital Districts. To do so, a mental health services district must be created. HB 492 would authorize the Midland and Ector Hospital Districts to create such a district. This mental health service district would be operated by a governing board jointly appointed by these two county hospital districts, which would oversee the operational aspects of the Permian Basin Behavioral Health Facility.</p> <p>Creating the mental health services district will allow the operation of the Permian Basin Behavioral Health Facility, giving West Texas citizens greater access to mental health services.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b></p> <p>Evaluated by: Stefanie Page (512)-766-8477 Stefanie@texaslsg.org</p>
<p><b>HB 1024</b></p> <p>By: Thompson, Senfronia   Kuempel   Hernandez   Darby   Allen</p>	<p>Relating to the value of residential dwelling offered or awarded as a prize at a charitable raffle.</p>	<p>Licensing &amp; Administrative Procedures</p> <p>8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Abs</p>	<p>Charitable organizations like St. Jude Hospital work to help families throughout the U.S. without charging for care. To fund its operations, St. Jude's hosts various raffles to raise money. One of the events they host is the annual St. Jude's Dream Home giveaway, where they offer a home as a raffle prize. Current law restricts the maximum value of a home awarded as a prize through a charity raffle to \$250,000. This monetary cap has not increased since 2005 to keep up with inflation and current home prices.</p> <p>HB 1024 would increase the statutory cap of a residential dwelling that can be offered or awarded as a prize at an organization's charitable auction from \$250,000 to \$1 million.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b></p> <p>Evaluated by: La'Dereka Christian Ladereka@texaslsg.org (512) 710-5627</p>
<p><b>HB 1825</b></p> <p>By: Turner   Cook</p>	<p>Relating to the consumption, possession, and sale of alcoholic beverages at certain</p>	<p>Licensing &amp; Administrative Procedures</p> <p>10 Ayes,</p>	<p>Arlington Independent School District's (AISD) Center for Visual and Performing Arts serves as an event space in the DFW metroplex within the Arlington Entertainment District. However, alcohol cannot be sold, consumed, or possessed on facility property because a school district owns it. HB 1825 authorizes Arlington ISD's school board to approve the consumption, possession, and sale of alcohol at the Center for Visual and Performing Arts for non-school activities.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b></p> <p>Evaluated By: La'Dereka Christian Ladereka@texaslsg.org (512) 710-5627</p>

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	performing arts facilities owned by certain school districts.	1 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent		
<b>HB 205</b> By: Moody	Relating to an application for a writ of habeas corpus based on certain relevant scientific evidence that was not available at the applicant's trial.	Criminal Jurisprudence  9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	In Texas, an individual may petition for a writ of habeas corpus to challenge a conviction based on new scientific evidence that was not available during the original trial. This individual may obtain writ relief if the courts find that this new evidence, had it been presented at the original trial, would have resulted in the individual not being convicted. Writ relief is only available if the evidence changes the conviction, not the petitioner's sentence. This leaves a gap in cases where new scientific evidence would not have changed the conviction but would have changed the sentence.  HB 205 addresses this gap by adding language that specifies that writ relief may be granted if, based on new scientific evidence that was not available at the original trial, the petitioner would have received a different sentence.  HB 205 provides a simple solution to a gap created by the original language of the legislation. As 1 in 4 wrongful convictions nationally have rested on outdated science, having the ability to apply for writ relief based on new science that would have changed an individual's sentence is vital.	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: Savannah Lee Savannah@texaslsg.org 281-900-4980
