



Texas Legislative Study Group

An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

Chair, Rep. Armando L. Walle
 Co-Vice Chair, Rep. Ana Hernandez
 Co-Vice Chair, Rep. Yvonne Davis
 Secretary, Rep. Victoria Neave Criado
 General Counsel, Rep. Lina Ortega

STEERING COMMITTEE

Rep. Rafael Anchia	Rep. Armando 'Mando' Martinez
Rep. Toni Rose	Rep. Rhetta Andrews Bowers
Rep. Nicole Collier	Rep. Carl O. Sherman Sr.
Rep. Julie Johnson	Rep. Sergio Muñoz Jr.
Rep. Abel Herrero	Rep. Mary E. González
Rep. Chris Turner	Rep. Diego M. Bernal
Rep. Gina Hinojosa	

LSG Floor Report For Major State Calendar – Friday, May 19, 2023

<p>SB 375</p> <p>By: Huffman</p> <p>Sponsor: Darby</p>	<p>Relating to the composition of districts for the election of members of the Texas Senate.</p>	<p>Redistricting</p> <p>8 Ayes, 5 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>The Texas Constitution (Article 3, Section 28) requires legislative redistricting – for both the House and the Senate - to be conducted by the legislature "at its first regular session after the publication of each United States decennial census." The 2020 census data needed to draw the new districts was not released until August 2021, after the regular session of the 87th Legislature had adjourned. Nonetheless, in the 3rd called session of the 87th Legislature, the Texas Senate used the delayed census data to adopt a new redistricting plan that was used for the 2022 legislative elections. However, the 88th Legislature, Regular Session, is the first regular session following the publication of the 2020 federal census, and SB 375 is intended to ensure that the legislature meets the constitutional requirement to conduct redistricting in the first regular session by “ratifying the Texas Senate district maps passed in 2021.”</p> <p><i>Voting Rights Concerns</i></p> <p>As reported by the Redistricting Committee, SB 375, just like the House plan, is identical to the plan used in 2022 elections. When the current maps were adopted in 2021, serious concerns were expressed that the plan ignored the fact that 95% of the state’s population growth was driven by people of color, the plan actually reduced the opportunity for people of color to elect their candidates of choice in effective minority districts. These concerns are now the subject of litigation in federal court.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the 2010-2020 decade, the state population increased at a 16% rate, and people of color are responsible for 95% of the state’s four-million-person population increase, especially in suburban and major urban areas. • By contrast, the “Non-Hispanic White ” (Anglo) population increased by only 1.6%, or 187,252 - barely enough people to make up one state House district. • Harris, Dallas, and Tarrant counties actually had a net loss of Anglo population, while many suburban counties have experienced a decrease in the percentage of population that is Anglo. • The SB 375 map actually decreases the number of Senate minority opportunity districts, and “ratifying” that plan is ratifying a plan that is intentionally discriminatory. <p><i>Specific Examples</i></p> <p><i>Tarrant County</i></p>	<p><u>Unfavorable</u></p>
---	--	---	---	----------------------------------

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In May of 2022, the three-judge federal court reviewing Texas’s 2021 redistricting plan acknowledged that the “the redrawing of SD 10 results not just in an incremental diminishment of minority voting strength but also in the loss of a seat in which minorities were able to elect candidates they preferred” and that there was strong evidence of “a discriminatory effect, strengthening an inference of discriminatory intent.” The court also found that the historical context of SD 10—with a federal court invalidating the 2011 effort to dismantle it—likewise was “evidence [that] weights in favor of an inference of discriminatory intent.” That plan is identical to the SB 375 plan. • The SB 375 plan cracks Tarrant County minority communities that had worked together to repeatedly elect the candidate of their choice by replacing Black, Latino and Asian voters whose numbers are increasing with rural, primarily Anglo voters, thereby diluting an effective Minority Opportunity district in Tarrant County. <p>Latino Voters The SB 375 plan creates no new Latino opportunity districts despite the fact that Latinos make up about half of the Texas population, but there are only 7 Majority Hispanic CVAP Senate districts compared to 20 Majority Anglo CVAP districts, illustrating a problem of statewide magnitude.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In Harris and Ft. Bend Counties, rapidly growing diverse communities are cracked between SD17 and multiple districts and combined with distant rural counties that are primarily Anglo counties. • More than 600,000 Hispanic residents live in Tarrant County but the SB375 plan (see above) guts the one district that provides them an opportunity to elect the candidate of their choice. 	
<p>SB 12 By: Hughes Sponsor: Shaheen</p>	<p>Relating to restricting certain sexually oriented performances on public property, on the premises of a commercial enterprise, or in the presence of a child; authorizing a civil penalty; creating a criminal offense.</p>	<p>State Affairs 9 Ayes, 4 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Proponents of SB 12 assert the bill is an effort to protect minors from public exposure to “sexually oriented performances,” however, the function of SB 12 is yet another legislative attack on LGBTQIA+ Texans, specifically, freedom of expression through drag performances and the livelihood of drag performers. Towards that effort, SB 12 has several key provisions: creating civil liability and a criminal offense, empowering the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to enforce the civil penalty, authorizing local governments to implement ordinances regulating sexually oriented performances, and defining terms.</p> <p>Civil Liability & Criminal Offense SB 12 establishes civil and criminal penalties for organizers of sexually oriented performances where minors are present. As such, business entities or venue operators would face civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per violation. Conversely, performers would be charged with a Class A misdemeanor punishable by up to one year in jail and a maximum fine of \$4,000.</p> <p>Role of the Attorney General</p>	<p><u>Unfavorable</u></p>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

