Texas Legislative Study Group

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PART 1 of 2

**Please refer to LSG's previous for postponed business*

LSG Floor Report For POSTPONED BUSINESS UNTIL 9:00 AM – Wednesday, May 10, 2023				
HB 2650 By: Howard | Guillen | Neave Criado	Relating to the continuation and duties of the Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force and establishment of a mandatory training program for peace officers on responding to reports of child sexual abuse and adult sexual assault.	Homeland Security & Public Safety 6 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	The Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force (SASTF) in the Officer of the Governor is responsible for policy recommendations to improve responses to sexual violence with a particular focus on survivor-centered and trauma-informed approaches. Since its creation, it has worked with stakeholders across the state to transform sexual assault policy in Texas. The Law Enforcement Working Group, under SASTF, is to provide recommendations for officer training, resource availability, and investigation of sexual assault and other sex offenses. A recommendation from SASTF, approved by the working group, is to add instruction on a trauma-informed approach to child sexual abuse and adult sexual assault investigations for the basic peace officer course. HB 2650 makes SASTF permanent by removing the provision of SASTF's expiration on September 1, 2023. The bill will also make provisions governing state agency advisory committees inapplicable to the composition of SASTF or the designation of SASTF's presiding officer. HB 2650 requires the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE), in consultation with SASTF, to establish an education and training program on responding to reports of child sexual abuse and adult sexual assault, including best practices and trauma-informed response techniques to recognize, investigate, and document these cases. The program must contain a minimum of eight instructional hours. In addition, TCOLE must include completing the education and training program as a part of the minimum curriculum requirements for officers unless the officer has completed an equivalent to the program as determined by TCOLE. An officer would be required to complete this program by the end of their first full continuing education period after being licensed unless they completed the program during their basic training course. The Texas State Auditor's Office reported that from 2014 to 2018, as of March 2020, only 42% of sexual assault cases resulted in convictions, while 36% were dismissed. As law enforcement serves a critical role in investigating these offenses, they must be appropriately trained to meet where sexual abuse or sexual assault survivors are. Additionally, a trauma-informed approach while conducting investigations will aid in mitigating the retraumatization of this population.	**Favorable**

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A.L. Walle

HB 2238 By: Buckley | Patterson | Lalani	Relating to the licensing and regulation of dog and cat breeders; expanding the applicability of an occupational license.	Licensing & Administrative Procedures 9 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The 82nd Legislature passed HB 1451, establishing the Texas Licensed Breeders Program (TLBP) which created minimum standards of dog and cat breeders. However, the program is not operating the way the Legislature intended. HB 2283 seeks to ensure that commercial breeders are operating under current regulations and oversight through the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR). HB 2238 amends statutory law to only apply to individuals involved in commercial breeding dogs or cats. Additionally, it reduces the minimum number of adult intact female dogs or cats required for someone to be considered a dog or cat breeder from 11 to 5. Finally, HB 2238 eliminates the condition that the breeder must sell, exchange, or offer to sell or exchange at least 20 animals in a calendar year to be recognized as a breeder. HB 2238 helps ensure more individuals involved in commercial breeding are being regulated by TLBP.	**Favorable**
LSG Floor Report For POSTPONED BUSINESS UNTIL 10:00 AM – Wednesday, May 10, 2023				
HB 3519 By: Hull | Leach | Johnson, Julie | Vasut | Moody	Relating to judicial training requirements regarding family violence.	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	New or first-term judges are required to complete four hours of training on trafficking of persons, child abuse and neglect, and at least two related topics from a specified list. Additionally, judges must undergo six hours of training on various subjects, such as counseling resources, gender bias, and the dynamics and effects of family violence, sexual assault, and others, and can choose the topics they want to focus on. For subsequent terms or every four years, judges must complete at least two hours of training specifically on trafficking of persons and child abuse and neglect, unless they opt out due to not hearing these cases. Family violence dynamics can affect different types of proceedings, including divorce cases or criminal matters, and it is important that judges are adequately trained to recognize family violence. HB 3519, under the rules set by the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals (CCA), imposes requirements for judicial training, including the completion of at least one hour of training dedicated to the dynamics of family violence within the judge's first term of office or the initial four years of service. This training is part of the mandatory 12 hours of training for district judges, judges of statutory county courts, associate judges, masters, referees, and magistrates. Additionally, during each subsequent term in office or four years of service, judges and judicial officers must complete an additional five hours of training, with at least one hour dedicated to the dynamics of family violence. Moreover, judges presiding over courts with primary responsibility for family law or family violence matters are obligated to complete an additional hour of training on the dynamics of family violence every two years. HB 3519 adjusts the subjects on which judges and judicial officers must complete at least two hours of training as part of the additional five hours of training to issues of child development that pertain to trafficking of persons and child abuse and neglect, and medical findings regarding physical abuse, sexual abuse, trafficking of persons, and child abuse and neglect. Additionally, HB 3519 requires all judges to complete training.	**Favorable**

			HB 3519 ensures that all judges complete initial training and continuing education training on the dynamics of family violence, ensuring that these judges will be prepared for cases that may involve family violence.	
HB 1492 By: Ordaz	Relating to the conveyance of property by a municipality for the public purpose of economic development.	Urban Affairs 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Local officials in El Paso are interested in expanding their range of economic development tools to enhance the city's competitiveness in attracting businesses. Although state law offers various ways for cities to transfer land for this purpose, these methods often involve lengthy procedures that discourage companies from operating in Texas. Enabling the transfer of property through an economic development agreement within an economic development program would provide the city with an additional tool to foster economic growth and enhance its ability to attract businesses. HB 1492 grants a municipality engaged in an economic development agreement with an entity overseeing an economic development program the ability to transfer real property or an interest in property to that entity for consideration. HB 1492 specifies that this transfer can be considered in the form of an agreement between the parties that requires the entity to use the property in a way that promotes a public purpose of the municipality relating to economic development, and the municipality should be granted sufficient control to accomplish this. HB 1492 prohibits transferring real property or an interest in real property that is owned, held, or claimed as a public square or park for the municipality. Real property acquired by the municipality by eminent domain is also prohibited from being transferred unless the municipality offers and the previous owner cannot be located with reasonable effort or declines the opportunity to repurchase the property at the current market value. Prior to a municipality transferring real property or an interest in real property, they must provide public notice in a newspaper for two days or by another means authorized by local law or ordinance within 10 days before the property is transferred with a description of the property and its location. HB1492 clarifies that this is not expanding eminent domain authority. HB 1492 would provide another economic development tool that would make it easier for conveyance, or the transfer of property, to occur, attracting businesses and promoting economic growth.	**Favorable**
HB 303 By: Bernal	Relating to a justice or municipal court's authority to order a defendant confined in jail for failure to pay a fine or cost or for contempt and to the authority of a municipality to	Criminal Jurisprudence 7 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	In recent years, Texas' Failure to Appear/Pay (FTAP) program has drawn widespread criticism due to its harsh consequences for individuals unable to pay fines and fees for traffic tickets and minor offenses. Unfortunately, the program has resulted in many people having their licenses suspended or put on hold, leading to crippling debt that can be impossible to escape. Currently, if an individual's fine or fee goes unpaid, a justice or municipal court is authorized to order the individual to be confined in jail. This not only exacerbates an individual's inability to pay, but is an unfair punishment that criminalizes poverty. HB 303 seeks to solve this issue by ensuring that an individual's inability to pay fines or fees does not result in incarceration. HB 303 prohibits a justice or municipal court from ordering confinement in jail for a person, including juvenile	**Favorable**

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	enforce the collection of certain fines by imprisonment of the defendant.		offenders, who are unable to pay their fines and fees regarding a conviction for a fine-only offense. The bill also disallows a municipality to use incarceration as an enforcement mechanism for unpaid fines and fees regarding fine-only offenses. HB 303 also replaces the current requirement that an individual may be discharged upon proof that they do not have the funds to pay the applicable fines and fees, or have been incarcerated for an appropriate period of time in order to satisfy their fines, with a requirement that an individual may be discharged by proving that they were incarcerated in violation of HB 303's provisions or as a result of failure to pay fines for a conviction of a fine-only offense. Regarding a defendant who defaults, HB 303 replaces the current provision that allows a judge to order that individual to confinement if they make a written statement regarding the defendant's indigence and failure to make an attempt to pay, with a requirement that a judge set a hearing for the defendant to show cause as to why they cannot pay. HB 303 mandates the release, by September 2, 2023, of any individual who is currently being detained in a county or municipal jail due to their failure to pay fees associated with a fine-only offense or for contempt of a judgment for a fine-only offense. This includes people who were ordered to be incarcerated in jail for failing to pay fees based on a judge's determination of their inability to pay, as well as those being held for contempt of a judgment entered for the conviction of a fine-only offense. Criminalizing poverty cannot be the state's solution to an individual's inability to pay fines and fees, not only because it is not just punishment, but because it is wholly ineffective and exacerbates the issue. Incarceration is costly for the state and creates further barriers to payment for the confined individual. HB 303 will prevent this practice and allow Texas to explore solutions to this issue that do not cause further harm.	
LSG Floor Report For Major State Calendar – Wednesday, May 10, 2023				
HB 1942 By: Leach | Meyer | Moody	Relating to the regulation of sports wagering; requiring occupational permits; authorizing fees; imposing a tax; decriminalizing wagering on certain sports events; creating criminal	State Affairs 9 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The Supreme Court's 2018 decision in Murphy v. The National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) struck down the Professional and Amateur Sports Protection Act (PASPA). PASPA prohibited states from legalizing sports betting. In doing so, the Court paved the way for each state to decide whether or not to legalize sports betting. Thirty states have subsequently chosen to legalize sports betting; however, Texas has not enacted legislation to authorize sports betting, a practice commonly done by placing sports bets on mobile phones. HB 1942, also known as the Texas Sports and Entertainment Recovery Act, establishes a framework for mobile sports betting in Texas contingent upon an enabling constitutional amendment, HJR 102.	**Favorable**

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	offenses; providing administrative penalties.		HB 1942 outlines a permitting and regulatory process for mobile sports betting overseen by the Texas Lottery Commission authorizing bets on professional, college, or amateur sports, motor race events, electronic sports (e-sports), and competitive video game events. Conversely, HB 1942 does not authorize sports wagers for fantasy sports, horse racing, or greyhound racing. HB 1942 tasks the Commission to develop an interactive sports wagering program and grant operation licenses for qualifying sporting events. HB 1942 prohibits wagering on youth sporting events and in-person betting locations. HB 1942 establishes criminal and civil penalties for individuals who knowingly engage in sports betting violating the bill and a defense to prosecution for a gambling offense if an individual reasonably believes their actions were permitted under the bill's provisions. HB 1942 includes measures to protect minors and individuals at risk of gambling disorders, such as age limits and tools to prevent underage betting, advertising restrictions, a self-exclusion mechanism, safe-betting language, and allocating 2% of revenue to gambling disorder grant programs. Finally, HB 1942 notably lacks the language necessary under the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) to include Indigenous tribes subject to its provisions. In this way, HB 1942 is not as inclusive as it could be. ***Interactive Sports Wagering Permit*** HB 1942 establishes a permit system linked to professional sports organizations in Texas. The teams would be required to adhere to various policies and regulations to ensure competitive integrity and would be subject to enforcement measures. In Texas, this would include 15 permits, covering teams from the NFL, NBA, WNBA, MLB, MLS, PGA Tour, and Racing. The initial permit fee is $500,000 with a 10% tax on sports betting operators (see below). The generated revenue would be used to lower property tax rates by reducing the state compression percentage. ***Service Provider Permit*** Under HB 1942, a service provider permit authorizes companies to offer sports betting services, such as developing or operating sports betting platforms and providing odds and risk management information to sports wagering operators. The permit excludes financial services, age verification, geolocation services, and other non-sports betting services. The initial permit application fee is $25,000 and must be submitted with required background, organizational, and personnel information. HB 1942 requires the Commission to conduct complete background checks on each service provider applicant. ***Interactive Sports Wagering Operators*** These companies would be authorized to directly offer online or mobile sports betting platforms for real-time placement of wagers. HB 1942 outlines several requirements: wagers are placed only by authorized individuals within Texas, player information is kept confidential, preventing wagering on prohibited events, wagering is not	

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			done by agents or proxies, individuals can self-exclude, suspicious or illegal wagering activity is detected, and income tax is withheld or reported as required by law. Operators must keep records of wagers and suspicious activity for three years and share real-time information with sports governing bodies if requested. Advertisements must not target individuals under 21, must identify the operator's brand, cannot be misleading, and must include information about problem gambling prevention. Interactive sports wagering operations can be assigned to a third-party with lottery commission approval. HB 1942 legalizes online sports betting and as such includes significant provisions that establish the operational and practical framework. HB 1942 has the capacity to increase state revenue through taxes and licensing fees. Additionally, it enables Texans to make their own choices about how they spend their money and free time while offering substantial measures to mitigate the harmful impacts of gambling.	
HB 2843 By: Kuempel	Relating to the authorization, licensing, and regulation of casino gaming and sports wagering in this state, to the creation, powers, and duties of the Texas Gaming Commission, to the support of the horse racing industry and reform of horse racing and greyhound racing, and to other provisions related to gambling; imposing and authorizing administrative and civil penalties; imposing taxes; imposing and authorizing fees;	State Affairs 9 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	HB 2843 establishes destination resorts and authorizes casinos in Texas. In doing so, HB 2843 would legalize casino gaming and sports wagering in the state. HB 2843 is contingent upon passage of corresponding legislation, HJR 155, which authorizes eight casino gaming resorts in metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in Texas. Overall, HB 2843 aims to enhance the state's competitiveness in attracting major conventions and leisure travelers, ultimately contributing to job creation and economic growth. HB 2843 includes necessary language for federally recognized tribes subject to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act to participate. Key provisions of HB 2843 include: ● Establishing a regulatory framework for casino gaming and sports wagering, overseen by the newly formed Texas Gaming Commission; ● Outlining the process for licensing casinos at destination resorts and specifying the requirements for gaming-related entities, such as operators, manufacturers, and casino service providers; ● Regulating casino and sports wagering operations to ensure compliance with relevant laws and gaming industry integrity; ● Outlining enforcement measures, penalties, and offenses related to gaming, ensuring that violations are identified and dealt with appropriately; and ● Establishing the Problem Gambling and Addiction Grant Fund aimed at prevention, treatment, and increasing public awareness of gambling disorders and addictions. ***Texas Gaming Commission*** HB 2843 creates the Texas Gaming Commission, composed of five members appointed by the governor with senate approval. Additionally, HB 2834 provides qualifications and requirements for appointment to the commission. The Commission is subject to sunset review in 2033 and serves as the primary regulatory authority for gambling authorized in Texas. Its responsibilities include establishing and enforcing rules and regulations,	**Favorable**

	requiring occupational licenses; creating criminal offenses.		licensing and overseeing gaming-related entities, conducting investigations and audits, and ensuring fair gaming practices.	
LSG Floor Report For Constitutional Amendments Calendar – Wednesday, May 10, 2023				
HJR 155 By: Geren | Rose | Davis | Romero, Jr.	Proposing a constitutional amendment to foster economic development and job growth, provide tax relief and funding for education and public safety programs, support the horse racing industry, and reform horse racing and greyhound racing by authorizing casino gaming at destination resorts, authorizing sports wagering, authorizing Tribal-State compacts with federally recognized Indian tribes, and creating the Texas Gaming Commission to regulate casino gaming and sports wagering; requiring a license to conduct casino gaming; and requiring the imposition of a casino gaming tax, sports wagering tax, and license application fees.	State Affairs 9 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	HJR 155 is enabling legislation for HB 2843. It proposes a constitutional amendment to authorize large-scale destination casino gaming and sports betting in Texas. HB 2843 establishes destination resorts and authorizes casinos in Texas and includes necessary language for federally recognized tribes subject to the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act (IGRA) to participate. In doing so, HB 2843 and HJR 155 would legalize casino gaming and sports wagering in the state. HJR 155 authorizes eight casino gaming resorts in metropolitan statistical areas (MSAs) in Texas, with two each in Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington and Houston-Woodlands-Sugar Land, and one each in San Antonio-New Braunfels, Corpus Christi, and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission. The location of the eighth resort has not been determined but must be located in a county at least 100 miles from the aforementioned MSAs and with majority voter support for the amendment. HJR 155 outlines the initial investments required, starting at $1 billion, from applicants for casino licenses in the designated MSAs. HJR 155 mandates the legislature set license application fees to fund the gaming commission for proposed destination resorts. The fees are: ● $2.5 million for resorts in the Dallas-Fort Worth-Arlington or Houston-The Woodlands-Sugar Land ● $1.25 million for a resort in San-Antonio-New Braunfels ● $500,000 for a resort in Corpus Christi and McAllen-Edinburg-Mission ● $1.25 million for the resort outside of these MSAs It is estimated that resorts enabled by HJR 155 could create 48,000 full-time jobs, $4.5 billion in labor income, $8.3 billion GDP revenue, and 25,000 temporary construction jobs.	**Favorable**
HJR 102 By: Leach	Proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to legalize wagering in this state	State Affairs 9 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV,	HJR 102 is enabling legislation for HB 1942. It proposes a constitutional amendment to authorize and regulate sports betting in Texas. HB 1942 authorizes a sports team, a sports organization, a class 1 racetrack, or a designee of any of these entities in Texas.	**Favorable**