<b>HB 1805</b> By: Klick	Relating to the medical use of low-THC cannabis by patients with certain medical conditions.	Public Health  10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The Texas Compassionate Use Program (TCUP) currently permits low-THC cannabis oil use for patients with qualifying medical conditions like epilepsy, multiple sclerosis, or terminal cancer. However, there are still more Texans who could benefit from medicinal cannabis.  HB 1805 expands the list of medical conditions for which low-THC cannabis can be prescribed by a qualified physician to include chronic pain and debilitating medical conditions, as defined by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). The bill also increases the amount of THC allowed in cannabis for medical use from 1% by weight to 10 milligrams per dosage unit.  HB 1805 aims to improve access to medicinal cannabis under the TCUP program. This bill provides an accessible alternative to opioids and relief for a larger number of Texans who have not found relief from traditional treatments.	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: Brian Dusablon Brian@texaslsg.org 281-789-8955
<b>HB 728</b> By: Rose	Relating to the statewide interagency services coordinating council.	Human Services  8 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV,	According to the AARP of Texas, the number of older Texans is expected to increase by nearly 3 million between 2020 and 2030. The 65+ population is the fastest-growing group in the state, increasing the need for more individualized services and programs.  HB 728 establishes the Statewide Interagency Aging Services Coordinating Council to develop and monitor a recurring five-year strategic plan for the provision of aging services in the state. The Council would be	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: La'Dereka Christian Ladereka@texaslsg.org (512) 710-5627

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		0 Absent	<p>composed of representatives from various state agencies, organizations, universities, and other individuals with expertise working with aging individuals. In addition to the five-year strategic plan, the Council would develop an annual inventory of state-funded aging programs and a biennial expenditure proposal outlining opportunities to further support older Texans.</p> <p>No later than 90 days after receiving the strategic plan, the Texas Health and Human Services (HHSC) commissioner must submit a plan for implementing the Council’s recommendations to the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and the Legislature.</p> <p>Under HB 728, the Council would be subject to review and abolishment under the Texas Sunset Act. The bill takes effect immediately if it receives a 2/3 vote in each chamber or on September 1.</p>	
<p><b>HB 2970</b> By: Guillen</p>	<p>Relating to the municipal regulation of HUD-code manufactured homes.</p>	<p>Land &amp; Resource Management</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Limited housing supply caused prices to rise, making it difficult for many Texans to afford a home. Currently, municipalities in Texas can deny an application for the placement of manufactured homes or impose various regulations and requirements on them, such as minimum lot sizes, setbacks, and building codes.</p> <p>HB 2970 aims to increase access to affordable housing by mandating that towns and cities treat HUD-code manufactured homes the same as real property used for a single-family dwelling. Manufactured homes are constructed according to a home construction and safety standards code administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD Code). HB 2970 mandates that cities allow the placement of a new HUD-code manufactured home in all zoning classifications that allow residential single-family or duplex dwellings. Cities may impose the same regulations on manufactured homes as other single-family homes in the area, such as permanent foundation requirements, exterior aesthetic requirements, and property value requirements. Cities may not impose more stringent requirements on new HUD-code manufactured homes than on typical single-family or duplex homes in the same area.</p> <p>HB 2970 clarifies that a manufactured home's value is determined by its taxable or initial sales value in addition to the value of the land it sits on. Under HB 2970, no existing regulations related to historic preservation laws or local deed restrictions shall be circumvented or overridden.</p> <p>HB 2970 would align Texas with 27 other states with similar parity laws, providing Texas homebuyers with more affordable options.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: Brian Dusablon 281-789-8955 Brian@texaslsg.org</p>
