



# Texas Legislative Study Group

An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

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## LSG Floor Report For POSTPONED BUSINESS UNTIL 9:00 AM – Friday, April 28, 2023

<p><b>HB 3447</b></p> <p>By: Bonnen   Paul   Anderson</p>	<p>Relating to the establishment and administration of the Texas Aerospace Research and Space Economy Consortium and the Texas Space Commission.</p>	<p>State Affairs</p> <p>11 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>HB 3447 establishes the Texas Space Commission, the Space Exploration and Aeronautics Research Fund, and the Aerospace Research and Space Economy Consortium. HB 3447 aims to secure Texas' position as a leader in space operations and further integrate aerospace and space industries in the state's economy.</p> <p><b><i>Texas Space Commission</i></b></p> <p>The commission would be overseen by a nine-member board of directors. The Governor and Lieutenant Governor would each select three appointees, and the three remaining members would be appointed by the governor from a list provided by the Speaker. Under HB 3447, the nine-member board, is responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing financial services to support aerospace development and infrastructure in Texas;</li> <li>• Managing and implementing agreements with local and federal government agencies, nonprofits, and educational institutions;</li> <li>• Partnering with the consortium to create educational opportunities;</li> <li>• Developing projects that advance space-related economic development as a part of annual strategic planning; and</li> <li>• Establishing the Space Exploration and Aeronautics Research Fund to award grants to eligible entities.</li> </ul> <p>The commission must submit an annual report to the legislature in December.</p> <p><b><i>Space Exploration and Aeronautics Research Fund</i></b></p> <p>The Space Exploration and Aeronautics Research Fund would establish a trust fund outside of the state treasury, administered by the Commission in collaboration with the Comptroller. The fund will consist of donations, grants, and gifts provided to the commission as well as funding appropriated by the Legislature. HB 3447 specifies that the fund will support grants to eligible entities, including businesses, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, and government entities involved in space exploration, research, or aeronautics industry. Grants awarded by the fund will support the development of emerging technologies, space exploration and flight research, and workforce training. HB 3447 requires the commission to develop administrative procedures that guide distribution of funding.</p> <p><b><i>Aerospace Research &amp; Space Economy Consortium</i></b></p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
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			<p>The consortium will be a nine-member executive committee composed of representatives from Rice University, Texas A&amp;M University System, the University of Texas System, as well as appointees of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, and Speaker. HB 3447 tasks the consortium with identifying research opportunities that promote space-related economic development in Texas. HB 447 requires the consortium to make recommendations to the commission.</p> <p>HB 3447 is an investment in science, technology, engineering, and math that enables the state to remain competitive in the growing space industry. The investments outlined in HB 3447 may result in more opportunities and well-paying jobs for all Texans.</p>	
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**LSG Floor Report For Major State Calendar House Bills – Friday, April 28, 2023**

<p><b>HB 400</b> By: Klick</p>	<p>Relating to innovation grant programs to support residency training programs in psychiatric specialty fields and recruitment, training, and retention programs in behavioral health fields.</p>	<p>Higher Education 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>After the devastation of the Robb Elementary Shooting, Speaker Phelan commissioned the Select Committee on Youth, Health, and Safety to investigate the mental health service needs in Texas. The committee identified a critical workforce shortage across mental health and behavioral fields that denied over 2,000 Texans the treatment they needed.</p> <p>HB 400 seeks to increase the number of mental and behavioral health professionals in Texas by creating two new grant programs: The Psychiatric Specialty Innovation Grant Program and The Behavioral Health Innovations Grant Program.</p> <p><b><i>Speciality Innovation Grant Program</i></b> HB 400 directs the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to use available funds to establish The Psychiatric Speciality Innovation Grant Program. This program will provide incentive payments to medical schools offering innovative residency training programs designed to draw specialists in pediatric and adult psychiatric care to Texas.</p> <p>HB 400 requires that 60% of the yearly grant funding be directed to pediatric psychiatric care programs, while 40% is allocated to adult psychiatric care programs. Priority will be given to medical schools with innovative residency programs in rural and underserved areas.</p> <p><b><i>The Behavioral Health Innovations Grant Program</i></b> Under HB 400, THECB shall use available funds to establish the Behavioral Health Innovation Grant Program, which will allocate grants to higher education institutions offering inventive recruitment, training, and retention programs to expand the mental health professional workforce. This includes offering salary increases or stipends to faculty teaching additional students in mental health-related degree or certificate programs. When awarding grants, the board must prioritize applicants proposing to:</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enhance existing programs</li> <li>● Establish or maintain programs serving rural or underserved areas</li> <li>● Partner with other institutions to create joint programs or public schools to implement early recruitment in high school</li> <li>● Establish or maintain a program that incentivizes professionals to work at least three consecutive years post-graduation in a behavioral health facility</li> <li>● Establish or maintain a degree or certificate program to educate professionals in specialties that face significant workforce shortages, or</li> <li>● Establish or maintain a psychiatric fellowship program that serves correctional facilities or inpatient psychiatric facilities.</li> </ul> <p>HB 400 allows both programs to seek federal funding and accept gifts, grants, and donations for implementation. The THECB will be responsible for administering the rules for these programs. In establishing rules for The Psychiatric Speciality Innovation Grant Program, the board shall consult with each medical school in the state. Rules for the Behavioral Health Innovation Grant Program shall be established in consultation with the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council. Grants for both programs cannot exceed \$1 million, and recipient institutions must submit an annual spending report to the board. The board can use up to 5% of each program's general revenue for administrative expenses.</p>	
<p><b>HB 504</b> By: Wu   Moody   Reynolds   Bhojani</p>	<p>Relating to the issuance of a warrant authorizing the use of a no-knock entry by a peace officer.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>The lightly regulated use of no-knock warrants creates an unstable and dangerous situation for both citizens and law enforcement, resulting in the deaths of at least 81 individuals and 13 officers between 2010 and 2016. The purpose of no-knock entry is to catch an accused individual off guard, ideally in the act of committing an offense. Currently, law enforcement must establish probable cause then seek an affidavit for search, seizure, or arrest for no-knock entry from a judge or magistrate.</p> <p>HB 504 prohibits a magistrate from issuing a warrant that authorizes no-knock entry, except under limited conditions. These conditions are; a request made with a statement approving the use of a no-knock entry, signed by the chief administrator of the agency seeking the warrant, and when the officers executing the warrant are in uniform or clearly identifiable as an officer. The only officials authorized under HB 504 to issue a no-knock entry under the aforementioned conditions would be; a district court judge, a statutory county court judge, or a judge of a county or municipal court who is a state-licensed attorney. Additionally, in a county that does not have either a municipal court of record and a judge or county court judge who is a state- licensed attorney, or a statutory county court judge, any magistrate may authorize a no-knock warrant.</p> <p>There are many concerns when it comes to no-knock warrants, including the potential infringement on Fourth Amendment rights guaranteeing protection from unreasonable search and seizure. Additionally, no-knock</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			warrants pose a particular danger in a state like Texas, because of Castle Doctrine. Most citizens live with the understanding that if someone enters their home unannounced, they are within their right to defend themselves without question. This poses a risk to any law enforcement officer who may enter a home unannounced. HB504 is a step towards solving these issues and moving toward a more fair justice system.	
<b>HB 3659</b> By: Hefner   Moody   Cook   Slawson   Ordaz	Relating to civil asset forfeiture proceedings, to the seizure and forfeiture of certain property, and to the reporting and disposition of proceeds and property from civil asset	Criminal Jurisprudence  9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Concerns have been raised regarding the current evidentiary standard that the state must meet in order to seize an individual's assets in connection with a crime. Some have expressed that this standard is not high enough to allow for due process, and may leave innocent individuals without their property for extended periods of time. Additionally, disclosure regarding the seizure of assets by law enforcement is required by current law, but only occurs once a year through statewide aggregate data from the Office of the Attorney General (OAG). This data does not provide adequate insight into how asset forfeiture is handled statewide. This prevents necessary transparency and keeps interested parties from knowledge that may be necessary to address the issue.  HB 3659 seeks to address this issue in several ways. First, the bill exempts property that is contraband from civil asset forfeiture if it is not illegal to possess and is worth less than \$2,500. The bill also raises the evidentiary standard for the state in an asset forfeiture proceeding regarding contraband or substitute property from a “preponderance of the evidence” to “clear and convincing evidence.”  HB 3659 requires that a law enforcement agency engaged in civil asset forfeiture submit a monthly report to the OAG. The report must contain all information required by the annual audit by the county commissioners court or governing body of a municipality under those provisions, as well as the number of seizures challenged or not challenged by an owner or interest holder of the property. If law enforcement did not engage in asset forfeiture during a given month, they must indicate that on the monthly report. The bill also requires that the OAG establish a standard form for the report and publish it to their website monthly. This report must include each law enforcement agency's aggregate information, the total value of proceeds, and property seized by all agencies throughout the month. The report may not include any identifying information regarding the owners of the property, or the location, vehicle identification number, or serial number of any seized or forfeited property.  HB 3659 functions to protect individuals and their right to their property, as well as provide transparency regarding the civil asset forfeiture process for the public.	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>
<b>LSG Floor Report For Major State Calendar Senate Bills – Friday, April 28, 2023</b>				
<b>SB 10</b> By:	Relating to contributions to, benefits from, and	Pensions, Investment, and Financial	SB 10 provides a one-time cost-of-living adjustment for retired teachers and a \$5,000 supplemental payment for eligible annuitants who are at least 70 years of age. SB 10 also increases the active member and the state contribution rate from 8.25% to 9%. The most recent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) that retired teachers	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>