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	on certain sporting events.	1 Absent		
HJR 134 By: Bonnen | Cain | Burrows | Canales | Garcia	Proposing a constitutional amendment to abolish the office of county treasurer of Galveston County.	County Affairs 6 Ayes, 3 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	The GOP-elected county treasurer for Friendswood and Galveston county campaigned for a referendum vote to eliminate that local office. Galveston county commissioners voted unanimously in favor of a resolution in support of abolishing the county Treasurer's Office. The position of County Treasurer is a constitutionally elected position and the effort to abolish the position can only be done by amending the state constitution. HJR 134 proposes an amendment to the Texas Constitution to eliminate the position of county treasurer in Galveston County and give the Commissioners Court of Galveston County the ability to hire a qualified person or assign another county officer to handle the tasks that were previously the responsibility of the county treasurer. The proposed constitutional amendment will only go into effect on January 1, 2024 if approved by a majority of the state and voters in Galveston County during the statewide election. Eliminating an elected county office through a statewide ballot could disrupt the current system of checks and balances in county government. An independently elected county Treasurer may be better positioned to ask tough questions that an employee can't always ask. Additionally, abolishing an office may not result in cost savings as it merely redistributes responsibilities.	**Will of the House**
HJR 146 By: Capriglione | Leo-Wilson	Proposing a constitutional amendment relating to the right to own, hold, and use a mutually agreed upon medium of exchange.	Pensions, Investments, & Financial Services 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	HJR 146 proposes a constitutional amendment to affirm Texans' rights to own, hold, and use a mutually agreed upon medium of exchange, including cash, coins, bullion, digital currency, or privately issued scrip, when engaging in trade and contracts for goods and services. HJR 146 specifies that the amendment would not impact the state's ability to choose payment methods made to the state. HJR 146 aims to reduce the risk of financial insecurity in Texas by preempting any attempts by financial institutions to limit the use of cryptocurrencies or other digital monies and protecting the right to use physical paper currency.	**Will of the House**
HJR 172 By: Cook	Proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to enact laws providing for a court to grant a commutation of	Criminal Jurisprudence 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HJR 172 is the enabling legislation for HB 4518. Currently, the power to grant commutations of sentences in Texas lies primarily with the governor, while the courts may have limited authority to grant commutations in specific circumstances. However, in many other states, the courts have broader authority to adjust sentences for individuals currently serving prison terms if it is deemed necessary to serve the interest of justice. Texas does not have the same mechanisms to address situations where new information comes to light that may suggest an individual's current sentence is not serving the interest of justice, limiting the options available to those who have been wrongly sentenced or whose sentences	**Favorable**

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	punishment to certain individuals serving a term of imprisonment.		no longer serve the interest of justice. HJR 172 seeks to remedy this issue by allowing the legislature to provide that courts can commute sentences in certain circumstances. HJR 172 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the legislature to pass a law authorizing a court to grant a commutation of punishment to certain individuals serving a term of imprisonment. HJR 172 seeks to prioritize fairness and the interest of justice in the State of Texas.	
HJR 25 By: Zwiener	Proposing a constitutional amendment to authorize the commissioners court of a county to exempt from ad valorem taxation by each political subdivision that taxes the property the portion of the assessed value of a person's property that is attributable to the installation in or on the property of a rainwater harvesting or graywater system.	Ways & Means 10 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HJR 25 is enabling legislation for HB 40. Texas property owners are not incentivized to develop water conservation systems due to the lack of financial benefits and the possibility of being taxed on such systems. Solar panels are exempt from property taxes, but there is no similar tax exemption for water conservation systems, despite the threat of drought in multiple state regions. HJR 25 provides a property tax exemption for rainwater harvesting and graywater reuse systems - systems for wastewater reuse from washing and hygiene. HJR 25 proposes a constitutional amendment to allow the legislature to authorize a county commissioners court to exempt property owners from paying property taxes for the portion of their property's assessed value attributed to the installation of rainwater harvesting or graywater systems. The legislature may set additional criteria for eligibility for the exemption through general law. HJR 25 promotes water conservation and reduces strain on water reserves during droughts.	**Favorable**
LSG Floor Report For General State Calendar – Wednesday, May 10, 2023				
HB 3487 By: Turner	Relating to certain expenditures by public institutions of higher education and university systems that are eligible for certain tax credits.	Ways & Means 10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	In the 85th session, HB 1003 authorized public institutions of higher education and university systems to participate in the Texas Historic Preservation Tax Credit Program (THPTCP). This program was only available for project costs incurred between June 14, 2017 and January 1, 2022. HB 3487 seeks to reauthorize this program and extend it to public institutions of higher education and university systems until January 1, 2031.	**Favorable**
HB 5406 By: Rogers	Relating to the creation of the Cross Timbers Regional Utility Authority; granting a limited power of eminent	Natural Resources 10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV,	Growth and development in North Central Texas have resulted in the need for significant and long-term infrastructure improvements such as water supply, wastewater treatment, and flood control projects in counties like Stephens, Palo Pinto, and Parker. HB 5406 establishes the Cross Timbers Regional Utility Authority (CTRUA) to meet this need.	**Favorable**

	domain; providing authority to issue bonds; providing authority to impose assessments and fees.	1 Absent	HB 5406 establishes the CTRUA as a conservation and reclamation district comprising all territory in the abovementioned counties. In addition, HB 5406 outlines the rules for the board of directors of the CTRUA. The board will consist of seven members, appointed by the commissioner's courts of Palo Pinto, Parker, and Stephens Counties, as well as the city council of Mineral Wells. HB 5406 provides for board member terms, appointments, qualifications, vacancies, and removals from office. In addition, HB 5406 provides the CTRUA with the powers, rights, privileges, and functions of a municipal utility district as provided in state statutes. HB 5406 grants the CTRUA the power of eminent domain to acquire land, easements, or other properties inside and outside its boundaries to serve its purposes. HB 5406 restricts the authority from using eminent domain to obtain land owned by a municipal water district that was acquired for use as a surface water reservoir site. The authority can only exercise the power of eminent domain if the bill receives a two-thirds vote of all members elected to each house. The authority cannot use eminent domain if it fails to receive a vote. HB 5406 enables the CTRUA to enter into contracts with individuals or political subdivisions to purchase or sell raw or treated water, manage, operate, or control water or sewer treatment or distribution facilities, and perform preliminary surveys, investigations, or feasibility reports. The authority can also enter into contracts to acquire an existing water or sewer facility. HB 5406 allows the CTRUA and political subdivisions to enter into water, sewer, solid waste, or drainage services contracts without requiring an election to approve the contract. In addition, HB 5406 establishes that payment by a municipal corporation for the purchase of water or the treatment and disposal of sewage is a maintenance and operating expense of the utility system unless the contract includes provisions for the municipal corporation to acquire an ownership interest in the facilities or other arrangements. HB 5406 prohibits the CTRUA from imposing taxes but allows the authority to issue revenue bonds for any of its powers, functions, or obligations. HB 5406 enables the authority to issue bonds to improve or extend a facility if it operates the facility under contract with a municipal corporation and if the contract permits the issuance. The Cross Timbers Regional Utility Authority will help ensure residents and businesses access reliable, safe, and affordable water and wastewater services, essential for more economic development, public health, and environmental sustainability in this North Central Texas region.	
HB 5025 By: Zwiener | Isaac	Relating to the boundaries of the single-member districts for and vacancies on the board of directors of	Natural Resources 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV,	Under current law, new Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District (HTGCD) board directors must be elected from each district when the boundaries change. HB 5025 allows a current director of the HTGCD to finish their term should they no longer live within new district boundaries due to redistricting by the legislature. HB 5025 revises provisions regulating the establishment of office terms for the HTGCD board of directors when the single-member district boundaries change. HB 5025 removes the requirement to elect a new director from	**Favorable**

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	the Hays Trinity Groundwater Conservation District.	2 Absent	each district and eliminates the need for a random draw to determine the length of their terms. It entitles the incumbent director, elected or appointed before the change, to serve the term or remainder of the term if their residence becomes outside district boundaries. HB 5025 repeals the provision that requires the Hays County Commissioners Court to appoint a director to fill a vacancy on the board. HB 5025 confirms the selection of terms of the board of directors that occurred before its effective date and only applies to a change in the district's single-member boundaries made on or after the bill's effective date. HB 5025 helps provide greater stability and continuity for HTGCD leadership when redistricting occurs.	
HB 5160 By: Darby	Relating to the authority of the board of directors to select a depository bank for the West Coke County Hospital District	County Affairs 7 Ayes, 2 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Statute does not permit the West Coke County Hospital District to choose a bank outside its boundaries. The district is in Robert Lee, Texas, in House District 72, an isolated and rural community of 3,200 residents with only one banking option. HB 5160 removes the requirement that the depository bank(s) must be within the district, allowing the board of directors from the West Coke County Hospital District to have more flexibility in choosing a bank.	**Favorable**
HB 5359 By: Bucy | Wilson | Harris, Caroline	Relating to approval and creation of the Williamson County Development District No. 1; and to the administration, powers, duties, operations, and financing of the district, including the authority to impose an assessment, a tax, and issue bonds.	County Affairs 8 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HB 5359 enables the formation of the Williamson County Development District No. 1 in the county's unincorporated area. Upon voter approval, HB 5359 authorizes the District to impose and collect ad valorem taxes and sales and use taxes. The District may not provide utility services, may impose a hotel tax, and grant the authority for the district to contract with law enforcement, road projects, and public parking facilities. The District is governed by a board of five directors serving four-year staggered terms expiring June 1 of each odd-numbered year. Utility property is exempt from District fees and assessments and the District has no eminent domain authority. The TCEQ will possess general supervisory jurisdiction over the District, which includes the authority to review bonds and financial reports.	**Favorable**
HB 5351 By: Bailes	Relating to the creation of the Liberty County Management District No. 2; providing authority to issue bonds; providing authority to impose assessments, fees, and taxes.	County Affairs 8 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HB 5351 enables the creation of Liberty County Management District No. 2. Upon voter approval, HB 5351 authorizes the District to impose and collect ad valorem taxes and sales and use taxes. Additionally, the District may levy an operation and maintenance tax on taxable property as outlined in Section 49.107 of the Water Code. The District is authorized, with municipalities consent through an ordinance or resolution, to procure bonds that are payable through ad valorem taxes. The District may create a tax increment reinvestment zone under Chapter 311, Tax Code or a tax abatement reinvestment zone under Chapter 312, Tax Code.	**Favorable**

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HB 5375 By: Metcalf	Relating to the creation of the Montgomery County Management District No. 2; providing authority to issue bonds; providing authority to impose assessments, fees, and taxes.	County Affairs 8 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HB 5375 enables the creation of Montgomery County Management District No. 2. Upon voter approval, HB 5375 authorizes the District to impose and collect ad valorem taxes and sales and use taxes. Additionally, the District may levy an operation and maintenance tax on taxable property as outlined in Section 49.107 of the Water Code. The District is authorized, with municipalities consent through an ordinance or resolution, to procure bonds that are payable through ad valorem taxes. The District may create a tax increment reinvestment zone under Chapter 311, Tax Code or a tax abatement reinvestment zone under Chapter 312, Tax Code.	**Favorable**
HB 361 By: Thompson, Senfronia	Relating to the placement on community supervision, including deferred adjudication community supervision, of a defendant who is the primary caretaker of a child.	Corrections 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The alarming statistic that 81% of incarcerated women are mothers, with many being their children's primary caregivers, highlights the need for a more compassionate approach in the Texas justice system. Parental incarceration negatively affects children's mental and emotional well-being, making it crucial to find alternative ways to ensure justice while preserving Texas family bonds. On an applicable defendant's written motion, HB 361 requires courts to consider a defendant's primary caretaker status. This written motion must include evidence of the defendant's status as a primary caretaker. HB 361 specifies that it applies to defendants who are primary caretakers of a child and are eligible for deferred adjudication community supervision or community supervision. Courts must make written findings about the caretaker's status and cannot impose confinement without this finding. Once a caretaker status is determined or a court believes community supervision would be in the defendant's best interest, the defendant's child or children, and society or justice, courts may place the defendant onto deferred adjudication community supervision or community supervision. It emphasizes parent-child unity and community rehabilitation, allowing courts to impose conditions like counseling, vocational training, and housing assistance. Courts are prohibited from requiring a confinement term as a condition of a defendant's community supervision. Still, courts may impose confinement terms for adjudications of guilt, supervision violations, or supervision revocation. In addition, defendants on deferred adjudication community supervision may be arrested for violating supervision conditions. HB 361 promotes a more compassionate and effective justice system in Texas by prioritizing family unity and providing resources for parents to reintegrate into society. By offering alternatives to confinement and focusing on community rehabilitation, HB 361 holds parents accountable for their actions while still allowing them to support their families, benefiting the children of incarcerated parents and contributing to the overall well-being of Texas communities.	**Favorable**

HB 4172 By: Price	Relating to the authority of the governing body of a hospital district to vote for candidates for director of the appraisal district in which the hospital district participates.	Ways & Means 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Hospital districts, which are local taxing entities, are included within their corresponding local appraisal districts. As local taxing units, hospital districts are obligated to contribute a proportionate amount towards the operational costs of their respective appraisal district. Nevertheless, hospital districts are prohibited from participating in the selection of board members for the local appraisal district. Currently, incorporated cities and towns, school districts, junior college districts, and if entitled to vote, the conservation and reclamation districts are allowed to vote for candidates for director of the appraisal district. HB 4172 aims to allow the governing body of a hospital district to vote for candidates for director of an appraisal district that the hospital is in. HB 4171 also requires the chief appraiser to deliver a written notice to the presiding officer of the governing body and the hospital administrator of each hospital district on their voting entitlement before October 1st of every odd-numbered year. HB 4172 allows hospital districts to be represented, similarly to other local taxing entities, in the selection of the director of their appraisal district.	**<u>Favorable</u>**
HB 1164 By: Gervin-Hawkins	Relating to health benefit plan coverage for hair prostheses for breast cancer patients.	Insurance 5 Ayes, 4 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Cancer patients often experience hair loss due to chemotherapy, which can impact their emotional well-being and physical health. Hair prostheses can help maintain dignity for breast cancer patients, but many insurance plans don't cover them. HB 1164 mandates health benefit plans to cover hair prostheses for specific cancer patients in Texas. Eligible patients must be undergoing or have completed breast cancer treatment, with their physician approving the prosthesis due to treatment side effects. Coverage includes prosthesis repair or replacement, with a minimum benefit amount of $100, except in cases of misuse or loss by the patient. Health plans cannot charge extra premiums for the coverage but can apply the annual deductible, copayment, and coinsurance consistent with other plan coverages. The coverage requirement applies to health benefit plans listed in the bill, including state Medicaid and CHIP programs. If a state agency determines that federal authorization is needed for implementation, the affected agency must request it and may delay implementation until approval is granted. HB 1164 seeks to improve the quality of life for Texas breast cancer patients by requiring health benefit plans to cover hair prostheses.	**<u>Favorable</u>**
HB 2687 By: Leach	Relating to the age at which a juvenile court may exercise jurisdiction over a child.	Youth Health and Safety Select 9 Ayes 0 Nay	According to data released by the Texas Department of Juvenile Justice (TJJD), 90% of youth in the system have experienced at least one traumatic event. Additionally, these children's brains have not completed development, making them more susceptible to peer pressure, hasty decision making, and less equipped to make logical decisions. These children are often not best served in the juvenile justice system, especially when it may leave them with a permanent record that affects their access to education, jobs, and housing in the future. HB 2687 seeks to address this by raising the age that a child may be considered a juvenile, and creating a presumption that	**<u>Favorable</u>**