<p><b>HB 2374</b> By: Landgraf  </p>	<p>Relating to the authority of a political subdivision to regulate an energy</p>	<p>State Affairs</p> <p>10 Ayes, 1 Nays,</p>	<p>HB 2374 is a direct response to local efforts to combat climate change and reduce greenhouse gas emissions by regulating gas-powered lawn equipment and small engines as well as banning the construction of new gas stations.</p>	<p><b>Unfavorable</b> Evaluated by: Nzingha Williams-Eugene</p>

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<p>Darby   Manuel   Thimesch   Button</p>	<p>source or engine.</p>	<p>0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>HB 2374 bans municipalities from adopting regulations that directly or indirectly limit the use, sale, or lease of an engine based on its fuel source. Additionally, HB 2374 prohibits local governments or political subdivisions from enacting or enforcing ordinances that restrict access to an energy source, including fuel service stations. Under HB 2374, local governments retain the authority to adopt ordinances relating to engines provided such measures are not preempted by state or federal statute and effectively prohibit the use, sale, or lease of engines or specific fuel sources.</p> <p>HB 2374 eliminates local government’s authority to regulate gas-powered lawn equipment in efforts to improve air quality. Operating a typical lawn mower for one hour emits as much smog-forming pollution as driving a new light-duty car about 300 miles. An hour of using a typical leaf blower emits as much as an 1100-mile drive. HB 2374 is a costly prohibition in a state where four metropolitan areas currently do not meet federal ozone pollution standards, impacting the health of millions of Texans.</p>	<p>(214) 631-9720 Nzingha@texaslsg.org</p>
<p><b>HB 797</b>  By: Button   Cook   Bell, Keith</p>	<p>Relating to education requirements for an applicant to take the uniform CPA examination</p>	<p>Licensing &amp; Administrative Procedures  7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent</p>	<p>HB 797 aims to increase the number of CPAs in Texas by removing obstacles for CPA-seeking students and allowing them to sit for their exams sooner. According to the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants, there is a need for more CPAs in Texas to support the increase in population and the number of new businesses moving to the state. However, excessive exam and certificate requirements lead many students to take the CPA exam in other states and not return to the Texas workforce.</p> <p>HB 797 would allow prospective CPAs to sit for the exam after completing 120 semester hours, rather than 150. It would also permit prospective CPAs to have 24 semester hours of accounting-specific courses, rather than an accounting concentration at the time of the test. CPA-seeking students will still be required to complete the current requirements of 150 semester hours and accounting concentration or equivalent courses to receive the certificate/licensure. HB 797 would also remove the eligibility requirement that a person has at least two years of work experience under the supervision of a certified public accountant to receive a certificate.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: La’Dereka Christian Ladereka@texaslsg.org (512) 710-5627</p>
<p><b>HB 1422</b>  By: Metcalf   Murr   Slawson   Rogers</p>	<p>Relating to daylight saving time.</p>	<p>State Affairs  11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>HB 1422 is a trigger law that authorizes the observation of daylight saving time (DST) year-round in Texas upon passage of federal law allowing permanent DST. Texas currently observes the practice of changing clocks twice a year, one hour forward from standard time in the spring and back again in the fall. Some medical studies have associated adverse health outcomes with the current practice – notably, sleep disruption and increased risk of heart attacks, strokes, and car accidents. Permanent observation of DST could boost the state economy as consumers have daylight for longer in the evening to engage in leisure activities and frequent restaurants and retailers.</p> <p>An alternative option would be permanently adopting standard time, for which research has also yielded positive results. It has been shown to be better aligned with the body’s 24-hour clock or circadian rhythm. However, this does not seem feasible given that the U.S. Senate passed the Sunshine Protection Act in</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Nzingha Williams-Eugene (214) 631-9720 Nzingha@texaslsg.org</p>

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			2022 to adopt permanent DST rather than permanent standard time. Ultimately, permanent DST will allow more daylight in the evening to engage in leisurely activity and less adverse health outcomes.	
