



Texas Legislative Study Group

An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

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LSG Floor Report For NOTICE FOR RECONSIDERATION – Wednesday, April 19, 2023

<p>HB 596 By: Shaheen</p>	<p>Relating to a local option exemption from ad valorem taxation by a county of a portion of the value of the residence homestead of a physician who provides health care services for which the physician agrees not to seek payment from any source, including the Medicaid program or otherwise from this state or the federal government, to county residents who are indigent or who are Medicaid recipients.</p>	<p>Ways & Means 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>Texas has the highest rate of uninsured people in the country. Additionally, many doctors do not accept Medicaid due to low reimbursement rates and billing issues. This makes it difficult for low-income Texans to access healthcare.</p> <p>HB 596 is enabling legislation for HJR 45 and allows counties to provide an incentive to doctors who provide health care services to Texans who are indigent or receive Medicaid at no cost to the patient, the Medicaid program, the state, or the federal government. Licensed physicians who provide these services would be able to receive up to a 50% homestead exemption on their properties' appraised value from property taxes if their county adopts this incentive.</p> <p>Under HB 596, county commissioners courts must set the amount of county residents these physicians must provide free services to so they can qualify for the exemption. The commissioners court will also be required to submit a copy of the exemption to the chief appraiser, who is allowed to require a physician to submit additional information to qualify for the exemption. Commissioners courts are also allowed to repeal the exemption if needed using an established process for the county. There are concerns that the maximum homestead exemption of 50%, on top of current homestead exemptions, would constitute too high a tax break for physicians, who may not need it. Additionally, there are a host of other professions that offer free, essential services that are not eligible for the tax break.</p>	<p><u>Unfavorable</u></p>
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LSG Floor Report For POSTPONED BUSINESS UNTIL 9:00 AM – Wednesday, April 19, 2023

<p>HB 2713 By: Dean</p>	<p>Relating to the consideration of employee</p>	<p>State Affairs 10 Ayes,</p>	<p>Currently, the Public Utility Commission (PUC) is not required to consider employee compensation (a combination of base pay, benefits, and performance-based incentives) when establishing electric rates. This</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
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	compensation and benefits in establishing the rates of electric utilities.	1 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	<p>makes it difficult for electric utilities to compete with non-regulated industries that provide more robust compensation packages to attract and retain highly-skilled and experienced employees.</p> <p>HB 2713 aims to address this by requiring the PUC to presume that total compensation expenses are “reasonable and necessary” when establishing electric utility rates. HB 2713 mandates that compensation expenses must be consistent with market compensation studies conducted three years before initial rate establishment. Additionally, the provisions of HB 2713 do not provide for post-employment benefits, incentives based on financial metrics, compensation of executive officers or CEOs, or metrics that hurt customers’ interests as determined by PUC.</p> <p>Electric utility companies help ensure lights are on, homes are cool, and businesses are open, ultimately powering the Texas economy and the lives of Texans. HB 2713 facilitates the delivery of efficient, reliable electricity by ensuring electric utilities are able to compensate highly skilled, current, and potential employees competitively.</p>	
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LSG Floor Report For POSTPONED BUSINESS UNTIL 10:00 AM – Wednesday, April 19, 2023

<p>HB 1114 By: Kacal</p>	<p>Relating to the service area of the Blinn Junior College District.</p>	<p>Higher Education</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>HB 1114 expands the service area of Blinn Junior College District to include portions of Waller Independent School District which is located in Harris County. This will allow Waller ISD high school students to participate in programs or courses offered by Blinn College.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
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LSG Floor Report For Major State Calendar – Wednesday, April 19, 2023