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<p>Bonnen   Burns   Capriglione</p>	<p>the administration of systems and programs administered by the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.</p>	<p>Services  8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>received was in 2013, but only for those who retired before 2004.</p> <p>An eligible annuitant has one of the following annuity payments disregarding any forfeiture of benefits due to a resumption of service:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standard service or disability retirement annuity payment</li> <li>• An optional service or disability retirement annuity payment to the retiree or beneficiary;</li> <li>• A 60-month retirement annuity payment or an optional lifetime retirement annuity payment followed by the death of an active member</li> <li>• An alternative payee annuity payment in lieu of benefits awarded by a qualified domestic relations</li> </ul> <p>The supplemental payment, one-time COLA, and the GS-COLA are inapplicable to the following type of annuity payments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• disability retirees with less than 10 years of service credit;</li> <li>• participants in the deferred retirement option plan concerning payments from their deferred retirement option plan accounts; or</li> <li>• retiree or active member survivor beneficiaries who receive a survivor annuity in an amount fixed by statute.</li> </ul> <p><b>One-time Cost of Living Adjustment</b> SB 10 requires TRS to make an additional one-time COLA payable to recipients that receive a monthly death or retirement benefit annuity. The eligible retiree has to meet the criteria of the legislation to be eligible for the COLA. The percentage increase of COLA is based on when the retiree retired, the member died, or the election to be an alternate payee under a qualified domestic relation occurrence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 6% COLA if the date of retirement, death, or election was before Jan. 1, 2004</li> <li>• 4% COLA if the date of retirement, death, or election was on or after Jan. 1, 2004, but before Jan. 1, 2014</li> <li>• 2% COLA if the date of retirement, death, or election was on or after 2014 but before Jan. 1, 2021.</li> </ul> <p>Under SB 10, educators or those who retire on or after January 1, 2021 will not receive the annual one-time COLA. As the bill is written, it would exclude 2021 retirees and future retirees as inflation increases, while current salaries and wages remain stagnant. SB 10 authorizes the TRS board of trustees to determine eligibility and approve the adjustment for the monthly annuities based on the bill’s provisions.</p> <p><b>One-time Supplemental Payment for Eligible Retirees</b> SB 10 requires TRS to make a one-time supplement payment of a retirement or death benefit. A one-time payment of \$5,000 would be given to eligible annuitants that are at least the age of 70 years old. It has to be payable no later than February 2024 and shall not be counted as an annuitant’s guaranteed monthly payments. The</p>	
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		<p>supplemental one-time payment does not apply to individuals if they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disability retirees with less than 10 years of service credit</li> <li>• Participants in the deferred retirement option plan, or</li> <li>• Retiree or active member survivor beneficiaries who receive a survivor annuity in a fixed amount by statute. SB 10 directs conditions to make the supplemental payment on the TRS board of trustees</li> </ul> <p><b>Gain Sharing (GS) Cost-of-Living Adjustment</b>                  SB 10 directs TRS to make cost-of-living adjustments based on the average rate of return on the investment in the TRS fund during the preceding five fiscal years. The amount payable to eligible annuitants is received every fiscal year starting the 2029 fiscal year.</p> <p>If TRS' average five-year rate of return is seven percent or greater, a one-person GS-COLA would be provided. If the investment return was an average of nine percent, TRS will provide the max of two percent GS-COLA.</p> <p>Future retirees would have to wait three years before receiving a GS-COLA on their monthly annuity. This gain-sharing COLA adjustment is eligible for an annuitant that fits the bill provisions. Meaning, that a retiree receiving the one-time COLA could receive a GS-COLA on top of their increased monthly annuity. Retirees who do not receive the one-time COLA are still eligible to receive the GS-COLA.</p> <p>The board of trustees is in control to determine the rate of investments and not the legislation.</p> <p><b>Contribution Rate Change</b>                  To pay for the contribution of the GS COLA and TRS liabilities, SB 10 increases the rate of state and active member contribution to TRS by 9%. Upon passage, this rate increase replaces the previous 8.25%. The state and active members (current teachers) would pay to remain paid eight percent until January 1, 2024. While the proposed increase in contributions is only 0.75%, many retired and active members of the Teacher Retirement System (TRS) are worried about the potential impact on their already modest salaries.</p> <p>The contribution assists in making sure that TRS is actuarially sound in addition to the legacy payments each fiscal year by the General Revenue. SB 10 authorizes the state to make a legacy payment of \$630 million each fiscal year to the TRS to fully fund an actuarially sound pension system by August 31, 2054.</p> <p>HJR 2 enables this legislation to provide benefit enhancement to TRS annuitants. SB 10 shall be enacted on January 1st 2024 upon voter approval of the constitutional amendment of HJR 2.</p>	
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LSG Floor Report For Constitutional Amendments Calendar – Friday, April 28, 2023				
<p><b>HJR 2</b> By: Bonnen   Capriglione   Burns</p>	<p>Proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide cost-of-living adjustments or other benefit enhancements to eligible annuitants of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas and providing a one-time transfer of funds for contributions, actuarially determined payments, and benefit enhancements.</p>	<p>Pensions, Investments &amp; Financial Services</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>HJR 2 is enabling legislation for SB 10. It proposes a constitutional amendment to appropriate \$3.35 billion of general revenue to provide a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and supplemental payment for eligible annuitants of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas. The Legislature may direct the comptroller of public accounts to transfer funds to TRS for the benefit enhancement if TRS is actuarially sound and the legislature appropriated the amount needed for the enhancements as directed by the TRS board of trustees.</p> <p>The funds may only be spent for the sole purpose of providing contribution, actuarial payments, and benefit enhancement to the eligible TRS annuitants. Appropriated funds will not count towards the state’s spending limits under HJR 2 because they are constitutionally dedicated</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HJR 138</b> By: Holland   Rose   González, Mary   Bell, Cecil   Zwiener</p>	<p>Proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing the use of money in the state highway fund for roadways for seaports, airports, spaceports, land ports of entry, and international bridges.</p>	<p>Natural Resources</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>Millions of people visit Texas state parks annually, increasing revenue for the state. As the number of visitors increases, there is concern about decreasing land availability for public parks, making it critically important to protect them. Polling from The Nature Conservancy shows that 83% of Texans support the constitutional amendment for the land and water conservation fund, with strong bipartisan support. This fund will aid projects and programs to preserve Texas land and protect public parks and nature.</p> <p>HJR 138 proposes a constitutional amendment establishing the Texas Land and Water Conservation Fund. The Texas Land and Water Conservation Fund is a special fund outside the state treasury. The Texas Land and Water Conservation Board may administer without legislative appropriation and use the fund to provide funding for conservation, restoration, and public access to Texas's land, water, and natural resources. The Texas Land and Water Conservation Board may create separate accounts in the fund to administer the fund or authorized projects.</p> <p>HJR 138 is enabling legislation for HB 3165. The public will vote on HJR 138 in November 2023.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

LSG Floor Report For General State Calendar – Friday, April 28, 2023				
<p><b>HB 412</b>  By: Thompson, Senfronia</p>	<p>Relating to requiring the corroboration of certain testimony in a criminal case involving a controlled substance.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence  8 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Current law requires the testimony of undercover informants in drug cases be corroborated, unless that informant is a police officer. This law was created to prevent an undercover informant from framing innocent individuals, as exemplified by a 2001 case in Tulia, Texas in which an undercover informant made numerous false accusations against Black citizens. Despite the informant in the Tulia case being a police officer, the original bill passed with an exception specifically for law enforcement testimony, leaving individuals vulnerable to false claims made by law enforcement. The issue of dishonest officers falsifying cases has persisted and resulted in numerous reopened drug convictions.</p> <p>HB 412 seeks to remedy this by prohibiting an individual from being convicted for an offense under the Texas Controlled Substances Act on the testimony of an undercover informant who is law enforcement unless the testimony is corroborated by other evidence.</p> <p>The interest of justice is never served without a thorough and clear understanding of the facts of the case. Advocates believe the word of one individual should not be enough to remove the freedom of a Texan and subject them to the criminal justice system. HB 412 aims to help ensure that the truth is pursued in criminal drug cases, and that citizens can trust in the Texas justice system.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 1561</b>  By: Smithee</p>	<p>Relating to the decision of a court of appeals not to accept certain interlocutory appeals.</p>	<p>Judiciary &amp; Civil Jurisprudence  9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>The Texas Supreme Court recently ruled that state law gives a court of appeals the ability to deny a permissive interlocutory appeal — which occurs when a ruling by a trial court is appealed while other parts of the case are still happening — as long as the court complies with the Texas Rules of Appellate Procedure that requires courts to give basic reasons for decisions. Under current law, the court does not have authority to mandate courts of appeals to accept more permissive appeals to ensure disputes are resolved efficiently.</p> <p>HB 1561 aims to solve this issue by requiring a court of appeals to provide a reason for denying an appeal, and giving the Texas Supreme Court authority to review the court's decision under an abuse of discretion standard. HB 1561 ensures that interlocutory appeals cannot be denied without a reason being provided, and that the Supreme Court has authority to review these denials.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 2162</b>  By: Dutton</p>	<p>Relating to reading instruction, assessment instruments, and interventions provided to public school students.</p>	<p>Public Education  9 Ayes, 4 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>According to the 2022 STAAR exams, half of third graders in Texas are not at grade-level reading. When a student falls behind in reading, they risk falling behind in every other subject. Education experts emphasize reading proficiency in the 3rd grade because of its positive links to future academic outcomes. HB 2162 seeks to ramp up schools' reading proficiency programs.</p>	<p><b><u>Unfavorable</u></b></p>

HB 2162 (1) requires reading assessments for kindergarten through second grade students, (2) implements reading intervention programs for failing students, and (3) makes available up to \$1,000 per student for private tutoring.

***Reading Assessments***

HB 2162 requires school districts and charter schools to administer reading instruments to test reading development and comprehension, identify students at risk for dyslexia, and ensure the reliability and validity of the test results. The results of the reading tests would determine if a student needs reading intervention practices. A school could not administer a reading assessment to a student more than three times a year.

A school superintendent, or any position that functions as such, must report the reading instrument results to the school district’s board of trustees or the governing body of the open-enrollment school district. The superintendent must also notify parents of their student’s test results and whether or not they will need a reading intervention program within 30 days of the administration of the instrument. The notification must include a description of the provided reading services and resources for the parent or guardian to use at home.

***Reading Intervention Program***

Students who require a reading intervention program would participate until a satisfactory performance on the instrument is achieved. A reading intervention program must: include targeted instruction for improvement; monitor progress; be implemented during regular school hours and in addition to core instruction; use high-quality, research-based instructional curriculum’ and be administered by a teacher who attended a literacy achievement academy (created by HB 3 during the 86th Legislature). Schools cannot require attendance of a reading intervention program in place of or during the foundation curriculum instruction or recess. The commissioner may use funds appropriated for teacher literacy achievement academies to provide assistance to schools and priority shall be given to districts with the highest rate of below-satisfactory results on the reading instrument.

HB 2162 prohibits an educator preparation program from including the three-cueing method of reading instruction, an outdated and misguided method of teaching reading.

***Private Tutoring***

HB 2162 requires schools to make tutoring service providers available to a parent or guardian whose student displays deficiencies based on reading instrument results for two consecutive years. The district or school shall contract directly with that service provider to pay the lesser of \$1,000 or the cost of the service to provide private tutoring services to the student. The money cannot be given directly to the parent or guardian.