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		0 PNV 0 Absent	a child aged 10-12 is best served through service referral instead of TJJD facilities. HB 2687 raises the minimum age at which a person is considered a child under the juvenile justice code from 10 to 13 years old, and provides carve-outs for certain offenses for children aged 10-12. These offenses include aggravated assault, sexual assault, murder, capital murder, and more serious offenses. The bill also mandates that a juvenile court conduct a non-jury hearing prior to adjudication in order to determine whether to waive its exclusive jurisdiction over a child under 13 years of age. During the hearing, the court is required to consider whether less restrictive interventions by the child's parent, guardian, family, or school, or other parties are available and will serve to ensure the safety of the public and the child. The court must also determine whether its intervention is warranted and in the child's best interest. HB 2687 provides that if the court elects to waive its jurisdiction over the child, the child's charges will be dismissed, and the child will be referred to the person who conducted the investigation of the child for a referral for applicable services. The brain development of a ten year old child is in no way far enough along to contend with a full understanding of their actions and an ability to navigate the justice system. A child this age has an underdeveloped prefrontal cortex, lacks abstract thinking, and is just beginning to learn to emotionally regulate. These children are far better served through resources aimed at teaching them these skills as opposed to punishment. Children incarcerated at a young age are at higher risk for recidivism, long-term negative mental health outcomes, and lower educational achievements. In addition, not only is incarcerating children harmful and ineffective, it's expensive. The passage of this bill could save over $10 million over the next biennium. HB 2687 seeks to provide care specific to the needs of these children, while prioritizing community involvement and public safety.	
HB 2927 By: Turner	Relating to quarantine leave for certain public safety employees.	State Affairs 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent	In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 87th Texas Legislature passed two bills for first responders. SB 22 established a presumption that a COVID-19 injury or death is work-related for first responders. HB 2073 required political subdivisions to develop paid quarantine leave policies for first responders ordered to quarantine or isolate due to known or possible exposure to a communicable disease while on duty. There is confusion about the interaction between these two pieces of legislation and if the paid quarantine requirement impacts individuals covered by the presumption under SB 22. HB 2927 seeks to clarify that public safety employees in state agencies are entitled to paid quarantine leave and benefits if they contract or are exposed to a qualifying disease such as COVID-19. HB 2927 requires state agencies that employ public safety employees to develop and implement a paid quarantine leave policy for employees ordered to quarantine or isolate. Under this policy, employees ordered to quarantine or isolate would be required to receive all employment benefits, compensation, and reimbursement for reasonable costs related to the quarantine, like lodging, medical, and transportation costs. A state agency	<u>**Favorable**</u>

			could not reduce an employee's sick leave, vacation leave, or other paid leave balances in connection with paid quarantine leave taken under the policy. HB 2927 establishes that "ordered to quarantine or isolate" means any circumstances in which a person may not continue working due to a directive by a health authority or the employee's supervisor ordering the person from reporting to duty after exhibiting symptoms of or after exposure to a communicable disease included as presumed to be work-related for benefits or compensation. HB 2927 requires state agencies that employ public safety employees to implement a paid quarantine leave policy to help ensure that such employees receive compensation and reimbursement for reasonable costs related to quarantine or isolation.	
HB 4845 By: Allison	Relating to the establishment of a bullying prevention pilot program for public schools.	Youth Health & Safety, Select 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	Bullying has long been a problem in schools, but the situation has escalated with the increasing use of social media coupled with the rising issues with students' mental health. As a result, there is interest in addressing the issue with collaborative, evidence-based practices to mitigate bullying incidents by supporting public schools in implementing bullying prevention strategies. HB 4845 will assist by creating a bullying prevention pilot program. HB 4845 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to establish a bullying prevention pilot program to reduce bullying incidents on public school campuses and award grants to eligible districts to implement this program. While establishing this program, the TEA must use research-based bullying prevention practices and collaborate with qualified experts and researchers in child and youth psychology, mental health, and education. HB 4845 requires the Commissioner of Education to award grants from appropriated funds to districts that demonstrate significant needs for bullying prevention; districts that are awarded grants can only implement this program at up to three campuses in the district. The commissioner must establish eligibility criteria for districts to apply for grants and permitted uses of grant funds. TEA must use funds appropriated for the pilot program to provide technical assistance to grant recipients via regional education service centers. The commissioner can use other available funds for the program and solicit or accept grants or other donations to implement the program. HB 4845 will provide essential resources for school districts dealing with heightened bullying incidents on their campuses and improve school safety for these districts.	**Favorable**
HB 1452 By: Anchía | Bonnen | Shine | Rose	Relating to insurance coverage for the disposition of embryonic and fetal tissue remains.	Insurance 5 Ayes, 4 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Families experiencing stillbirths often seek funeral services for their unborn child. However, the majority of health and life insurance policies do not cover associated costs, requiring a child to be at least 14 days old before coverage is applicable. HB 1452 addresses this by requiring applicable insurers to cover the handling of embryonic and fetal tissue remains in stillbirth pregnancies with a post-fertilization age of 20 weeks. Insurers and other applicable entities are mandated to provide coverage of up to $7,500 for funerals, and related expenses, such as cremation. HB 1452 establishes exceptions for Medicaid and Medicare supplemental policies.	**Favorable**

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			HB 1452 acknowledges the grief of stillbirth and addresses it with dignity and respect.	
HB 4483 By: Lozano	Relating to a study by the Texas A&M Transportation Institute regarding the economic impact of navigation districts on the state and local economies.	Transportation 12 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	Texas ports in Texas are essential drivers of the state's economy and are vital for supporting coastal communities. HB 4483 will require the Texas A&M Transportation Institute to conduct a study to determine the economic impact of Texas ports and the growth potential of these ports. HB 4483 requires the Texas A&M Transportation Institute to study the economic impact and potential for economic growth of Texas navigation districts. The study must determine each district's direct economic impact on the state's economy, the total populations within each district's boundaries, and each district's projected economic growth over the next ten years. HB 4483 would also determine each navigation district's economic impact, population, and projected economic growth at the county level. The Texas A&M Transportation Institute must submit a report of the study's results to the lieutenant governor, the Speaker of the House of Representatives, and each legislative member. HB 4483 will provide an essential understanding of the economic impact of Texas navigation districts.	**Favorable**
HB 4069 By: Meyer	Relating to the required disclosure of prices by a veterinarian before providing emergency treatment to an ill or injured animal.	Agriculture & Livestock 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	HB 4069 amends the Veterinarians' Occupational Code, giving the Texas Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (TBVME) the power to enforce transparency among veterinarians regarding emergency care pricing. Under HB 4069, TBVME would be required to adopt regulations for veterinarians to inform pet owners of the cost of emergency treatment before administering any treatment to their animals. This would give pet owners a clear idea of the financial implications of emergency treatment and enable them to make informed decisions about their pets' medical care. Additionally, HB 4069 would require veterinarians to explain the intended treatment plan, helping pet owners understand the proposed treatment plan to help make an informed decision on whether to proceed with the treatment. Overall, HB 4069 is aimed at promoting optimal standards in the veterinary industry and empowering pet owners to make informed choices about the medical treatment and overall well-being of their beloved pets.	**Favorable**
HB 1086 By: Hull	Relating to policies and procedures regarding certain investigations by the Department of Family and Protective Services	Juvenile Justice & Family Issues 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV,	When investigating cases of child abuse and neglect, state investigators may seek permission to enter homes or schools, interview children, and review their medical records. When parents resist or contest these requests, the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) may seek court orders to facilitate the investigation and mandate access. Unfortunately, such orders are often issued in an ex parte hearing without allowing parents to present their perspective; only DFPS provides evidence through an affidavit. It is important for judges to possess all relevant information from all parties before making crucial decisions. By requiring a record of these hearings and limiting ex parte hearings to essential circumstances, HB 1086 aims to ensure due process and transparency	**Favorable**

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	and certain suits affecting the parent-child relationship.	3 Absent	for families and children. HB 1086 clarifies that if admission to the home, school, or any place where the child is cannot be obtained, the court requires probable cause to believe an order is necessary due to an immediate risk to a child's safety, rather than good cause shown, for the court to order entry. The bill adds that a court may not issue an order unless it is presented with facts that establish probable cause that the child is in immediate danger and a separate affidavit must be filed for each location for which admission is requested. An ex parte hearing for an order may not be held unless there is probable cause to believe that there is an immediate risk to the physical health or safety of the child that makes it impracticable to hold a full hearing. HB 1086 requires the court to prepare and keep a record of any ex parte hearing in the form of an audio recording or court reporter transcription and also maintain a copy of any electronic communication that occurred in place of an in-person hearing and provide a copy of the record of an ex parte hearing upon request. HB 1086 also modifies certain provisions regarding an initial court hearing for a child taken into possession by a government entity without a court order. The bill specifies that the initial hearing may be ex parte and proof may be by sworn petition or affidavit, only if a full adversary hearing is not practicable. This refers to situations where there is an urgent need to take action to protect the child's safety and holding a full hearing would not be possible or would cause undue delay. The bill requires courts holding an ex parte hearing to keep a record of the hearing, including any electronic communication, and provide a copy to a party upon request. HB 1086 aims to increase transparency and allow parents or guardians the opportunity for due process in certain circumstances. It is imperative to ensure that CPS procedures are conducted properly and with guardrails that protect all parties involved. These changes provide greater flexibility to the court in determining the appropriate measures necessary to protect a child's safety during an investigation of child abuse or neglect.	
HB 1206 By: Guillen	Relating to the determination of a school district's assets to liabilities ratio under the public school financial accountability rating system.	Public Education 8 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 4 Absent	Texas school districts have multiple rating systems including the A through F rating system which measures academic performance and the School Financial Integrity Rating System of Texas (FIRST), TEA's financial accountability system. School FIRST serves as a tool with several indicators to inform the legislature and taxpayers about a district's assets and liabilities. School districts that are property wealthy may face adverse performance ratings under the School FIRST system because they are required to make recapture payments to the state under the school financing system. However, School FIRST categorizes recapture payments as a liability with significant financial consequences when determining the district's asset-to-liability ratio. If a district receives a low School FIRST score, rating agencies may scrutinize it, which could result in a downgrade of outstanding bonds, leading to higher interest rates and burdening taxpayers. In other words, a low score tells rating agencies that the district is not managing their finances properly. HB 1206 prohibits the School FIRST system from including any performance measure that requires a school district to spend at least 65 percent or any other specified percentage of district operating funds for instructional	**Favorable**

			purposes. The bill also prohibits the system from lowering the financial management performance rating of a school district for failing to spend at least 65 percent or any other specified percentage of district operating funds for instructional purposes. Lastly, HB 1206 stipulates that any expenses incurred by the district to decrease local revenue levels beyond their entitlement amount should not be taken into account when determining the district's assets-to-liabilities ratio. These School FIRST points have real value and implications for taxpayers. A low grade triggers a review from rating agencies that could lower the rating and raise interest rates. When a school district is forced to decrease a portion of its local revenue level by state funding policy, the district should not be rated poorly by rating systems such as School FIRST in its assets to liability ratio because of an expenditure that is required by state.	
HB 798 By: Collier | González, Mary	Relating to crime victims' compensation for certain relocation and housing rental expenses.	Criminal Jurisprudence 5 Ayes 0 Nay 0 PNV 4 Absent	In Texas, a significant number of sexual assault and domestic violence victims struggle with housing issues due to their abuse and cannot access shelter services. In addition, current relocation assistance through the Crime Victim's Compensation Act is limited to specific crimes and requires that the crime occurs at the victim's residence. HB 798 seeks to address this by broadening eligibility for relocation support and helping more victims find refuge from their abusers. HB 798 addresses the issue of limited relocation assistance for victims by allowing the attorney general to provide one-time assistance payments for certain relocation and housing rental expenses to any victim of sexual assault and child victim of attempted murder, regardless of where the crime occurred. HB 798 will help ensure that survivors of crime in Texas have access to the housing needed to rebuild a sense of safety and move forward.	**<u>Favorable</u>**
HB 4220 By: Clardy	Relating to the office of the state long-term care ombudsman.	Human Services 5 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The State Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for assisted living and nursing home residents, ensuring their rights and well-being are protected. The office investigates various complaints, like medication concerns or assistance requests. To resolve these complaints, the ombudsman needs access to a resident's records and documents to advocate for their well-being adequately. HB 4220 clarifies the meaning of a patient care record, adds training regulations, and limits ombudsman access to residents' documents. HB 4220 requires an ombudsman to undergo comprehensive training on the state laws applicable to long-term care settings. This training ensures that they possess the necessary knowledge and understanding to effectively advocate for residents and navigate the complexities of the healthcare system. HB 4220 establishes that ombudsmen have access to a resident's patient records and a long-term facility's administrative records, policies, and other documents residents or the general public have access to in the normal course of business. HB 4220 does clarify documents obtained via litigation are not considered documents obtained in the normal course of business. An ombudsman must obtain consent from the resident or the	**<u>Unfavorable</u>**

			resident's representative to access patient care records. In addition, an ombudsman must verify to the long-term care facility subject to a complaint investigation that the ombudsman complied with all requirements to access a resident's records. HB 4220 introduces reporting requirements to the ombudsman's office. The report must include a statement explaining its role as an advocate for residents and that its points of view, opinions, positions, or policies do not reflect those of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Further, this report is to include a list of people representing the office who submitted a sworn statement to a legislative committee indicating the office's position on legislation and if the office submitted a public comment on a proposed rule in the Texas Register. Aligning state statutes with federal standards is always welcome to ensure Texas complies with national expectations. However, advocates have expressed concern that restricting access to certain records for ombudsmen would weaken their ability to perform their duties. Ombudsmen require various documents to complete their investigations, like patient records, administrative records available to the general public, and licensing or certification records maintained by the Department of State Health Services (DSHS). Additionally, ombudsmen may require documentation available through litigation, and HB 4220 would not allow this, thus restricting what they can access for their investigation. This restriction can interfere with the ombudsman's ability to complete timely and effective investigations.	
HB 3031 By: Johnson, Julie | Wilson | Bumgarner | Garcia	Relating to a grant program for members of the Texas military forces experiencing financial hardship caused by a tax withholding error.	Defense & Veterans' Affairs 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	In 2021 and 2022, officials from the Texas Military Department made an error in the payroll service for guardsmen deployed for Operation Lone Star (OLS), resulting in withholding too little in taxes. While the issue has been rectified, approximately 7,000 guardsmen were left with a substantial federal tax bill, causing financial hardships as they struggled to pay off debts and provide for their families. HB 3031 aims to address this problem by establishing a grant program specifically designed for guardsmen facing financial challenges due to this withholding error. HB 3031 mandates the Texas Military Department to create and manage the grant program exclusively for members, who served in OLS during 2021 and 2022, affected by the department's error. The legislation outlines the eligibility criteria for the grant, requiring the member to certify in their application that they were unaware of the withholding error and must demonstrate the connection between the error and their financial burden. The bill also grants authority to the Texas Military Department to include additional eligibility requirements for applicants. HB 3031 further directs the department to establish procedures for grant applications, criteria for evaluating those applications, and guidelines to ensure that the grant amount does not exceed the difference between the amount of federal taxes owed and the amount that was withheld. The Texas Military Department is required to report the program's performance results to the governor and legislature no later than December 1, 2023. This grant program will expire on January 1, 2025. These guardsmen do not deserve to pay for these owed tax on a	**Favorable**

			mistake that the state made. HB 3031 ensures financial accountability is executed by the TMD through this grant program.	
HB 4413 By: Guillen	Relating to the establishment of a task force to make recommendations for updating the livestock brand registration process.	Agriculture & Livestock 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	Current law requires individuals who own certain types of livestock such as cows, pigs, sheep, goats, and horses to have a unique marking or brand on them. These unique markings allow for livestock to be easily identified and distinguished from their neighbors' animals. However, some brands typically used to identify livestock can be indistinguishable from one another. HB 4413 updates the agricultural code to enact The Updated Livestock Brand Registration Task Force. This task force will include representatives from various associations and departments related to livestock. Their duties will include making recommendations for a digital registration method for livestock branding that is standardized across Texas. HB 4413 allows the task force the ability to accept gifts, grants, and donations for its work. Additionally, the task force shall submit reports to the governor, lieutenant governor, and chairs of relevant legislative committees. Overall HB 4413 creation of the Livestock Brand Registration Task Force is an important step towards updating and modernizing the identification methods for livestock to ensure efficient and accurate tracking and reuniting of animals with their rightful owners.	**Favorable**
HB 2211 By: Landgraf	Relating to the exclusive jurisdiction of the state to regulate greenhouse gas emissions in this state and the express preemption of local regulation of those emissions.	Environmental Regulation 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	Multiple cities in Texas have climate change plans for their city, a fundamental aspect of addressing climate change. Proponents of HB 2211 perceive this patchwork of climate plans as a cause for confusion, inefficiencies, and conflicts for greenhouse gas regulations across the state. HB 2211 aims to simplify and standardize regulations by establishing that the state has exclusive jurisdiction over greenhouse gas emissions and prohibiting local regulations. HB 2211 specifies that the state has sole authority over regulating greenhouse gas emissions in Texas, except where federal law overrides this authority. HB 2211 prohibits municipalities or other political subdivisions from creating or enforcing local regulations directly controlling greenhouse gas emissions. HB 2211 defines "greenhouse gas emissions" as emissions of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride. HB 2211 intends to ensure a consistent and streamlined regulatory system for greenhouse gas emissions across the state. ***Concerns*** Those in opposition state that the intent to prohibit all municipal action and yield all regulatory ability to the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) is reckless. Texas has four metro areas ranked in the top 25 worst for ozone and three ranked in the top 25 worst for year-round particle pollution, according to a 2023	**Unfavorable**