<p>HB 16 Moody Thompson, Senfronia Johnson, Ann Leach Cook</p>	<p>Relating to the adjudication and disposition of cases involving delinquent conduct, certain juvenile court proceedings, and planning and funding for services for children in the juvenile justice</p>	<p>Youth Health and Safety</p> <p>7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>In 2011, following a series of concerns brought to light during the sunset process of the Texas Youth Commission, the legislature began to divert justice-involved children away from large detention facilities and bring them closer to home. They did this by closing several facilities, and introducing statutory reforms that began to slow admissions, resulting in roughly 200 youth per year being diverted away from large TJJD (Texas Juvenile Justice Department) facilities. Research shows that an approach to juvenile justice that prioritizes keeping youth as shallow in the system as possible, close to their loved ones and families, and out of large facilities results in lower recidivism rates and higher rates of rehabilitation. TJJD has struggled to serve children in their care, citing turnover rates as high as 70%. Roughly 50% of children in their care are at risk for suicide. Additionally, reports have been published detailing the horrific conditions at TJJD facilities, with some children in cells for 23 hours a</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
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	<p>system.</p>		<p>day and urinating in plastic bottles. Combined, these issues underscore a deep need for change in how Texas navigates juvenile justice.</p> <p>HB 16, also known as The Closer to Home Bill, seeks to enact that change by increasing court involvement, enhancing court discretion, and requiring courts to consider mitigating evidence in relation to youth characteristics. HB 16 includes stop gaps at every point in the process that asks a court to deeply consider how each child is best served and establishes a presumption for diversion into community-based services.</p> <p>Judicial Proceedings</p> <p>HB 16 requires that if a child is not released from detention solely because they are not under the care of a guardian, the court must refer them to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) for intervention services. In such instances, DFPS must review the youths' situation within 72 hours and send the report to the court. The court must then consider the report and release the child within 10 days of the hearing if appropriate.</p> <p>HB 16 establishes a presumption that both a child and the public's interests are better served in a juvenile court rather than a criminal court. As such, a juvenile court is required to consider this when deciding whether a child should be moved to criminal courts. Under HB 16, the burden of proof needed for moving a child to criminal court is with the state. If it is determined that a child needs to be transferred to criminal court, the court must outline why and detail mitigating evidence such as the child's capability for growth, maturity, and culpability considering their age.</p> <p>Under HB 16, during a disposition hearing, the court is required to consider mitigating factors such as mental health concerns or a child's family situation that may suggest the need for rehabilitation. The court may consider such evidence in making a special commitment finding that the child has behavioral health or other special needs that cannot be met outside of TJJD services.</p> <p>HB 16 allows TJJD to shorten the time a child spends in a highly-structured residential program if there is a documented reason to do so. Additionally, HB 16 raises the maximum age limit for eligibility for early at-risk youth intervention services from 10 to 13, and requires the DFPS provide such services. A contract to provide such services must be available at the county level.</p> <p>Community Based Intervention Task Force</p>	
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			<p>HB 16 requires that TJJD develop, and the Texas Juvenile Justice Board adopt, a plan for community based diversion and intervention services. The intention of this plan is to keep justice-involved children as close to home as possible while focusing on their rehabilitation. HB 16 requires this plan to establish a network of services in specific geographic areas that are accessible to each child’s community and invested parties. The plan requires: an inventory of community based programs and services, an intercept map that plots resources and gaps in the system, and a description of barriers to rehabilitative mental health and therapeutic treatment service providers in various jurisdictions.</p> <p>Additionally, the plan must identify strategies to use community resources to divert children from post-adjudication correctional facilities. The plan must also include a description of community programs and services that promote evidence-based practices that will be able to serve the needs of children from all backgrounds. The plan should highlight state and national models for regionalized collaborations, and must examine any other issues regarding juvenile justice service providers and infrastructure. The bill requires that TJJD submit a copy of this plan to the legislature by December 1, 2024.</p> <p>HB 16 creates a task force that consults with TJJD in the development of the previously outlined plan, in collaboration with TJJD’s regionalization division. The make up of this task force is outlined in the bill and includes a myriad of expert stakeholders.</p> <p>Community Reinvestment Funds HB 16 requires each county to establish a community reinvestment fund. The county's juvenile probation department would be required to collaborate with research based providers in the county to establish community based services that serve as an alternative to juvenile detention, paid for by the reinvestment fund. This may be funded by surplus TJJD funds, the county, or gifts, grants, and donations.</p> <p>Investment Funding HB 16 authorizes the legislature to create an account in the general revenue fund to supplement local funding and encourage service network expansion. The bill requires TJJD use the funding to create and facilitate implementation of the strategic plan for community-based diversion and intervention. The department should create funding protocols that are research-based.</p> <p>HB 16 requires TJJD to submit a report to each member of the legislature by December 1, 2024. The report must outline the amount of funds given as incentives for implementing the community-based diversion and intervention plan, demonstrate which regions are implementing the plan, define efficiencies of scale, propose a</p>	
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			<p>payment schedule for incentive funds, and establish a method for documenting and reporting incentive fund distributions.</p> <p>Credit Towards Minimum Length of Stay HB 16 requires TJJD to give credit towards a child's minimum sentence length in a detention facility for time spent in a pre-adjudication secure facility between their commitment and transfer to TJJD.</p> <p>Impact The current model has proved to be unsustainable, ineffective, and in some instances, inhumane. It is imperative Texas enact a solution that addresses the rehabilitation of justice-involved children while centering public safety. HB 16 is comprehensive legislation that seeks to ensure each child is viewed as someone capable of learning, growing, and changing by the justice system. This change of perspective and emphasis on regional rehabilitation will aid Texas children in becoming adults who can thrive.</p>	
<p>HB 681 By: Bell, Keith King, Ken Buckley Shaheen Morales, Eddie</p>	<p>Relating to virtual and off-campus electronic instruction at a public school, the satisfaction of teacher certification requirements through an internship teaching certain virtual courses, and the allotment for certain special-purpose school districts under the Foundation School Program.</p>	<p>Public Education</p> <p>Vote: 11 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>HB 681 makes programs established in SB 15, 87(2), permanent. SB 15 authorized eligible public schools to establish a local remote learning program to offer virtual courses outside the state virtual school network.</p> <p>The pandemic necessitated a transition to virtual learning environments for schools across the state. Research has shown that virtual education may not be as effective as in-person learning, especially for younger students. Additionally, online courses do not provide opportunities for necessary social emotional learning. However, virtual, remote options for schooling have been helpful to some students in specific circumstances, such as those with medical conditions. Due to these benefits, the demand persists to make virtual learning a permanent option for students. HB 681 would allow online instruction to continue for public schools by repealing the September 1, 2023 sunset date for schools' remote learning programs.</p> <p>Students' enrollment would be counted toward a school's average daily attendance (ADA) in the same manner as other students, allowing for the use of state funds for the online program. Under the bill, students are still required to take the STAAR test and schools would still be evaluated by the education commissioner with the same standards as if the program were a campus of the district.</p> <p>HB 681 would also continue to allow the rules authorized by the State Board for Educator Certification that gives schools the ability to allow teacher candidates to satisfy their internship requirements in a virtual setting.</p> <p>There are some concerns over new teachers entering the classroom with only virtual classroom experience. Additionally, providing state funds for virtual learning increases the opportunity for the privatization of education because schools may have to purchase vendor services to provide online instruction. Lastly, SB 15 was presented</p>	<p><u>Favorable with Concerns</u></p>

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			as an adaptation to COVID-19 and was not intended to be permanent. At the same time, if virtual education works for students in a narrow set of circumstances, there should be a public option to do so with guardrails in place.	
<p>HB 890</p> <p>Bell, Keith Buckley Harris, Cody Hefner Dutton</p>	<p>Relating to school district hearings regarding complaints.</p>	<p>Public Education</p> <p>10 Ayes, 0 Nays 0 PNV 2 Absent</p>	<p>A school district’s board of trustees must adopt a process for hearing complaints and grievances against them by district personnel, students, and parents. However, there have been issues regarding the administration’s slow response to address complaints and unclear timelines to obtain a hearing before the school board to resolve complaints. HB 890 seeks to address these issues by laying out a process to address complaints and enforcing a 120-day time limit for a school district to render a decision on filed grievances.</p> <p>HB 890 requires school districts to accept a complaint at any time if the complaint alleges the school board violates the law or school board policy. The complaint must receive an initial administrative hearing and a subsequent opportunity to appeal the decision. The final decision must be made no later than 120 days after the complaint was filed. If the district fails to meet this deadline, the complaint is automatically considered in favor of the complainant.</p> <p>HB 890 increases accountability and improves responsiveness to local communities.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
<p>HB 1416</p> <p>By: Bell, Keith Dutton Buckley VanDeaver King, Ken</p>	<p>Relating to accelerated instruction provided to public school students who fail to achieve satisfactory performance on certain assessment instruments.</p>	<p>Public Education</p> <p>Vote: 12 Ayes 0 Nays 1 Absent</p>	<p>The 87th Legislation passed HB 4545, which defined accelerated learning instruction and provided specific tutoring requirements for students who fail the STAAR test. However, school districts have reported challenges in implementation, meeting requirements, and staffing. HB 1416 seeks to address these issues by removing accelerated learning committees, limiting supplemental instruction to math and reading assessments, reducing tutoring hours from 30 to 15, adjusting student-to-teacher ratios (3:5 for below 9th grade, 3:10 for above), permitting parental opt-out, and enabling augmented tutoring methods.</p> <p><i>Accelerated Learning Committee Repeal</i> HB 1416 eliminates the accelerated learning committees for 3rd, 5th, and 8th-grade mathematics or reading assessment instruction and restricts accelerated learning to mathematics or reading assessment on the English I, English II, or Algebra I end-of-course assessments.</p> <p><i>Adjusted Requirements for Supplemental Learning</i> If a student fails to pass English I, English II, or Algebra I end-of-course assessments, the school shall provide at least 15 hours of tutoring to the student during the subsequent summer or school year. This tutoring may be provided individually or in a group setting (five students per tutor below 9th grade or ten students per tutor above 9th grade). These requirements do not apply to students retained at their current grade level.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>