			<p>SB 12 empowers the attorney general to enforce the measure’s provisions, most notably tasking the AG with pursuing legal action against entities for civil violations. The AG would also be authorized to recover civil penalty fines and obtain restraining orders to prevent further violations.</p> <p>Local Government Authority In an unsurprisingly hypocritical move, SB 12 allows local governments to regulate sexually oriented performances in the interest of public health, safety, and welfare. Notably, the measure does not enable local governments to authorize qualifying performances on public property or in the presence of minors. This aspect directly targets drag story hour at public libraries.</p> <p>Other Provisions To assist enforcement mechanisms, SB 12 specifically defines “premises,” “sexually oriented performance,” and “sexual conduct.” However, while these definitions may facilitate enforcement, they also may result in lawsuits regarding what does and does not constitute First Amendment violations. Furthermore, SB 12 includes a severability clause that allows provisions of the bill to stand if courts strike down other provisions.</p> <p>Concerns & Impact The primary concern is related to the degree to which the provisions of SB 12 violate Texans’ First Amendment rights of speech and expression. While the First Amendment does not protect obscenity, the definitions provided in SB 12 may not align with the legal definition of obscenity.</p> <p>Another concern is that law enforcement entities and courts may require additional resources to respond to complaints, investigate potential violations, and prosecute drag performers. Moreover, businesses that host drag performances could be targeted and may have to restrict the range of performances offered which could affect profitability. Finally, there is the question of how frequently minors are being taken to “sexually oriented performances” and how often these performances are open for minors to attend.</p> <p>As such, the impact of SB 12 is three-fold: 1) hamper LGBTQIA+ businesses; 2) criminalization of speech and expression of the LGBTQIA+ community; and 3) perpetuate the marginalization of the LGBTQIA+ community by removing opportunities to foster inclusivity through creative expression.</p>	
<p>SB 24 By: Kolkhorst Campbell Creighton Hall King </p>	<p>Relating to the powers and duties of the Health and Human Services Commission and the transfer to the commission of</p>	<p>Human Services 8 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>SB 24 seeks to execute two primary objectives: transferring Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) prevention and early intervention programs to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and codifying the Alternatives to Abortion (A2A) program.</p> <p>Transfer of Services Under SB 24, the following DFPS prevention and early intervention (PEI) services are transferred and consolidated with HHSC services:</p>	<p>Favorable with Concerns</p>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

<p>Middleton Parker Paxton Perry Sparks Springer</p> <p>Sponsor: Frank Noble Hull</p>	<p>certain powers and duties from the Department of Family and Protective Services.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Services for At-Risk Youth and Early Youth Intervention Services — services, such as emergency short-term residential care, counseling, and parenting skills training, for at-risk children and their families • Preventive Services for Veterans And Military Families — for veterans and military families at a high risk of family violence, abuse, or neglect • Texas Home Visiting Program — a voluntary-enrollment program in which early childhood and health professionals, such as nurses or social workers, repeatedly visit the homes of pregnant women or families with children under the age of six who are born with or exposed to one or more risk factors over a period of at least six months. <p>The consolidated and expanded scope of services are redesignated as “family support services” under HHSC. “Family support services” support at-risk children, pregnant women, and families who: have been the subject of an abuse, neglect, or exploitation investigation; are at an increased likelihood of involvement with the child welfare system, the criminal justice system, or the juvenile justice system; or are experiencing conditions that threaten the self-sufficiency or stability of the family or the birth of a healthy baby.</p> <p>All necessary authorities, responsibilities, programs, employees, support services, contracts, assets, records, and resources needed to fulfill the requirements of the bill are reallocated from DFPS to HHSC. This includes the transfer of the child abuse and neglect prevention operating fund account and the child abuse and neglect prevention trust fund account. SB 14 also requires HHSC to create and annually review a 5-year strategic plan for family support services.</p> <p>SB 24 repeals the use of evidence-based programs offered by community-based organizations aimed at tackling child abuse and neglect. It also strikes any language allowing institutions of higher education to be contracted when conducting independent reviews of family support services.</p> <p>The most recent state budget bill (HB 1) includes \$65 million for child abuse prevention funding, contingent on SB 24, or similar legislation, passing.</p> <p>Concerns with Transfer of Services</p> <p>There are some concerns the transfer of programs could impact the Healthy Outcomes through Prevention and Early Support (HOPES) program, a prevention and early intervention program currently under DFPS. The transfer may unintentionally result in changes or potential elimination of crucial services, such as local collaborations with community-based programs and protective measures like parent support groups, maternal depression screening, early literacy promotion, case management, and parent education. These programs play a vital role in safeguarding the overall welfare of children.</p>	
---	---	--	--	--

Additionally, the removal of language regarding evidence-based programs could have consequences for federal funding that support essential home visiting programs such as the Nurse-Family Partnership, Parents as Teachers, Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters, and Healthy Families America. Currently, Texas receives federal funds called MIECHV to support these programs. While this change may not immediately affect federal funding if Texas invests less in evidence-based programs over time Texas would also miss out on federal match funding that amplifies the state's investment in these important programs.

Another provision in SB 24 that may have significant repercussions is the removal of language concerning collaboration with higher education institutions for reviewing family support services. Instead, HHSC is given the authority to independently determine and develop outcome measures using vague language. This change could lead to the exclusion of peer-reviewed studies and reduce oversight in evaluating the effectiveness of these programs and services.

Codifying Alternatives to Abortion Program
 SB 24 codifies the A2A program, which has existed as a budget rider in the state's General Appropriations Act since 2008. The bill also renames the program to the Thriving Texas Families Program. SB 24 states that the program is a continuation of the A2A program, with similar goals, including promoting child birth as an alternative to abortion, and services including counseling, mentoring, care coordination for prenatal and postnatal care, educational materials on pregnancy and parenting, and referrals to social service programs.

The most recent state budget bill (HB 1) includes \$140 million for the biennium for A2A after conference committee decisions.

SB 24 requires HHSC to conduct periodic impact evaluations by an external third-party evaluator. HHSC must also issue an annual report with details on the number of providers, individuals served, expenditures, contract values, outcome measures, performance outcomes, and results of impact evaluations.

Concerns with Codifying A2A
 Some contend that “assisting families in achieving economic self-sufficiency and stability” as a measure of performance may amount to pressuring families to get off of public assistance programs when it is not beneficial to them. Similarly, the outcome related to “promoting marriage and family formation” could inadvertently encourage the cohabitation of parents in an unhealthy or unsafe relationship.