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			<p><b>Impact</b></p> <p>While the intentions of the bill are good, the new provisions it puts in place are concerning. HB 2162 requires schools to contract with vendors to provide students private tutoring services. Even further, each student would have up to \$1,000 to choose a TEA-approved vendor, but does not include any accompanying eligibility requirements for the vendor, or any accountability metrics. Opponents of the bill also raise concerns about the third party vendor structure, which allows the agency to enter into a multi-million dollar contract outside of any public review.</p> <p>Rather than investing this \$1,000 per student in certified teachers — who are required to complete literacy achievement academy training to administer the bill’s reading intervention — it chips away at school funding for outside, private tutoring services.</p> <p>Texas needs to provide supplemental reading instruction to help students catch up to grade level. However, public, taxpayer dollars need to be invested in evidence-based, quality supplemental instruction delivered through our public schools and educators.</p>	
<p><b>HB 3390</b></p> <p>By: Hunter</p>	<p>Relating to the provision of information regarding distributed generation and certain electrical loads.</p>	<p>State Affairs</p> <p>10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>Currently, ERCOT is able to review resources on power transmission loads but not distribution systems. HB 3390 ensures ERCOT has access to distribution information necessary to account for projected demand.</p> <p>HB 3390 authorizes ERCOT to establish protocols that require transmission and distribution utilities (TDUs) that operate within the ERCOT power region to provide to the interconnecting entity information about generation that ERCOT requires to maintain system reliability.</p> <p>These requirements only apply to a generation facility that is connected at a voltage under 60 kilovolts and is capable of being connected to the utility system.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 2926</b></p> <p>By: Turner   Patterson   Neave Criado   Frazier</p>	<p>Relating to certain claims for benefits or compensation by certain public safety employees and survivors of certain public safety employees.</p>	<p>Business &amp; Industry</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>The 88th Legislature passed a bill establishing a presumption that public safety employees who caught COVID-19 contracted it as a result of their employment. However, this presumption is set to expire at the end of this fiscal year. Interested parties have noted that an extension is necessary to continue filing claims, but also to reprocess claims that were unfairly denied.</p> <p>HB 2926 extends the aforementioned presumption through September 1, 2025. The bill also requires an insurance carrier who denied a COVID-related claim before the June 14, 2021 do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reprocess the claim by October 31, 2023 using the presumption that the illness was contracted at work;</li> <li>● Notify the person by that date the result of the claim; and</li> <li>● Use the notice outlined by the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) for worker’s compensation and include information on disputing for any denied claims.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			<p>HB 2926 also expands the application of health care reimbursement procedures under the Labor Code to include all compensable claims related to diseases and illnesses contracted by public safety employees during employment. Beneficiaries of these employees may seek reimbursement or medical dispute resolution through these procedures. There is no sunset date on this provision.</p> <p>Finally, the bill expands the definition of an administrative violation by an insurance carrier or its representative to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Misrepresenting benefits relating to diseases or illness to public safety employees;</li> <li>- Failing to apply the required presumption; and</li> <li>- Denying a claim subject to that presumption without an opinion from a medical expert.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>HB 3508</b> By: Hernandez</p>	<p>Relating to the operation of public electric vehicle charging stations.</p>	<p>State Affairs 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 5 Absent</p>	<p>HB 3508 creates a plan to meet the state's expected demand for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations by encouraging competitive private investment while protecting consumers from high electricity costs. HB 3508 proposes a framework for both ERCOT and non-ERCOT utilities' participation in the public EV charging industry.</p> <p><b>Inside ERCOT</b> Under the bill, Transmission and Distribution Utilities (TDU) inside ERCOT are prohibited from directly owning, operating, or providing charging services from a public EV charging station. TDUs are also prohibited from rate-basing publicly available EV charging stations. Additionally, TDUs are allowed to own, operate, and lease EV charging stations on their own property only to serve the TDUs' vehicles.</p> <p>TDUs may provide public EV charging services only through affiliation with a subsidiary or third party if the following conditions are met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the affiliate is not subject to PUC regulations but is subject to certain provisions prohibiting market power abuse as described in the Public Utilities Regulatory Act; and</li> <li>• it is not located within 50 miles of a public EV charging station that provides EV charging as identified by the US Department of Energy alternative fuels map.</li> </ul> <p>TDUs are required to set the same rates, terms, and conditions to the affiliate and other EV charging stations within the TDU's service area and in compliance with certain PURA provisions. A TDU affiliate providing EV charging stations may not be subsidized by rates to consumers in the TDU's service area. In other words, consumers will not bear the price of constructing or maintaining EV charging stations in their monthly electric bills.</p> <p><b>Outside ERCOT</b></p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			<p>HB 3508 provides guardrails for electric utilities operating outside of ERCOT to own and operate EV charging stations. Under this framework, non-ERCOT electric utilities may directly provide EV charging services to consumers if the utility goes through a right of first refusal process and complies with rate-setting requirements established in the bill.</p> <p>The right of first refusal (ROFR) process recognizes that there may be areas in the state in which private investment of EV charging stations may be lacking or nonexistent and electric utilities may be better suited to provide EV charging stations. The process establishes criteria that must be met before an electric utility is allowed to directly provide EV charging services, and provides for neutral policies to promote competitive private investment.</p> <p>Non-ERCOT utilities authorized to directly provide EV charging services are allowed to recover reasonable and necessary costs as determined by the PUC. HB 3508 also sets out provisions that authorize a non-ERCOT utility to enter into an agreement with a person or municipality to own or operate an EV charging station in the person or municipality's property.</p> <p>With HB 3508, these necessary safeguards for both ERCOT and non-ERCOT utilities will promote private investment, expand the EV charging industry, protect consumers and lead to a cleaner future.</p>	
<p><b>HB 3741</b></p> <p>By: Canales</p>	<p>Relating to the operation of a program by the Texas Department of Transportation to allow a real property owner to plant or replace vegetation in a right-of-way.</p>	<p>Transportation</p> <p>12 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Oftentimes, vegetation on right-of-ways obstructs the visibility of businesses along the roadway.</p> <p>HB 3741 directs the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to create a program that enables landowners to plant or replace vegetation in the right-of-way of state highways that blocks visibility or enhances the property's aesthetic appeal. The program may allow planting within 500 feet of the property that abuts or adjoins the right-of-way. Landowners would bear all costs associated with planting and must use native, regionally appropriate, and pollinator-friendly plants. TxDOT's rules cannot impair the state's right to use the right-of-way for construction or reconstruction.</p> <p>HB 3741 resolves an ongoing problem for businesses and allows landowners to help enhance the appeal of their property without interfering with infrastructure</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 3772</b></p> <p>By: Thompson, Senfronia</p>	<p>Relating to combating human trafficking by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.</p>	<p>Licensing &amp; Administrative Procedures</p> <p>8 Ayes, 2 Nays,</p>	<p>HB 3772 authorizes the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) to combat human trafficking through the creation of an anti-trafficking unit, which will identify businesses in industries affected by human trafficking. TDLR will also work closely with the Attorney General's office and other task forces to coordinate efforts with local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies, as well as with any other nongovernmental organizations that combat human trafficking or assist victims.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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		0 PNV, 1 Absent	<p>Under HB 3772, the Texas Commission on Licensing and Regulation (TCLR) can create rules aimed at combating human trafficking, including conducting inspections and investigations for any program regulated by the department.</p> <p>Another key provision of HB 3772 is the protection of victims’ identities. HB 3772 ensures that victims’ personal information remains confidential and cannot be disclosed to the public, unless the Attorney General decides otherwise.</p> <p>HB 3772 represents a significant step forward in the fight against human trafficking in Texas.</p>	
<b>HB 4390</b> By: Button	Relating to the Texas Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs Grant Program.	International Relations & Economic Development  8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	<p>In Texas, apprenticeships are a helpful way to improve skills in the workforce. People can get on-the-job training, a certificate for a particular industry, and get paid while they learn. Currently, only certain jobs and programs that the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) approves are classified as Industry-Recognized Apprenticeships through the Texas Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs Grant Program.</p> <p>HB 4390 would provide the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) the ability to create a certification for "industry-recognized apprenticeship programs" or IRAPs. HB 4390 would allow the TWC to create rules establishing apprenticeship eligibility and criteria for certification of these programs. This bill would also result in these IRAPs to be eligible for state funding through the Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs Grant Program.</p> <p>The bill expands apprenticeship programs, allowing more opportunities to develop a skilled workforce. However, based on the limited requirements outlined in the bill, there are concerns about the standards IRAPs must meet. Specifically, that they will not meet the high level of training and benchmarks required of their Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Program (DOL RAP) counterparts. This is especially true in the construction industry. The DOL RAPs provide for progressively increasing wages; appropriate apprentice-to-journey worker ratios that ensure targeted instruction and the level of supervision apprentices need to guarantee their safety; training by qualified instructors; and safe equipment and facilities. They also must comply with equal opportunity requirements. As the bill is written, these standards will not be required.</p> <p>Additionally, the bill is unclear in its treatment of DOL RAPs on whether or not these existing programs will be eligible for funding through the Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Programs Grant Program.</p> <p>In 2017, the Trump Administration created an Industry-Recognized Apprenticeship Program through Executive Order. This program is no longer in existence, which is in part why this bill was filed. In the final rule for the Trump program, construction industries were excluded due to the high level of training and standards provided by DOL RAP that were more constituent with the needs of the industry. A similar carve-out would improve the bill.</p>	<b><u>Unfavorable</u></b>