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			<p>If a student fails to perform satisfactorily for two or more consecutive years in the same subject, the school shall develop an accelerated education plan. These plans shall identify reasons for the student’s failure and require a minimum of 30 hours of tutoring for each consecutive school year in which the student does not perform satisfactorily. Additionally, the plan may require individual tutoring or a lower teacher-to-student ratio, expansion of available times for supplemental instruction, or student reassignment to a teacher who is best able to provide accelerated instruction. These plans require written documentation, with copies provided to the student’s parent or guardian.</p> <p>For students unable to participate in accelerated instruction programs due to personal needs or conditions, the school district may allow the student to receive accelerated instruction when they return to on-campus learning. If students are unable to attend on-campus learning for the school year in which accelerated learning is provided, the district is not required to provide the instruction.</p> <p>Unless a district partners with another entity for transportation, it must provide transportation for students attending accelerated programs outside regular school hours.</p> <p><i>Students in Special Education Program</i> If a student in a special education program does not perform satisfactorily on the Alt-STAAR, their admission, review, and dismissal (ARD) committee shall review the student’s participation and progress in supplemental and accelerated instruction or any accelerated education plan. This review shall be conducted during the student’s annual review meeting and any additional meetings regarding individualized education plans may be scheduled by the school district or requested by a parent or guardian.</p> <p><i>Parental Opt-Out</i> Parents or guardians have the option to reduce or remove their student from the supplemental instruction they would otherwise be required to participate by submitting a written request to the administrator of their student’s school.</p> <p><i>Augmented Learning for Supplemental Instruction</i> HB 1416 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to substitute individual or group instruction for an augmented method of supplemental instruction only if this method of learning is an evidence-based practice and has been proven more effective than group or individual learning. The commissioner of education shall adopt rules necessary for the approval of potential augmented methods of supplemental instruction.</p> <p><i>Recommendation</i></p>	
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			<p>HB 1416 allows districts to focus on students who are the most behind, providing flexibility and local control. Teachers often cite excessive workload outside of school hours for leaving the profession. Although HB 1416 maintains some of these requirements, it shows consideration for teachers’ time and addresses some of the bill’s unintended effects.</p>	
<p>HB 900 Patterson Buckley Burrows Shaheen Longoria</p>	<p>Relating to the regulation of books sold to or included in public school libraries.</p>	<p>Public Education Vote: 10 Ayes 2 Nays 0 PNV 1 Absent</p>	<p>Concern regarding the availability of library materials deemed as sexually explicit in public schools is a nationwide topic and momentum regarding the removal of certain library materials has grown in Texas. Governor Abbott wrote a letter in November of 2021 to the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB) on the issue, directing the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to investigate sexually explicit content in public schools. HB 900, The READERS Act, seeks to address concerns regarding sexually-explicit library materials available to minors in Texas public schools.</p> <p>HB 900 would regulate materials in public school libraries by requiring vendors to provide ratings on degree of sexual content in books and banning material containing sexually explicit content.</p> <p><i>Library Standards and Regulation</i> HB 900 establishes library standards by requiring the review of material considered sexually explicit vs. sexually relevant. Under the bill, sexually relevant material is permissible because it relates to the district’s required curriculum. Sexually explicit materials, however, would be prohibited under the bill. The bill defines “sexually explicit material” as any communication, language, or material (such as audiobooks), including a written description, illustration, photographic image, video image, or audio file, that describes, depicts, or portrays “sexual conduct” in a way that is “patently offensive.” This would not include material directly related to the curriculum. Statute defines “sexual conduct” as the description or depiction of sexual contact, intercourse, bestiality, masturbation, abuse, or the exhibition of genitals, anus, or female breasts below the top of the areola is described or depicted. “Patently offensive” is also defined in statute as anything so offensive at face value that it is an affront to current community standards of decency.</p> <p>Under HB 900, the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC), with approval by a majority vote of the State Board of Education, must adopt district standards for school library book procurement. These standards apply to all materials in use or displayed in school libraries, classrooms, and online catalogs and must be reviewed annually.</p> <p>These standards must include policies that prohibit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the purchase of harmful material, defined as material where the main theme pertains to the sexual interest of a minor; 	<p><u>Unfavorable</u></p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • patently offensive to what adults deem suitable for minors, and is considered to have no redeeming social value for minors; • library materials rated sexually explicit by the vendor; or • library material deemed pervasively vulgar and educationally unsuitable. <p>No definitions were provided for pervasively vulgar and educationally unsuitable materials.</p> <p>The standards must also acknowledge that obscene content is not protected by the First Amendment and that parents are the primary decision-makers regarding a student’s access to library materials. The standards must encourage schools to provide library catalog transparency and recommend schools communicate with parents regarding collection procurement.</p> <p>Regulation and Rating of Library Materials by Vendors HB 900 defines “library material vendors” as any entity that sells library materials to public schools in Texas. HB 900 prohibits vendors from selling library materials to schools without providing appropriate ratings regarding sexually explicit material and sexually relevant material. The bill also explicitly prohibits vendors from selling sexually explicit material, as defined in HB 900. Any materials found in libraries that would be deemed sexually explicit must be removed.</p> <p>Each vendor must develop a rating guide for the materials they sell, differentiating sexually explicit materials from sexually relevant materials. They must submit this guide to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) by September 1st of each year and it must be posted on the agency’s website.</p> <p>The TEA may review and override any library material rating made by a vendor. If the agency deems the vendor’s rating inaccurate, they must provide written notice to the vendor with information detailing the corrected rating. Once a written notice has been received, vendors have 60 days to correct the rating. The TEA must maintain a list on its website of vendors who have failed to comply with their rating corrections, and schools cannot purchase materials from these vendors. Vendors may file a petition to be removed from the list. Additionally, school staff cannot be held liable for issues arising due to a vendor’s violation of the rating policy.</p> <p>HB 900 also requires written parental consent for students to reserve or check out certain “sexually relevant” materials from the school library.</p> <p>On August 1st of every even-numbered year, school districts must review the “sexually-relevant” material found at the school library and determine, in accordance with school policy regarding school library material, whether to keep or remove the material. Once this audit is complete, they must post a report or provide physical copies at the</p>	
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			<p>central administration building of the school. The report must include the title of each library material that was reviewed, their decision regarding the material, and the specific school where the material is located.</p> <p>Recommendation HB 900 states that “parents are to be the primary decision-makers regarding a student’s access to library materials,” but in reality, third-party book vendors and the TEA, who establish standards and regulate materials, hold the primary-decision making power. This doesn’t truly give parents any greater autonomy, but rather strips local communities and professional librarians of authority.</p> <p>Due to the arduous rating process, largely based on vague and unclear definitions, vendors may only choose to sell extremely safe choices to prevent any misinterpretation of sexually explicit content, instead of risking lost sales or being banned from selling to schools. This could lead to unintended consequences, such as removing classic literature or holy texts.</p> <p>While pornographic content has no place in school libraries, HB 900’s interpretation of inappropriate material casts such a wide net and doesn’t consider the material’s value as a whole. This could ultimately impact students’ learning, the school’s ability to provide literature that could engage with diverse identities, and increases the potential for discriminatory or targeted enforcement.</p> <p>This bill may work to condone the erasure of LGBTQIA+ representation in school library material, as some may deem this community’s experiences as “patently offensive,” further marginalizing LGBTQIA+ children. 41% of currently banned books across the nation address LGBTQIA+ themes or have protagonists or prominent secondary characters who are LGBTQIA+.</p> <p>Public school libraries are often a safe haven for students to find a love for reading, identify with characters, and discover more about the world around them. HB 900 could significantly undermine one of the most valuable educational resources for Texas students.</p>	
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LSG Floor Report For General State Calendar – Wednesday, April 19, 2023