Conclusion
 Ultimately, SB 24 transfers and codifies existing programs, making little substantive changes to the programming. While it is important to acknowledge the negative impacts of the A2A program, including the grossly inaccurate medical information given to pregnant women, funds for the program are nevertheless likely

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

			to be appropriated in the state budget, just as they have been in years past. Codifying the program and changing its name won't change its implementation. There are serious concerns, however, that the \$65 million for child abuse prevention and intervention program is in jeopardy without SB 24's passage.	
<p>SB 17</p> <p>By: Creighton Campbell King Kolkhorst Middleton Parker Paxton Schwertner Springer</p> <p>Sponsor: Kuempel Shaheen Bonnen</p>	<p>Relating to the purpose of public institutions of higher education and the powers and duties of the governing boards of those institutions.</p>	<p>Higher Education</p> <p>6 Ayes, 5 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) policies and offices were created at the collegiate and university level in response to historical discrimination against marginalized United States citizens and Texans. The purpose of these offices and policies is to remedy past and, in some cases, current inequities in these systems. Critics of DEI policies and offices state that they are polarizing and promote exclusion. DEI policies and offices are vital mechanisms to dismantle the inherent exclusion and discrimination of marginalized Texas college and university students. SB 17 reverses all these efforts by prohibiting public institutions of higher education from holding DEI offices or hiring any officers, employees, or contractors that perform the duties of a DEI office.</p> <p>SB 17 mandates that higher education institutions prioritize an environment of intellectual inquiry, academic freedom, and intellectual diversity to ensure that all students are prepared for the workforce and contribute positively to society, as well as promote respect and education of all students, regardless of different races, sexes, ethnicities, and social, political, or religious backgrounds or beliefs.</p> <p>SB 17 defines a “diversity, equity, and inclusion office” as an office or unit of a public higher education institution that engages in certain activities relating to preferential treatment based on sex, race, color, ethnicity, and other designations. First, it includes hiring or employment practices that give preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, or ethnicity other than the nondiscriminatory hiring processes per applicable state and federal laws. Second, it includes providing differential treatment based on race, sex, color, or ethnicity. Third, implementing policies or procedures to give preference based on sex, race, color, or ethnicity other than policies or procedures to maintain compliance with applicable court orders or state or federal law. Lastly, conducting training or other activities that advocate for or give preferential treatment based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, gender identity, or sexual orientation other than pre-approved activities to maintain compliance with applicable court orders or state or federal law.</p> <p>Under SB 17, a higher education institution's governing board must ensure each unit within the institution does not establish or maintain a DEI office, hire or assign an employee or contract a third party to perform DEI office duties, or give preference based on race, sex, ethnicity, or national origin to an applicant for employment, an employee, or participant in any institution function. Further, the governing board must ensure that it was not required that anyone enrolling or performing any institution function had to participate in DEI training. SB 17 provides exemptions for a board to implement certain DEI programs if it is determined the program complies with applicable state and federal law and is necessary to comply with certain grant or contract requirements or the standards or requirements of an institution's accrediting agency. Additionally, SB 17 lists what does not apply to its provisions, like academic course instruction or scholarly research by a student or faculty member.</p>	<p><u>Unfavorable</u></p>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

An institution of higher education may not spend money appropriated to the institution until the governing board submits to the legislature and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) a report certifying compliance with DEI prohibitions during the preceding state fiscal year. A higher education institution’s governing board must adopt policies for appropriately disciplining those who violate DEI prohibitions. In the interim of each legislature’s regular session, an institution’s governing board or the board’s designee must testify in a public hearing before the legislative committees overseeing higher education and affirm compliance with prohibiting DEI in their institution.

Conclusion

The principles of DEI originated from the Civil Rights Movement and were established to address persistent inequalities in schools and workplaces. Student population statistics of Texas colleges and universities reflect disproportionately low representations of Texas’ diverse populations. DEI offices and policies give space to marginalized students and ensure these students have access to higher education to move on to be productive citizens. More so, these offices and policies aid students in overcoming financial, cultural, and social barriers to education.

Another consideration would be the politicization of higher education - specifically, how it may deter current and new faculty and students from coming to or staying in Texas to avoid involvement in this situation. SB 17 would require universities to discipline or fire employees who engage in activity that could be considered DEI. Additionally, universities must prove to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that they are in compliance with SB 17’s provisions before spending any state appropriations. Students of various backgrounds valuing DEI practices may choose another out-of-state university because a Texas school does not reflect their values or best interests. Faculty may want to avoid any potential complications or severe disciplinary actions. As a result, Texas can lose highly-valuable students and faculty. Even now, Texas universities and colleges are pre-emptively removing DEI practices and halting its advancement in preparation for the potential passing of SB 17. Texas cannot afford to lose potential additions to its workforce in various career sectors.

DEI has been misrepresented as divisive, exclusive, and ineffective. However, DEI offices aim to create an inclusive environment for all students, eliminating barriers faced by marginalized groups like veterans, individuals with disabilities, or first-generation students. If there are concerns about DEI practices or policies, there should be a consideration to focus on those issues before a sweeping prohibition. DEI, at its core, wishes to build and foster diverse representation.

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

LSG Floor Report For General State Calendar – Friday, May 19, 2023				
SB 1745 By: Perry Sponsor: Burrows	Relating to the equalization of the rates of production fees charged on certain wells by the Barton Springs-Edwards Aquifer Conservation District; authorizing an increase in the rate of the fee.	Natural Resources 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	<p>The Barton Springs-Edwards Aquifer Conservation District (BSEACD) can charge fees for groundwater production for nonagricultural wells that require permits. SB 1745 intends to standardize the fees for nonagricultural wells in the Hays County shared territory added to the district in 2015, which involves raising the annual groundwater production fee for those specific wells.</p> <p>SB 1745 specifies that the BSEACD production fee cap of 17 cents per thousand gallons applies to specific nonagricultural wells in the shared territory until September 1, 2023. After this date, the district could gradually increase the annual fee for nonagricultural water, with a maximum increase of 10 cents per thousand gallons per year. This fee would then be capped at 38 cents per thousand gallons or match the raw surface water cost of other wholesale suppliers in the district, whichever is higher.</p> <p>SB 1745 addresses an imbalance in production fees among specific well types within the BSEACD, particularly in the Hays County area that became part of the district in 2015, and helps ensure that the BSEACD can fund its water infrastructure and supply services for a growing number of Texans into the future.</p>	<u>Favorable</u>
SB 1802 By: Springer Sponsor: Goldman	Relating to administrative procedures in the architectural barriers program at the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation.	Licensing & Administrative Procedures 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	<p>The Texas Architectural Barriers Act, passed in 2012, sets accessibility standards for public spaces in Texas. Design professionals currently need to register their projects, undergo review and approval, and schedule inspections by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR), which enforces the act along with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In 2022, TDLR thoroughly reviewed the act and program rules. SB 1802 intends to modify the administrative procedures of the program to ensure consistency with its enabling law and authority.</p> <p>SB 1802 grants the executive director of TDLR the authority to impose administrative penalties on building owners who violate laws pertaining to architectural barriers, aligning with the authority given to the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation (TCLR). SB 1802 removes the requirement for TCLR, before imposing an administrative penalty for these violations, to notify a building owner and allow the owner 90 days to bring the building into compliance. Additionally, SB 1802 removes the requirement for TDLR to provide regular updates to the person who filed the complaint regarding the monitoring status of the non-compliant building.</p> <p>SB 1802 is from a recommendation provided by TDLR to improve its administrative procedures regarding these violations.</p>	<u>Favorable</u>
SB 998 By: West	Relating to an opioid-related drug overdose training program for certain alcoholic beverage	Licensing & Administrative Procedures 9 Ayes,	<p>The dangers associated with synthetic opioid fentanyl are often unknown to casual drug users and this particular opioid is commonly found in illicit drugs consumed at nightclubs, bars, and similar establishments where alcohol is served. SB 998 aims to make it mandatory for the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) to develop and execute training programs for permit holders and their employees so they can learn to recognize the signs and symptoms of opioid overdose and be trained in administering opioid antagonists.</p>	<u>Favorable</u>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