<b>HB 64</b> By: Landgraf	Relating to the peace officers authorized to operate an authorized emergency vehicle used to conduct a police escort.	Homeland Security & Public Safety  8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The Ector County Hospital District (ECHD) serves 17 counties in the Permian Basin. Currently, its hospital district police officers cannot provide escort service in authorized emergency vehicles for funerals, oversized or hazardous loads, or other traffic disruptions for public safety. HB 64 authorizes the ECHD police to participate in escort services so that Ector County police can focus on responding to criminal activity and providing public safety.	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: Jade Tucker Jade@texaslsg.org (512) 730-0462
<b>HB 165</b> By: Johnson, Ann   Bonnen   Kuempel   Landgraf   Ordaz	Relating to the prosecution of and punishment for an aggravated assault occurring as part of a mass shooting; increasing a criminal penalty.	Community Safety-Select  9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent	<p>The number of mass shootings in the US has risen sharply. Texas has been the site of more than 20 deadly mass shootings since 1966, with five occurring in the last five years. The courts have been unable to give appropriate sentencing to mass shooters because there is no definition of a mass shooting in state statute. Currently, a non-fatal mass shooting is charged as an aggravated assault with a deadly weapon, a second-degree felony with a sentence ranging from two to 20 years. Additionally, multiple charges occurring as part of the same event are not eligible to be served consecutively.</p> <p>HB 165 defines a mass shooting as the discharge of a firearm to cause, or attempt to cause, serious bodily injury or death to four or more persons during the same criminal transaction or during different criminal transactions but pursuant to the same scheme or course of conduct.</p> <p>HB 165 increases the criminal penalty for the actor who commits a mass shooting from a second-degree to a first-degree felony. If someone is found guilty of multiple counts of this offense during the same event, then HB 165 requires that the person serve the sentences consecutively – one after the other. Under HB 165, if two or more of these offenses are tried simultaneously, then the defendant would not be eligible to have the offenses separated and tried in different courts. An exception may be made if the court determines that consolidating the offenses would be unfairly prejudiced against the defendant or the state.</p>	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: Jade Tucker jade@texaslsg.org (512) 730-0462
<b>HB 90</b> By: Patterson   Buckley   Cook   Raymond   Shine	Relating to benefits for certain members of the Texas military forces and survivors of members of the Texas military forces.	Defense & Veterans' Affairs  8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	<p>Specialist Bishop Evans was a Texas National Guardsman who drowned attempting to save two migrants in the Rio Grande in April 2022. His family was not guaranteed line-of-duty death benefits despite Specialist Evans's state active duty status serving on Operation Lone Star (OLS). At least ten service members have died in connection with OLS in the past two years. Currently, Texas military forces (Texas State Guard, Texas Army National Guard, and Texas Air National Guard) under state active duty orders do not receive workers' compensation coverage or death gratuity for familial survivors on par with other state employees or federal counterparts. HB 90 expands benefits for state military forces and surviving families.</p> <p>HB 90 extends eligibility to certain family members of Texas military forces for death gratuities, a lump sum payment of \$500,000, should their spouse or parent die in the line of duty. This is on par with death</p>	<b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: Jade Tucker Jade@texaslsg.org (512) 730-0462

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			<p>gratuities to survivors of certain law enforcement officers and fire fighters. Eligible recipients of the death gratuity would be a spouse, a child if there is no spouse, or a surviving parent if there is no surviving spouse or child.</p> <p>HB 90 also clarifies certain workforce compensation benefits. It clarifies that state active duty members are entitled to workers' compensation coverage when traveling to and from their residence to their duty location. HB 90 would allow post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as a compensable injury under worker's compensation for Texas military forces if the events happened while on state active duty. Lastly, the bill requires an insurance carrier to expedite and prioritize medical claims by Texas military members injured while on duty. If the claim is denied, the Texas Department of Insurance must accelerate any appeal or contested case hearing requested by the service member.</p> <p>Texas State Guardsmen are volunteer service members that receive unequal benefits compared to their federal counterparts. Yet, they continue to serve with the same commitment and service to our state. HB 90 provides necessary financial security for Texas military families and provides needed compensation for potential mental health impacts from active duty.</p>	