<p>HB 458</p> <p>By: Craddick Cook Martinez</p>	<p>Relating to the period within which the Texas Juvenile Justice Department must accept custody of a person</p>	<p>Juvenile Justice & Family Issues</p> <p>Vote: 8 Ayes,</p>	<p>Currently, there is no statutory deadline for the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJD) to take custody of youths sentenced to rehabilitation programs provided by TJJD. This extends youths’ stay in county jails and delays their access to rehabilitative programming, and subsequent release.</p> <p>HB 458 seeks to address this by mandating TJJD to accept custody of youths’ sentenced to their care within thirty days of a judge’s order. HB 458 mandates TJJD to compensate counties, a sum equal to the cost that would have</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
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<p>Fischer Dutton Talarico</p>	<p>committed to the department and to the consequences for the failure of the department to accept custody of the person within that period.</p>	<p>1 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>been incurred by TJJD, in the event TJJD takes custody after the thirty-day deadline. Additionally, HB 458 mandates TJJD give credit to the child’s overall sentence for their time spent in a pre-adjudication detention facility before a transfer to TJJD. This provision is triggered on the 31st day after youths are sentenced to services under TJJD.</p> <p>HB 458 establishes a timeline that helps youths to receive rehabilitative programming under TJJD sooner and therefore be released earlier. This lowers the burden on county services and provides justice involved youths with the opportunity to move forward.</p>	
<p>HB 213 By: Moody Leach Thompson, Senfronia Buckley Cook</p>	<p>Relating to the adjudication and disposition of cases involving delinquent conduct, certain juvenile court proceedings, and planning and funding for services for children in the juvenile justice system.</p>	<p>Youth Health and Safety 7 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 2 Absent</p>	<p>Currently, thousands of Texas youth who were tried as adults for serious felonies face extensive prison sentences that will stretch well into adulthood, without the possibility of parole for up to 40 years. These sentences do not allow for consideration of what the State has learned in recent years, that children’s brains are not fully developed and they cannot grasp the severity of their actions. These long sentences leave no room for the rehabilitation of juveniles. The primary goal of the Texas Juvenile Justice Department is to rehabilitate, which is further underscored by the Supreme Court’s recognition that it is wrong to deny a justice-involved youth the opportunity to demonstrate rehabilitation. Current Texas law denies that opportunity to many of our youth.</p> <p>HB 213 seeks to remedy this issue by changing parole eligibility for an individual serving a sentence for a felony offense committed when they were under 18 years of age. Such an individual would be eligible for release on parole once their time served plus good conduct time equals one-fourth of the sentence or 15 years, whichever is less. An individual serving a life sentence for a capital felony committed under the age of 18 will not be considered for parole until their time served reaches 20 years, without consideration of good conduct.</p> <p>HB 213 sets out additional conditions for the parole of an individual who was under the age of 18 at the time of their offense, requiring a parole panel to take into account the individual’s growth since their incarceration, characteristics of youth that may have contributed to the offense, the diminished culpability of a juvenile offender, and other considerations. HB 213 would require the Board of Pardons and Parole to create a policy detailing factors for parole panels to consider when assessing juvenile offenders. These factors include the offender’s age at the time of the crime and evidence from loved ones demonstrating personal growth or maturity during imprisonment. This bill does not expressly change any of the rights to which a crime victim is entitled to under the Criminal Code.</p> <p>Lastly, HB 213 requires a court during the penalty phase of a trial for a felony or capital offense committed by an individual under 18 to instruct the jury in writing, using the bill’s specified language, on the conditions under which the juvenile may be granted parole.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>