			American Lung Association report. The state's response to surging ozone from rising greenhouse gas emissions has proven inadequate and local action does make a difference in alleviating specific health, economic, infrastructural, and environmental stressors. In addition, Texas is expansive and diverse, with varying climates, geographies, and industries, requiring a tailored approach to the environmental regulation of greenhouse gas emissions. It would be significantly difficult for TCEQ to design and implement strategies to address greenhouse gas emissions responsive to each Texas region's or city's specific needs. During this session, there has been a focus on preempting local enforcement and assuming control at the state level. Removing local control strips municipalities of the ability to respond to their constituents' needs and desires and the needs or requirements of their specific area. For example, many communities have come together and created climate action plans, enacting their ability to use their voice to effect change where they live.	
HB 4759 By: Campos | Bernal | Garcia | Leach	Relating to an attack by a dangerous dog; increasing criminal penalties.	Public Health 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	The American Veterinary Medical Association estimates 4.5 million people are bitten by dogs each year, with 800,000 needing medical attention. Children and the elderly are the most common victims. Current Texas law requires a notarized witness statement to investigate a dog attack, but a 2001 task force recommended granting investigators more authority. HB 4759 allows animal control authorities to investigate dangerous dog incidents without a sworn witness statement and expands the list of offenses related to a dog attack to include bodily harm alongside serious bodily harm. HB 4759 expands offenses for dog attacks to include "bodily injury," encompassing physical pain, illness, or any impairment of physical condition. A person commits an offense if they negligently fail to secure or knowingly own a dangerous dog that causes an unprovoked attack resulting in bodily injury, serious bodily injury, or death. The bill classifies offenses as a Class B misdemeanor for bodily injury, a third-degree felony for serious bodily injury, and a second-degree felony for death. Additionally, the penalty for subsequent dangerous dog offense convictions is increased from a Class C to a Class A misdemeanor. In large municipalities like Houston and Dallas (specifically a municipality with more than 70% of a county's population of 1.5 million or more), HB 4759 requires animal control authorities to investigate incidents and notify the owner in writing if the dog is deemed dangerous. HB 4759 seeks to improve public safety by granting investigators more authority and updating the list of offenses in animal attack cases. By streamlining the investigation process and protecting witness identities, the bill aims to reduce harmful dog attacks, ultimately creating a safer environment for Texans, particularly vulnerable groups such as children and the elderly.	**<u>Favorable</u>**

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HB 3708 By: Buckley	Relating to creating an allotment under the Foundation School Program for school districts that allow non-enrolled students to participate in University Interscholastic League activities	Public Education 10 Ayes, 0 Nay, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	In 2021 Texas created an avenue for public schools to grant University Interscholastic League (UIL) access to homeschool students by passing HB 574 during the 87th Legislature. Although home-schooled participants have gained educational benefits through access to UIL activities, districts that offer these opportunities to home-schooled students are not provided with any extra funding for the higher number of participants in their programs. HB 3708 provides support to the public schools that have taken on these students due to HB 547 by providing an allotted amount for each homeschool student who participates in UIL extracurricular activities. HB 3708 provides an allotment for non-enrolled students participating in UIL activities. A non-enrolled student refers to a student who receives instruction from a nonpublic school. If a non-enrolled student participates in a UIL activity for a school district that allows participation of non-enrolled students under HB 547, 87th Legislature, the district is entitled to receive an annual allotment of $1,500 per activity in which the non-enrolled student participates. HB 3708 is designed to recognize the part time nature of some students while providing needed and meaningful support to these schools. There is currently a contingency rider in Article XI of the budget in support of this legislation.	**Favorable**
HB 3826 By: Toth	Relating to the time for processing a municipal building permit application.	Land & Resource Management 6 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Texas municipalities must approve or reject a building permit within 45 days of receiving the application or agree on a deadline with the person applying. If they don't decide within this time, they must give the applicant a written explanation for the delay. Some think the allowed time for issuing building permits should be shorter. HB 3826 would expand the conditions under which municipalities cannot charge permit fees and must refund collected fees for building permit applications. This situation would occur when a municipality failed to comply with permit issuance timelines. A municipality would be prohibited from denying permits solely because it could not comply with the statute and prevent it from requiring applicants to waive requirements for permit applications. For written agreements for an extended deadline, HB 3826 would narrow these agreements to only be for commercial building permits. In this context, “commercial” encompasses buildings for public use, economic gain, or multifamily residences not classified as residential by provisions governing municipal building and rehabilitation codes. HB 3826 aims to streamline the building permit process and protect applicants' rights, but critics argue it restricts local control and limits service options. Tighter timeframes and reduced flexibility could result in more outright rejections before the 45-day deadline, potentially leading to duplicate fees, resubmissions, and increased complaints.	**Unfavorable**

OK for Distribution

HB 4449 By: Reynolds	Relating to the establishment of a task force to study disciplinary practices and policies in public schools.	Youth Health & Safety, Select 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	For decades through Chapter 37 of the Education Code, relating to school safety and discipline, legislation has been introduced seeking to address student's behavior using current tools and disciplinary placements. There is growing concern that proposals such as truancy reform and an emphasis on zero tolerance and exclusionary discipline harms more than it helps students and educators. HB 4449 provides an opportunity for stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to work together to understand and make recommendations regarding school safety and discipline in Texas. HB 4449 establishes a task force to study and make recommendations for policies and practices related to student discipline in public schools in Texas. The task force is required to have a diverse range of members appointed by the commissioner of education or the commissioner's designee. HB 4449 mandates the task force to conduct a study to examine school discipline practices and policies in public schools throughout Texas. The study must include several components, including identifying exclusionary and punitive disciplinary practices and procedures used in public schools and identifying age-appropriate and research-based alternative disciplinary practices that focus on conflict resolution strategies and keep students engaged in the classroom. Under HB 4449, the study must also examine the impacts of mental and behavioral health challenges on student behavior and the current law and relevant regulations permitting or requiring a school to account for a student's mental or behavioral health when making disciplinary decisions. It must also examine the frequency with which independent school districts and open-enrollment charter schools implement alternative disciplinary practices and policies identified by the study and the challenges they face in implementing them. The study must also examine positive behavior programs or programs for graduated sanctions for certain school offenses and analyze their effectiveness in reducing the district's reliance on exclusionary and punitive disciplinary practices and policies identified by the study. Additionally, the study must also examine the resources and training educators have access to relating to alternative disciplinary practices and policies and those they lack. It must also examine how the COVID-19 pandemic and remote learning impacted student behavior and school disciplinary resources and whether there are gaps in current data collection methods relating to the disciplinary practices and policies identified by the study that, if corrected, would aid assessment of disciplinary practices. Lastly, the study must examine the manner and frequency of use of informal disciplinary practices and policies in public schools, including unreported out-of-school suspensions, early parent pick-ups, silent lunches, exclusion from recess, time-out, and removal of a student by a teacher as authorized under state law. It must also examine the frequency with which restraint is used on students as a disciplinary measure and how current laws and	**<u>Favorable</u>**

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			practices interact with and affect student discipline in Texas. Based on the study results under HB 4449, the task force will recommend changes to current laws and regulations to improve student disciplinary practices and policies. Having a safe learning environment is critical to a child's success in the classroom and is vital for retaining teachers and educational professionals. HB 4449 would give the legislature the ability to gain knowledge on ways in which Chapter 37 has failed and succeeded in its actions. This task force could be a vital tool for the state to understand the ever evolving student population and their specific needs, especially after recent years of increasing mental health issues and turmoil for this age group.	
HB 2412 By: King, Ken	Relating to civil actions by a civilly committed individual.	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	The Texas Civil Commitment Center (TCCC) in Lamb County is the only mental health facility in the state that holds and offers treatment to 437 civilly committed sexually violent predators (SVPs), as defined in statute. There have been reports of frivolous lawsuits, including lawsuits about not receiving the "right" pen or receiving the "wrong" dessert. These lawsuits result in significant court costs when filed by indigent individuals and take time from this small rural county. HB 2412 is narrowly tailored to address this issue in Lamb County by limiting the amount of frivolous lawsuits from civilly committed SVPs. HB 2412 allows individuals to go through a grievance process, and for the court to dismiss false, frivolous, or malicious claims. It enables the court to determine or hold a hearing to determine the validity of the claim upon request from the court, a party, or the court clerk. The bill also requires the suspension of discovery related to the claim during the hearing process if it is determined to meet qualifications. Furthermore, if the court dismisses a claim brought by a civilly committed individual in a facility operated by or under contract with the office, it permits the court to inform the office and suggest a mental health evaluation for the individual. HB 2412 requires civilly committed individuals who file an affidavit or unsworn declaration of their inability to pay costs to file another affidavit of declaration that names the court that ordered the individual's commitment, provides information on the individual's previously filed causes of action, allegations, actions, or claims, and certifies that all applicable grievance processes have been exhausted and that no court has found the individual to be a vexatious litigant. This affidavit or unsworn declaration must be accompanied by a certified copy of the individual's trust account statement and state the final order affirming the dismissal if the affidavit or declaration states that a previous action or claim was dismissed as frivolous or malicious. Individuals who file claims subject to the grievance system must file an affidavit or unsworn declaration on the date the written decision was received and a copy of the written decision from the grievance system, and these claims must be dismissed if they fail to file the claim before the 31st day after they receive a decision from the grievance system. The court must stay the proceeding with respect to the claim for no longer than 180 days to allow for a grievance procedure.	**Will of the House**

			HB 2412 allows the court to order a civilly committed individual who has filed a claim to pay court fees, costs, and other costs. The individual must pay an amount equal to the lesser of 20% of the preceding six months' deposits to the individual's trust account or the total amount of court fees, costs, and other costs. For the following months after this payment is made, the individual must pay an amount equal to the lesser of 10% of that month's deposits to the trust account or the total amount of court fees, costs, and other costs that remain unpaid until the total amount is paid or the individual is released from confinement. Civilly committed individuals may authorize payment in addition to what is required by this section. Courts can dismiss a claim if the individual fails to pay fees and costs under this section. A civilly committed individual may not avoid fees and court costs by nonsuiting a party or by voluntarily dismissing the action. Additionally, HB 2412 enables courts to allow a civilly committed individual who has not paid the fees and costs to file a claim for injunctive relief seeking to enjoin an act or failure to act that creates a substantial threat of irreparable injury or serious physical harm to the individual. HB 2412 allows these hearings to be conducted over video and recorded to serve as a permanent record of the hearing. HB 2412 also lays out the process for submitting evidence for these hearings. HB 2412 allows the court to enter an order to dismiss the entire claim or a portion of the claim. HB 2412 disallows a Supreme Court ruling to modify or repeal a rule adopted. HB 2412 maintains the civilly committed SVPs rights to file claims while allowing the courts to dismiss any frivolous, false, or malicious claims. It also requires these individuals to pay relevant court costs if they have the ability to do so. HB 2412 limits the amount of frivolous lawsuits and the cost to Lamb County.	
HB 1443 By: Slawson | Buckley | Rogers | Frank	Relating to the operation of certain wind-powered devices near certain aviation facilities and the receipt of certain ad valorem tax incentives for property on which such devices are constructed or installed; authorizing an administrative penalty.	State Affairs 7 Ayes, 5 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The 86th Texas Legislature passed SB 277, which prohibited landowners from receiving certain tax incentives for wind-powered energy devices within 25 nautical miles of a Texas military aviation facility. The intent was to preserve the ability of Texas bases to perform their missions. Proponents of HB 1443 state that new wind energy applications pose a risk to highly specialized helicopter training routes. HB 1443 aims to create a 65-nautical-mile boundary from a joint-use airport on a U.S. Army mobilization force generation installation to protect low-altitude training flights. HB 1443 prohibits qualifying property owners from receiving a property tax exemption or limitation on appraised property value under an agreement entered as a part of a program to encourage economic development in a reinvestment zone if a wind-powered energy device was installed or constructed on a property within 25 miles of a Texas military aviation facility. The prohibition applies regardless if the device was installed or built in a reinvestment zone. HB 1443 includes it prevails over conflicting legislation passed by the 88th legislature. HB 1443 prohibits power generation companies, electric cooperatives, and municipally-owned utilities from operating wind-powered generation facilities within 65 nautical miles of a joint-use airport in Texas. A joint-use airport is a U.S. Army mobilization force generation installation where military and civilian aircraft share airfield	**Unfavorable**

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			use, providing air traffic control for all aircraft operating within 60 nautical miles. HB 1443 authorizes the Public Utility Commission of Texas (PUC) to levy an administrative penalty on electric cooperatives or municipally owned utilities that breach this prohibition. HB 1443 establishes legislative intent that HB 1443's provisions be harmonized with another bill relating to nonsubstantive additions and corrections in enacted codes from another act of the 88th Legislature. ***Concerns*** HB 1443 imposes specific location requirements on wind farms not applicable to other forms of energy, including ones that pollute Texas. Wind energy is a crucial component of Texas' renewable energy portfolio and has improved grid capacity, providing a quarter of the state's energy use in 2022 and accounting for over a quarter of generating capacity in 2023, according to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT). Buffer zones are not evidenced-based, deny energy development rights to landowners without valid justification, and ignore that many wind projects are already successfully and safely operating near military bases. HB 1443's regulations on wind turbines are unfounded as they have not caused significant disruption to military training. Wind farms already operate near military installations, including the area referenced in HB 1443's purpose - Robert Gray Army Airfield at Fort Hood. The Federal Aviation Administration and the Department of Defense (DOD) address any issues by working closely with developers before developing wind projects. Moreover, ERCOT also requires wind farm developers to engage with DOD officials before launching new grid connection studies. HB 1443 would not enhance protections for military installations and impose arbitrary buffer zones.	
HB 4250 By: Lalani	Relating to the right of the clerk of a court to deduct from the amount of the excess proceeds from an ad valorem tax sale of property the cost of postage for sending to the former owner of the property a notice of the owner's right to claim the proceeds.	Ways & Means 10 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Currently, when a tax sale generates excess proceeds, the court's clerk is required to send a notification to the previous owner. This notification specifies the exact amount of the excess proceeds, informs the previous owner about their right to claim the funds, and includes a copy or the complete text of the relevant state laws. The process of preparing and sending these notifications incurs expenses that are borne by the clerk's office, which does not receive any funding for this purpose, putting a strain on smaller counties. HB 4250 aims to authorize the clerk to recoup these expenses by subtracting the postage cost of sending the notification from the property owner's total excess proceeds. The cost of postage is minimal to a taxpayer but significant to counties that send excess proceeds by mail regularly.	**Favorable**
HB 2615 By: Gates | Harris, Cody Burrows | Canales | Allen	Relating to the operation by a school district of a foundation and trade diploma program to provide eligible high school students with	Public Education 8 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 4 Absent	HB 2615 establishes guidelines for a school district to create a foundation and trade diploma program for high school students seeking skills in technical professions. This program would be intended for students whose educational necessities can be fulfilled by personalized training and education or for whom a P-TECH program is either academically unsuitable or lacks adequate opportunities. ***Foundation and Trade Diploma Program*** Each program must meet the following standards: be aligned with essential knowledge in mathematics, English	**Unfavorable**

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	educational training under a plan for the issuance of a high school diploma and the application of certain student-based allotments under the public school finance system.		language arts, science, and social studies; be designed to enable students to fulfill requirements related to industry-recognized credentials and certificates, including industry-based certification advisory council that is geared towards high school career and technology education programs, or industry-specific skill standards that are acknowledged by the Texas Workforce Investment Council under the Workforce Investment Act; be tailored to help students enter high-wage and high-growth jobs markets as identified by the Texas Education Agency (TEA). TEA must determine high-wage and high-growth jobs and industries for foundation and trade diploma students by using valid and reliable data to consider the average salary or wages and available work opportunities. A school district may form partnerships between the district and public postsecondary institutions in this state offering: academic or technical education; training under a certificate program; or an associate degree program. The bill permits a district to use funding from the foundation school program to cover tuition expenses for students obtaining academic or technical education or training from a postsecondary institution as part of a partnership. School districts may also partner with private sector businesses and institutions of higher education that offer workforce development training programs to provide opportunities for students to participate in apprenticeship training programs and other workplace-based education. The bill allows a district to apply for the P-TECH school grant program and use the funds obtained through the grant to pay for tuition costs for students enrolled in the district's foundation and trade diploma program who receive education or training from a postsecondary institution under a partnership. <u>Program Requirements</u> The State Board of Education must require students to successfully complete 24 credits for graduation and the issuance of a foundation and trade diploma. These credits must include one credit in each of the following: English I and II, Algebra I and one additional mathematic credit, biology and one additional science credit; United States history, a course providing instruction regarding the relationship between business and the federal government, physical education, language course other than English, fine arts, a course providing instruction in basic knowledge and skills to run an independent business; a course that providing basic knowledge and skills necessary to develop entrepreneurship, a course that provides instruction regarding financial education, and an internship of at least 120 hours in a job or industry approved by the board. The board must require nine hours in career and technical education courses related to industry-defined and industry recognized skill standards. The SBOE may only require these courses to provide curriculum regarding computer programming and software development, cybersecurity, plumbing and pipefitting, electricity, welding, diesel and heavy equipment, aviation maintenance, applied agricultural engineering, heating, ventilation, and air conditioning, property management, and residential construction.	