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<p><b>HB 4520</b> By: Harris, Cody</p>	<p>Relating to employment and retirement consequences for an educator convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision for the sale, distribution, or display of harmful material to a minor.</p>	<p>Public Education  10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>HB 4520 expands the list of qualifying offenses in which the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) may revoke an educator license and report them to the Do Not Hire Registry, disqualifying the person from receiving Teacher Retirement System (TRS) retirement benefits..</p> <p>Under HB 4520, a person convicted of or placed on deferred adjudication community for selling, distributing, or displaying harmful material to a minor would have their educator’s license revoked, be added to the Do Not Hire Registry, and lose their TRS pension. A court clerk would notify the SBEC of a qualifying offense; then, the SBEC would inform the school, which must immediately remove the educator from campus.</p> <p>HB 4520’s offenses under Penal Code 43.24 are the same as referenced in HB 900, bringing up the same concerns about broad and vague language, such as what constitutes “harmful material” or “patently offensive.”</p> <p>It is very likely that HB 4520 seeks to further the narrative that the stories of people of color and LGBTQ folks are offensive and harmful. This bill, in conjunction with HB 900 (regulates “sexually explicit” material in public school libraries) may work to confuse and alarm current and prospective teachers. The state is already experiencing mass teacher workforce shortages, and this bill may exacerbate it. At the same time, teachers convicted of the crimes described in the bill should not be teaching. It is unclear how many people who are teachers are convicted of these offenses.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable with Concerns</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 4921</b> By: Murr</p>	<p>Relating to the establishment of an adult education pilot program by the Windham School District.</p>	<p>Corrections  8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>According to the Brookings Institute, approximately two-fifths of people entering correctional facilities do not have a high school diploma or General Educational Development (GED) credential. Research suggests that educational attainment is a key indicator of social mobility, economic stability, and criminal justice involvement. Nationally, justice-involved individuals tend to be undereducated and underemployed when compared to the general population: this is particularly troubling in Texas which has the highest prison population in the country.</p> <p>HB 4921 aims to provide justice-involved individuals between the ages of 26 and 50 greater access to educational opportunity. HB 4921 establishes a pilot adult education program in which justice-involved individuals can earn a high school diploma through a nonprofit entity collaboration with the Windham School District (WSD).</p> <p>Individuals would be eligible if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are between 26 and 50 years of age; and</li> <li>• Did not graduate from high school, pass a test required to graduate from high school, or earn a high school equivalency certificate.</li> </ul> <p>Additionally, HB 4921 requires the program to:</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter into a memorandum of understanding with at least one non-profit entity to provide adult education through the program;</li> <li>• Require that each nonprofit identify regions across the state in which they can operate; and</li> <li>• Identify at least three schools operated by WISD that are able to serve as sites for the program.</li> </ul> <p>For justice-involved individuals, educational opportunity – particularly adult education programs that improve literacy – reduces recidivism by giving individuals the knowledge and credentials generally required for employment. Rearrest and reincarceration are more likely when individuals do not have the skills, credentials, and support necessary to secure stable employment and housing. HB 4921 addresses this by expanding adult educational programming in TDCJ.</p>	
<p><b>HB 399</b> By: Collier</p>	<p>Relating to orders of nondisclosure of criminal history record information for certain misdemeanor defendants following successful completion of a period of deferred adjudication community supervision.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Texas law mandates that an individual who commits a nonviolent misdemeanor offense is not eligible to receive an automatic order of nondisclosure of their criminal record if they have been previously convicted of, or placed on deferred adjudication community supervision (DACs) for another offense, excluding fine only traffic offenses. These nondisclosure orders seal a record or a portion of a record from the general public while leaving it available to certain fields, such as law enforcement agencies. Orders of nondisclosure benefit individuals with a criminal record, as a record can act as a barrier to housing, jobs, and education. 1 in 3 Americans has a criminal record, including millions of Texans, making a second chance at nondisclosure orders for certain individuals important.</p> <p>HB 399 revises eligibility conditions for automatic orders of nondisclosure for certain misdemeanor offenses following the completion of DACs. Current statute dictates that an individual is not eligible for orders of nondisclosure if they have been previously convicted or placed on DACs for an offense other than a fine-only offense. HB 399 allows an individual with one prior misdemeanor conviction or placement on DACs to apply for an order of nondisclosure. HB 399 would give an individual a second chance at automatic nondisclosure orders.</p> <p>Individuals who complete DACs have spent time contributing to their community, paying their dues, and caring for themselves and others. These citizens deserve the opportunity for employment to rebuild their lives and move forward.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 71</b> By: Canales</p>	<p>Relating to the establishment of a program for the issuance of digital identification; authorizing a fee.</p>	<p>Homeland Security and Public Safety</p> <p>7 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Texas is not among the twenty states that piloted a digital driver's license program. The Department of Public Safety (DPS) shared that a digital driver's license solution makes it more convenient and provides added new services for Texans. HB 71 seeks to expand the accessibility of various licenses in one central digital location.</p> <p>HB 71 requires DPS to consult with the Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to establish a digital identification program. The bill encompasses “digital identification” to include a digital driver’s license, a digital personal identification certificate, a digital handgun license, and a digital hunting or fishing license. DPS will assess and upgrade DPS infrastructure to provide a digital identification solution, execute the solution, and implement a procedure that permits law enforcement agencies to accept digital identification.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			<p>HB 71 requires that all general information on these licenses, including authorization stamps issued by TPWD, be presentable on the digital identification on a wireless device. The application should be accessible on any digital device in any location, regardless of connectivity and cellular service levels. HB 71 prohibits digital identification from being used for voting purposes and authorizes DPS to charge a fee for issuing the digital identification to offset the implementation costs.</p> <p>HB 71 authorizes DPS to contract with a third-party company to create this program at no cost. HB 71 provides an added digital option for license holders. DPS has shared that this data and information is already stored in their system.</p>	
<p><b>HB 730</b> By: Frank</p>	<p>Relating to policies and procedures regarding certain suits affecting the parent-child relationship, investigations by the Department of Family and Protective Services, and parental child safety placements.</p>	<p>Juvenile Justice and Family Issues</p> <p>8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Many families who are under investigation by the Department of Family Protective Service (DFPS) are unaware of their rights regarding the investigation and struggle through a difficult and unclear process. This exacerbates an already difficult situation for both parents and case workers, that sometimes concludes with the removal of a child. HB 730 seeks to increase transparency and clarity in a DFPS investigation process from the initial contact with DFPS to the removal of the child if necessary.</p> <p>HB 730 would require that before an applicable order is issued, probable cause is shown that the following court orders are necessary: a court order requiring a guardian examination or investigation and a court order requiring the release of a child medical records or medical evaluation requested by DFPS. The showing of “probable cause” replaces “good cause” in the current statute which heightens the requirement for such orders.</p> <p>HB 730 makes an adjustment to current statute by requiring DFPS to provide written information regarding a child protection suit upon first contact with the guardian, as opposed to “as soon as possible.” This information must include an explanation that any statement a guardian makes can be used against them in a criminal court, to remove the child, or to terminate the parent child relationship. The information must also include an outline of the allegations levied against them and a verbal description and written summary of their rights moving forward. HB 730 requires that any DFPS investigator must document that this information has been provided, and mandates that DFPS adopt a form to verify that the guardian received the verbal notification and written summary. If the guardian has an attorney, this form must also be provided to them. If this process is not completed as outlined, any information gathered from the guardian may not be used against them in a civil proceeding.</p> <p>HB 730 requires the court to keep record of any ex parte hearing held for a child protection suit, and to make that record available to any party upon request. If the guardian has obtained representation, DFPS is required to provide notice of an ex parte hearing. In a suit for a temporary order to require a guardian to participate in certain family services, HB 730 prohibits the court from issuing an order that places the child outside of the home.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			<p>Regarding a parental child safety placement agreement, HB 730 requires DFPS to notify all parties of their right to confer with counsel and must provide that person with a reasonable time to do so. Additionally, the initial agreement will automatically expire upon the 30th day after the agreement is signed or the child is placed. Upon expiration, the bill outlines a re-evaluation process for additional agreements if necessarily. The bill prohibits DFPS from placing a child outside of the home under a parental child safety placement for more than 90 days, unless the agreement is signed by both the parent and their attorney. HB 730 requires children who are placed outside of the home under such an agreement to be included in any report in which DFPS is required to report the number of children in the system who are removed from their homes.</p> <p>HB 730 is a comprehensive bill that addresses several sides of a multifaceted issue. This bill will improve transparency, protect guardians, and help ensure that removal of a child is the last resort.</p>	
<p><b>HB 1715</b>  By: Canales</p>	<p>Relating to the expunction of arrest records and files relating to certain nonviolent misdemeanor offenses.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence  5 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent</p>	<p>In Texas, many individuals are placed on deferred adjudication community service (DACS) for misdemeanor and felony arrests, and are generally under the impression that upon completion, their records will be erased. Some individuals who have completed DACS may file a petition with the court for orders of nondisclosure, which would seal their records from some entities, but not all, such as law enforcement, school districts, and state licensing boards. HB 1715 seeks to remedy this by authorizing certain individuals with nonviolent misdemeanor offenses to have all records related to their arrest and conviction expunged under certain circumstances.</p> <p>HB 1715 entitles a person who has been placed under a custodial or noncustodial arrest to criminal record expungement, excluding some particular charges. Additional requirements include that the individual was placed on DACS for the offense and subsequently received a dismissal, was not required to register as a sex offender, has not been convicted of or placed on DACS for another offense other than a fine only offense, there are no charges pending that are not a fine-only offense, and not less than five years has past since the individual received the dismissal.</p> <p>HB 1715 also prohibits a business entity from publishing any criminal record information for which an expunction has been issued, and requires any private entity that compiles and distributes certain criminal record information to destroy any information related to a criminal record that has been expunged.</p> <p>1 in 3 Americans have a criminal record, including millions of Texans. It is important that those who have completed the necessary steps are allowed to move forward and begin rebuilding their lives without fear of a record following them. HB 1715 helps to ensure that.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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<p><b>HB 1455</b></p> <p>By: Anchia   Lambert   Bhojani   Rose</p>	<p>Relating to health care benefits of persons wrongfully imprisoned.</p>	<p>Pensions, Investment, and Financial Services</p> <p>7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>The 82nd Legislature amended the Tim Cole Act by permitting exonerees to receive the same health benefits afforded to employees of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). Currently, the law specifically excludes and prohibits wrongfully imprisoned individuals from adding their spouses and dependents to their health benefit plans.</p> <p>HB 1455 rectifies this issue by authorizing spouses and dependents of a person that is entitled to compensation for wrongful imprisonment to be included in the same healthcare benefits coverage. The exoneree can elect their spouse and dependents to receive the group health benefit plan coverage through the TDCJ as if they were a TDCJ employee prior to March 1, 2024 or during the open enrollment period for TDCJ employees.</p> <p>HB 1455 aims to provide coverage for spouses and dependents of the wrongfully convicted as they rebuild their lives with their families.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 1506</b></p> <p>By: Meyer</p>	<p>Relating to the statute of limitations for the offense of abandoning or endangering a child.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p> <p>8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>The current statute of limitations for the offense of abandoning or endangering a child is five years from the date of the offense. Concerns have been raised that this is an inadequate time period for a victim of such an offense to come forward and seek charges. Considering that many victims are children, it is pertinent that they are given ample time to process what has occurred and come forward when they are ready.</p> <p>HB 1506 extends the statute of limitations for the offense of abandoning or endangering a child from five years to ten years from the time of the offense. This allows victims more time to come forward and seek justice, ensuring they are given adequate time to report the crime.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 1357</b></p> <p>By: Holland</p>	<p>Relating to Medicaid reimbursement for certain medication-assisted treatments for opioid or substance use disorder.</p>	<p>Human Services</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Texas is facing an opioid and substance use disorder crisis. According to the CDC, over 5,000 people died due to drug overdoses between July 2021 and July 2022. Studies have shown that medication assisted treatment is among the most effective methods for treating opioid use disorder, as well as some other substance use disorders. It is crucial for Texans to continue having access to Medicaid reimbursements for certain medication-assisted treatments for opioid or substance use disorder. However, there is a sunset date for Medicaid reimbursement for medication-assisted treatment for opioid or certain substance use disorders.</p> <p>HB 1357 seeks to rectify this issue by repealing the provision establishing that Medicaid reimbursement for medication-assisted treatment for opioid or certain substance use disorders expires on August 31, 2023. This would ensure that this program becomes permanent. HB 1357 allows for delayed implementation if a federal authorization or waiver is required.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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<p><b>HB 1683</b></p> <p>By: Walle   Bonnen   Buckley</p>	<p>Relating to the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact; authorizing fees.</p>	<p>Public Health</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>Occupational therapists (OTs) in Texas face administrative challenges due to state licensure requirements when clients relocate or OTs need to move. This can be particularly challenging for Texas military families.</p> <p>HB 1683 seeks to establish the Occupational Therapy Licensure Compact, improving public access to OT services and enabling Texas-licensed OTs to practice in all other participating states. This would reduce licensing obstacles and lessen the administrative burden on the Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners for out-of-state OT applications.</p> <p>HB 1683 details compact provisions, including state participation, license acquisition for relocating therapists and military personnel, member states' authority over adverse actions, the Occupational Therapy Compact Commission's creation and rulemaking powers, a coordinated database, oversight and dispute resolution, construction and severability, and the process for amending or withdrawing from the compact. The Texas Board of Occupational Therapy Examiners will administer the compact in Texas and adopt necessary implementation rules.</p> <p>The OT Compact established under HB 1683 benefits all Texans, particularly military spouses, who face higher barriers to entry in state-licensed professions due to frequent relocation.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 1710</b></p> <p>By: Canales</p>	<p>Relating to notice provided to a court regarding a defendant confined in a state jail felony facility.</p>	<p>Corrections</p> <p>7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>HB 1710 implements an interim report recommendation from the 83rd Legislature's House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence. Judges who sentence a defendant to state jail aren't notified when the individual is transferred from county jail to state jail. This results in a defendant serving a longer sentence than ordered. HB 1710 requires the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) to notify a sentencing court when a justice-involved individual has been in a state jail facility for 75 days and is eligible for community supervision. In the interest of efficiency and cost, the notifications would be sent via digital communication.</p> <p>HB 1710 aims to reduce overcrowding in state jail facilities, provide sentencing courts with information to assess release, and give justice-involved individuals a chance to engage rehabilitative efforts under community supervision without delay.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 475</b></p> <p>By: Hull   Noble   Rose   Klick   Manuel</p>	<p>Relating to certain policies and procedures for health care specialty consultations in certain child abuse or neglect investigations and assessments.</p>	<p>Human Services</p> <p>7 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>The Forensic Assessment Center Network (FACN) is a group established by the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to provide pediatric expertise to Child Protective Services (CPS) concerning abuse or neglected children. The FACN reviews medical records, working with specialists, including child abuse pediatricians, to determine whether abuse or neglect occurred and offer a second opinion on the child's medical situation. Currently, parents do not have access to their child's medical records if there is suspected abuse or neglect.</p> <p>When making referrals for specialty consultations or forensic assessments for abuse or neglect cases, HB 475 would require DFPS to make such referrals to physicians who were not a part of reviewing the case, including as a</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			<p>member of the investigation review team or a multidisciplinary team. HB 475 also prohibits any healthcare practitioner who reviewed the case from providing a forensic assessment connected to the investigation.</p> <p>Before referring a child’s case for specialty consultation, DFPS must give the parent, legal guardian, or attorney all medical records used by DFPS and FACN during the investigation. During a blind peer review process to resolve different opinions of the causes of a child’s injuries or applicable health conditions, DFPS must provide the parent, legal guardian, or attorney with all medical records and the information used to resolve the case. This information would include the physicians’ names and opinions, possible conflicting conditions, all assessments conducted on the child, and the child’s medical records.</p>	
<p><b>HB 433</b> By: VanDeaver</p>	<p>Relating to the definition of a commercial fleet.</p>	<p>Transportation</p> <p>10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>Statutorily, a commercial fleet is defined as a group of at least 25 non-apportioned motor vehicles, semi-trailers, or trailers owned, operated, or leased by a corporation, limited or general partnership, limited liability company, or other business entity and used for the business purposes of that entity. Owners of less than 25 commercial vehicles have expressed that managing individual vehicle renewals at different times can be difficult.</p> <p>HB 433 aims to ease the process by decreasing the required number of vehicles to 12 vehicles to be considered a fleet for registration purposes. This change will apply to all corporations, limited or general partnerships, limited liability companies, or other business entities that own, operate, or lease such vehicles for business purposes.</p> <p>By reducing the minimum number of vehicles required for a group to be considered a commercial fleet, HB 433 makes it easier for smaller businesses to obtain the same insurance, registration, and licensing benefits as larger businesses with more vehicles.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 4835</b> By: Metcalf</p>	<p>Relating to the creation and operations of certain health care provider participation programs.</p>	<p>County Affairs</p> <p>7 Ayes 1 Nay 0 PNV 1 Absent</p>	<p>In Texas, local hospitals can choose to implement a healthcare provider participation program (LPPF), through which a healthcare-related tax is implemented on a local level. LPPFs are administered by an existing unit of local government and are designed specifically to meet federal requirements regarding eligible local funds. Since 2015, the City of Beaumont has been authorized to operate an LPPF. Local stakeholders have asked the program be transferred to Jefferson County.</p> <p>HB 4835 codifies the Jefferson County LPPF and authorizes the governing provisions of the program to the county. HB 4835 repeals Chapter 295 of the Health and Safety Code, which gave the City of Beaumont authority to operate an LPPF. The bill's provisions relating to the county health care provider participation program take effect September 1, 2025.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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<p><b>HB 4363</b></p> <p>By: Kuempel   Lalani   Bucy</p>	<p>Relating to the establishment of a scholarship program for aspiring classroom teachers.</p>	<p>Higher Education</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>Texas schools are struggling to retain teachers, with an attrition rate of approximately 25% over the past decade. In 2021, more than one in nine teachers left the workforce, citing college debt, financial instability, and insufficient preparation programs as reasons for leaving. Research conducted by the University of Houston found that those who received their preparation from a four-year institution were more likely to remain in the teaching profession than their peers who attended non-profit or for-profit preparation programs.</p> <p>HB 4363 aims to recruit and retain future teachers by establishing the Future Texas Teachers Scholarship (FTTS) Program to provide the necessary tuition, mandatory fees, and other costs of attendance to an eligible institution.</p> <p>To be eligible for this scholarship program, an educator preparation program (EPP) must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be operated by an eligible institution;</li> <li>• Provide a structured system of support to assist scholarship recipients in their successful completion of the EPP;</li> <li>• Require additional hours of clinical teaching experience for students above the minimum hours required by the State Board of Educator Certificate (SBOE);</li> <li>• Provide or facilitate opportunities for scholarship recipients to participate in learning opportunities beyond the university classroom setting; and</li> <li>• Comply with other eligibility criteria established by the coordinating board.</li> </ul> <p>For a college student to be initially eligible for a scholarship under the FTTS, the student must be a Texas resident, attend college full-time, be admitted to an eligible EPP, and pursue teaching for subjects with severe shortages or schools with mainly educationally disadvantaged students.</p> <p>Continued eligibility is contingent on a demonstrated commitment to the teaching profession, full-time status as an enrolled student and participant of an eligible EPP, making satisfactory progress toward the completion of their degree and teacher certification exam, and any other requirements adopted by the coordinating board. If students fail to meet these requirements after completing a semester, they will not receive a scholarship during the next semester. They may reestablish eligibility for FTTS in later semesters if they finish their semester of ineligibility due to failure and meet all eligibility requirements. Eligibility expires on the fourth anniversary of the student's initial scholarship award or the completion of their degree.</p> <p><b>Scholarship Amount and Use</b></p> <p>For the 2023-2024 academic year, the scholarship amount shall be \$12,000. In the following academic year, the scholarship amount will be the same unless an adjustment for inflation is necessary. The scholarship amount may not be reduced by any other financial aid the recipient receives and must be used to pay any college attendance cost.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
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			<p><b>Administration of the Program</b>                  The coordinating board shall adopt the necessary rules to establish the eligibility of the EPP programs and scholarship recipients, create the application and selection process of applicants, and administer the scholarship program. Criteria for the EPP programs shall be established with consultation from the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). In determining student eligibility, the coordinating board must consult with representatives of the EPP from eligible institutions. Rules regarding scholarship distribution shall be in consultation with financial aid coordinators. The coordinating board shall determine the distribution of available scholarship funds from money appropriated by the legislature every year. Those with the greatest financial need whose family contributions do not exceed 60% of the average statewide amount of tuition and fees, first-generation college students, and those demonstrating a commitment to teaching in areas of critical shortage or educationally disadvantaged populations will be given priority for the scholarship.</p> <p>The Future Texas Teacher Scholarship Program aims to attract qualified professionals to pursue and stay in the teaching field for the betterment of the state.</p>	
<p><b>HB 1907</b>                  By: Anchiá</p>	<p>Relating to the procedures for the expunction of arrest records and files for persons who complete certain court programs or pretrial intervention programs.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p> <p>5 Ayes,                  0 Nays,                  0 PNV,                  4 Absent</p>	<p>People who successfully complete pretrial intervention programs, such as veteran’s court, mental health court, and drug court, are only informed by the judge that they qualify for an expunction. This leaves the person to go through the expunction process on their own, oftentimes without counsel. Many people do not follow through with this expunction process due to it being expensive, time-consuming, and confusing.</p> <p>HB 1907 requires trial courts to expunge the records of a person who successfully completes a veterans or mental health treatment court program and qualifies for an expunction. An order for expunction should be entered before the 30th day after the court dismisses the case or receives information regarding the dismissal. The person who is to be granted an expunction must provide the attorney representing the state with all of the required information, and the attorney must prepare the expunction for the court to sign. No fee should be charged for this expunction. Community supervision and corrections departments and an office of an attorney representing the state can retain and use expunction records and files for developing and operating pretrial intervention programs in a judicial district served by the department or office. HB 1907 helps people get their records expunged after they successfully completed treatment programs.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 2651</b>                  By: Howard                    Jetton                    Johnson,                  Ann                    Harless  </p>	<p>Relating to required training and continuing education requirements for persons who provide medical care or</p>	<p>Public Health</p> <p>10 Ayes,                  1 Nay,                  0 PNV,                  0 Absent</p>	<p>The Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force (SASTF) was established by the Texas Governor's Office to create a supportive, sensitive, and united approach to help adults and children affected by sexual violence. Last session, the legislature fully backed the SASTF's initial work by approving all 11 proposed policy suggestions.</p> <p>Current Texas law requires emergency department nurses to undergo two-hour training on forensic evidence collection, but content requirements are not clearly defined, and other staff aren't required to receive training.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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<p>Oliverson</p>	<p>other support to survivors of sexual assault.</p>		<p>This means not all emergency department personnel can properly address survivors' needs and respect their rights.</p> <p>HB 2651 requires healthcare facilities with emergency departments to provide at least one hour of basic sexual assault response training to employees involved in patient admissions, administrative support, or direct patient care. This training must include survivor-centered care, trauma-informed care, and survivors' rights, including forensic medical exams and advocates' roles. Completing an approved continuing medical or nursing education course in forensic evidence collection will count as completing this training. HB 2651 specifies the types of continuing medical or nursing education courses considered forensic evidence collection training.</p> <p>HB 2651 requires 2 hours of continuing medical education on specific topics for licensed physicians renewing their licenses, physician assistants who treat patients in an emergency room, and nurses who work in emergency rooms. The continuing education topics are trauma-informed care, appropriate referrals and medications, survivors' rights, forensic evidence collection methods, and state laws about handling and tracking forensic evidence, following the attorney general's protocol.</p> <p>HB 1651 clarifies that the survivor's exam is a forensic medical examination, sets a two-hour training duration based on the attorney general's protocol, and defines qualifying continuing medical or nursing courses. It also replaces non-SAFE-ready facilities' need for a training plan with a written policy ensuring examiner training.</p> <p>HB 2651 extends Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE) certification from two to three years, allowing nurses to focus more on providing personalized care to survivors.</p>	
<p><b>HB 2316</b> By: Canales</p>	<p>Relating to the employment of certain peace officers, detention officers, county jailers, or firefighters who are injured in the course and scope of duty.</p>	<p>Business &amp; Industry 9 Ayes, 0 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Concerns have been raised that peace officers, detention officers, county jailers, and firefighters injured in the line of duty are not given enough time to recover. Advocates have stated that these employees should be afforded protection from being terminated from their position before a physician determines that they will not recover enough to return to work.</p> <p>HB 2316 prohibits an employer from discharging, indefinitely suspending, or terminating a peace officer, detention officer, county jailer, or a firefighter injured in the course and scope of duty based on inability to work due to their injury before being certified as having reached maximum medical improvement. An exception to this is if the treating physician indicates the person is permanently restricted from returning to their duties. Disputes regarding these cases are to follow the same procedures as provided in the Texas Workers' Compensation Act.</p> <p>Violating employers are liable for damages incurred by the officer, jailer, or firefighter in response to the termination, suspension, or discharge. HB 2316 caps the damages at \$100,000 and entitles these employees to be reinstated to their former position. Regarding these disputes, the burden of proof in a proceeding is placed on the officer, jailer, or firefighter. HB 2316 waives sovereign immunity to suit and liability for the purposes of its</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			<p>provisions and authorizes a current or former officer, jailer, or firefighter to sue an employer for damages and reinstatement.</p> <p>HB 2316 exempts municipalities that have adopted the firefighters’ and police officers’ civil service law and counties with a civil service system.</p>	
<p><b>HB 1817</b> By: Capriglione</p>	<p>Relating to the validity of a contract for which a disclosure of interested parties is required.</p>	<p>State Affairs 12 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Currently, certain contracts with governmental entities require a disclosure of interested parties, or Form 1295, to be filed with the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC). In 2022, a court ruled a contract between the City of Hutto and a developer was invalid because the city did not verify if a Form 1295 was filed with TEC. This court ruling set a precedent that any government contract without a Form 1295 on file could potentially be deemed invalid.</p> <p>HB 1817 aims to address the potential issue of contract invalidation due to the absence of a Form 1295. HB 1817 establishes a cure period of 10 business days and would only void a contract if they fail to file the form upon receiving written notification from a governmental entity.</p> <p>The provisions of HB 1817 only apply to a contract that is either for lobbying services, has a minimum contract value of \$1 million, or requires a governing body’s approval before signing the form. Additionally, if a lawsuit challenging the validity of contract is pending, a court may order the government or state agency to provide the required written notice to ensure fairness for involved parties.</p> <p>HB 1817 provides a remedy for contracts at risk of invalidation due to a missing disclosure form, while providing a level of protection for government entities and private parties involved in applicable contracts.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 1718</b> By: Ashby   Button   Shine   Clardy</p>	<p>Relating to rural development funds and insurance tax credits for certain investments in those funds; authorizing fees.</p>	<p>International Relations &amp; Economic Development 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Rural counties, which comprise over half of Texas’ 254 counties, continue to experience underinvestment in local businesses. Historically, rural businesses receive less than 1% on average in annual private equity and venture capital investments across the state. These businesses are increasingly vulnerable due to rising interest rates, tighter lending standards, and growing consumer prices following the COVID-19 pandemic. Some interested parties are advocating for ways to inject capital into rural communities to stimulate growth and competitiveness.</p> <p>HB 1718 provides approval for rural development funds by the comptroller of public accounts, providing specific financing to targeted small businesses. HB 1718 also establishes tax credits against state insurance liability for eligible investors in these funds.</p> <p>A "targeted small business" is defined as having fewer than 250 employees and its principal operations in Texas. The bill clarifies the criteria for a business's primary operations location and outlines situations where an out-of-state business that agrees to relocate or hire new employees using growth investment proceeds may qualify as a targeted small business.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable with Concerns</u></b></p>