<p>Sponsor: Geren</p>	<p>permit holders.</p>	<p>0 Nays, 0 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>SB 998 requires the TABC to create a training program that must cover signs and symptoms of an opioid-related drug overdose which will educate individuals on how to recognize the indications and symptoms that may arise during an opioid-related drug overdose. The training must also cover the administration of an opioid antagonist which is a medication used to counteract the effects of an opioid overdose. Under SB 998, every holder of a mixed beverage permit and every employee of the permit holder, who is mandated by the permit holder to complete a commission-approved seller training program, must complete the opioid-related drug overdose training program on an annual basis.</p> <p>SB 998 will help employees of alcohol serving establishments recognize the signs of someone who has overdosed on opioids. This bill could potentially save lives if employees can catch these symptoms in a person before they leave the establishment.</p>	
<p>SB 129 By: Springer Sponsor: Meyer</p>	<p>Relating to the prosecution and punishment for possession or promotion of child pornography; increasing criminal penalties.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence 8 Ayes 0 Nay 0 PNV 1 Absent</p>	<p>Texas’ current child pornography laws have not been adequately updated to reflect recent technological changes, leaving children vulnerable to those who may harm them. Websites allow actors to exchange images, connect with one another, and groom children online, and prosecutors may find some of this difficult to prosecute because of our current laws. SB 129 seeks to update these laws to keep Texas children safe.</p> <p>SB 129 makes several changes to criminal penalties for the possession or promotion of child pornography. The bill would increase the statute of limitations for the offense of possession or promotion of child pornography from three to seven years after the date of the commission of the offense. First, the penalty for possessing prohibited visual material containing fewer than 100 depictions of a child becomes a third-degree felony. The provision that previously enhanced the penalty for subsequent convictions is removed and replaced with an enhancement to a second-degree felony for possessing visual material with between 100 and 500 depictions of a child. Similarly, the provision that increased the penalty to a first-degree felony for two or more convictions is replaced with an enhancement to a first-degree felony if the material contains 500 or more depictions. Furthermore, the penalty is escalated to a first-degree felony punishable by imprisonment for life or a term of 25 to 99 years if the person possessing the material was an employee at a child-related facility. The legislation also includes provisions to increase the penalty if the material depicts a child under 10 years of age when the image was made or if the defendant has a previous conviction for the offense. Lastly, possessing prohibited visual material with 500 or more depictions of a child would be considered a first-degree felony punishable by a minimum 15-year term of confinement.</p> <p>SB 129 will help ensure that Texas laws are in keeping with technological changes and can keep children safe.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

<p>SB 1308</p> <p>By: Hancock</p> <p>Sponsor: Geren</p>	<p>Relating to the operation of an unmanned aircraft over an airport or military installation; creating a criminal offense.</p>	<p>State Affairs</p> <p>13 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Chapter 423 of the Texas Government Code also known as the “Texas Privacy Act” was enacted to restrict use of drones to capture images of individuals or private property without the owner’s consent and established restrictions on drone usage over critical infrastructure facilities such as military bases and airports. However, Chapter 423 was found to be an unconstitutional violation of the First Amendment because it provided certain exemptions for commercial use but not news reporting. This ruling acknowledged that Chapter 423’s lack of an exemption for journalists impeded the press’s ability to gather and share news which is a fundamental aspect of freedom of the press enshrined by the First Amendment.</p> <p>As such, SB 1308 addresses these constitutional issues regarding press access while protecting the integrity of critical infrastructure from threats posed by drone usage in several ways, namely: creating a standalone offense, removing height restrictions, and providing defenses to prosecution. SB 1308 removes the height limitation of 400 feet set forth in previous legislation and creates an offense to operate a drone over a military base or airport regardless of height. Moreover, SB 1308 establishes the penalty for violating its provisions as Class B misdemeanor that can be enhanced to Class A misdemeanor upon subsequent convictions. Additionally, the bill removes the commercial usage exemptions from previous legislation and amends the prior consent exception to a defense to prosecution. As such, a person or entity has a defense to prosecution if they have prior written or electronic authorization from the facility’s owner, operator, or the Federal Aviation Administration.</p> <p>SB 1308 supports security efforts, ensures public safety, and addresses constitutional concerns regarding journalistic activities by establishing a clear legal framework for the operation of drones over critical infrastructure.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
<p>SB 2304</p> <p>By: LaMantia</p> <p>Sponsor: Hernandez</p>	<p>Relating to the regulation of driver education courses and driving safety courses and the provision of information regarding the Texas Driving with Disability Program to certain public schools.</p>	<p>Licensing & Administrative Procedures</p> <p>8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>In 2019, the Legislature passed SB 976, known as the Samuel Allen Law, to create the Texas Driving with Disability Program, which allowed individuals to voluntarily disclose a communication impediment on their driver’s license or vehicle registration. This program aimed to foster safer interactions between law enforcement and individuals with disabilities by ensuring officers were aware of an individual’s communication impediment. SB 2304 aims to promote awareness of this program to new drivers in high school.</p> <p>SB 2304 requires school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to provide information regarding the Texas Driving with Disability Program to students who have a health condition or disability that might make it difficult to communicate effectively with a peace officer and who receive special education services or who are covered under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and their parents. SB 2304 specifies that the information must be provided to each student who is 16 or older every year until they graduate from high school or reach their 21st birthday.</p> <p>SB 2304 requires the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to collaborate with the Department of Public Safety (DPS), the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), and the Governor’s Committee on People with Disabilities to develop information materials. These materials must include information on a person’s option to voluntarily list</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