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			HB 2615 prohibits the SBOE from requiring curriculum founded on essential knowledge and skills provided for students in a P-TECH program. It also establishes that the curriculum standard for a foundation and trade diploma program may solely be founded on essential knowledge and skills designated by the SBOE. The Texas Education Agency (TEA) must provide support to the board in establishing curriculum requirements. A student enrolled in this program may also receive a high school diploma as well if they successfully complete the program and any other graduation requirements, and either pass end-of-year assessments or be considered qualified to graduate by the individual graduation committee operating in the district that has the foundation and trade diploma program. The bill requires that information regarding foundation and trade diploma programs be provided to students in grades seven or eight as part of high school, college, and career preparation instruction and mandates that the state plan for career and technology education should have procedures to ensure the opportunity for students to participate in foundation and trade diploma programs. Assessment Instruments A school district is permitted to oversee assessment instruments necessary for a student enrolled in the district's foundation and trade diploma program to obtain an industry-recognized license, credential, or certificate. The students must be given end-of-course assessment established by federal law. HB 2615 allows a school district to create and administer exams for students in the foundation and trade diploma program to earn industry-recognized licenses, credentials, or certificates and provide a reimbursement for one exam cost per school year for a student enrolled in the program. Achievement Indicators HB 2615 requires the commissioner to establish achievement indicators for students in foundation and trade diploma programs based on Texas Workforce Investment Council recommendations. The indicators must: assess program outcomes related to students' success in obtaining industry-recognized licenses, postsecondary occupational training, and entering the workforce; reducing outcome disparities among varying socioeconomic, racial, and ethnic backgrounds; and informing parents and employers the performance of the program. Each district must give the commissioner all required information for the necessary evaluation based on the achievement indicators. The commissioner shall annually select a cohort to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of each foundation and trade diploma program and publish a report on program performance based on achievement indicators and the evaluation of the cohort. The SBOE must conduct an annual study on the implementation and effectiveness of the program. The SBOE must submit the study results, along with recommendations, to the legislature and a legislative oversight committee by December 31 of each year. The committee comprises three senators appointed by the lieutenant	

			governor and three house representatives appointed by the speaker of the house. All appointments must be by December 1, 2024. The committee is required to meet twice a year and receive reports from the SBOE, as well as any other information related to the implementation and effectiveness of the programs; review recommendations for legislation proposed by TEA, SBOE, public school districts, or relevant stakeholders; monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the programs; and submit a report by December 31 of every even-numbered year to the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the house, describing any identified problems and recommending legislative actions to solve them. Enrollment Eligibility A student may enroll in the program if the district has received an informed-consent form and the student attends a high school in the district or has finished 10th grade. The informed consent form is handled by the school counselor with the student and their parent, guardian, or other parental figure. This form outlines the differences between the traditional high school diploma and the foundation and trade program. Information must also be included regarding the number of additional credits the student may be required to graduate should the student stop the foundation and trade program and resume the foundation high school program. Once this information has been debriefed, the parental figure may provide written permission on a form for the student's enrollment in the foundation and trade diploma program. The form shall be created by the TEA and given to the school counselor. Minimum Instructor Qualifications HB2615 specifies that any instructor for the foundation and trade diploma program must demonstrate expertise through professional work experience, formal training and education, holding a relevant, active, industry-recognized license, credential, or certificate, or any combination of the three. Instructors must have received at least 20 hours of classroom management training as determined by the district's board of trustees. Program instructors qualify for membership in the Teacher Retirement System of Texas. ***Foundation and Trade Diploma Program Allotment*** C.S.H.B. 2615 establishes that only the first 10 hours of instructional hours provided for each full-time equivalent student in average daily attendance in a foundation and trade diploma program each week qualify toward the district's entitlement to the career and technology education allotment. The entitlement is calculated by multiplying the basic allotment by 1.1 for each such student or the sum of the basic allotment and the applicable small and mid-sized district allotment multiplied by 1.1 for each student. The commissioner must reduce the entitlement based on the limited number of weekly instructional hours using a self-determined method. A district's entitlement to the additional career and technology education allotment with respect to students enrolled in the program is limited to the amount determined by the commissioner for a campus designated as a P-TECH school. The bill also increases from 55 percent to 65 percent the minimum amount of funds from the	

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			allotment that must be used by each district in providing career and technology education programs in grades 7 through 12. The amount of career and technology education funding that a school district can receive for each student enrolled in its foundation and trade diploma program is limited to the amount designated by the commissioner for a P-TECH school campus. ***Conclusion*** Supporters of HB 2615 believe it could help address the increased need for middle-skill jobs across Texas by equipping students with vocational training and skills, industry-recognized certification and credentials for these crucial jobs through the Foundation and Trade Diploma Program in public schools. Opponents view this bill as creating a separate and less rigorous path to graduation, which ultimately reduces post-secondary options for students. The current standards for graduation under the Foundation High School Program ensures students have a solid academic foundation for their future, whether it be traditional post-secondary education or vocational trade. Currently, diploma endorsements are available for students to specialize in areas of vocational skills through career and technical education (CTE) courses. HB 2615 offers a differing diploma track, with differing academic standards and curriculum requirements, that could limit a high school student's future post-graduation. Allowing students to opt out of core academic courses in 10th grade could deprive students from attending college after graduation without significant and costly remedial courses.	
HB 4306 By: Dorazio	Relating to a study by the attorney general on the feasibility of linking debit card transactions to bullion in the Texas Bullion Depository.	Pensions, Investments, & Financial Services 7 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	Some people have shown interest in incorporating gold and silver into their everyday transactions. HB 4306 mandates that the attorney general conducts a study to assess the viability of a program allowing debit cards to be used in transactions linked to and accounted for by bullion in the Texas Bullion Depository. Bullion are precious metals such as gold and silver that are suitable for or customarily used in the purchase, sale, storage, transfer, and delivery of bulk or wholesale transactions in precious metals. The study explores whether specific state and local taxes would apply to transactions conducted through the program, outline measures to protect participants from federal taxation of bullion as currency, and consider other operational aspects of the program. HB 4306 authorizes the attorney general to submit a written report with recommendations to the governor, comptroller of public accounts, and speaker of the house no later than May 31, 2024. The attorney general shall accept input from the public and HB 4306 authorizes the attorney to collaborate with the appropriate committees in both chambers in conducting the study.	**Will of the House**

HB 40 By: Zwiener | Isaac | Troxclair | King, Tracy | Murr	Relating to the authority of a county commissioners court to adopt an exemption from ad valorem taxation by each taxing unit that taxes the property of the portion of the appraised value of a person's property that is attributable to the installation in or on the property of certain water conservation systems.	Ways & Means 10 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HB 40 is the enabling legislation for HJR 25. Texas property owners lack incentive to install water conservation systems like rainwater harvesting and graywater reuse - wastewater reuse from washing and hygiene - because they may be taxed on the value of the system. This is different from solar panels, which are exempt from property taxes. HB 40 allows county commissioners to provide a property tax exemption for the installation of rainwater harvesting and graywater reuse systems to encourage conservation of a precious resource in Texas. HB 40 amends the state Tax Code and permits county commissioners' courts to exempt the appraised value of rainwater harvesting or graywater systems installed on private property from property taxes. This exemption would be applicable to all taxing units that tax the property. Graywater refers to wastewater from specific household sources that don't contain hazardous or toxic materials, and it doesn't include wastewater from toilets, human excreta, and sinks used for food preparation or disposal. These changes will be enforced only for property taxes for tax years starting from the effective date of the bill. HB 40 encourages participation in statewide water conservation efforts and reduces the pressure on water reserves during droughts.	**Favorable**
HB 3464 By: Kacal	Relating to creating the criminal offense of tampering with a correctional facility tablet device.	Corrections 5 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) has raised concerns about individuals in correctional facilities tampering with or modifying the tablets they've been given. Currently, the legal ramifications for inmates who "jailbreak" or alter tablet devices within a correctional facility remains ambiguous. HB 3464 clarifies the offense for confined individuals who tamper with issued technology devices. HB 3464 creates a third degree felony offense for tampering with a correctional facility tablet device. This applies to inmates who alter, modify, or breach the security, programming, or operating system of a tablet device provided to them by a correctional facility operator while confined in a municipal or county jail, a secure correctional facility, a secure detention facility, or a facility operated by TDCJ. Felonies are reserved for some of Texas' most serious crimes, such as intoxicated manslaughter, robbery, and indecent assault. Tampering with a correctional facility tablet in no way meets the seriousness of other crimes of this degree and is an extreme over-correction. There are a myriad of other remedies that can be used instead of a harsh third degree felony, such as requiring more supervision of the tablets or withholding the device altogether.	**Unfavorable**
HB 4120 By: Guillen	Relating to the inspection of the location of a	Natural Resources 9 Ayes,	House District 31 constituents have expressed concerns about the inefficiencies in injection well maintenance. At present, operation managers must travel long distances to personally check on the well. To address this issue, HB 4120 proposes using aerial or satellite imagery for inspection checks instead of in-person visits.	**Unfavorable**

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	proposed Class I injection well.	2 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HB 4120 amends the state Water Code to allow the executive director of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to accept an inspection report from a licensed engineer or geoscientist for a proposed Class I injection well instead of conducting in-person inspections. HB 4120 requires the report to confirm that the engineer or geoscientist inspected the well location, determined the local conditions, and evaluated the well's impact. The report must also state the engineer's or geoscientist's decision on the casing requirements. HB 4120 authorizes the inspection to be conducted in person or virtually using aerial imagery, mapping software, or other relevant sources. Although it is wise to appropriately use new technology, there are serious concerns that not having a physical inspection by a TCEQ inspector could lead to mistakes which will impact the technical review and the permit approval process.	
HB 211 By: González, Mary	Relating to the regulation of child-care facilities and registered family homes providing services to children with disabilities or special needs.	Human Services 5 Ayes, 4 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) provides little protection regarding policies and procedures on children with disabilities accessing child care. While federal and state regulations provide some provisions to safeguard these children and their families, some children still face rejection. HB 211 seeks to add regulations to protect children with disabilities in child care settings. HB 211 prohibits discrimination based on race or disability status and requires child care facilities and group homes to incorporate inclusive practices for children with special needs. Additionally, HB 211 prohibits child-care facilities from refusing admission to a child with a disability, unless accommodating that child would unreasonably burden the facility or pose a risk to the health and safety of other children. It also states that facilities cannot be required to modify their existing practices, procedures, or incur excessive expenses or difficulties to accommodate the child. HB 211 introduces new training standards for employees, directors, and operators of daycares, group homes, and registered family homes. Employees must complete 8 of their 24-hour initial training before they can become caregivers. However, this requirement only applies if the employee is not the sole caregiver for a child or group of children and is working under the supervision of another qualified caregiver in the same room. Additionally, employees' annual 24-hour training must include at least 6 hours focused on caring for children with special needs. Under HB 211, both initial and annual training for employees, directors, or operators of various residential child care facilities must include at least one hour of training in subjects such as child mental health and screenings, social and emotional learning, positive behavior intervention and supports, trauma-informed care, or similar topics. The training can be completed virtually or in-person, and the facility must provide it at no cost. HB 211 also allows accredited early intervention specialists, accredited early childhood intervention service providers, or	<u>**Favorable**</u>

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			licensed behavior analysts to provide the training. HB 211 mandates that facilities maintain records and provide parents with essential information about their child's developmental milestones and any indicators of developmental delays. Also, facilities must disclose their policies on providing care to children with disabilities. HB 211 aims to ensure that children with disabilities and special needs receive appropriate care and have the opportunity to grow and develop in child care facilities, like other children.	
HB 4518 By: Cook	Relating to the authority of a court to grant a commutation of punishment to certain individuals serving a term of imprisonment and to victims' rights regarding a motion to grant a commutation.	Criminal Jurisprudence 9 Ayes 0 Nay 0 PNV 0 Absent	In many other states, the courts have the authority to adjust sentences for individuals currently serving prison terms if it is deemed necessary to serve the interest of justice. Texas does not have the same mechanisms in place to address situations where new information comes to light that suggests an individual's sentence is not serving the interest of justice, an appeal is not possible, and parole is years away. This limits the options available to those who have been wrongly sentenced or whose sentences are no longer appropriate. HB 4518 seeks to remedy this by creating a pathway for judicial commutations. HJR 172 is the enabling legislation for HB 4518. HB 4518 allows a court to grant a commutation of punishment for an incarcerated person currently serving a term of imprisonment, but only upon motion by the state's attorney. The motion must be filed by the state's attorney for the jurisdiction where the inmate was convicted, and the state's attorney may withdraw the motion until it has been granted. HB 4518 allows the court to consider a person's disciplinary record, rehabilitation, age, time served, and physical condition in determining whether to grant a commutation. The bill also permits the court to consider evidence that suggests the individual no longer poses a risk and that their continued imprisonment is no longer serving the interest of justice. HB 4518 allows a court granting commutation to reduce an incarcerated person's sentence below the established minimum for the offense and prohibits the increase of any sentencing. Lastly, regarding victims affected by the crime committed by the individual, HB 4518 grants them the right to be notified of any commutation hearings or granted commutations. HB 4518 allows for nuance and needed adjustments in our courts and justice system, while still prioritizing public safety and survivors of crime. It is important that the state is able to adapt when circumstances change, or new information is brought forth.	**Favorable**

HB 601 By: Jetton	Relating to deceptive, unfair, or prohibited practices by an insurer.	Insurance 6 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Current statute requires policyholders to cover attorney and licensed public adjuster fees when an insurance company mishandles a claim and eventually takes responsibility. This situation unfairly burdens policyholders as they are not fully compensated due the insurance company's failure. HB 601 seeks to address this issue by classifying the improper denial, delay, underpayment or mishandling of claims that necessitates policyholders hire professional representation as an unfair claims settlement practice. Under the provisions of HB 601, an insurance company must pay fees for a licensed public adjuster when it has mishandled a claim. HB 601 ensures policyholders are not financially burdened by corrective actions needed when an insurance company is at fault. This measure is important because many Texans do not have the time to seek a civil remedy in small claims court or the means to hire a public adjuster without significant burden. HB 601 implements an important consumer protection mechanism that ensures fairness, lower expenses for Texas consumers, and incentivizes good-faith efforts by insurers.	**Favorable**
HB 994 By: Muñoz, Jr. | Frazier	Relating to sheriff's department civil service systems in certain counties.	County Affairs 8 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Police officers in House District 36 have expressed concern over the power granted by the sheriff's department civil service system to a sheriff to impose an indefinite suspension on a police officer. HB 994 aims to resolve this concern by creating a process for the suspension, termination, and demotion of a sheriff's department employee equivalent to the discipline standards followed under municipal civil service for other officers. HB 994 permits a sheriff to authorize a suspension of up to 15 days or terminate an employee for violating a civil service rule. Should the sheriff exercise this authority, a written statement must be filed within 120 hours of the suspension or termination that outlines the reasons for action, including which civil service rule was violated and describing the alleged act in violation. If the sheriff fails to specifically outline the action of violation that led to the suspension, then the employee must be reinstated. HB 994 prohibits a sheriff from complaining about an act, including those related to a violation of federal, state, or local law, that occurred more than 180 days before suspending or terminating an employee. The sheriff must deliver a copy of the statement to the suspended or terminated employee. The written statement must inform the employee of the appeal process to the commission. HB 994 allows a sheriff to offer the employee the option to accept a voluntary suspension of 16 to 90 days. The employee must agree to the suspension in writing within five working days, with no right to appeal. If the employee refuses the offer and wishes to appeal, they must file a written appeal with the commission within ten days of receiving the statement from the sheriff. HB 994 lets a sheriff recommend in writing that a nonexempt employee be demoted. The reasons must be listed in the recommendation, and a copy be given immediately to the employee in person. The commission is authorized to refuse to grant the request. If there is believed to be probable cause for the demotion, a public	**Favorable**

			hearing must be held. The employee must receive immediate and in-person notification of the public hearing at least 10 days before the hearing. An employee may not be demoted without a hearing unless a voluntary demotion is acceptable to the employee. HB 994 could allow a sheriff to hold officers to the same discipline standards other officers are currently held to under municipal civil service, thus creating a more equitable accountability system.	
HB 638 By: Toth | Burrows | Harris, Cody | Bonnen	Relating to access to certain investigational drugs, biological products, and devices used in clinical trials by patients with severe chronic diseases.	Public Health 11 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	The Right to Try Act of May 2018 created a federal framework for patients with chronic diseases to access investigational drugs and biologics. As a result, Texas advocates have called for expanded treatment choices for these patients. HB 638 aims to provide more treatment options by allowing investigational drugs, biological products, and devices for patients with severe chronic diseases designated by the commissioner of state health services and confirmed in writing by their treating physician. To access investigational treatments, a patient's physician must consult with the patient, consider all FDA-approved options, and determine if these options are unsuitable or unlikely to provide relief. The physician must also recommend or prescribe the patient's use of a specific class of investigational treatment in writing. HB 638 defines "investigational" treatments as those that have completed phase one of a clinical trial but are not yet approved by the FDA and exclude low-THC cannabis and marijuana products. HB 638 allows physicians to recommend or prescribe investigational treatments to eligible patients who sign a written informed consent, offers provisions for minors or those lacking mental capacity, and ensures that the Texas Medical Board cannot penalize physicians for recommending such treatments if they comply with the bill's requirements and rules. Furthermore, state officials, employees, or agents cannot block eligible patients' access to investigational treatments unless deemed adulterated or misbranded under the Texas Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. HB 638 mandates the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to adopt necessary rules to implement the bill's provisions as soon as possible, with initial rules adopted under emergency provisions. In addition, the state health services commissioner will designate which medical conditions are considered severe chronic diseases. HB 638 neither allows legal action against manufacturers or caregivers involved in using investigational treatments nor does it impact coverage for routine patient care costs in clinical trials, per the Insurance Code. HB 638 acknowledges the success of the Right To Try Act in helping terminally ill patients and addresses the lengthy approval process for investigational treatments for non-terminal illnesses. Ultimately, HB 638 strives to provide Texans with severe chronic diseases access to potentially life-altering investigational treatments, empowering them to make informed decisions about their healthcare in consultation with their physicians.	**Favorable**