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			An early parole hearing may allow thousands of individuals to exhibit their growth, maturity, and rehabilitation to a parole panel. This chance may encourage incarcerated youth to focus on growth and rehabilitation, knowing that there is a chance that they may be able to rebuild their lives. Without an opportunity for parole, there is no incentive for these youth to grow. It is important that as the State’s knowledge changes, so does its law. HB 213 is a strong step to applying new knowledge that has been gained regarding justice-involved children and gives these individuals an opportunity for growth.	
HB 2217 By: Button Shaheen Goldman Cole Orr	Relating to the regulation of the practice of public accountancy.	Licensing & Administrative Procedures 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	Language within the Occupations Accountancy Code has not been updated to more accurately reflect current accounting practices. HB 2217 updates language in statute to best reflect current practices, by clarifying that the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy (TSBPA) can only collect fees for exams or re-takes from CPA applicants, based on the parts of the exam they are eligible to take. HB 2217 adds language allowing the TSBPA to send electronic or written notices of upcoming license expiration within 30 days. Additionally, HB 2217 specifies that anyone receiving a scholarship through TSBPA must intend to take the uniform CPA exam. HB 2217 also alters the word “privilege” to “confidentiality” when referring to accountant-client relationships. Under HB 2217, those who were public accountancy license holders before September 1, 2023 are allowed to practice in Texas based on a foreign country certification without having to renew their Texas licenses. HB 2217 aims to help the TSBPA better regulate the accountancy industry.	<u>Favorable</u>
HB 188 By: Moody	Relating to certain sentencing procedures in a capital case.	Criminal Jurisprudence 9 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent	Currently, a jury in Texas must answer “yes” to a series of questions regarding the defendant’s future risk and culpability in committing the crime if imposing the death penalty. The ambiguous language of these jury questions has caused confusion regarding the required vote threshold to impose the death penalty. These ambiguous instructions and subsequent confusion have led to juries repeatedly requesting clarification, only to be sent the same instructions back. Because of the continued lack of clarification, some jury members have shared that they voted against their conscience because they were experiencing such confusion and were unsure of the vote threshold required to impose the death penalty. HB 188 seeks to remedy this by revising the language of capital jury instructions in sentencing proceedings in a capital felony case. The bill clarifies that in imposing the death penalty, the jury must answer a series of questions “no”, unless the answer is “yes” unanimously. The questions are as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whether there is a probability that the defendant would commit further criminal acts and be a continued threat to society; or 	<u>Favorable</u>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> in cases in which the jury finds the defendant guilty under the law of parties, whether the defendant actually caused the deceased's death or did not but intended to kill the deceased or anticipated that another human life would be taken. <p>HB 188 helps ensure that the State is providing clear and concise instructions when considering its most severe punishment. A fair justice system is absolutely vital to ensuring a healthy democracy that encourages the people's trust, and HB 188 aims to ensure such fairness in capital jury proceedings.</p>	
HB 2224 By: Hernandez	Relating to the authority of a municipality to alter speed limits.	Transportation 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	<p>Counties can reduce the speed limit to as low as 20 mph in unincorporated areas without an engineering or traffic study. Municipalities have the authority to establish a 25 mph speed limit if they determine a roadway's current speed limit is unreasonable or unsafe, provided they conduct an engineering or traffic study. HB 2224 would allow municipalities to have the same options as counties.</p> <p>HB 2224 will allow municipalities to declare a speed limit of not lower than 20 mph in residential streets if they determine a roadway's current speed limit is unreasonable or unsafe without needing an engineering or traffic investigation.</p> <p>HB 2224 enables municipalities to set a safer speed limit in residential areas without time-consuming and costly engineering studies. Studies show that pedestrians and bicyclists struck by vehicles traveling at 20 mph have only a 5% chance of dying, compared to a 45% fatality rate for vehicles traveling at 30 mph. This practical and timely approach can help decrease pedestrian injuries and fatalities on the road.</p>	<u>Favorable</u>
HB 999 By: Price Guillen Allison Oliverson	Relating to the effect of certain reductions in a health benefit plan enrollee's out-of-pocket expenses for certain prescription drugs on enrollee cost-sharing requirements.	Health Care Reform, Select 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent	<p>Copay assistance programs help many Texans cover deductibles, copays, and coinsurances. Without them, some patients may go without medication, skip doses to save money, or choose between treatment and essential needs like food and housing. Recently, Texas has seen a rise in Pharmacy Benefit Managers (PBMs) implementing "accumulator policies" designed to prevent patients from accessing copay assistance benefits and deny them the ability to apply them towards their deductible or annual out-of-pocket maximum.</p> <p>HB 999 seeks to address this issue by requiring health benefit plans covering prescription drugs or pharmacy benefit managers to apply any coupon or other out-of-pocket expense reduction to an enrollee's deductible, copayment, cost-sharing responsibility, or out-of-pocket maximum for prescription drug benefits.</p> <p>HB 999 applies to drugs covered by the enrollee's health benefit plan in the following situations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The drug doesn't have a generic equivalent or interchangeable biological product; or The enrollee has obtained access to the prescription drug through prior authorization, step therapy, or the health benefit plan issuer's exceptions and appeals process. 	<u>Favorable</u>

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			HB 999 seeks to offer many underserved patients and their families access to life-saving treatments at a lower cost through copay assistance programs.	
HB 2719 By: Ashby	Relating to the powers of the Texas Historical Commission over historic sites in this state.	Culture, Recreation & Tourism 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	<p>The statute regarding the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) jurisdiction over historical sites and its authority regarding real property has not been updated for some time. HB 2719 provides updates to allow THC more authority to acquire property relevant to Texas history and to benefit from retail operations.</p> <p>HB 2719 authorizes THC to acquire real property for the historic sites system via gift or other methods. THC would also be allowed to renovate, restore, acquire property, or construct improvements. HB 2719 expands the jurisdiction of THC by removing the current list of historic sites and parks identified as its jurisdiction and defining "historic site" as real property significant to the state's history that THC administers or acquires for public use. HB 2719 allows THC to establish, manage, and operate souvenir retail services. HB 2719 would enable THC to sell souvenir items online, hire employees, contract with a nonprofit organization to assist in retail operations and establish procurement procedures and policies in collaboration with the Texas Comptroller and the Department of Information Resources.</p> <p>HB 2719 additionally creates the Texas Historical Commission Retail Operations Fund, a special fund that supports THC retail operations. The fund will be administered by the Texas Comptroller as directed by THC. It will consist of revenue from THC retail operations as well as interest and income from the fund's assets. This fund will be separate from the historic courthouse preservation fund, and appropriated funds will not be allocated to the newly established fund. HB 2719 outlines this fund's specific uses to benefit Texas historical sites or to support THC retail operations.</p> <p>HB 2719 increases the cap for grants provided through the historic courthouse preservation program from a cap of six million to ten million.</p>	<u>Favorable</u>
HB 3698 By: Landgraf	Relating to expanding access to the protective order registry and the inclusion of certain information regarding a person who is the subject of a protective order in that registry.	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	<p>Texans have raised concerns about the accessibility and effectiveness of the protective order registry. The registry includes people subject to a protective order. It currently does not require the inclusion of aliases, nicknames, or misspellings, which can make it difficult to locate an individual's protective order information. In addition, state magistrates do not have access to the same level of restricted information as other officials, such as district attorneys and peace officers.</p> <p>HB 3698 seeks to address these issues by expanding the publicly accessible information in the protective order registry maintained by the Office of Court Administration (OCA). The bill requires the registry to include common name misspellings and known aliases of individuals subject to a protective order. Furthermore, HB 3698 grants magistrates access to certain restricted registry information.</p> <p>By implementing these changes, HB 3698 makes it easier for Texans to search for and access information in the protective order registry. Additionally, it ensures that magistrates have the necessary information to make</p>	<u>Favorable</u>