<p><b>HB 178</b> By: Murr   Cook</p>	<p>Relating to testing possible controlled substance evidence for fentanyl.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>In 2021, the United States lost over 107,000 Americans to drug overdose. Of those, 67% were caused by some sort of synthetic opioid, including fentanyl. The opioid crisis has continued to worsen, even as legislatures nationwide attempt to contend with it.</p> <p>HB 178 aims to address one part of this crisis by requiring that controlled substance evidence brought in for laboratory testing is also tested for fentanyl if it's reasonably possible that the substance is or may contain the opioid.</p> <p>The foremost benefit to HB 178 is that it may allow the state to begin to understand which communities are most affected by the opioid crisis. Additionally, it may provide the state with information about which controlled substances are most often laced with fentanyl, giving communities more information that will help keep them safe.</p> <p>A concern with HB 178 is that this testing may be used as an enhancement tool for prosecutors, further criminalizing drug users if the evidence contains fentanyl. Often, users are unaware that the drugs they consume contain fentanyl, with studies showing that over half of surveyed drug users report that they suspect that they've accidentally consumed fentanyl while consuming other drugs. Ultimately, the data collected on fentanyl sources may serve communities or harm them based on its use.</p>	<p><b><u>Will of the House</u></b> Evaluated By: Savannah Lee Savannah@texaslsg.org</p>

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<p><b>HB 367</b> By: Jetton</p>	<p>Relating to the powers and duties of the State Commission on Judicial Conduct.</p>	<p>Judiciary &amp; Civil Jurisprudence 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>HB 367 is the enabling legislation for HJR 165, 87(R), a constitutional amendment that voters approved in November 2021.</p> <p>There have been concerns about the fairness of judicial elections, as incumbents are subject to the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, but candidates are not. Voters approved HJR 165, 87(R) in the November 2021 election, which constitutionally authorized the State Commission on Judicial Conduct (SCJC) to accept complaints, conduct investigations, and take disciplinary action against candidates for judicial office in the same way they do for sitting judges. HB 367 would hold candidates to the same standards as incumbents during elections, ensuring fairness during judicial campaigns.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated by: Drew Tonjes (512)672-8406 Drew@texaslsg.org</p>
<p><b>HB 25</b> By: Talarico   Frank   Burrows   Rose   Klick</p>	<p>Relating to wholesale importation of prescription drugs in this state; authorizing a fee.</p>	<p>Health Care Reform, Select 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent</p>	<p>The United States has one of the highest prescription drug costs globally, almost double the average of other high-income countries. This makes it difficult for Texans to afford their medications, and 42% of them have to ration or stop taking their medications because of the high cost.</p> <p>In 2020, the Trump Administration allowed states to import drugs from Canada, finding that it would save patients money and could be done safely. Later, the Biden Administration instructed the FDA to help states set up these import programs. To import drugs, states must first pass laws and then apply to the FDA for approval of their programs. Six states have already started this process: Florida, Colorado, New Mexico, Maine, Vermont, and New Hampshire.</p> <p>HB 25 would require the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to create a program to import prescription drugs from Canadian suppliers, enabling Texans to get their medications at a lower cost. The Wholesale Prescription Drug Importation Program will be funded using appropriated money, fees on each drug sold, or another funding method determined by HHSC. The program will work by contracting with Canadian suppliers and prescription drug wholesalers. Additionally, HB 25 will create a registration process for health benefit plan issuers, healthcare providers, and pharmacies to obtain and dispense imported drugs.</p> <p>All imported drugs must meet FDA safety and effectiveness standards and not be misbranded or adulterated. The bill excludes drugs listed as controlled substances, biologicals, infused, intravenously injected, inhaled during surgery, or parenteral. HHSC, in consultation with the attorney general, is responsible for monitoring unfair business practices that are likely to reduce competition and lead to higher prices in industries affected by the program.</p> <p>Under HB 25, HHSC would have to report yearly on which prescription drugs and suppliers are included, how many health benefit plan issuers, healthcare providers, and pharmacies are registered, and how much money Texans saved. Additionally, the executive commissioner must develop rules to audit prescription</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b> Evaluated By: Brian Dusablon 281-789-8955 brian@texaslsg.org</p>

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			drug wholesalers participating in the program. HB 25 is crucial for Texans who cannot afford the medicines they need to stay alive and healthy.	