			<p><b><i>Rural Development Fund</i></b>                  HB 1718 requires the comptroller to process applications for entities seeking approval as rural development funds. Applications must include investment authority, proof of affiliation with a federally licensed rural business investment principal, a federal license copy, estimated job creation and retention, a business plan with a revenue impact assessment, signed affidavits from investors, and a \$5,000 fee. "Jobs created" must be new, located in the state, require at least 35 hours of work per week, and have not existed before the investment. For rural, historically underutilized businesses, each job is multiplied by two in calculations.</p> <p>The comptroller must decide on applications within 30 days, and can approve up to \$300 million in investment authority. Applications can be denied for incompleteness, unpaid fees, licensing issues, lack of positive economic impact, insufficient credit-eligible capital contributions, or if the investment authority limit is reached. Denied applicants have 15 days to provide additional information.</p> <p><b><i>Approval</i></b>                  HB 1718 mandates the comptroller to send a written notice to the applicant upon approval, including the approved investment authority amount, and issue tax credit certificates to investors with affidavits in the application. The fund must collect credit-eligible capital contributions, cash investments equal to the unattributed investment authority, and provide documentation within 65 days of approval. Failure to comply results in approval lapse, allowing the comptroller to redistribute the lapsed investment authority to other funds or new applicants.</p> <p><b><i>Authority</i></b>                  HB 1718 mandates that rural development funds invest at least 60% of their investment authority in state growth investments within two years or face tax credit reductions. A 100% investment must be made within three years to avoid further consequences. Growth investments are capped at \$5 million per targeted small business in rural areas. Failure to maintain growth investments between the third and sixth anniversaries results in tax credit and investment authority reductions, with a \$7.5 million limit per targeted small business. Distributions or payments causing failure to meet investment requirements lead to the revocation of tax credit certificates and investment authority.</p> <p>The comptroller may reduce tax credits and investment authority if a fund invests in a targeted small business with a direct or indirect relationship, but there are exemptions. Before any reductions or revocations, the comptroller must notify the fund, giving them 90 days to rectify the violation. Reduced or revoked investment authority is redistributed proportionally among affected rural development funds or awarded to new applicants.</p> <p><b><i>Certain Fund Operations</i></b></p>	
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			<p>generated by the anticipated new economic activity. However, some states with similar programs have not seen expected outcomes fully materialize. HB 1718 lacks sufficient safeguards to ensure the state benefits. Only a few firms can compete for these credits due to specific certification requirements. With approval on a first-come, first-served basis, the state can only reject applicants who don't meet these narrow criteria. Texas may also effectively support small businesses through existing federal and state programs and improving access to and security for small business loans. With the proper guardrails for accountability, HB 1718 has the potential to help rural, small, and minority-owned businesses.</p>	
<p><b>HB 2334</b> By: Burns   Button</p>	<p>Relating to an exception from the plumbing licensing law for certain work performed on certain private property.</p>	<p>Licensing &amp; Administrative Procedures</p> <p>10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>HB 2334 creates an exception to the Plumbing Code enabling utility contractors to carry out plumbing-related tasks such as installing, repairing, or servicing service mains or lines, delivering water, sewer, or storm drainage services to private properties, within 5 feet of a building or structure, without supervision from a plumber. It is important to note that the local municipal water department must still inspect all work completed.</p> <p>Under HB 2334, this exception is not applicable to private properties that have been designated for use as a one-family or two-family dwelling. Interested parties are concerned that this bill would allow for unqualified workers to be able to work on private properties and potentially cost taxpayers and property owners money in repairs done by skilled professionals.</p>	<p><b><u>Will of the House</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 2557</b> By: Buckley   Raney</p>	<p>Relating to the Licensed Professional Counselors Compact; authorizing fees.</p>	<p>Human Services</p> <p>9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>As the provision of telehealth continues to grow, there is a need to open the channels for various medical professionals to provide services across state lines. Requirements for licensed professional counselors (LPCs) vary state by state, making it difficult to provide telehealth services or obtain new licenses when moving to a new state. A national committee was formed to create an interstate LPC compact, which 21 other states have already joined. HB 2557 adds Texas to the list of member states participating in the Licensed Professional Counselors Compact.</p> <p>HB 2557 would allow good-standing LPCs in other states be able to work in another within the compact without a new license, including telehealth services. HB 2557 outlines eligibility requirements for states to participate in the compact, how LPCs may work under the compact, and requirements for anyone moving to another member state. HB 2557 establishes the Counseling Compact Commission as a joint public agency and an executive committee to act on behalf of the commission. The commission would have rulemaking authority and would be responsible for the oversight and enforcement of the compact.</p> <p>HB 2557 states that to utilize the compact, a licensee must hold a license in their home state, be eligible to practice in any member state, meet any continuing competence/education requirements established by their home state, and pay any applicable fees. HB 2557 also creates a centralized database with information regarding licensure, investigations, and other pertinent information for all licensees in member states. HB 2557 outlines provisions to amend the compact or allow a member state to withdraw. HB 2557 designates the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC) as the compact's administrator in Texas and authorizes BHEC necessary rules to</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			implement the bill's provisions.	
<b>HB 2683</b> By: Burns	Relating to the use of dyed diesel fuel to operate a motor vehicle during and for a limited period following certain disasters.	Ways & Means  11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Diesel fuel meant for off-road use only, such as in construction and farm equipment, is not taxed. Federal law requires that tax-exempt diesel fuel be dyed red so it can be identified, as it is against the law to use it to drive on the highway or knowingly sell it for this purpose. During Winter Storm Uri, regular diesel fuel was widely unavailable for agriculture. However, many farmers and ranchers had off-road, dyed diesel fuel available for their equipment but were not legally allowed to use it for their vehicles on the highway.  HB 2683 aims to solve this problem by allowing people to use dyed diesel fuel to operate a motor vehicle on a public highway as long as they have a signed statement with an end user number issued by the comptroller, operate the vehicle during a state of disaster, and fuel and operate the vehicle in designated disaster areas. People would be allowed to use this fuel as soon as a state of disaster is declared and 30 days after this declaration ends, allowing the dyed fuel to have proper time to cycle out of a vehicle's tank. HB 2683 seeks to ensure that farmers and ranchers have access to fuel during times of disaster so they can take care of themselves and their communities.	<b>Favorable</b>
<b>HB 2808</b> By: VanDeaver	Relating to the finality of public school accountability determinations.	Public Education  10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	The Texas Education Agency (TEA) recently gave a rating for career, college, and military readiness to a school district at the start of the year, but later removed the rating. HB 2808 seeks to address the fluctuations and removal of ratings by prohibiting TEA from modifying the accountability rating assigned to a district for one school year after TEA has released the rating.  HB 2808 also prohibits a district or charter school from challenging a decision related to final academic or financial accountability ratings for the school year. While the intent of the bill focuses on avoiding rating fluctuations, the bill would also prohibit districts from challenging an unfavorable rating by TEA. Districts should have the ability to challenge TEA ratings, especially considering that the state may intervene on a campus that fails to meet state accountability ratings for two consecutive years.	<b>Unfavorable</b>
<b>HB 2818</b> By: Cain	Relating to the production and regulation of hemp; providing an administrative penalty; requiring a permit to conduct certain research involving hemp; authorizing a fee; creating a criminal offense.	Agriculture & Livestock  7 Ayes, 0 Nay, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	The U.S. Department of Agriculture modified federal law regarding hemp production requiring changes at the state level. HB 2818 intends to reflect federal updates in state statutes and change other provisions related to hemp cultivation.  Once an applicable state statute, federal statute, or federal regulation takes effect, HB 2818 requires the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) to propose any hemp cultivation rules needed to implement the change within 90 days of the change and to submit amendments to the state plan for monitoring and regulating hemp plant production to implement the change to the secretary of the U.S. Department of Agriculture within 120 of the change. HB 2818 prohibits rules adopted by TDA to implement federal statutes or regulations from being construed to conflict with state statutes relating to hemp cultivation or the state hemp production plan.	<b>Favorable</b>