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			informed decisions in cases involving protective orders, improving the overall effectiveness of the registry.	
HB 1518 By: Darby	Relating to the examination of appraisal services for an appraisal management company.	Licensing & Administrative Procedures 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	<p>The 82nd Legislature Passed HB 1146, creating more regulatory oversight by the Texas Appraiser Licensing and Certification Board (TALCB) for appraisal management companies (AMC) and how internal appraisal reviews are completed. HB 1146 requires AMCs to perform extremely extensive reviews of an appraisal to conform with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) post-sale, which is of little value to the consumer and, ultimately, does not change the value of the property.</p> <p>HB 1518 seeks to expedite the appraisal review process while minimizing costs. HB 1518 removes redundant requirements for additional reviews by an AMC by replacing language that outlines an examiner must only be knowledgeable of current USPAP when examining current appraisal services. Under HB 1518, an AMC must keep records of the qualifications of the examiner who conducted an appraisal services examination.</p> <p>HB 1518 gives AMCs greater flexibility to perform reviews and retains consumer protection by internal reviews through lenders and USPAP.</p>	<u>Favorable</u>
HB 1666 By: Capriglione	Relating to the commingling of funds by digital asset service providers.	Pensions, Investments & Financial Services 7 Ayes 0 Nays 0 Present Not Voting 2 Absent	<p>Over 8.5 million Texas have invested in cryptocurrencies and other digital assets. About 15% of adults surveyed by the Pew Research Center who own cryptocurrency were low-income. Digital asset service providers facilitate and maintain custody of the customers’ digital assets. Third-party exchange or digital asset service providers cannot operate in the state of Texas unless they have a money transmission license. Recently, these companies have betrayed their customer’s trust by commingling investor funds with their corporate assets, which led to the loss of billions in investments. HB 1666 aims to regulate digital asset service providers that serve more than 500 customers in Texas or have at least \$10 million in customer funds and that hold a money transmission license.</p> <p>HB 1666 would prohibit these digital asset service providers from commingling (combining) customer funds with the company's corporate assets. Additionally, HB 1666 would prohibit digital asset service providers from using one customer’s funds to secure or guarantee another transaction or to maintain a customer’s funds in a way that would prevent the customer from entirely withdrawing their funds. HB 1666 requires the digital asset service provider to maintain enough reserves to cover customer obligations. HB 1666 outlines how the provider may keep these reserves and do not have to create a separate account between the reserves and the customer’s asset accounts . HB 1666 requires a provider to create a plan to allow customers to review a quarterly accounting of any liabilities and the customer’s digital assets held in reserve. An auditor must be able to access this information when customers can.</p> <p>HB 1666 requires providers to submit an annual report to the Texas Department of Banking Providers and provide evidence of outstanding liabilities to customers, proof of customer assets held by the provider, and attestation by an auditor that the information is accurate. The auditor has to be a licensed independent certified public accountant licensed in the U.S. with their attestation standards adopted by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. HB 1666 authorizes the Department of Banking to suspend and revoke the digital</p>	<u>Favorable with Concerns</u>

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			<p>asset service provider’s money transmission license if they do not comply. The Finance Commission of Texas may adopt rules to administer and enforce the bill.</p> <p>HB 1666 provides a framework to regulate digital asset service providers. More than 90% of Texas's current digital asset service providers would be regulated under this bill. However, there are some concerns. Under the bill, the department has no recourse outside of revoking the money transmission license. An amendment to authorize the Department of Banking to bring penalties like injunctions would improve the bill. In addition, selected digital assets such as fiat currency and stable coins shall not commingle funds with the exception of allowing their funds to be invested in government obligations (debt) or stored in the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation insured account. An amendment to permit providers to add funds into customer’s accounts if discrepancies are found in order to meet their customer or investors’ obligation would improve the bill. If the standard was violated and funds were lost, the bill does not address how consumers would be compensated.</p>	
<p>HB 995 By: Muñoz, Jr. Frazier</p>	<p>Relating to sheriff’s department disability leave in certain counties.</p>	<p>County Affairs 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Municipalities in Texas with a population of 10,000 or more can establish civil service systems for police and fire departments to promote professionalism and political neutrality. Under this system, officers injured in the line of duty can take up to a year of leave to recover and return to duty. However, in counties with a population of 500,000 or more, the Sheriff’s Office Civil Service only guarantees recovery time for officers if approved by the civil service commission.</p> <p>HB 995 addresses this discrepancy by requiring Sheriff’s Office Civil Service in counties with a population of 500,000 or more to grant up to a year of leave for officers injured in the line of duty, allowing them to recover and return to work. After one year, the county commissioners court can extend the leave at full or reduced pay. If the leave is not extended or their monthly salary is reduced below 60%, then HB 995 also permits employees to retire on a pension (if a pension fund member) until they can return to duty.</p> <p>Employees may also use accumulated sick leave, vacation time, and other time before being placed on temporary leave if pension benefits are unavailable and the full-pay year and any extensions have expired. Under HB 995, recovered employees must be reinstated with the same rank and seniority. Employees may also voluntarily do the work of or donate leave time to colleagues who are temporarily disabled to maintain their salary until they return to duty.</p> <p>HB 995 ensures equitable treatment and support for injured officers in larger counties, reinforcing the value placed on the well-being and job security of those who protect and serve Texas communities.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>

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<p>HB 1212</p> <p>By: Jetton Bhojani Allison</p>	<p>Relating to verification of excused absences from public school for the purpose of observing religious holy days.</p>	<p>Public Education</p> <p>12 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 1 Absent</p>	<p>Current law grants excused absences to students on certain religious holy days. Districts may determine the requirements for students to obtain the excuse. Some school districts require a note from a religious leader for an excused absence. This requirement may be unrealistic and impose barriers to all religions practicing freely. Additionally, certain religious holy days are based on the Lunar Calendar and do not follow a set date each year.</p> <p>HB 1212 seeks to remove barriers to be excused for religious observances for students by removing the requirement of documentation from religious leaders and allowing a note from a parent</p> <p>HB 861 would allow more Texas families to celebrate religious holy days that may not be recognized by their school district but are an important part of their culture and identity.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
<p>HB 1277</p> <p>By: Cain Moody Leach Thompson, Senfronia Patterson</p>	<p>Relating to pedestrian use of a sidewalk.</p>	<p>Transportation</p> <p>11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>When walking along a roadway without sidewalks, pedestrians must walk on the left roadside or, if possible, the shoulder facing oncoming traffic. Failure to do so could result in the offense of a pedestrian in a roadway. Following the arrest of an individual for this offense during Winter Storm Uri, this requirement has been identified as overly prescriptive and obscure.</p> <p>HB 1277 repeals the requirement to walk on the left side or the roadway shoulder facing oncoming traffic when walking along a roadway without sidewalks. HB 1277 helps to ensure that pedestrians are not unnecessarily stopped, cited, or detained by law enforcement when sidewalks are inaccessible.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
<p>HB 555</p> <p>By: Vasut</p>	<p>Relating to the duration of a special open hunting season for game animals and certain game birds taken by persons under 17 years of age</p>	<p>Culture, Recreation & Tourism</p> <p>7 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 2 Absent</p>	<p>Youth hunting for white-tailed deer and turkey spans multiple days in January and two days in October for Northern and Southern Texas. Special youth hunting seasons can encourage younger generations to engage in outdoor activities, while also learning valuable trade knowledge and skills from their elders.</p> <p>HB 555 extends youth hunting, a special open hunting season for persons under 17 years old from two consecutive days to a minimum of seven consecutive days. This extension applies explicitly to the hunting of game animals or game birds. HB 555 requires the Parks and Wildlife Commission to adopt the necessary rules to enact the bill's provisions. HB 555 would not impact other provisions relating to youth hunting like youth participants being required to be accompanied by an adult.</p> <p>One concern within the hunting community is that extending the youth hunting season could conflict with regular hunting seasons. Special youth hunting seasons occur before traditional hunting seasons for increased safety measures for youth.</p> <p>Extending youth hunting would provide additional days and opportunities for quality outdoor time with family and friends.</p>	<p><u>Favorable with Concerns</u></p>