HB 4083 By: Goldman	Relating to the availability of certain working papers and electronic communications of certain administrative law judges and technical examiners under the public information law.	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence 5 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	Presently, the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) Hearings Division faces a situation where administrative law judges (ALJs) and technical examiners (TEs) do not have clear protection against the disclosure of their case discussions, impressions, notes, emails, and other related materials. Although there is a possibility that the Office of Attorney General (OAG) might determine that such information should be shielded from disclosure upon receiving a request, this is not guaranteed. Currently, this exception exists for the ALJs at the State Office of Administrative Hearings, and HB 4083 aims to extend this exemption to certain documents and communications of ALJs and TEs at the RRC. HB 4083, if passed, would only apply to the RRC. It would make it more difficult for the public to get access to communications that are currently open to disclosure, that other state agencies are also subject to. It does not make sense to exempt the RRC from state public information law and no other state agencies. It also does not make sense to make it more difficult to get access to these materials, as state agencies should have some transparency on their actions.	**<u>Unfavorable</u>**
HB 1054 By: Turner	Relating to the classification of certain construction workers and the eligibility of those workers for unemployment benefits; providing an administrative penalty..	Business & Industry 9 Ayes, 0 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Payroll fraud is a type of fraud in which employers wrongly classify their employees as independent contractors to evade payroll, unemployment, and Social Security taxes. Estimates have shown nearly 40% of Texas construction employees could be misclassified as independent contractors. When employers misclassify their workers, they can deny them essential benefits like overtime pay, workers' compensation, and unemployment insurance. In addition, employers who commit payroll fraud can shift the burden of paying payroll taxes to their workers, unfairly placing the burden of additional taxes on the individual. HB 1054 amends the Labor Code, laying out rules for classifying individuals providing construction services. The bill clarifies that if an individual works as an independent contractor in construction, they are not considered an employee. Individuals required to pass a background check or have a specific license to do their job do not automatically make them an employee. Employers don't need to report these individuals as employees if they can show that they are independent contractors and correctly report their payments to the IRS. If a contractor is found to have improperly classified an individual, they can be fined up to $100 for each individual. If the contractor repeats this violation, they can be fined up to $1,000 for each person for each additional offense. The penalty also applies to business owners with a new business entity similar to their original business. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) will impose the penalty in the same way it imposes penalties under other laws. The bill also requires TWC to issue an annual report regarding compliance with and enforcement of the classification requirement.	**<u>Favorable</u>**

			HB 1054 seeks to address payroll fraud, which not only deprives employees of essential benefits but also causes the state to lose millions of dollars in tax revenue.	
HB 4873 By: Holland	Relating to the licensing and regulation of peace officers.	Homeland Security & Public Safety 6 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	The Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) provides training and licenses to law enforcement officers in Texas. Currently, there are no statewide minimum conduct standards for these officers, making it difficult for agencies to identify instances of misconduct. HB 4873 aims to address this issue by directing TCOLE to establish a set of minimum conduct standards, including procedures for disciplinary actions, for peace officers. HB 4873 requires TCOLE to prescribe conduct standards for peace and reserve law enforcement officers and update these standards biennially. These conduct standards must establish minimum standards for the pursuit of a suspect, arrest and control tactics, executing high-risk warrants, and conducting traffic stops, including uniform standards for conducting traffic stops for fine-only offenses. HB 4873 requires the governor to appoint a panel to investigate alleged violations of prescribed conduct standards. The panel will consist of nine members appointed by the governor from TCOLE, Texas Indigent Defense Commission, four TCOLE-licensed peace officers, each selected by the presidents of Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT), Texas Municipal Police Association, Sheriffs' Association of Texas, and Texas Police Chiefs Association, and three others. The TCOLE appointment is to serve as the presiding officer of the panel. HB 4873 provides term limits for the panel members and when the panel will meet. Panel members are not entitled to compensation but will be reimbursed for incurred expenses while performing their duties. HB 4873 allows TCOLE or the investigation panel, while investigating a violation of conduct standards, to request and compel by subpoena for the examination of witnesses under oath and inspection and copying of certain information relevant to the investigation, like personnel files and other employee records of the person under investigation. HB 4873 requires TCOLE to allow a witness to attend over videoconference in response to a subpoena. TCOLE or the panel may bring an action via the attorney general to enforce a subpoena against a person that fails to comply. TCOLE has the authority to revoke, suspend, or place an individual on probation if their license has been suspended or reprimanded for violating the standards of conduct. HB 4873 stipulates that TCOLE may only take disciplinary action against an officer for an alleged violation of the standards of conduct if the investigative panel, by a two-thirds vote, determines that the violation occurred and recommends disciplinary action. TCOLE must submit to the National Decertification Index information required to create a record for each officer license revoked by TCOLE for violating officer conducts standards or for dishonorable discharge. Individuals with licensures or authorizations from other states suspended or revoked are disqualified from being peace or reserve law enforcement officers. TCOLE is prohibited from issuing an officer license to such an individual.	**Favorable**

OK for Distribution

			HB 4873 provides accountability and a uniform standard of conduct among all law enforcement. Law enforcement should be held accountable for their conduct, considering the authority and purpose allotted to them.	
HB 1170 By: Gervin-Hawkins	Relating to policies and standards for providing legal representation to indigent defendants in certain capital felony cases.	Criminal Jurisprudence 7 Ayes 1 Nay 0 PNV 1 Absent	Recently, concerns have been raised regarding the quality and qualifications of attorneys appointed to represent indigent defendants in capital murder cases. According to the Texas Indigent Defense Commission (TIDC), Texas held 243 pending capital murder cases with indigent defendants in 2020 alone. Because these cases carry the most severe and harsh punishment available to the state, representation must be highly qualified and equipped to handle such cases. HB 1170 aims to ensure this by altering various statutes regarding requirements for attorney representation and attorney experience in capital trials and creating a statewide capital defense and standards committee to train and vet such counsel. HB 1170 creates the statewide capital defense training and standards committee to develop policies and standards for attorneys representing indigent defendants in capital cases. The bill eliminates the duty of local selection committees to set attorney qualification standards and requires them to evaluate and determine the qualified attorney list instead and then post that list publicly to their website. HB 1170 requires training, qualification standards, and continuing education to be a part of the policies and standards adopted by the committee. The bill also revises the qualification requirements for attorneys appointed to capital cases, removing the condition that a federal or state court must not have found an attorney to have provided ineffective counsel. Instead, the bill requires that an attorney not have been found by a local selection committee to have provided inadequate representation during a death penalty case unless the committee has determined that the underlying conduct no longer accurately reflects the attorney's ability to provide effective representation in the future. HB 1170 also requires that attorneys appointed to capital cases have experience regarding mitigating evidence at the penalty phase of a death penalty trial. As an alternative experience, an attorney may have equivalent trial experience as determined by the local selection committee. HB 1170 also changes the requirements for attorneys on a local selection committee's qualified list for death penalty cases. Attorneys on the list must now present certain proof to the committee regarding their qualifications and experience within two years of being placed on the list and annually after that. HB 1170 establishes that the statewide committee comprises nine members, each with significant experience in capital defense or indigent criminal defense policy or practice. Each professional will be appointed by a qualified expert agency in their field. The committee members will select the committee chair. In summary, HB 1170 aims to improve the quality of legal representation provided	**Favorable**

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			to indigent defendants in capital cases. All Americans have the right to counsel and due process, as the Constitution guarantees. In no way should poverty ever be a barrier to freedom, and HB 1170 helps to ensure that it won't be.	
HB 1215 By: Cook | Moody | Leach | Rosenthal | Anchía	Relating to consideration of criminal history of applicants for public employment.	State Affairs 13 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Access to employment is essential for individuals with a criminal record to reintegrate into society and succeed after serving their sentence. A criminal record prevents many employers from even considering a person's skills and qualifications. Over 35 states have implemented fair chance hiring policies for public employers, and federal employment adopted such policies in 2019. HB 1215 aims to foster equal opportunities for all job applicants and reduce recidivism rates. HB 1215 prohibits an employer from requesting or viewing an applicant's criminal history before making a conditional offer of employment. This approach allows applicants to be evaluated based on their skills and qualifications rather than their criminal record. HB 1215 does not apply to public schools and law enforcement agencies, and doesn't prevent employers from informing applicants about disqualifying convictions or affecting how criminal history is considered in final hiring decisions. HB 1215 seeks to create a more equitable hiring process for Texans with criminal records who seek public employment.	**Favorable**
HB 1537 By: Howard | Lalani	Relating to the submission by law enforcement agencies to certain public school personnel of a handle with care notice concerning a traumatic event experienced by a public school student and to certain required training regarding those notices.	Youth Health and Safety 5 Ayes 1 Nay 0 PNV 3 Absent	ACES, or Adverse Childhood Experiences, are incredibly accurate indicators of negative physical health outcomes, mental health issues, and social and behavioral problems. These outcomes can be mitigated, however, with proper support. According to the Texas Education Agency, any given class with 24 children likely has 12 children that have experienced at least one ACE. This report signals a need for school districts to have an understanding of children that may have experienced trauma. HB 1537 seeks to ensure educators handle students who have been through traumatic experiences with care by providing "handle with care" notices from law enforcement agencies to public school districts and school personnel. HB 1537 allows law enforcement agencies to submit "handle with care" notices to the appropriate school employee at the student's enrolled school if the agency determines that a public school student has experienced a traumatic event. Traumatic events listed in the bill include a range of incidents such as the arrest of an individual who resides with a student, suicide or attempted suicide committed by an individual who lives with a student, and other events that could negatively impact a student's ability to succeed in school. This notice will only include the student's name, age, and grade at their school. Upon receiving a "handle with care" notice, the employee must immediately provide a copy of the notice to all personnel involved in supervising the affected student. The bill also requires law enforcement agencies to ensure that their officers and other employees receive appropriate training regarding "handle with care" notices and	**Favorable**

			mandates that the information contained in the notices be kept confidential except as provided by the bill's provisions. To further support the implementation of the "handle with care" notice system, the bill requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to create a one-hour training course for district and charter school employees responsible for student supervision. Additionally, the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) must propose changes allowing educators to receive credit toward their continuing education requirements for course completion. HB 1537 ensures that vulnerable children are supported by adults in their life who have consistent contact with them. Additionally, as trauma can often cause behavioral changes and a decrease in educational investment from students, educators must receive a notice that may help ensure that they understand the root of those changes. This knowledge will make it more likely that a school district will react to any changes with support instead of punishment.	
HB 1299 By: Noble	Relating to the signature required on a carrier envelope for a ballot voted by mail; changing the elements of a criminal offense.	Elections 6 Ayes, 3 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HB 1299 seeks to institute the requirement of an ink-on-paper signature on a mail-in ballot's carrier envelope in the name of election security. HB 1299 requires voters and those who are assisting voters to add their signature on the carrier envelope of their mail-in ballot with ink. Under HB 1299, electronic and photocopied signatures are prohibited. Despite the removal of criminal implications of using an electronic or photocopied signature through the committee substitute, advocates remain concerned about the equity of prohibiting the use of a stamp by a voter. This restriction particularly impacts individuals with disabilities who are unable to physically apply ink to their signature. It creates an inequity as stamps are allowed for other legal documents, and restricts their independence since they would have to rely on assistance when unable to use ink. Additionally, individuals in pre-trial detention, who are legally permitted to vote by mail in Texas, face challenges as they do not have access to pens or ink due to safety procedures. In summary, these proposed changes would disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, further limiting accessibility and voter participation inTexas.	**Unfavorable**
HB 1998 By: Johnson, Julie | Price | Smith | Johnson,	Relating to the regulation of physicians and the disciplinary authority of the Texas Medical Board; increasing a criminal penalty.	Public Health 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	Several cases have recently surfaced in Texas where doctors caused serious or even deadly harm to patients. Some of these doctors had a history of negligence or previous disciplinary actions in other states. Due to gaps in existing Texas law, these cases were missed, allowing the doctors to keep practicing and endangering patients' lives. HB 1998 aims to refine language and close gaps in current laws governing the Texas Medical Board's (TMB) disciplinary power, licensing and renewal requirements, and complaint investigation and resolution processes. The TMB is required to monitor the National Practitioner Data Bank, updating a physician's profile within 10	**Favorable**

Ann			working days upon discovering new information. Profile updates should include any new or corrected reports of disciplinary action against the physician, while removing any disciplinary reports that have been dismissed or voided. Physician profiles must not contain any patient-identifying information or details that could reasonably identify any person or entity other than the physician. HB 1998 also requires medical license holders to submit fingerprints during their registration permit renewal application, to be sent to the Department of Public Safety for a criminal record check. If license holders fail to submit fingerprints, the board may suspend or refuse to renew their registration. Additionally, the bill prevents TMB from issuing a medical license to someone whose license has been revoked in another state for reasons that would result in revocation in Texas, and if a license is revoked in another state, the board will revoke their Texas license as well. Finally, HB 1998 classifies certain offenses, such as those sexual in nature and committed against patients, children, or the elderly, as grounds for license revocation. If an applicant knowling makes a false statement, the offense is a Class A misdemeanor, except when the intention is to defraud or harm another, which makes the offense a state jail felony. HB 1998 aims to improve patient safety by tightening regulations on medical practitioners in Texas.	
HB 3119 By: Smithee	Relating to requirements applicable to certain third-party health insurers in relation to Medicaid.	Human Services 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HB 3119 updates state statutes regarding third-party liability to align with recent changes in federal law. As such, HB 3119 repeals a key provision requiring health insurers to maintain and provide specific information about individuals covered under their policies to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). This information was previously used by HHSC to determine if health benefits were properly claimed and paid under a health insurance policy or plan when Medicaid coverage could have been available. By removing this requirement, HB 3119 seeks to streamline the process and provide HHSC with more flexibility in obtaining necessary information. Under HB 3119, HHSC is authorized to delegate a designee to request relevant information from third-party health insurers to a designee. This means that HHSC may designate another entity or individual to collect the required information on its behalf. HHSC can also impose administrative penalties on those who fail to comply with information requests, similar to the penalties authorized under the repealed provisions. HB 3119 also requires third-party health insurers to accept prior authorizations provided by HHSC or its designee for items or services covered under Medicaid. This allows HHSC or its designee to grant authorization for a specific medical item or service, which the insurer must honor as if it were their own prior authorization. However, there are exemptions to this requirement for health insurance plans and benefits programs specified under the federal Social Security Act, including hospital insurance benefits or supplementary insurance benefits, a health care prepayment plan, a Medicare Advantage plan, a prescription drug plan, or cost reimbursement plan.	**Favorable**

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			Furthermore, HB 3119 establishes timelines for submitting and enforcing claims. It stipulates that HHSC or its designee must submit a claim to a responsible third-party health insurer within three years from the date the item or service was provided, and any action taken to enforce the state's rights regarding the claim must commence within six years from the date of claim submission. HB 3119 provides a comprehensive definition of a "third-party health insurer" to encompass various entities legally responsible for paying some or all claims for health care items or services provided to individuals. This includes self-insured plans, group health plans, service benefit plans, managed care organizations, and pharmacy benefit managers, among others. HB 3119 modifies existing regulations and procedures related to health insurers and Medicaid coverage, with the goal of improving efficiency, flexibility, and compliance in the administration of health care services. HB 3119 allows for delayed implementation if federal authorization or waiver is required.	
HB 1179 By: Ramos | Plesa	Relating to informing the public about the availability of provisions in protective orders, including provisions regarding pets and other companion animals	Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence 6 Ayes, 1 Nays, 1 PNV, 1 Absent	Pets are often seen as important members of a family, but legally they are considered property, which means they are often overlooked in protection orders (PO). However, pets can be crucial to protecting victims of family violence. Abusers may use threats against pets or livestock as a way to control their victims. A survey conducted for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals and the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges found that 55% of survey participants reported animal abuse as part of their experience with family violence. An additional 28% of individuals said they would have left their abusive partner sooner if they did not have a pet. Lack of public information about pet options during protective orders can worsen the situation. HB 1179 requires the Office of the Attorney General and the State Bar of Texas to work together to create information regarding protective orders in cases of family violence. This will be provided to the public and encompasses information regarding protective orders and pets, such as how a PO may prohibit someone from taking away a pet, companion animal, or assistance animal from the person listed in the order. This information should be easily available to anyone who wants to apply for a protective order. Ultimately, HB 1179 provides victims of family violence with crucial information about protecting their pets and leaving abusive situations, ultimately empowering them to take action when they are ready.	**Favorable**