			<p>any health condition or disability that may impede communication with a peace officer on a person’s vehicle registration and can be provided with any transition planning materials. SB 2304 also requires the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation (TCLR) to include the information in driver education and driving safety course curriculum. Providers of these courses must certify to TCLR that the course curriculum has been updated to include information on the Texas Driving with Disability Program.</p> <p>SB 2304 makes the Texas Driving with Disability Program accessible to new drivers with disabilities, empowering them to opt into the program if they want to.</p>	
<p>SB 1040</p> <p>By: Kolkhorst</p> <p>Sponsor: Oliverson Capriglione Harris, Caroline Jetton Anderson</p>	<p>Relating to health benefit plan coverage of a transplant of an organ that originated from or is transplanted in a country known to have participated in forced organ harvesting.</p>	<p>Public Health</p> <p>10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>SB 1040 prohibits health benefit plan issuers from covering a human organ transplant or post-transplant care if the organ was procured from, or the transplant operation was performed in China, or another country known to participate in forced organ harvesting.</p> <p>SB 1040 authorizes the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) commissioner to designate additional countries that fund, sponsor, or otherwise facilitate forced organ harvesting and provide notice to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas, the Employees Retirement System of Texas, and the Health and Human Services Commission to apply to certain health benefit plans.</p> <p>UN human rights experts have reported forced organ harvesting in China that appears to be targeting specific ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities held in detention. SB 1040 ensures that Texas insurance plans do not inadvertently prop up the organ harvesting trafficking industry.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
<p>SB 1120</p> <p>By: Schwertner</p> <p>Sponsor: King, Ken</p>	<p>Relating to certain prohibited practices by a barber or cosmetologist.</p>	<p>Licensing & Administrative Procedures</p> <p>6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 5 Absent</p>	<p>Estheticians and cosmetologists are only legally allowed to administer injections, such as Botox, under the supervision or authorization of a physician. However, there have been instances where estheticians and cosmetologists have organized "Botox parties" and administered unauthorized injections to their friends and family members.</p> <p>SB 1120 prohibits a licensed barber or cosmetologist from making an incision into the dermis layer of a person's skin, including injecting medication or other substances, and prohibits using a prescription medical device approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration. A licensed barber or cosmetologist may only perform the aforementioned acts if licensed to provide the service in Texas or otherwise authorized by law. If a violation occurs and disciplinary action is taken by the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation, the license or permit holder would be responsible for proving they were licensed or authorized. The bill does not impact the authority of any other state agency responsible for regulating a particular profession to enforce its laws over that profession.</p> <p>By enforcing SB 1120, people could be protected from the potential harm of these substances. In addition, the bill will help ensure that only licensed medical professionals administer Botox and other similar injections to Texans.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

<p>SB 467 By: Bettencourt Sponsor: Leach</p>	<p>Relating to increasing the criminal penalty for the offense of criminal mischief involving impairment of a motor fuel pump.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence 7 Ayes 0 Nay 1 PNV 1 Absent</p>	<p>In response to concerns regarding a growing issue of card skimmers at gas pumps in Texas, the 86th and 87th legislatures enacted legislation to combat the issue. However, a new issue has recently arisen in which individuals disrupt fuel pulsors at gas pumps, which allows for inaccurate fuel measurements that let individuals steal hundreds of gallons of gas. Because damaging a pulsar only allows for a charge of criminal mischief, these individuals are not able to be appropriately charged for the crime. SB 467 allows for a penalty increase in order to curb this behavior.</p> <p>SB 467 increases the penalty for the offense of criminal mischief to a third-degree felony for an actor who causes impairment to a motor fuel pump, regardless of the financial loss. This charge would carry with it two to ten years in prison, whereas the original charge of a Class A Misdemeanor for criminal mischief carries with it up to one year.</p> <p>SB 467 may help ensure that there is an enforcement mechanism for the disruption of fuel pulsors, but concerns have been raised that an enhancement to this degree is disproportionate to the crime and unlikely to actually deter the behavior.</p>	<p><u>Favorable with Concerns</u></p>
<p>SB 1001 By: Schwertner Sponsor: King, Ken</p>	<p>Relating to the regulation of electric vehicle supply equipment; requiring an occupational registration; authorizing fees; authorizing an administrative penalty.</p>	<p>Licensing & Administrative Procedures 8 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 1 Absent</p>	<p>Per ERCOT, the number of electric vehicles (EVs) in Texas is expected to reach one million by 2028. As more of these vehicles are on Texas roads, there is a need for accessible charging stations. There needs to be a comprehensive oversight structure for electric charging stations in the state. SB 1001 intends to assign oversight responsibility to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation and place nationally recognized specifications into state law.</p> <p>SB 1001 requires the Texas Commission of Licensing and Regulation (TCLR) to set sufficient fees to cover the administrative costs and adopt rules to implement the bill. The commission may contract services related to electric vehicle supply equipment and is responsible for conducting inspections to ensure compliance. TDLR is permitted to inspect EV supply equipment periodically or in response to a complaint to ensure compliance. Additionally, SB 1001 establishes consumer protections by requiring TDLR to provide accessible channels for consumers to file complaints about electric vehicle supply equipment. Finally, SB 1001 provides exemptions for TDLR inspection, like if it is not cost-effective as determined by TDLR or if the equipment is installed or adjacent to a private residence for noncommercial use.</p> <p>TCLR is authorized to regulate legacy chargers - EV supply equipment installed before January 1, 2024 - that never had metering systems to measure transferred electricity or how long a vehicle has been charging and calculating the fee for the station. SB 1001 provides a deadline for when EV supply equipment must be registered. SB 1001 requires EV supply providers to disclose to consumers how fees for the station will be calculated, the rate the consumer is charged, and additional surcharges. EV supply providers are to provide receipts of the transaction on request.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