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<p>HB 1736 By: Leach</p>	<p>Relating to the extent of a defendant's criminal responsibility for the conduct of a conspirator in a capital murder case and the review of certain convictions by the Board of Pardons and Paroles.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence 9 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent</p>	<p>Functionally, Texas law sees almost no distinction between a conspirator and the principal person who committed an offense, making both individuals equally criminally responsible for a felony, which may result in capital punishment for an individual who did not commit murder. This is often called the Law of Parties, which essentially dictates that if, in conspiring to commit a felony offense, a secondary, more severe, offense occurs by one member of the party, all members are culpable so long as the secondary felony was in furtherance of the primary crime and could have been reasonably predicted by the conspirators. The Law of Parties often applies regardless of an individual's awareness of the possibility of the secondary felony occurring.</p> <p>HB 1736 seeks to remedy this by clarifying how an individual may be charged with capital murder under the law of parties. A person can be charged in this manner if they are a major participant in the conspiracy, or in an attempt to carry out the conspiracy, act with reckless indifference to human life, or if the murder was committed in furtherance of the primary offense.</p> <p>Additionally, under HB 1736, the issue of whether the defendant anticipated that a life may be taken during the primary offense cannot be considered by a jury imposing the death penalty as an alternative for whether or not the defendant actually caused a death. HB 1736 also requires the Board of Pardon and Paroles review the criminal conviction of all individuals sentenced to capital punishment under the law of parties regarding the commission of a felony in order to identify individuals that should be recommended to the Governor for clemency.</p> <p>The American justice system bases punishment on the harm caused, the individual's mental state, and the severity of their conduct. HB 1736 provides much-needed clarity for courts considering cases under the Law of Parties, so that those not intending or participating in murder can avoid the state's harshest punishment, potentially saving lives in Texas.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
<p>HB 2060 By: Capriglione Slawson Lalani Cook</p>	<p>Relating to the creation of the artificial intelligence advisory council.</p>	<p>State Affairs 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>As state agencies increasingly adopt artificial intelligence (AI) to enhance government services, increasing complexity and advancements in AI technology demand more oversight. HB 2060 seeks to address this by establishing an Artificial Intelligence Advisory Council, modeled after Vermont's AI Task Force, to study and monitor AI usage by state agencies.</p> <p>HB 2060 requires the council be composed of seven members, including four Governor appointees, and one appointee from the Executive Director of the Department of Information Resources (DIR), the Speaker of the House, and the Lieutenant Governor. The council will assess the need for a state code of ethics for AI systems usage and suggest actionable steps for state agencies that do not require new legislation. HB 2060 also requires the council to review AI systems currently in use and assess the effect of these systems on the constitutional rights of Texans as well as the potential benefits and risks to the state. The council must submit its findings in a report to the 89th Legislature no later than December 2024.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>

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			AI, like many other technologies, is inevitable and can simplify processes for many state agencies. However, there are few guardrails for new and emerging technologies. HB 2060 seeks to balance the benefits of implementing AI systems with the potential risks and liabilities to Texas and its residents.	
HB 2007 By: Martinez Leach Holland	Relating to a certificate of merit in certain actions against certain licensed or registered professionals.	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence 7 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	In 2019, the Texas Legislature passed SB 1928, which took the certificate of merit requirement for plaintiffs who sue design professionals, such as engineers and architects, and expanded it to all claimants against design professionals, such as third-party claimants and counterclaimants. A certificate of merit is a sworn statement issued by an independent third-party certifying that the claim being brought against a design professional is factually and legally supportable. SB 1928 had an unintended consequence for design-build projects, where if an owner sues the general contractor for both construction and design defects, the general contractor would have to get a certificate of merit against their engineer or architect for the design and defects, thus admitting liability against their team where there may not be any, and therefore losing insurance coverage. HB 2007 seeks to resolve this issue by exempting third-party plaintiffs, who are part of a design-build firm or team, from filing an affidavit in cases where the design-build project has a governmental entity that uses a single entity for both design and construction services. This clarification will ensure that design-build firms or teams do not implicate themselves in arbitration or litigation. HB 2007 would alleviate the insurance coverage issues created by SB 1928.	<u>Favorable</u>
HB 422 By: VanDeaver	Relating to remotely conducting depositions, hearings, and other proceedings in juvenile cases	Criminal Jurisprudence 9 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent	During the COVID-19 pandemic, juvenile detention hearings were authorized to occur remotely. This saved facility employees and youth valuable time, as many juvenile facilities are in rural areas of the state, sometimes hundreds of miles away. Additionally, because many employees don't have access to secure law enforcement vehicles (only 30% of transfers were performed by the sheriff's department), not traveling is a safer option. Currently, a remote option is not available, which once again requires all involved parties to sometimes travel up to 10 hours a day to attend a meeting that may only last 10 minutes. HB 422 seeks to address this by authorizing a juvenile court to conduct a hearing or proceeding remotely without the consent of the involved parties unless such consent is required by federal law or the Constitution. HB 422 would also require that all involved parties participate in such a proceeding. Remote hearings and proceedings have proven incredibly useful, correlating with higher participation rates. This, in conjunction with improved timeliness and safety, underscore that remote hearings are a viable option that is helpful to all parties.	<u>Favorable</u>