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		<p>HB 2818 includes Texas-produced hemp in its natural state or processed by the producer as an agricultural commodity relating to the commodity producers board. HB 2818 requires TDA to issue a hemp research permit to higher education institutions or nonprofit research entities in Texas that request the permit. Research permit holders are exempt from being required to obtain lot crop permits or other permits from the TDA for each location where hemp is grown, and they are exempt from having to do preharvest testing except as provided in the bill. Permit holders can cultivate and handle varieties of hemp seeds and plants not certified or approved. Permit holders are exempt from being subject to provisions related to negligent violations for hemp grower license holders. Permit holders are allowed to sell or transfer hemp if the variety is approved for sale and if the transaction occurs at least six months after the hemp is harvested. Permit holders may conduct research in conjunction with a hemp grower license holder at the license holder’s facility for research use only.</p> <p>HB 2818 authorizes TDA to adopt a shipping certificate or cargo manifest different than what is required by current state law if it’s for transporting or shipping a sample of hemp to a testing laboratory or if the sample is not more than what TDA allows and is accompanied by laboratory results indicating a lot’s or plot’s delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol (delta 9 THC) concentration from which the sample was taken. HB 2818 requires laboratories performing testing under its provisions to report the delta 9 THC concentration, total THC concentration, and the concentration levels of any other federally regulated cannabinoid. HB 2818 provides the required means these concentrations must be measured and comply with International Organization for Standardization standards and federal law.</p> <p>HB 2818 authorizes hemp growers to obtain preharvest and postharvest testing and to harvest plants if their license is suspended or revoked after they planted hemp. TDA is to establish standards to determine if the person can use or sell the harvested hemp, depending on the circumstances of their suspension or revocation. Based on these standards, TDA is authorized to prohibit a person from selling or using the harvested hemp while their license is suspended or revoked. Once reinstated, then the person may sell or use the hemp.</p> <p>HB 2818 authorizes a person to transport and a hemp grower license holder to obtain and cultivate immature plants propagated outside of Texas. HB 2818 authorizes a Texas hemp grower license holder to obtain and cultivate immature plants propagated by another Texas license holder. The bill provides the labeling requirements to ship the plants. HB 2818 provides a preharvest testing exemption for propagated plants in Texas that were sent to another Texas hemp grower license holder. HB 2818 authorizes a license holder to transplant immature plants propagated by another license holder from one plot to another.</p> <p>HB 2818 authorizes a person to transport and a hemp grower’s license holder to obtain and cultivate immature plants propagated in or outside of Texas if the plants are accompanied by shipping documents that comply with requirements of the original state, identify the grower is licensed in the original state, lists the Texas license holder’s name and license number, and verifies the is certified or approved. For plants propagated in Texas and</p>	
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			<p>shipped to another license holder within the state, HB 2818 requires the recipient to maintain records that match the lot crop permit numbers for where the plants were propagated and cultivated and that these plants are exempt from preharvest testing.</p> <p>HB 2818 includes federal regulations on which TDA must enforce a hemp grower’s negligent violation of state hemp cultivation provisions or rules adopted for those provisions. A license holder cannot be subject to more than one negligent violation related to cultivation per calendar year. If an individual violates the hemp grower’s licensing requirement, then TDA may issue a written warning, impose a \$500 administrative penalty, and require a person to obtain a license. For a person who continues to violate this requirement, the next offense is punishable by a Class C misdemeanor, a Class B misdemeanor following that conviction, and then a Class A misdemeanor from then on.</p>	
<p><b>HB 2851</b> By: Burns</p>	<p>Relating to the composition of the board of directors of the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority and grant amounts under the young farmer grant program administered by the authority.</p>	<p>Agriculture &amp; Livestock</p> <p>8 Ayes, 0 Nay, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Even though Texas is a leader in farming, there has been a steady decline in farming operations nationally. A vast majority of farmers are over the age of 35, meaning the industry needs more young farmers to feed future generations. HB 2351 seeks to address the decline in farmers through changes to the Young Farm Grant Program (YFGP) to help the next generation of agricultural workers afford the high capital investment needed to start out in the industry.</p> <p>Primarily, HB 2351 expands the maximum amount that can be awarded by the grant from \$20,000 to \$35,000.</p> <p>HB 2351 also makes changes to the composition of the board of the Texas Agricultural Finance Authority (who awards the grant) by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacing an existing member from Prairie View A&amp;M from the Institute for International Agribusiness Studies with a member who represents the College of Agriculture and Human Services;</li> <li>• Adds a representative from the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources as Tarleton State University; and</li> <li>• Adds a person appointed by the Agricultural Commissioner who is knowledgeable on the subject and graduated with an agricultural degree in the past 8 years.</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 2673</b> By: Hull   Capriglione   Slawson   Lozano   Johnson, Ann</p>	<p>Relating to requirements for the use and transfer of electronic devices to students by a public school.</p>	<p>Youth Health &amp; Safety, Select</p> <p>7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>Many local education agencies (LEAs) seek guidance from the Texas Education Agency (TEA) on school-issued devices. However, the TEA currently lacks the authority to provide guidelines, resulting in inconsistent policies. Parents are also concerned about content access and data privacy standards.</p> <p>To address these issues, HB 2673 directs the TEA to establish rules for what kind of electronic devices and software applications schools can use. The rules aim to limit data collection on students, require parental permission for certain applications, and provide resources on cybersecurity and online safety. HB 2673 also limits students' access to social media websites or apps, requires districts to consider installing an internet filter to block inappropriate content, and designates a person to receive complaints or concerns from parents, students, and staff.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			HB 2673 seeks to balance district obligation and parent responsibility, enabling the TEA to support and protect Texas students when accessing technology in schools.	
<b>HB 3317</b> By: Frank	Relating to programs established and operated by federally qualified health centers to provide primary care access to certain employees.	Health Care Reform, Select  9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	<p>A study by the Urban Institute estimates two-thirds of uninsured Texans are from working families. Direct primary care is a method of health care where patients pay a flat monthly fee for unlimited access to their doctor. Federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) offer various primary and preventive care services, and working families in Texas could benefit from a program that combines direct primary care and other services at a FQHC.</p> <p>HB 3317 aims to improve primary care access at FQHCs for low-income and vulnerable individuals, improve employee and family health by offering better access to health care, aid small business competitiveness by promoting a healthy workforce with attractive health care benefits, and support innovative health care services and financing for employees. HB 3317 allows FQHCs to create a primary care access program for employees and dependents of participating employers. The program aims to achieve several goals such as reducing the amount of individuals without primary care access, promoting preventive care, offering fair payment rates, and encouraging innovative health information technology use.</p> <p>FQHCs can set participation criteria and require contributions from employers and employees. Additionally, FQHCs can seek donations and grants to fund primary care services, benefits, and lower participation costs. The bill also establishes a grant program managed by The Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) and the commission to award to FQHCs, create performance goals, and monitor progress. The TDI and the commission must submit a report to the legislature assessing the program's success and recommending actions to improve or support it.</p> <p>HB 3317 aims to increase primary care access for uninsured or underinsured Texans by establishing and financing federal qualified health center primary care access programs to be run by FQHCs.</p>	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>
<b>HB 3361</b> By: Cain	Relating to the slaughtering of livestock.	Agriculture & Livestock  8 Ayes, 0 Nay, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	<p>HB 3361 amends the Agricultural Code to simplify the definition of slaughterer to slaughtering livestock for profit, removing references to specific counties</p> <p>However, HB 3361 also repeals the section of the Local Government Code that allows a county to regulate slaughterers in the unincorporated area of certain counties. Currently, this section of code is only bracketed to specific counties (which appear to include Dallas and all adjacent counties).</p> <p>This bill undermines eligible commissioners' courts' ability to have local control in unincorporated areas to provide restrictions on where a slaughterhouse may operate. Current allowable restrictions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prohibiting operations near schools or residences; and</li> <li>● Requiring permits.</li> </ul>	<b><u>Unfavorable</u></b>