			<p>Under SB 1001, equipment specifications and tolerances must align with the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) recommendations. Electric vehicle supply equipment made available to the public after December 1, 2024, must be equipped with a standard charging connector compatible with various electric vehicles. A notice informing users that the department regulates the equipment must be displayed, along with information on filing complaints.</p> <p>Overall, SB 1001 establishes regulations and standards to ensure the safe and fair operation of electric vehicle supply equipment in Texas, promoting consumer protection and facilitating the growth of electric vehicle infrastructure.</p>	
<p>SB 1900 By: Birdwell Sponsor: Guillen</p>	<p>Relating to foreign terrorist organizations, including the compilation of information regarding, certain civil actions brought against, and the prosecution of certain organized crime offenses involving a foreign terrorist organization.</p>	<p>State Affairs 10 Ayes, 0 Nays, 1 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>SB 1900 extends the power of the state to oversee border security in a manner inconsistent with federal laws. While the primary focus of SB 1900 is on drug trafficking and international criminal gangs, it is also an effort to contest federal authority by attempting to assert state jurisdiction over "foreign terrorist organizations." SB 1900 designates groups as "foreign terrorist organizations" under state law, escalating the punishments associated with their activities. In addition, this measure would place these organizations under the purview of various organized crime laws and provisions that broaden the methods and mechanisms available to law enforcement agencies to take against these groups. SB 1900 is part of a broader border security legislative effort, including HB 7, HB 1600, HB 800, among others, that aims to vest federal authority within the office of the Governor and the directors of agencies he appointed.</p> <p>SB 1900 classifies any group of three or more persons operating at least partially outside the United States and engaging in activities threatening the security of Texas or its residents as a "foreign terrorist organization," including but not limited to drug cartels. SB 1900 will include foreign terrorist organizations in existing provisions relating to criminal street gangs. Specifically, it expands the scope of state and local intelligence databases to include these groups and allows local entities to seek public nuisance claims against them. Further, these entities would be applied to criminal offenses relating to criminal street gangs, like coercing, inducing, or soliciting membership in a criminal street gang and directing the activities of criminal street gangs. In addition, SB 1900 would expand the conduct that can be considered engaging in organized criminal activity to include a person operating a stash house, unlawfully manufacturing, delivering, dispensing, or distributing a controlled substance or dangerous drug, or unlawfully possessing a controlled substance or dangerous drug with the intent to deliver. SB 1900 would also include establishing, maintaining, or participating as a member of a foreign terrorist organization as organized criminal conduct. This could lead to potentially higher offenses that individuals could be charged with and be subject to more severe penalties.</p> <p>Critics against SB 1900 raise multiple concerns about the bill. First, SB 1900 could extend the power of the state to oversee border security in a manner inconsistent with federal laws. For example, at the federal level, drug cartels have not been identified as "terrorist organizations." Further, SB 1900 can be seen as a part of an effort to</p>	<p><u>Unfavorable</u></p>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

			content federal authority by asserting state jurisdiction over “foreign terrorist organizations” under the guise of going after drug trafficking and international criminal gangs. Federal organizations are already trained and structured to address these concerns, whereas state level entities are not. Second, there is concern about mixed-family homes that may be used for criminal activity, but not all in the home may know what is happening. For example, one family member may be cartel affiliated and use a family member’s home as a stash house. SB 1900 could consider all in the home as a part of a “foreign terrorist organization.” Third, the expanded definition of “foreign terrorist organizations” could infringe upon the civil liberties of particular communities and disproportionately impact these communities. Lastly, increasing penalties and widening law enforcement powers have historically proven ineffective at reducing drug trafficking and cartel activity.	
SB 1929 By: Johnson Sponsor: Dean	Relating to the registration of virtual currency mining facilities in the ERCOT power region that demand a large load of interruptible power.	State Affairs 13 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent	<p>SB 1929 aims to regulate virtual currency mining facilities in ERCOT power regions due to the unique challenges they pose to the electric grid as a result of their high electricity usage and rapidly changing demand.</p> <p>Under SB 1929, any person operating a virtual currency mining facility that requires more than 75 megawatts of power during the first two years of operation is mandated to register the facility with the Public Utility Commission (PUC). Moreover, the bill requires these facilities to provide PUC with their location and anticipated power demand over the next five years. Conversely, SB 1929 requires PUC to develop rules to determine load interruption and ensure facility compliance. This enables PUC to share large flexible load registration information with ERCOT to manage and prevent strain on the electric grid.</p> <p>By requiring virtual currency mining facilities to register with PUC and disclose their location and anticipated power demand with ERCOT, SB 1929 facilitates accurate forecasting and efficient management of Texas’s power supply—ultimately assisting maintenance of grid stability. Additionally, the clear definitions provide legal clarity and enable PUC to share load data with ERCOT, thus enhancing transparency and collaboration among entities tasked with managing the state’s power infrastructure.</p>	<u>Favorable</u>
SB 2016 By: Zaffrini Sponsor: Goldman	Relating to the licensing and regulation of dietitians.	Licensing & Administrative Procedures 6 Ayes, 2 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent	<p>Texas requires a dietitian to pass the Commission on Dietetic Registration (CDR) exam to become licensed. However, starting January 1, 2024, the CDR will require applicants to have a graduate-level degree to take the exam, which will conflict with Texas law that allows applicants to have only baccalaureate or post-baccalaureate degrees. SB 2016 aligns Texas laws with national standards.</p> <p>SB 2016 replaces the current licensure examination requirements and qualifications for dietitian licensure with the following criteria: the individual is a registered dietitian or dietitian nutritionist, has met the specified education and experience requirements, passed the CDR examination, is in compliance with applicable professional, ethical, and disciplinary standards, and is not subject to any disciplinary action by the applicable certifying entity. The education requirement would require applicants to have a master’s degree accepted by the certifying entity. This change would align with the CDR educational requirements to take the licensure exam. SB 2016 also amends the definitions of “Commission on Dietetic Registration,” “certifying entity,” “registered dietitian,” and “registered dietitian nutritionist” to ensure the proper certifying entities are identified in statute</p>	<u>Favorable</u>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