OK for Distribution

HB 1875 By: Guillen	Relating to the audiology and speech-language pathology interstate compact; authorizing fees.	Public Health 10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	Licensed audiologists and speech-language pathologists must comply with their state's licensing guidelines. However, current laws prohibit them from practicing across state lines with a license from their home state. This restriction is especially problematic for military families who frequently relocate. This limitation also hinders residents' access to these health services. HB 1875 aims to address this issue by recognizing out-of-state licenses for audiologists and speech pathologists in Texas, thereby increasing access to these services. This will be accomplished through the Audiology and Speech-Language Pathology Interstate Compact. The bill lays out provisions for the compact, including rules for participation, practicing telehealth, and taking adverse action against professionals who violate the rules. The compact also establishes a commission to oversee and enforce the rules. The compact will take effect when it is enacted into law in the 10th member state. The Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation will oversee the implementation of the compact, and the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation will adopt rules to implement the bill's provisions. HB 1875 seeks to establish an interstate compact to improve Texans' access to audiology and speech-language pathology services. ***Concerns*** There is a particular concern about absent language about the oversight of the compact that is present in other compact legislation. Other compacts include oversight from member states' executive, legislative, and judicial branches to enforce the compact, but these provisions are not included in HB 1875. HB 1875 states that the provider will be subject to the state practice laws where the client receiving the services is located. Another concern from interested parties is that the compact would bypass states with more robust regulations and potentially override state law. Further, the provider would be subject to the jurisdiction of the licensing board, the courts, and the laws of the member state where the client is located. This language would suggest that the provider would no longer be under Texas regulations if providing care for clients outside of the state, which could cause unintentional harm that could avoid recourse depending on the laws and regulations of other states.	**<u>Favorable with Concerns</u>**
HB 2051 By: Zweiner	Relating to the compilation and reporting of statistics involving sexual assault victims who receive a forensic medical examination before reporting the assault to law enforcement.	Homeland Security & Public Safety 6 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	During the 81st legislature, House Bill 2626 was passed, establishing the Non-Report Sexual Assault Evidence Program. This program allows survivors of sexual assault to undergo a forensic medical examination without involving law enforcement personnel at that time. The evidence collected during the examination is then transferred and stored by the Department of Public Safety (DPS) for a period of two years or until the survivor decides to release the evidence, whichever comes first. While there are statistics available on the number of sexual assault cases that have not been reported to the agency, there is no data on those cases that have been reported. This lack of information creates a gap in our understanding of the effectiveness of this program. Without comprehensive statistical data, researchers and advocates lack the necessary tools to improve the training of investigators and prosecutors.	**<u>Favorable</u>**

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			To address this issue, House Bill 2051 requires the DPS to gather and maintain statistics on the number of sexual assault victims who have reported the assault to a law enforcement agency after undergoing a forensic medical examination, regardless of when the examination took place. The bill also prohibits the inclusion of victim identities and personal information in these statistics. Furthermore, House Bill 2051 mandates that the DPS submit a report, no later than September 1 of every even-numbered year, to both chambers of the legislature responsible for criminal justice, and publish it on the DPS website. The aim of this bill is to provide researchers and advocates with valuable data to gain a better understanding of the scope of sexual assault in Texas and facilitate improved responses to these cases.	
HB 2171 By: Guerra | Muñoz, Jr. | Gamez | Longoria | Canales	Relating to the establishment of the Texas Center for Rural Health Education at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.	Higher Education 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	Over three million Texans have limited access to affordable and quality healthcare, with 75% of counties in Texas designated as medically underserved areas or health professional shortage areas by federal authorities. HB 2171 seeks to improve health care outcomes and expand health care systems in underserved rural areas by establishing the Texas Center for Rural Health Education at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. HB 2171 authorizes the board of regents of the University of Texas System (UT) to create the Texas Center for Rural Health Education at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. The university can partner with public or private entities and make agreements allowing the center to exchange information, services, or assistance for the entity's support or participation. The board may solicit, accept, and administer gifts and grants from any public or private source, adopt any necessary rules, and employ any necessary personnel for center operations. The center is responsible for assessing rural health education, developing metrics to measure improvement, conducting research, recommending funding allocation for tuition and loan repayment programs, creating partnerships, improving rural health education and outcomes, and maintaining an online resource for rural health education. The center must submit a report on rural health education and healthcare outcomes to the legislature by December 1 of even-numbered years, which must include a summary of the center's activities and any recommendations for legislative action.	**<u>Favorable</u>**
HB 3135 By: Stucky	Relating to the review, adoption, and modification of land development regulations by municipalities,	Land & Resource Management 7 Ayes, 1 Nay,	As Texas experiences rapid population growth and economic development, it is facing a housing crunch that some contend has been exacerbated by outdated land development regulations creating unnecessary barriers to home construction. HB 3135 aims to address this challenge by requiring governing bodies of specific political subdivisions to periodically review the costs, benefits, and risks of their existing land development regulations and make necessary adjustments.	**<u>Unfavorable</u>**

OK for Distribution

	counties, and certain special districts.	0 PNV, 1 Absent	HB 3135 mandates that the governing body of a county, municipality, or special purpose district regulating building codes, development, or land use must review existing land development regulations at least once every 10 years. The first review must be completed by September 1, 2028. These regulations include rules for zoning, subdivision, planning, construction codes, fees, and other aspects of land development. During the review process, the governing body must consider the regulation's impact on housing development, appropriateness, benefits to landowners and residents, costs for the public, effects on regulated individuals, and taxpayer-funded administrative or enforcement expenses. At least one public hearing and an opportunity for public comments must be held. Upon completion of the review, the governing body is obligated to either repeal, amend, or readopt the regulation, with particular attention paid to regulations that hinder the production of new housing or development related to existing housing. Before adopting or modifying a land development regulation, the governing body must issue an impact statement analyzing the costs, benefits, and risks of the proposed regulation. The statement should assess the fiscal impact, determine if the regulation's benefits to residents' health and welfare outweigh identified costs, and evaluate the regulation's impact on housing costs in the political subdivision. A proposed regulation can only be adopted or modified if it aligns with public health and safety priorities, has minimal fiscal impact, and either positively affects or does not adversely impact housing costs for residents. Impact statements must be made available for public review. ***Concerns*** HB 3135 imposes a vague, burdensome review on vastly diverse political subdivisions with the intention to influence local decision-making. Texas has more than 1,200 cities. They range in size from the city of Houston with more than 2.3 million residents to towns with populations of fewer than 1,000. This doesn’t even include additional counties or special purpose districts with some type of authority over building codes, development, or land use. The bill's language regarding the repeal of regulations that "interfere with the production of new housing or development related to existing housing" is vague and broad. Local regulations aim to ensure the well-being of a city's residents, benefiting property owners, tenants, businesses, and others who live, work, or commute in the city. Cities say they would face significant challenges in conducting comprehensive reviews of all codes and regulations every 10 years, as the cost and time required would be substantial. Most cities lack the resources and capacity to perform such analyses and would need to outsource the work. The financial burden may be especially pronounced in small, rural towns.	

			Lastly, the bill's directive to adopt or modify regulations based on the required review is unenforceable overreach of state government. Political subdivisions are capable of best responding to the needs of their community, regarding housing regulations, and anything else.	
HB 3371 By: Johnson, Ann	Relating to the health benefits offered by institutions of higher education to students and their families.	Higher Education 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	The cost of health care coverage is a growing concern for Texas universities and students, and some states offer university health care coverage as an alternative to staying on their parents' health benefit plans until the age of 26. In Texas, these plans are neither authorized or prohibited under current law. HB 3371 aims to authorize public, private, and independent institutions of higher education in Texas to offer health care coverage to students and their families. HB 3371 grants permission to public, private, or independent institutions of higher education or their affiliates to provide higher education health benefits to students and their families, which is defined as health benefits offered by an institution or its affiliate, exclusively to enrolled students and their families, and not regulated as insurance in Texas, deemed essential by the institution to help students and their families lead healthy and productive lives. The health benefits must include the following regulatory provisions: Institutions are not allowed to impose a waiting period of over six months for the treatment of a preexisting condition that is covered under the benefits and requires institutions to provide written disclosure to the applicants that the provided benefits are not regulated as insurance in Texas. Individuals must sign and return a notice to the institution of higher education before enrolling in health benefits, a copy of the notice must be kept by the institution during the term and provided to the individual upon request. H.B. 3371 states that an institution of higher education offering health benefits is not considered a health insurer in Texas. However, an institution of higher education may partner with a Texas-authorized insurance company that is not affiliated with the institution to either transfer entirely or a portion of the organization's risks from offering higher education health benefits or obtain insurance coverage that guarantees the institution's obligations related to offering such benefits. Over 20 states already allow colleges and universities to fund student health plans to save money and maintain more control of their benefit designs. In joining these states and offering these plans, health plan costs can be lowered, subsequently decreasing the overall cost of higher education in Texas.	**Favorable**
HB 2523 By: Canales	Relating to the reimbursement of expenses to certain counsel appointed to	Criminal Jurisprudence 8 Ayes	Texas counties often house pretrial detainees in out-of-county jails, resulting in significant expenses for court-appointed attorneys who need to travel or pay for phone calls to communicate with their clients. HB 2523 proposes to reimburse court-appointed attorneys for expenses incurred when communicating with defendants held in facilities more than 50 miles from the court	**Favorable**

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	represent a defendant in a criminal proceeding.	0 Nay 0 PNV 1 Absent	handling their case. HB 2523 expands the types of expenses that must be reimbursed to court-appointed counsel representing a defendant in a noncapital case when the defendant is confined in a facility located more than 50 miles from the court. These expenses include travel for confidential communication, food and lodging related to travel, and costs associated with remote confidential communication. HB 2523 will help ensure that pretrial detainees are receiving adequate representation by providing appointed attorney's with the tools to be successful.	
HB 2992 By: Harrison | Thompson, Senfronia	Relating to the tracking, reporting, and disposition of proceeds and property from asset forfeiture proceedings under the Code of Criminal Procedure.	Criminal Jurisprudence 9 Ayes 0 Nay 0 PNV 0 Absent	Currently, law enforcement agencies can use civil courts to sue for property forfeiture without a criminal conviction or arresting the property owner. The House Committee on Criminal Justice Reform's Interim Report recommended expanding reporting requirements and tracking county-level data on civil forfeitures, making it easily accessible. HB 2992 aims to address this issue by requiring law enforcement agencies and state attorneys to submit specific information on asset forfeiture cases. HB 2992 requires law enforcement agencies and state's attorneys to submit detailed information to the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) regarding property seized or forfeited. The bill requires the OAG to establish and maintain a case tracking system to collect and organize this information, and to assign the responsibility for submitting the required information to appropriate parties. The required information includes details on the seizure date, property description, location, estimated value, and alleged offense that gave rise to the seizure, as well as information on any charges filed in relation to the event. HB 2992 also provides for public access to this information and requires law enforcement agencies and state's attorneys to submit the required information in a timely manner. The bill prohibits law enforcement agencies or state's attorneys from submitting certain information related to alcohol or controlled substances or drug paraphernalia, and authorizes them to delay submitting required information for property seized from a confidential informant. In addition, HB 2992 requires law enforcement agencies or state's attorneys to report any attorney's fees awarded to an owner of the seized property, as well as an estimate of the total costs associated with the forfeiture proceeding, including storage costs, salaries for law enforcement personnel, and costs for selling or disposing of the forfeited property. The bill also requires law enforcement agencies or state's attorneys to report on the purpose for which any property that was retained by a law enforcement agency or state's attorney was used. HB 2992 repeals the requirement for a law enforcement agency or state's attorney that did not seize any property	**Favorable**

			during the annual audit period of the county commissioners court or governing body of a municipality to file a report with the OAG stating that no property was seized during that period. The bill instead requires such a law enforcement agency or state's attorney to file the report during the period specified by the OAG under the new case tracking system, and outlines aspects that must be included in the report, including information regarding proceeds from forfeiture, the expenditure of proceeds, and total overall value. The bill provides for enforcement mechanisms regarding its provisions through civil penalties determined by the OAG. In addition, the OAG is prohibited from requiring any identifying information regarding an individual involved in forfeiture be disclosed. Overall, HB 2992 aims to address inadequate reporting requirements and tracking of civil forfeitures by requiring more detailed information on seized or forfeited property, providing for public access to this information, and establishing a case tracking system to collect and organize this information.	
HB 3169 By: Landgraf	Relating to regulation of short-term rental units by certain municipalities.	Urban Affairs 5 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	A constituent in House District 81 had a concern related to the property they own in House District 19. Their concerns were that the municipality had inconsistent regulation of short-term rental properties. HB 3169 seeks to solve this issue by imposing regulations on Volente — a city in HD 19. HB 3169 only applies to municipalities that have a population of less than 1,000 and borders Lake Travis, specifically targeting Volente. Under HB 3169, a municipality could prohibit the use of short-term rental units to promote activities that are illegal under municipal or other law, the provision or management of the unit by a registered sex offender or any person having been convicted of a felony, the serving of food to a tenant unless it is otherwise authorized by municipal law, the rental of the unit to a person under 18 years old, or the rental of the unit for less than 24 hours. HB 3169 allows municipalities to require a unit provider to designate an emergency contact responsible for responding to complaints on the unit and have the unit inspected on an annual basis by the local building code department or fire marshal, as applicable, to verify that the unit meets state and municipal requirements for short-term rental units. Additionally, HB 3169 requires either a unit provider or property manager on the provider's behalf to maintain property and liability insurance for the short-term rental unit to provide proof that the unit listing service is maintaining property and liability insurance for the unit in the amount required by the municipality. HB 3169 disallows municipalities to adopt or enforce an ordinance, rule, or other measure that prohibits or limits the use of property as a short-term rental unit or is applicable solely to short-term rental units, providers, unit tenants, or other persons associated with these units or apply a municipal law, including a noise restriction, parking requirement, building code requirement, or other law to short-term rental units, providers, tenants, or	**<u>Unfavorable</u>**

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			others in a manner that is more restrictive or otherwise inconsistent with the application of the law to other similarly situated property or persons. HB 3169 does not prohibit a lessor from restricting the use of leased property as a short-term rental unit or a property owner from placing restrictive covenant or easement on the property that restricts the future use of the property as a short-term rental unit. This bill also does not stop a municipality from contracting with a third party, including a short-term rental listing service, to provide services that help ensure compliance with municipal requirements under HB 3169. HB 3169 would preempt local control of municipality laws for short-term rentals in Volente, Texas. There was a lot of opposition from locals in the community of Volente, including the mayor of this city. HB 3169 is a targeted bill that negatively impacts a city that is hundreds of miles from the bill author's district, and the local government of Volente should be able to resolve these issues on their own.	
HB 3537 By: Manuel | Smith | Swanson | Bucy | Morales, Eddie	Relating to a candidate's application for a place on the ballot for a party's primary election.	Elections 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	The current Election Code lacks provisions that prevent a candidate from filing in multiple political parties for the primary elections. HB 3537 aims to address this issue by prohibiting candidates from running in both the general and primary elections if they file for multiple party primaries within the same year. HB 3537 establishes that candidates are not allowed to submit applications for the general primary election ballot with more than one political party during the same voting year. If a candidate violates this rule, the authority responsible for receiving the application can reject it, and the candidate will not be refunded the filing fee. Under HB 3537, a candidate whose application is rejected becomes ineligible for a ballot position in the subsequent general election for state and county officers. This applies to both independent candidates and nominees of political parties other than the one in which the candidate filed an application for a ballot position in the primary. The provisions of HB 3537 ensure fairness, streamline the election process, and prevent confusion among voters, ultimately fostering a more robust and credible state electoral system.	**Favorable**
HB 3128 By: Kitzman	Relating to the regulation of on-site sewage disposal systems, including requiring a license for on-site sewage disposal system pumping technicians.	Environmental Regulation 8 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	In recent years, there have been incidents of Texas toddlers drowning in unsecured septic tanks. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) enacted legislation to require on-site sewage facilities to have risers and secondary restraints that prevent unauthorized access. However, pumpers–professionals responsible for maintenance and removal of waste material–were left out of the requirement to be licensed or registered. This oversight prolongs public safety risk as untrained pumpers endanger the public by not properly securing on-site sewage facilities. HB 3128 seeks to address this by requiring certain pumpers to be licensed or registered with the TCEQ. HB 3128 amends the state Health and Safety Code by mandating anyone who pumps an on-site sewage disposal system for compensation must have a license or registration issued by the TCEQ. HB 3128 authorizes the TCEQ	**Favorable**