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<p>HB 420 By: Slawson</p>	<p>Relating to the offense of providing an alcoholic beverage to a minor; increasing a criminal penalty.</p>	<p>Licensing & Administrative Procedures 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>Currently it is an offense for a person to make available, to purchase, or to give alcohol to a minor with criminal negligence, or disregard for the minor’s safety. HB 420 enhances the offense to a state jail felony if, as a result of the person providing alcohol, the minor causes another person to have serious bodily injury or death.</p> <p>Under the Alcohol and Beverage code minors are persons under 21 years of age. Therefore, this bill would not apply to parents giving alcohol to their children, which is permissible under Texas law. It would apply to a parent providing alcohol to a minor that is not their child. Some concerns have been raised about how broadly the term “to provide” alcohol can be used. For example, under the bill, this could include children accessing alcohol from a liquor cabinet. An amendment that addresses this concern would improve the bill.</p>	<p><u>Favorable with Concerns</u></p>
<p>HB 26 By: Ordaz</p>	<p>Relating to the permitting of medical waste facilities by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.</p>	<p>Environmental Regulation 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Texas residents and local/state elected officials have been caught off guard by the emergence of hazardous material processing facilities in their communities. These medical waste facilities can obtain state permits and begin operations without public notification. One example, in El Paso, was less than one mile from residences, schools, parks, places of worship, and tribal land. The community had no opportunity to engage in the permitting process before the waste facility began operating. Therefore, petitioning and ceasing operations of the facility was much more burdensome for the community. These facilities present risks to nearby populations, such as fire, contamination of air and water, and heightened exposure to pathogens and toxins. HB 26 seeks to increase transparency during the medical waste facility permitting process with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ).</p> <p>HB 26 requires permit applicants intending to construct, operate, or maintain a medical waste facility to store, process, or dispose of medical waste to notify certain elected state officials and local governing bodies within 30 days of filing their application. The applicant must inform the state representative and senator, the county commissioners court, the municipality governing body, the district board of trustees, and the indigenous tribal council where the facility will be or is located. The applicant must submit proof of this notification to TCEQ.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
<p>HB 2741 By: Smith</p>	<p>Relating to the duties and composition of the Specialty Courts Advisory Council.</p>	<p>Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Juvenile family drug court programs are not currently listed as specialty treatment courts. Current statute requires the Specialty Court Advisory Council to provide their recommendations to the Criminal Justice Division in the Governor’s office. However, prior law was changed to give the Office of Court Administration (OCA) oversight of council recommendations, causing confusion on who is supposed to receive these recommendations. The Governor appoints nine judges to the Specialty Court Advisory Council, with four of them being judges with experience in specific types of specialty courts, limiting the pool of judges who can serve.</p> <p>HB 2741 adds juvenile family drug court programs to the list of specialty courts for the Specialty Court Advisory Council. HB 2741 expands the council's duties to make recommendations to the Texas Judicial Council and the OCA regarding best practices for specialty courts, along with the Criminal Justice Division. Regarding the council’s composition, HB 2741 would change the current structure of having judges who represent certain specialty courts to allow judges with experience in at least one specialty court to be appointed.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>

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<p>HB 2411</p> <p>By: Talarico Oliverson Leo-Wilson Howard Zwiener</p>	<p>Relating to the use of opioid antagonists on public and private school campuses and at or in transit to or from off-campus school events.</p>	<p>Public Education</p> <p>13 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent</p>	<p>The fentanyl overdose crisis in Texas is a growing epidemic. Teens may be especially susceptible to overdosing – they may unknowingly take an Adderall-like drug laced with fentanyl, or even mistake brightly colored fentanyl-laced pills for candy. HB 2411 will require every school district to adopt a policy for the maintenance, administration, and disposal of opioid antagonists for students grade 6-12. The Policy would be optional for elementary, charter, and private schools. Under HB 2411, the policy would mandate that schools have at least one personnel or volunteer trained in the usage of an opioid antagonist, like naloxone, present during school hours. That person would be authorized to administer an opioid antagonist to a person experiencing an opioid-related drug overdose. The policy would also establish the number of an opioid antagonist(s) available at each campus and require they be securely stored and quickly accessible to the trained administrator.</p> <p>HB 2411 directs the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services (HHSC) committee to work with the commissioner of education on rules regarding opioid antagonist inventory and necessary training for the personnel or volunteers authorized to administer the opioid antagonist. This training must include instruction on recognizing signs and symptoms of opioid-related overdose and the administration and proper disposal of an opioid antagonist.</p> <p>Reporting of Opioid-Antagonist Administration Reporting of opioid antagonist administration must include the age of the person receiving the opioid antagonist, the person's affiliation with the school, the location of the administration, the number of doses given, and the title of the person who administered the opioid antagonist. The report shall be submitted to the school district, the medical personnel who prescribed the opioid antagonist, and the commissioner of state health services no later than 10 days after the antagonist was administered.</p> <p>Prescription of Opioid Antagonist Any person with the authority to prescribe may prescribe opioid antagonists in the name of the school district. They must provide the school with signed instructions related to the administration of the opioid antagonist. Supervision by the prescribing authority entails periodic reviews of the order and telecommunication accessibility. Orders issued must include the name and signature of the prescribing authority, the name of the school district, how much opioid antagonist is given, and the date of the issue.</p> <p>Immunity from Liability A person acting in good faith cannot be held liable for their action or inaction in the event of any administration of opioid antagonists, including the administration, storage, and disposal of opioid antagonists. It is important to note that the administration of naloxone has no effect on someone who does not have opioids in their system.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
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			It is important that the State uses every tool at its disposal to prevent students overdosing on opioids. Naloxone is a safe and effective drug that has saved thousands of lives. Protecting Texas children is paramount, and HB2411 is one step toward ensuring their safety.	
HB 2306 By: Hefner	Relating to the prosecution of the criminal offense of voyeurism.	Criminal Jurisprudence 9 Ayes 0 Nays 0 PNV 0 Absent	Current voyeurism laws are ill-equipped to regulate advances in technology that may allow someone to invade the privacy of Texans without being on the premises. Offenders are able to use technology like drones to take images of or remotely watch vulnerable individuals. HB 2306 seeks to address this issue by updating Texas voyeurism laws. HB 2306 adds remote observation of another individual without their consent, through the use of electronic means, to the list of prosecutable voyeurism offenses. HB 2306 is a sensible update that helps keep Texans safe in an ever-changing technological landscape.	<u>Favorable</u>
HB 3937 By: Johnson, Julie	Relating to a criminal justice system sentencing database established by the Office of Court Administration of the Texas Judicial System.	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	There is currently no accessible statewide sentencing database, leaving lawmakers and the public unaware of what is happening in the criminal justice system. The Office of Court Administration (OCA) has been planning on developing a case-level data collection system, but requirements must be set to make this data accessible to the public and policymakers. HB 3937 requires OCA to establish a statewide digital database of sentencing information on those convicted of a Class B misdemeanor or higher offense. The database will include the type of offense, length of incarceration, the amount and type of bail, penalty enhancements, and other pertinent sentencing information. This database will also have de-identified case data like the defendant's age, zip code, indigence status, race, ethnicity, and gender. This information will not be required to be removed following an order of expunction. Sentencing data will only be required to be provided if it occurred on or after January 1st, 2024 and OCA needs to start publishing data no later than April 1st, 2024. HB 3937 specifies that data must be submitted within OCA's chosen period after the disposition of a defendant's case. OCA must update the database monthly, ensure it is publicly accessible and free, and make it searchable by each data element and the county and circuit where the court is located. An annual report must be provided to the governor and legislature about data compiled in the database. HB 3937 increases transparency in the criminal justice system by providing the public and the legislature with sentencing information. Transparency on sentencing will allow the public to know if there are any disparities in the criminal justice system and enable policymakers to use this data to work on solutions to address any disparities.	<u>Favorable</u>