			<p>and to ensure registered dietitians and dietitian nutritionists are properly credentialed. SB 2016 provides that an individual may not use the title or represent themselves as a registered dietitian nutritionist unless they are a registered dietitian. SB 2016 removes a provisional licensed dietitian as a type of license issued by TDLR. Finally, SB 2016 removes the specification that TDLR will develop and administer a jurisprudence examination for applicants.</p> <p>Updating state standards to align with upcoming national standards eliminates confusion for applicants and ensures clarity regarding the requirements on the path to licensure.</p>	
<p>SB 1518</p> <p>By: King</p> <p>Sponsor: Guillen Cook</p>	<p>Relating to the establishment of a terrorist offender registry and to the supervision of those terrorist offenders; creating criminal offenses related to terrorism.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence</p> <p>7 Ayes 1 Nay 1 PNV 0 Absent</p>	<p>Concerns have been raised regarding law enforcement lacking the necessary tools to properly investigate and prosecute terrorist acts in Texas. While threats of terrorism have fluctuated in recent years, there is no recent discernible increase, except for domestic terrorism, which has increased roughly 350% over the last ten years.</p> <p>SB 1518 seeks to address this issue in three ways, by establishing the terrorist offender registration program, creating criminal offenses related to terrorism, and requiring those who are convicted of such an offense to register.</p> <p>Registration and Verification Requirements SB 1518 creates offenses that would require registration with the Terrorist Offender Registration program, and stipulates that individuals who are required to register under the program as a condition of parole, release to mandatory supervision, or community supervision must fulfill registration obligations or, if applicable, verify their registration. This process must be carried out with the local law enforcement authority in any municipality where the person resides or intends to reside for more than seven days. The bill also mandates that individuals for whom registration has been completed under the program must, within seven days after their release, report to the relevant local law enforcement authority to verify the information provided in the registration. The bill also provides guidance for registration regarding lack of address, pre-release registration, and extra-jurisdictional registrants.</p> <p>SB 1518 establishes reporting requirements for individuals subject to registration under the program based on their criminal history. If a person has been convicted two or more times, received deferred adjudication two or more times, or has a combination of convictions and deferred adjudications for offenses requiring registration, they must report to the designated local law enforcement authority at least once every 90-days to verify the information in their registration form. For individuals not subject to such a requirement, they must report to the designated local law enforcement authority once per year. The bill grants authority to the local law enforcement authority designated DPS as the person's registration authority to direct the individual to report for verification of the information in their registration form maintained by DPS.</p>	<p><u>Will of the House</u></p>

SB 1518 also requires registration in municipalities where the individual spends considerable time visiting, and requires a person who is required to register to comply with a DNA request made by law enforcement. This provision, like many others in the bill, functions similarly to how this process works for the sex offender registry. The bill also provides for the expiration of an individual's requirement to register.

Terrorist Offender Registration Program

SB 1518 makes amendments to the Code of Criminal Procedure, specifically addressing establishing the terrorist offender registration program. The bill designates the Department of Public Safety (DPS) with the responsibility of assessing whether offenses committed in another state or a foreign country, federal law, or the Uniform Code of Military Justice share significant similarities with the elements of: a terroristic offense created by the bill, or certain offenses specified under federal law, which include applicable offenses of terrorism, bombing of public places, government facilities, public transportation systems, or infrastructure facilities, offenses related to missile systems designed to destroy aircraft, offenses related to radiological dispersal devices, and acts of nuclear terrorism.

SB 1518 grants authority to a county commissioners court to designate either the office of the sheriff or the office of a chief of police as the centralized registration authority. Under this bill, individuals subject to registration under the terrorist offender registration program are required to fulfill registration, verification, and change of address obligations exclusively with the centralized registration authority for the county, regardless of whether they reside within any municipality in that county. The bill also mandates DPS establish and maintain a central database that includes all necessary registration information, as well as photographs of individuals required to register. Furthermore, the bill designates the information contained in the database as confidential and not subject to disclosure under state public information laws. The bill authorizes DPS, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department to adopt any rules necessary to implement the registration program. The bill provides definitions for “terrorist,” “reportable conviction,” and more under the bill's provisions.

Terroristic Offenses

SB 1518 establishes the criminal offense of terrorism. The bill defines this offense as the commission or conspiracy to commit various specified offenses, including criminal homicide, unlawful restraint, kidnapping, trafficking of persons, aggravated assault or aggravated sexual assault, deadly conduct (if punishable as a felony), making a terroristic threat (if punishable as a felony), tampering with a consumer product, arson, interference with railroad property (if punishable as a felony), aggravated robbery, interference with a radio frequency licensed to a government entity (if punishable as a felony), or certain conduct relating to hoax bombs. The intent behind these actions must be to intimidate or coerce the public or a substantial group of the public, or to influence the policy, conduct, or activities of the state, a political subdivision of the state, or the United States

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

			<p>through intimidation or coercion.</p> <p>The bill establishes that the offense of terrorism is punishable by one penalty category higher than the most serious offense committed or conspired to be committed, except in two scenarios. If the most serious offense is a Class A misdemeanor, the offense of terrorism is punishable as a Class A misdemeanor with a minimum confinement term of 180 days. If the most serious offense is a first-degree felony, the offense of terrorism is punishable as a first-degree felony with a minimum confinement term of 15 years.</p> <p>The bill creates additional offenses, including aiding in the commission of terrorism and hindering prosecution of terrorism, and requires the Office of the Attorney General to provide assistance in these cases if requested by the State’s attorney.</p> <p>Impact SB 1518 is sweeping legislation that broadly defines many criminal offenses as terrorism. While intent is established as a prerequisite for the offense, some have expressed concern that the enhancements outlined in the bill are too broad and may lead to over criminalization of the public, especially minority communities. Lastly, there are concerns that when it comes to terrorism, the Federal Bureau of Investigation is far more equipped to handle the issue, as opposed to Texas municipalities who may not have the resources.</p>	
<p>SB 1517 By: King Sponsor: Paul</p>	<p>Relating to prohibiting certain academic boycotts of foreign countries by public institutions of higher education.</p>	<p>Higher Education 6 Ayes, 0 Nays, 3 PNV, 2 Absent</p>	<p>SB 1517 prohibits an institution of higher education from implementing an academic boycott against a foreign country that would prohibit a student or faculty member from studying or conducting research in or about the country, or from interacting with the country’s scholars and representatives. An institution may, however, implement a boycott on countries listed as state sponsors of terrorism by the U.S. Department of State (currently, Cuba, North Korea, Iran and Syria).</p> <p>SB 1517 is a response to potential academic sanctions against Israel. The Boycott, Divestments, and Sanctions (BDS) movement that aims to enforce economic, cultural, and academic sanctions of Israel over its treatment of Palestines has been gaining traction among university students. At the same time, the Texas Holocaust, Genocide, and Antisemitism Advisory Commission recommended that state-funded universities be prevented from implementing academic and research boycotts against Isreal. Additionally, there are concerns that incidents against the Jewish community in Texas have more than doubled between 2020 and 2021.</p> <p>Texas has already prohibited state agencies from engaging with companies that boycott Israel. SB 1517 would extend this concept to college campuses by prohibiting academic boycotts. Supporters of the bill see the BDS movement as inherently antisemitic while those in opposition believe SB 1517 would restrict First Amendment rights.</p>	<p><u>Will of the House</u></p>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