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			<p>This bill preempts duly elected local leaders in applicable counties from exercising safeguards over where slaughterhouses can operate.</p>	
<p><b>HB 3165</b> By: Holland   Rose   González, Mary   Bell, Cecil   Zwiener</p>	<p>Relating to the establishment, administration, and use of the Texas land and water conservation fund.</p>	<p>Natural Resources 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>Millions of people visit Texas state parks annually, increasing revenue for the state. As the number of visitors increases, there is concern about decreasing land availability for public parks, making it critically important to protect them.</p> <p>HB 3615 establishes the Texas Land and Water Conservation Fund - a special fund outside the state treasury. This fund will be used by the Texas Land and Water Conservation Board, also established by HB 3615, to award grants for public parks, natural areas, or natural resource conservation projects and to pay certain administrative expenses. HB 3615 identifies the various funding sources for the fund, including appropriations to the fund by law and fees or other revenue sources dedicated by law to the fund. HB 3615 restricts the use of the fund from being used to acquire property by eminent domain or acquiring or transferring property managed by the federal government. HB 3615 outlines which governmental entities may receive grants from the fund.</p> <p>HB 3165 creates the Texas Land and Water Conservation Board, consisting of five voting members: Commissioner of the General Land Office (GLO), Executive directors of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) and Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD), Executive Director of the State and Soil and Water Conservation Board, and Executive administrator of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB).</p> <p>The board may appoint up to two non-voting members with relevant professional or academic experience who will serve for two years. The Land and Water Conservation Technical Advisory Committee chair, established by HB 3615, will also serve as a nonvoting member. The chair of the board will be the commissioner of the General Land Office or their designee.</p> <p>HB 3615 establishes the types of projects eligible for grants under the fund. The projects must benefit, protect, and enhance public parks, natural areas, or natural resource conservation. HB 3615 requires the board to establish criteria for prioritizing grant-eligible projects, including the project’s overall ecological benefit and long-term sustainability and benefits. HB 3615 requires the conservation board to provide financial aid to eligible organizations for conservation planning and application preparation. HB 3615 includes funding allocation guidance if the board receives sufficient applicants.</p> <p>HB 3165 establishes the Land and Water Conservation Technical Advisory Committee. The committee will consist of one representative from GLO, TCEQ, TPWD, and TWDB and five other representatives appointed by the board. The committee will help develop and evaluate the application process and scoring criteria for project funding and recommendations to the board. HB 3165 requires the board to submit a biannual report that quantifies the benefits of grant projects.</p>	<p><b>Favorable</b></p>

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			HB 3165 is a considerable advancement in protecting public land and funding essential conservation projects in Texas. HB 3615 is the enabling legislation for HJR 138.	
<b>HB 3315</b> By: Bell, Keith   Buckley   Harris   Hefner   Dutton	Relating to a school district's grievance procedure regarding complaints concerning violation of parental rights.	Public Education  Vote: 10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	<p>Currently, school boards are required by law to adopt a policy for addressing grievances related to violating parental rights. Some parties contend that some grievance policies are unfair to parents or do not address concerns in a timely manner. HB 3315 establishes more stringent grievance procedures for districts. Current law requires a public school's board of trustees to create a process to address grievances concerning a violation of parental rights. Some view these procedures as prioritizing protecting the district and not ensuring parent grievances are considered in a timely manner. HB 3315 seeks to prioritize parents' grievances by establishing a requirement for a district's grievance procedure.</p> <p>Under HB 3315, districts must file a parent's complaint in writing with the principal of the school. These procedures must be considered timely regardless of when the event that led to the complaint occurred.</p> <p>If the principal does not grant the requested relief, then the parent may appeal to the superintendent. If the superintendent denies the requested relief, then a written request for an appeal may be submitted to the board of trustees that includes a review of all documents previously given to the principal and superintendent. The board of trustees must reach a conclusion within 120 days after the request for appeal was submitted, unless otherwise agreed by the involved parties. If the board of trustees fails to meet this deadline, the final decision will be made in favor of the parent. If the board of trustees does not grant the requested relief, then parents shall receive notice on their right to file an appeal with the education commissioner. HB 3315 requires that the grievance procedure and instructions on filing a complaint must be posted on the district's website and provided to parents at the beginning of the school year and on request.</p> <p>HB 3315 also requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to adopt a model grievance procedure for school districts and post it on their website. General guidelines on how a parent can file a complaint or appeal a district's decision must also be posted on TEA's website.</p> <p>The law already requires school boards adopt a policy to address grievances. HB 3315 lays out structured processes and timelines for doing so. This would help ensure parents they have recourse for violations of parental rights.</p>	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>
<b>HB 2959</b> By: Cain   Neave-Criado   Gates   Plesa	Relating to providing children committed to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department and prisoners	County Affairs  8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	Recently, concerns have been voiced regarding the release of children committed to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department (TJJJD) and the discharge of prisoners from a county jail with respect to the difficulties they face in society without basic identification documents (ID). HB 2959 seeks to ensure these individuals of basic identification documents by establishing procedures for providing prisoners of county jails with certain documents upon release.	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>

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	<p>serving a sentence in a county jail with certain documents on discharge or release; authorizing a fee.</p>		<p>HB 2959 changes the language regarding the time frame for the TJJD to submit a request on a committed child’s behalf for the issuance of various identification documents, requiring this be done “on intake of the child” instead of the current language stating “as soon as is practicable.” None of the procedures outlined in the bill apply to prisoners who are not legally present in the US or were not residents before custody.</p> <p>Before discharging a prisoner from a county jail, HB 2959 requires a sheriff to determine whether the prisoner has any valid form of ID. If the prisoner is found to be without, the sheriff must submit a request for the issuance of the ID to the Department of Public Safety (DPS). The sheriff must submit the request on intake of the prisoner to ensure the ID is given upon discharge.</p> <p>The Commission on Jail Standards, DPS, and the vital statistic unit of the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) must adopt a memorandum of understanding requiring DSHS to electronically verify the prisoner’s birth record with any other personal information provided by the sheriff and electronically report the record filing information to DPS to validate the prisoner’s identity. The sheriff or commissioner's court shall reimburse DPS or DSHS for costs incurred by the agencies to perform their responsibilities. This cost or the price of the ID can be passed along by the sheriff to the prisoner.</p> <p>In addition to the issuance of an ID, before discharging a county jail prisoner, the county sheriff must determine if the prisoner has a certified copy of their birth certificate and social security card. Should the prisoner have neither, the sheriff must submit a request for the issuance of these documents. This request must be done upon intake to ensure the prisoner will possess the documents upon discharge and is not applicable to prisoners not legally present in the United States or who were not residents before custody.</p>	
<p><b>HB 2897</b> By: Walle</p>	<p>Relating to the prosecution of the offense of theft of service.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Texas law requires that a victim of service theft send a demand letter as a first step to recover the payment owed to them before they are allowed to pursue charges through law enforcement. This letter must be sent correctly, but the process is incredibly confusing for a victim who was paid with a hot check, because theft of service and theft by check provide two different directives in statute about where such a letter should be sent. This leaves small businesses struggling to recover the funding that was stolen from them.</p> <p>HB 2897 seeks to remedy this by correcting the current conflicting instructions in statute. The bill expands the types of mailing addresses to which a notice demanding payment must be sent for the purposes of establishing an offense of theft of service to include: an address for the defendant in other records that the victim may have or, if the actor secured service by passing a hot check, the address shown on the check or the records of the bank from which the check was drawn. In short, a victim of theft of service will no longer be required to send the same demand letter to two different addresses.</p> <p>HB 2897 will protect victims and ensure that the avenue to recover their property is clear and easily</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			understandable.	
<b>HB 4070</b> By: Schaefer	Relating to the punishment for trafficking of persons, online solicitation of a minor, and prostitution and to the dissemination of certain information, including the required posting of certain signs, regarding human trafficking.	Public Education  9 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	The 87th Legislature passed HB 1540, which required both public and private schools to post certain warning signs of the increased penalties for human trafficking. HB 4070 seeks to remove private schools from this required sign postage by striking language in the bill referencing private schools in the bill’s definition of “school.”  Supporters of the legislation say that due to the nature of private schools having different regulations than public schools, they do not need to be subject to the same requirements. However, it is important to create awareness regarding human trafficking and private school students are no less susceptible to victimization, making education regarding this topic important for all. State law often requires private entities, such as bars, to display content displaying the warning signs of trafficking and who to call for help.	<b><u>Unfavorable</u></b>
<b>HB 3456</b> By: Ashby	Relating to the operation of certain healthcare provider participation programs in this state.	County Affairs  6 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Several healthcare provider participation programs (LPPF) across the state are set to expire at the end of this year. HB 3456 seeks to extend expiration dates so a district may continue to administer and operate its LPPF.  HB 3456 postpones expiration dates for the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A county with a population over 125,000, that borders Oklahoma, and has a hospital district that is not countywide from December 2023 to December 2027.</li> <li>• The Dallas County Hospital District and the Tarrant County Hospital District from December 2025 to December 2027.</li> <li>• A hospital district created in a county with a population greater than 800,000 that was not included in the hospital district boundaries before September 1, 2003, Bexar County Hospital District, and El Paso County Hospital District.</li> <li>• The Harris County Hospital District from December 2023 to December 2025.</li> </ul> The bill also revises eligibility for local governments to participate in a health care provider participation program by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replacing a hospital district or county or municipality that is not participating in a program authorized by other statutory provisions with a hospital district that is not authorized to create a program under other statutory provisions.</li> </ul>	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>