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			to create an on-site sewage disposal system pumping technician license or registration, with specific requirements and qualifications to obtain them. HB 3128 restricts the exemption from permitting requirements for on-site sewage disposal systems of a single residence on a land tract of 10 acres or more, to apply only to a land tract in a county with a population of less than 40,000, and for a residence built after the bill's effective date. The provisions of HB 3128 safeguard public safety, facilitate environmental protection efforts, uphold industry standards and increase consumer trust. Ultimately, licensing pumpers helps prevent needless tragedies related to septic systems and ensure these systems are properly planned and regulated.	
HB 3231 By: Allison	Relating to continuation and operations of a healthcare provider participation program by the Bexar County Hospital District	County Affairs 8 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	The Bexar County LPPF (local provider participation program) is set to expire on December 31, 2023. HB 3231 extends Bexar County's LPPF authority to December 31, 2027. In Texas, local hospitals can choose to implement an 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. HB 3231 also permits the district to charge interest and penalties on late mandatory payments for the program. The amount cannot exceed the maximum amount that the district is authorized to charge for other late payments.	**Favorable**
HB 3264 By: Meza | Bumgarner	Relating to the grounds for removal of county officers from office.	County Affairs 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Some contend that the removal of a county officer on the grounds of intoxication is too narrow. HB 3264 modifies the definition of intoxication related to the grounds for removal of a county officer. The bill replaces the current definition of alcohol-based intoxication with the specification that "intoxication" means an alcohol concentration of at least 0.08 or not having the normal mental or physical faculties due to alcohol, a controlled substance, a drug, or some combination.	**Favorable**
HB 3329 By: Thimesch	Relating to the investigation or determination of abuse or neglect of a child, elderly person, or person with a disability and the provision of certain services.	Human Services 8 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Hospital staff have found it difficult to get child protective services (CPS) or adult protective services (APS) to investigate cases of suspected abuse or neglect because patients are not considered in "imminent danger" while hospitalized. According to the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), current law does not authorize DFPS agencies to initiate an investigation unless an individual is in imminent danger. Under current law, hospital patients are temporarily removed from abusive or neglectful situations by their hospitalization and are no longer in imminent danger. This creates an ethical dilemma for hospitals and staff, as they may need to discharge patients into potentially harmful situations before appropriate agencies can investigate and intervene. HB 3329 establishes that temporary hospitalization of a child or vulnerable adult does not permanently remove them from danger, thus allowing investigations to occur while hospitalized. This clarification allows DFPS to begin investigating a report of abuse or neglect while the victim is temporarily hospitalized. HB 3329 also prohibits the Department of Human Services from refusing to conduct an investigation or delaying protective services solely based on the temporary hospitalization of an elderly person or person with a disability.	**Favorable**

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			The intent of this bill is not to increase unsubstantiated reports, nor is it so children can be taken from their families. Hospitals are pass-through and not permanent placement. HB 3329 simply ensures that DFPS can investigate suspected instances of abuse without delay.	
HB 3477 By: Neave Criado	Relating to the qualifications of a sheriff or a candidate for sheriff.	County Affairs 7 Ayes, 2 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	Currently, the qualifications for a person to serve as a sheriff in Texas are a high school diploma or equivalency certificate, as well as eligibility for a peace officer license. County sheriffs have expressed concerns about these qualifications as there have been instances where a newly elected sheriff does not already hold a peace officer license, so they must undergo several weeks of training to obtain it, leaving the county without a sheriff in the interim. HB 3477 aims to establish new sheriff qualifications to ensure that elected sheriffs may assume their responsibilities in the county on the first day of assuming office. HB 3477 maintains the requirement that an individual serving as a sheriff must have a high school diploma or equivalency certificate. HB 3477 removes the criteria that the individual must be eligible for the peace officer license and instead requires the individual to already hold the active permanent peace officer license. HB 3477 also adds the following requirements: the individual must either have a minimum of 5 years of experience as a full-time paid peace officer or federal special investigator, or ten years of combined active duty or national guard service experience and be a military veteran. The individual must hold an applicable proficiency certificate. Without meeting the aforementioned qualifications, an individual is ineligible for candidacy. The bill does not apply to a sheriff serving a term that began before the bill's effective date. HB 3477 would ensure that a sheriff can immediately begin fulfilling duties upon employment by ensuring they have all the proper qualifications.	**<u>Favorable</u>**
HB 3579 By: Bumgarner	Relating to the issuance of an emergency order by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation against a massage establishment.	Licensing & Administrative Procedures 9 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	Massage establishments are notorious for being a cover up for human trafficking activity and law enforcement continues to have difficulty addressing this problem. Allowing the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) to issue an emergency order halting business at establishments suspected of human trafficking activity could be a useful tool in combating this problem. HB 3579 would allow the executive director of the TDLR to issue an emergency order to stop the operation of a massage establishment if a law enforcement agency notifies the department of an investigation for an offense or if the department has reasonable cause to believe such an offense is being committed at the establishment. The simplicity of HB 3579 is a step forward in fighting the issue of human trafficking activity. With the growing resources and knowledge available on how to spot a counterfeit massage establishment, the TDLR can make a huge difference in combating this problem.	**<u>Favorable</u>**

HB 3581 By: Johnson, Julie	Relating to the regulation by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation of an eyelash extension application training program.	Licensing & Administrative Procedures 10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR) allowed distance learning for some licenses. However, TDLR ended these policies in 2022, which limited distance education for most licenses, including eyelash extension specialist licenses. HB 3581 aims to restore the option of distance learning by permitting a portion of the required hours to be completed online. HB 3581 outlines curriculum standards for an eyelash extension application training program. Each training program must determine the number of hours to be designated as the theory portion, which may be provided virtually, and the number of hours to be designated as a practical portion, which must be provided in-person. TDLR can develop and implement regulations according to these provisions as they see fit no later than December 31, 2023. HB 3581 provides schools with the flexibility to offer virtual courses, potentially increasing the number of participants in the program while still ensuring students receive sufficient hands-on training.	**Favorable**
HB 3591 By: Shaheen	Relating to the allocation of low income housing tax credits.	Urban Affairs 7 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent	The low-income housing tax credit (LIHTC) program administered by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs (TDHCA) provides affordable housing to Texans. HB 3591 revises effective affordability periods, increases maximum tax credits per applicant, and sets deadlines for required paperwork. HB 3591 prevents the TDHCA from implementing a qualified allocation plan for the LIHTC that mandates applicants to commit to an affordability period exceeding the federal minimum or utilizes a scoring system that grants points based on the applicant's willingness to extend the affordability period beyond the federal minimum for their proposed development. HB 3591 changes the affordability period from 45 years to 30 years, setting it to the federal minimum and cutting this back 15 years. This would make it so after the 30 year period, these affordable units go back to market value and become unaffordable for those with low-incomes. HB 3591 raises the maximum limit of tax credits that the TDHCA governing board can allocate to a low-income housing tax credit applicant in a single application round from $3 million to $6 million. The bill also mandates that the TDHCA issues a final commitment for a housing tax credit allocation within 120 days after receiving the applicant's federal tax form, which is required for obtaining a low-income housing credit allocation and certification. Although this is in line with the rising cost of housing, there are concerns that raising the maximum limit for a developer, combined with a shorter affordability period, will make low-income housing less available and affordable. HB 3591 strikes provisions that require TDHCA to establish an executive award and review advisory committee. This committee is responsible for making recommendations to the board on funding and allocation decisions. HB 3591 only applies to an application for low income housing tax credits submitted to TDHCA during an application cycle based on the 2024 qualified allocation plan or subsequent plan. There are concerns that eliminating the executive award and review advisory committee would get rid of oversight on this program.	**Unfavorable**

			HB 3591 would significantly reduce the future supply and availability of affordable housing and benefit developers instead of those that need affordable housing. An amendment that strikes section one of this bill would make it more reasonable, ensuring that developers get adequate incentives for an equal benefit to those who need affordable housing. However, there are still concerns that the removal of the executive award and review advisory committee may reduce oversight on this program. Rep. Shaheen is expected to put forth an amendment to eliminate the reduced affordability period altogether. If this happens, the LSG is Favorable.	
HB 4164 By: Cortez | Goodwin	Relating to the improper use and treatment of an assistance animal or service animal; increasing a criminal penalty.	Criminal Jurisprudence 8 Ayes 1 Nay 0 PNV 0 Absent	Recently, concerns have been raised regarding the increasing issue of individuals misrepresenting their pets as service animals in order to gain access to benefits such as waived pet deposits and breed restrictions, as well as entry into places that do not typically allow animals. This improper use of assistance animals creates distrust among business owners and employees who must ensure that only legitimate service animals are allowed into their establishments, leading to people with disabilities who rely on service animals being aggressively questioned or even removed from establishments. The bill seeks to deter individuals from this exploitative behavior by revising provisions relating to the improper use of assistance animals. HB 4164 expands the offense of misusing assistance animals by including intentional or knowing misrepresentation of an animal as an assistance or service animal that is not specially trained or equipped to help a person with a disability. In addition, the bill raises the maximum fine for the offense from $300 to $1,000, and renames the offense to more accurately represent it as "improper use of assistance and service animals." HB 4164 also provides for the seizure of a service animal belonging to a person who habitually abuses or neglects to feed or otherwise properly care for the animal. For some individuals with disabilities, their service animals provide them access to freedom and a full life. Individuals misrepresenting their animals as service animals do so to the detriment of those who rely heavily on them. HB 4164 will help ensure that those who use and care for service animals are able to do so with the trust they deserve.	**<u>Favorable</u>**
HB 3631 By: Lalani	Relating to a requirement that public institutions of higher education provide certain information regarding mental health services to	Higher Education 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	According to a survey by the American College Health Association in 2019, 63% of undergraduate students felt overwhelming anxiety, and 42% felt so depressed that it was difficult for them to function for most of the year. Mental health issues among college students can lead to low grades, increased dropout rates, and a decreased likelihood of graduating on time. HB 3631 seeks to ensure that all students enrolling in a higher institution receive information on mental health resources and how to utilize them. HB 3136 mandates that every public institution of higher education provide incoming undergraduate, graduate, and professional students with information regarding mental health and suicide prevention services. The	**<u>Favorable</u>**

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	entering students.		information must include the identification of early warning signs and appropriate interventions. A map must also be provided highlighting locations on campus where students can access mental health services and guidance on how to access them. Additionally, a mental health service location must be identified on any on-campus orientations. HB 3631 will ensure college students can access the support and care they need. Accessibility and knowledge as to where they can find mental health support may help college students not only finish their degrees but thrive in their chosen careers.	
HB 4399 By: Hayes	Relating to the plan for the operation of a central counting station.	Elections 5 Ayes, 4 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HB 4399 outlines a written plan for the orderly operation of the central counting station, which aims to enhance transparency and efficiency in the electoral process. The written plan must encompass specific information about the process of comparing the number of voters who signed the combination form and the electronic poll list with the overall number of votes cast in the election. The bill details a variety of specific information that must be included in the written plan, including provisions regarding date, time and location of logic and accuracy tests conducted at the various counting stations, the details of the individuals appointed to participated in the counting process, and information regarding surveillance systems, HB 4399 mandates that the plan be posted on the county's website, provided they maintain one. This posting must occur no later than the fifth day before election day and should be placed in the same location where the county clerk provides information on county elections, ensuring easy access for the public. There are concerns that the written plan described in the legislation is copiously detailed, creating an undue and unnecessary burden on election administrators. What's more, the bill requires hyper specific details to be included in the written plan. Minor deviations from this plan will be all but inevitable, and there are no guardrails in place for any deviations being used as the grounds for an election contest. The bill would substantially increase the number of baseless allegations of election fraud and feed the politically motivated narrative around election administration.	**Unfavorable**
HB 4227 By: Goldman	Relating to the repeal of a municipal civil service system for firefighters and police officers in certain municipalities.	Urban Affairs 9 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	HB 4227 builds upon protecting first responders in departments with certain municipal service agreements. After the passage of HB 1900 in the 87th legislature (which provides for the disannexation from and limit to certain tax revenues of municipalities that defunded their police departments), civil services agreements have been targeted by petition style ballots for propositions to impede current law. HB 4227 aims to tackle these concerns by limiting the obligation to hold an election for repealing the municipal civil service system for firefighters and police officers only to municipalities with populations below a threshold of 900,000. According to HB 4227, if a petition is submitted to the governing body of the municipality, signed by at least 10	**Favorable**

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			percent of the qualified voters and requesting an election to repeal the chapter of the law, then the governing body must order an election to be held. If the majority of the qualified voters vote in favor of repealing the chapter, then the chapter becomes void in that municipality. HB 4227 aims to protect those dollars and contracts entered with the municipalities to first responder budgets, ultimately protecting communities across the state.	
HB 3686 By: Jones, Jolando	Relating to the automatic expunction of arrest records and files after certain controlled substance offense charges are dismissed.	Criminal Jurisprudence 9 Ayes 0 Nay 0 PNV 0 Absent	Concerns have been raised regarding lasting arrest records for those accused of drug related crimes who were later cleared due to laboratory analysis which proved the individual did not have a controlled substance. These records can have significant and lasting negative effects on an individual's life, including limited employment and housing opportunities. The situation is particularly distressing when laboratory results indicate the absence of any controlled substance, yet the individual's criminal record still shows the charge. HB 3686 aims to rectify this problem and alleviate the burden on those who have been wrongly accused. HB 3686 provides individuals arrested for a felony or misdemeanor offense, who have been released and had their charge dismissed or quashed, with the opportunity to have all records and files relating to the arrest expunged from their criminal record, provided that there was no court-ordered community supervision for the offense. The bill further mandates this provision applies if an indictment or information charging the person with a misdemeanor or felony offense involving the manufacture, delivery, or possession of a controlled substance is dismissed or due to a laboratory analysis finding no presence of a controlled substance, the person is entitled to have all records and files relating to the arrest expunged from their criminal record. HB 3686 also requires a trial or district court to enter an order of expunction for an individual entitled to expunction under the bill's provisions not later than the 30th day after the court dismisses the case or receives the information regarding that dismissal. Furthermore, the bill prohibits any court from charging a fee or assessing any cost for the expunction of records and files relating to the arrest. Additionally, the bill mandates that a court must enter an order of expunction for a person entitled to expunction as soon as practicable after receiving written notice from any party to the case. HB 3686 seeks to protect the integrity of the justice system and ensure that arrest records and files are not wrongfully attached to individuals who are not guilty of the crime they were charged with due to proven laboratory analysis.	**Favorable**

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HB 3858 By: Frazier | Plesa | Bumgarner | Lopez, Janie | Lujan	Relating to peace officer wellness programs within certain law enforcement agencies.	Homeland Security & Public Safety 7 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent	Peace officers regularly face second-hand trauma and high levels of stress while performing their official duties. It is crucial to prioritize the mental health and overall well-being of these officers, particularly when they witness violent incidents or experience a loss in the line of duty. Peace officers often respond to calls that are violent in nature such as sexual assaults and mass shootings but they are not immediately informed of mental health services. HB 3858 grants qualifying agencies the authority to establish and maintain wellness programs specifically designed for peace officers, and it also creates a state grant program to provide funding for these wellness programs. Under HB 3858, the agency must ensure that the wellness program meets any requirements set by the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC). Every peace officer should have access to the wellness program. When an officer responds to or is affected by a violent incident, a representative from the agency must contact them to monitor their well-being. Additionally, these representatives are responsible for providing information about mental health resources, such as counseling and therapy services, to officers who may be struggling to cope with their experiences. The executive commissioner of the HHSC is tasked with establishing any necessary requirements for the wellness program, and these requirements must be in place no later than January 1, 2023. HB 3858 further mandates that the HHSC establish and administer a grant program to fund the wellness program. The grant program must adhere to the provisions outlined in the bill, including guidelines on the appropriate use of grant funds, which can be used to reimburse costs associated with counseling and therapy services for peace officers participating in the wellness program. Peace officers must apply for and comply with any conditions set by the HHSC to access the grant program. The bill establishes the wellness fund as an account within the general revenue fund, consisting of appropriations from the legislature as well as contributions and grants. The HHSC can only utilize this fund to make grants under the grant program to peace officers who have applied to the wellness program. HB 3858 prioritizes the mental health of peace officers after they have responded to violent incidents such as homicides, suicides, or fatal motor vehicle accidents. This bill provides checkpoints or check-ins and breaks the stigma and normalizes the discussion surrounding mental health.	**Favorable**
HB 4398 By: Kitzman	Relating to the powers and duties of a personal bond or personal bond and pretrial supervision office.	Criminal Jurisprudence 9 Ayes 0 Nay 0 PNV 0 Absent	Currently, many county magistrates and judges lack access to personal bond orders, leading to the inability to enforce bond conditions for defendants. H.B. 4398 aims to address this issue by establishing a centralized office for personal bond and pretrial supervision at the county or judicial district level. HB 4398 authorizes a county or judicial district with jurisdiction in more than one county to establish a personal bond and pretrial supervision office, with approval from the applicable commissioners court. This centralized office for personal bond and pretrial supervision will provide pretrial services, including indigent legal services monitoring, pretrial rehabilitative services, coordination of mental health services, and other services to fulfill the	**Favorable**

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			goals of pretrial bond supervision. Reasonable conditions and monitoring are authorized by the bill for such programs, including drug testing. Moreover, HB 4398 entitles a director of a personal bond or personal bond and pretrial supervision office established under the bill's provisions, or an employee of the office authorized by the director, to obtain criminal history record information from the Department of Public Safety for individuals being considered for personal bond or receiving services from the office. The bill prohibits DPS from charging a fee for providing the criminal history record information and only allows disclosure to judges, magistrates, the subject of the information, the state's attorney, or the subject's defense attorney if the information is relevant to a bond determination. Overall, HB 4398 aims to streamline the process for personal bond orders and pretrial supervision, and ensure defendants receive necessary services while awaiting trial.	