<p>SB 493 By: Hughes Sponsor by: Hefner Patterson Bumgarner Garcia</p>	<p>Relating to qualifications for certain individuals for veterans benefits.</p>	<p>Defense & Veterans' Affairs 8 Ayes, 1 Nay, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>Since the pandemic, members of the U.S. armed forces have been less than honorably discharged based on their refusal to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Due to this status, veterans have been denied certain benefits and services from the state. A less than honorable discharge remains on their military record and on a veteran's DD214 form (certificate of release or discharge), which is used for benefits eligibility such as Hazelwood funds. A veteran may petition and go through an appeal process to correct their military record through their respective military branch version of Discharge Review Board and Board for Correction of Military Records.</p> <p>SB 493 requires former U.S. armed forces members who received a less than honorable discharge based solely on their refusal to receive the COVID-19 vaccine to be considered for an honorable discharge for purposes of determining state veteran benefits. Veterans must prove to the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) that refusing the COVID-19 vaccine was the only reason for their less-than-honorable discharge. The bill takes effect immediately if it receives a 2/3 vote in each chamber or on September 1.</p> <p>Some contend that refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine is a refusal of a commanding officer's military orders. There are already vaccine requirements for service members deploying overseas, and refusing them, outside certain exemptions, would be a violation or failure to obey a general order.</p>	<p><u>Will of the House</u></p>
<p>SB 736 By: Whitmire Sponsor: Perez</p>	<p>Relating to mandatory arbitration for certain municipal fire departments and employee bargaining agents.</p>	<p>Urban Affairs 8 Ayes, 1 Nays, 0 PNV, 0 Absent</p>	<p>The Houston Professional Fire Fighters Association Local 341 works under a collective bargaining agreement without a contract, as the firefighters and the City of Houston have been unable to resolve contractual differences. Despite their lack of contract, these firefighters have fulfilled their duties over the last six years. SB 736 requires the firefighters and the city to go through mandatory arbitration if they come to an impasse when working on a contractual agreement.</p> <p>SB 736 requires a public employer and an association that is a bargaining agent for employees of a fire department that serves a municipality with a minimum of 1.9 million people to undergo binding interest arbitration if the parties reach an impasse in collective bargaining or if they are unable to settle after the 61st day after the appropriate lawmaking body fails to approve a contract reached through collective bargaining.</p> <p>SB 736 requires each party to send a written notice to the other party identifying topics of dispute no later than five days after the date an impasse was reached in the collective bargaining process, after the collective bargaining period extended by written agreement by the parties for the prescribed period expires, or after the 61st day after the date the lawmaking body fails to approve a collective bargaining contract. These notices are considered to be sent when they are placed in the mail, delivered, emailed, or sent electronically in other ways.</p> <p>SB 736 allows Houston firefighters and the City of Houston to come to a resolution in a timely manner to help firefighters establish a contractual agreement that protects them as city employees.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>

Texas Legislative Study Group – An Official Caucus of the Texas House of Representatives

<p>SB 1346 By: Miles Sponsor: Bowers</p>	<p>Relating to the prosecution of certain littering offenses.</p>	<p>Criminal Jurisprudence 7 Ayes 1 Nay 0 PNV 1 Absent</p>	<p>Recently, concerns have been raised regarding increased illegal dumping and littering in municipalities. Currently, few statutory provisions allow for the prosecution of the act. SB 1346 seeks to allow local authorities to prosecute such an offense.</p> <p>SB 1346 broadens the application of certain criminal offenses, such as criminal conspiracy and criminal solicitation, to include acts of illegal waste dumping and the improper disposal of lit materials, such as cigarettes or cigars.</p> <p><u>SB 1346 will help to ensure that localities have the tools necessary to prosecute this offense.</u></p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>
<p>SB 1979 By: Hughes Sponsor: Harris, Caroline</p>	<p>Relating to an annual study by the Texas A&M University Texas Real Estate Research Center of the purchase and sale of single-family homes by certain institutional buyers.</p>	<p>Licensing & Administrative Procedures 8 Ayes, 0 Nays, 0 PNV, 3 Absent</p>	<p>The surge in home prices has created significant challenges for average-income Texans looking to purchase a house and establish ownership.</p> <p>SB 1979 requires the Texas A&M University Texas Real Estate Research Center to conduct an annual study and report on single-family home purchases and sales by certain institutional buyers. Institutional buyers are defined as entities such as any corporation, limited or general partnership, limited liability company, business trust, investment asset manager, real estate investment trust, joint venture, joint stock company, or bank that acquires or purchases ten or more single-family homes in the state within a calendar year. The study will compile information using existing data and deed records, including the number of homes purchased by each institutional buyer, the number acquired through foreclosure, the number sold, the number used as rental properties, the location of each home, and their appraised values. The research center has the authority to gather additional relevant information based on market trends or legislative recommendations.</p> <p>The research findings provided by SB 1979 could help the state gain a better understanding as to what is happening in the housing market. There has been a significant decrease in the ability of middle-class Texans to purchase a home and this study may give the Legislature the information it needs to provide Texans with the opportunity to buy a home and build equity.</p>	<p><u>Favorable</u></p>