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<p><b>HB 264</b></p> <p>By: Toth   Cortez   Wilson   Schaefer</p>	<p>Relating to requirements for the physical presence of a borrower for signing certain documents related to a home equity loan.</p>	<p>Pensions, Investments, and Financial Services</p> <p>7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>Under the Texas Constitution, a home equity loan can only be closed in person at the office of the lender, an attorney, or at a title company. Some Texans have expressed their concern about being unable to arrive in person as a borrower in certain circumstances. HB 264 aims to address this issue by providing a virtual closing option for those borrowers.</p> <p>HB 264 authorizes an exception for requiring the borrowers to close in person at the office of a lender, an attorney, or a title company. The eligible borrower has to meet the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The borrower is located outside of Texas at the time of closing and is a member or the spouse or surviving spouse of one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Member of the U.S. armed forces who is on active duty;</li> <li>○ An officer of the Commissioned Corps of the U.S. Public Health Service who is on active duty; and</li> <li>○ Member of the reserve component of the armed forces who is on active duty;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The borrower is outside of Texas at the time of closing and is a civilian employee of the federal government assigned to a foreign country or unit of the U.S. armed forces.</li> <li>• The borrower has a disability that prohibits traveling or is quarantine to protect their health or others' health that is verified by a physician</li> <li>• The borrower is unable to travel because they are incarcerated or under house arrest</li> </ul> <p>If the borrower fits one of the criteria under HB 264 they are able to close the loan from a remote online notarization or through an agent that meets certain criteria. That agent must appear in person for the closing at the office of the lender, attorney, or title company on behalf of the borrower.</p> <p>HB 264 makes conforming changes in the Estates Code pursuant to the bill. In addition, the bill clarifies that home equity loan transactions fall under the category of real property transaction purposes in order to grant the agent powers. These changes only apply on or after the bill's effective date.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 148</b></p> <p>By: Johnson, Julie   Leach</p>	<p>Relating to the Texas Medical Disclosure Panel.</p>	<p>Judiciary &amp; Civil Jurisprudence</p> <p>7 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>The Texas Medical Disclosure Panel develops informed consent notices for physicians to provide patients with information about medical treatments and procedures. Informed consent is essential for patient safety and autonomy, and provided information must be easily comprehensible so Texans can make informed decisions about their health. The panel is composed of nine members, including three lawyers and six licensed physicians.</p> <p>HB 148 aims to expand the membership of the Texas Medical Disclosure Panel to eleven members, adding two that must represent the public, one of whom must have a background in health literacy. HB 148 also requires that one of the lawyers on the Texas Medical Disclosure Panel be board certified in personal injury trial law and another be board certified in health law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. Members will be selected by the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and those representing the public cannot be a registered lobbyist, healthcare provider, the spouse of a healthcare provider, or a person who</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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			works in any healthcare related field, including health insurance. The commissioner must give preference to people with experience advocating for public interest. HB 148 updates language in this area of code to reference HHSC instead of the Texas Department of Health.  Texans deserve to be fully and adequately informed about medical treatments and procedures. HB 148 ensures that the public is represented in creating accessible, understandable informed consent materials.	
<b>HB 469</b>  By: Smith	Relating to the sequestration of a jury in a criminal case.	Criminal Jurisprudence  9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Jury sequestration is the legal action of isolating jurors from the public and other outside influences during a trial. Under current law, jurors must be sequestered if any party involved in a court case requests it. Concerns have been raised, however, that the laws regarding sequestration complicate the process. Requests to sequester jurors are rare, often only used in high profile trials with extensive media coverage. Current law does not allow the court to decide whether or not to grant the request and has no required timeframe in which the request must be made, making it difficult for deputies and jurors to plan for accommodations and meals under these circumstances. HB 469 proposes a deadline for sequestration requests and a hearing process, with the possibility of exceptions if a valid reason is given.  HB 469 replaces the current requirement regarding jury sequestration with a hearing process, where either party can motion for sequestration and the court will determine if there is good cause to grant the request. If good cause is found, the court will enter an order for sequestration. The motion must be filed no less than 10 days before jury selection begins, unless there is a valid reason for filing after that deadline. This amendment only applies to criminal proceedings that start on or after the effective date of the bill.  HB 469 helps resolve challenges associated with an outdated law regarding sequestration of a jury and helps jurors plan for the disruption in their lives.	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>
<b>HB 3419</b>  By: Cain   Toth   Hefner   Manuel   Schaefer	Relating to the transportation of horse meat.	Agriculture & Livestock  6 Ayes, 0 Nay, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	Currently, Texas law prohibits the sale, possession and transportation of horse meat for human consumption. However, horses may be transported to other countries for slaughtering, and their meat is able to be transported through Texas.  The Agricultural Code allows for the transportation of equine meat only between the hours of 10pm and 4am, unless the horse meat is in individual packages of 5lbs or less clearly labeled horsemeat. HB 3419 repeals this provision.	<b><u>Will of the House</u></b>
<b>HB 476</b>  By: Jones,	Relating to the release of certain defendants detained in jail pending trial.	Criminal Jurisprudence  5 Ayes,	There is a deep backlog of legal cases across Texas counties, with Harris County hitting an all time high of 145,000 backlogged cases in 2021. This results in defendants being held in jail for an excessively long period of time, resulting in large costs to taxpayers and violating the detainee’s constitutional protection against unlawful detainment. HB 476 seeks to solve this problem by prohibiting a defendant from being held in jail for longer than	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>

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<p>Jolanda   Thompson, Senfronia   Martinez Fischer   Allen</p>		<p>4 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>the maximum length of time they would spend in jail if they were found guilty.</p> <p>HB 476 limits the detention of defendants in jail pending trial. If passed, the bill would restrict the amount of time a defendant could be held in jail before trial based on the maximum sentence they could receive if convicted. HB 476 has a few exceptions, such as defendants being evaluated for competency or who have been found incompetent to stand trial, those charged with Class C misdemeanor public intoxication, or those charged with any other Class C misdemeanors who are also detained for an outstanding warrant for any offense.</p> <p>HB 476 could reduce the number of individuals detained in jails, particularly those who are charged with low-level offenses and pose little risk to public safety. This could alleviate overcrowding in jails, reduce the financial burden on local governments, and mitigate the negative effects of pretrial detention on defendants and their families.</p>	
<p><b>HB 1883</b>  By: Bhojani   Cunningham   Allen   Hinojosa   Jetton</p>	<p>Relating to the administration of assessment instruments on religious holy days.</p>	<p>Public Education  8 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>State-mandated exams routinely fall on certain religious holy days, which may practice sacred traditions such as fasting and prayer. These practices of the religion conflicting with exam schedules puts students in a position to choose between partaking in their religion and scoring well on these exams. HB 1883 seeks to absolve this conflict for these students by requiring district's to provide alternative dates should the exam fall on certain religious holy days.</p> <p>HB 1883 expands considerations of religious holy days in scheduling assessment instruments, ensuring that STAAR-tests and End of Course exams are not schedule on the following religious holidays: All Saints Day, Christmas Day, Diwali, Eid al-Ahda, Eid al-Fitr, Passover, Rosh Hashanah, Vaisakhi, Vesak, and Yom Kippur.</p> <p>A school district's board of trustees may consider these days or periods of observance to see if there are any conflicts with the period set by the State Board of Education (SBOE) for the administered of state-mandated exams. When establishing a school calendar, the district's board of trustees must provide for alternative dates for the exam to be taken for student's absent for religious reasons.</p> <p>Scoring well on a state exam should not have to come at the cost of a student having the opportunity to observe religious holy days with their families and communities. Provisions against such conflicts are already made for major Christian holidays, like Christmas and Easter, across the nation; other religions deserve the same acknowledgement and respect.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>
<p><b>HB 2568</b>  By: Hayes   Morales,</p>	<p>Relating to a study of carrizo cane on the international border of this state.</p>	<p>Agriculture &amp; Livestock  7 Ayes, 0 Nay,</p>	<p>Carrizo cane is a non-native, invasive plant species that has caused issues as it lines the banks and floodplains of the Rio Grande River. The plant has created issues with law enforcement efforts along the border and taking from the water source for communities along the border. As a part of the governor's border security priorities, the 84th legislature directed the Texas State Soil and Water Conservation Board (TSSWCB) to implement a program to eradicate carrizo cane. HB 2568 will conduct a study to assist TSSWCB in administering the program.</p>	<p><b><u>Favorable</u></b></p>

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Eddie   Cain   Rogers		0 PNV, 2 Absent	HB 2568 requires the TSSWCB to study the extent of carrizo cane growth along the Rio Grande. In this study, the TSSCWB must determine the acreage of carrizo cane remaining along the Rio Grande, the amount of water consumed along the Rio Grande, and the program’s cost of eradicating carrizo cane. TSSCWB is to report its results and recommendations to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, and standing committees with jurisdiction over natural resources.	
<b>HB 2672</b>  By: Frazier   Leo-Wilson   Swanson   Lalani	Relating to the eligibility for student loan repayment assistance under the math and science scholars loan repayment program.	Higher Education  8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	<p>The math and science scholars loan repayment program is underutilized across the state, largely due to the program only being available for teachers employed by public schools that receive funding under Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965.</p> <p>HB 2672 seeks to expand eligibility for this program from only Title I schools to any public school. HB 2672 authorizes the same amount of loan repayment assistance received during the first four consecutive years of teaching if the person continues working at any public school for the number of consecutive school years determined per the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) rules.</p> <p>By allowing recent graduates entering the profession who have student loan debt into STEM, HB 2672 could help address teacher shortages in these key subjects.</p>	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>
<b>HB 2933</b>  By: Dorazio   Gates   Shaheen	Relating to ensuring certain adoptive parents may consent to medical care and access information regarding their child who is eligible for benefits under Medicaid.	Human Services  9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	<p>Only one adoptive parent can a legally authorized representative who can consent for medical decisions on a child’s behalf if the child was adopted from the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) conservatorship due to the IMPACT system used by DFPS and the TIERS system used by the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). This can cause unnecessary stress on families if the authorized representative is unable to make decisions for the child’s medical needs.</p> <p>HB 2933 aims to solve this issue by requiring HHSC to collaborate with DFPS to ensure both adoptive parents of a child, who was adopted from DFPS and is Medicaid eligible, can consent to medical care provided to the child under Medicaid. HB 2933 would also allow both adoptive parents to receive and provide information, including electronically, regarding the child’s Medicaid benefits to HHSC, a Medicaid managed care organization, or a healthcare provider providing services under Medicaid. HB 2933 allows for delayed implementation if a federal authorization or waiver is required.</p> <p>This proposed change would reduce stress on adoptive parents by ensuring that both parents have a say in their child’s medical care, without having to rely on one parent to make all the decisions.</p>	<b><u>Favorable</u></b>