<p><b>HB 1337</b></p> <p>By: Hull   Oliverson   Harless   González, Jessica   Johnson, Ann</p>	<p>Relating to step therapy protocols required by health benefit plans for coverage of prescription drugs for serious mental illnesses.</p>	<p>Insurance</p> <p>Vote: 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Many commercial health insurance plans currently require enrollees try a less expensive prescription drug treatment before plans cover another option. This health insurance protocol that requires enrollees to “fail first” before they can “step up” delays enrollees’ access to the most effective medical prescription intervention, detrimentally impacting health outcomes and quality of life for patients, particularly those with serious mental illness (SMI). Failure to consistently receive the most appropriate medical treatment for SMI diagnoses can lead to costly emergency visits, hospitalization, incarceration, unemployment, and loss of housing. HB 1337 addresses this by limiting step therapy practices in health insurance benefit plans for individuals with SMI.</p> <p>HB 1337 prohibits commercial health benefit plans from requiring that enrollees fail to respond to more than one different drug for each drug prescribed, excluding a generic pharmaceutical equivalent, or prove a history of failing first before covering an FDA-approved drug prescribed to treat enrollees’ SMI diagnosis. HB 1337 also limits issuers’ ability to require a step therapy protocol for a generic pharmaceutical equivalent as a condition of continued drug coverage to once a year, provided the generic or pharmaceutical equivalent is added to the list of generic and brand name drugs covered by under the health insurance plan.</p> <p>For individuals with SMI, access to the most appropriate medical interventions, including prescription drugs, is critical to managing their SMI diagnosis. The provisions of HB 1337 drastically increase health outcomes, improve the quality of life for individuals with SMI, and reduce system-wide healthcare costs.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b></p> <p>Evaluated by: Nzingha Williams-Eugene (214) 631-9720 Nzingha@texaslsg.org</p>
<p><b>HB 249</b></p> <p>By: Rogers   Lozano   Darby   Harris, Cody   Buckley</p>	<p>Relating to a school security volunteer program in certain counties.</p>	<p>Youth Health and Safety</p> <p>6 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>In recent years, rural school districts have struggled to hire qualified school security personnel, resulting in slower emergency response times. Simultaneously, school shootings have continued to increase across the United States, and the leading cause of death for children and teens is gun violence.</p> <p>HB 249 seeks to address this issue by allowing school districts and open-enrollment charter schools with populations of less than 200,000 to create a plan for veterans or retired law enforcement officers to provide security on a volunteer basis. These individuals must be approved by the school board or the charter school’s governing body. They would be authorized to carry a handgun, and security would extend to school grounds, school events, and school vehicles. Eligibility for such a program would require a criminal background check, and the veteran or law enforcement officer would have to have honorably retired.</p> <p>Under HB 249, a district that enacts such a program must include it in its multi-hazard emergency operations plan. A charter school that approves such programming would be required to adopt measures that would ensure coordination with State Health Services, local emergency management, health</p>	<p><b>Will of the House</b></p> <p>Evaluated By: Savannah Lee 281-900-4980 Savannah@texaslsg.org</p>

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			<p>departments, fire departments, and law enforcement agencies during an emergency. Both districts and charters would be required to provide volunteers with instruction on the school's safety policies. Lastly, HB 249 grants a school safety volunteer immunity from civil liability within the same scope that an employee of a district would have for incidents, but not for intentional misconduct or gross negligence.</p> <p>HB 249 addresses a concern for rural communities, which require nuanced programming that fits their specific needs. However, research shows that armed security officers at schools do not prevent school shootings, and more security may not necessarily make students and teachers feel safer. Additionally, retired peace officers and veterans may not have the most up-to-date necessary training required to guard schools. The issue of school violence is paramount, but the legislature must ensure that its solutions do not cause further harm in an attempt to solve the issue.</p>	
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