

Weekly Report
February 10, 2023

GOVERNOR:

Disaster Declaration Issued for Seven Counties – On February 4th, Governor Greg Abbott issued a disaster declaration for Texas counties impacted by the recent ice storm that caused widespread property damage, hazardous travel disruptions, and localized power outages. The disaster declaration includes Denton, Hays, Henderson, Milam, Smith, Travis, and Williamson counties. Additional counties may be added to the declaration as damage assessments are completed. Governor Abbott said, "The State of Texas has provided all assistance requested throughout the severe weather this week, and we continue to ensure that communities across our state have the resources and support they need to recover from the winter weather event. Through this disaster declaration, we will be able to provide additional assistance to Texans and communities who have experienced property damage and localized power outages from this ice storm. Texans are encouraged to continue reporting damages to the iSTAT damage survey so we can meet all needs in the recovery process." At the direction of Governor Abbott and in support of requests for assistance from local officials, repairs to damaged infrastructure, the disposal of debris, and damage assessments are underway and ongoing. This week, the governor urged Texans to report ice storm damage to homes and businesses using the Individual State of Texas Assessment Tool (iSTAT).

For more information, [view the iSTAT damage survey webpage](#).

Next Week:

State of the State Address – On February 7th, Governor Greg Abbott and Nexstar Media Inc. announced that Nexstar television stations across the state of Texas will carry a live telecast of Governor Abbott's 2023 State of the State address on Thursday, February 16, 2023 at 7:00 PM CT, hosted by the Greater San Marcos Partnership and San Marcos Area Chamber of Commerce. The speech will air on 16 Nexstar television stations serving 14 Texas media markets and will be telecast throughout the state. As a public service, Nexstar will make the live feed of the telecast available to every broadcast company serving Texas. Governor Abbott said, "Texas is the apex of opportunity, where infinite possibilities allow our people to climb from humble beginnings to the heights of success. This 88th Legislative Session is an opportunity for the legislature and statewide leaders to transform the lives of Texans for generations and build an even brighter future for our state. We have already accomplished so many great

things for the people of Texas - working together, we will continue charting a course for the Texas of tomorrow." During the address, Governor Abbott will update Texans on his priorities for the 88th Legislative Session, highlight exceptional Texans from across the state, and outline his plans for building the Texas of tomorrow. The address will air on 16 Nexstar television stations serving the state, including: KDAF-TV (CW) in Dallas, KIAH-TV (CW) in Houston, KXAN-TV (NBC) in Austin, KWKT-TV (FOX) in Waco, KVEO-TV/KGBT-TV (NBC/MyNet) in Harlingen/Brownsville, KSHV-TV (FOX) in Shreveport, LA, KTSM-TV (NBC) in El Paso, KETK-TV (NBC) in Tyler, KAMR-TV (NBC) in Amarillo, KAMC-TV/KLBK-TV (ABC/CBS) in Lubbock, KMID-TV (ABC) in Midland/Odessa, KFDX-TV (NBC) in Wichita Falls, KTAB-TV (CBS) in Abilene, and KLST-TV (CBS) in San Angelo.

SENATE:

The Senate briefly convened on Tuesday and Wednesday of this week. On Wednesday, Mrs. Opal Lee, who fought for decades to make Juneteenth a national holiday, was honored on the Senate floor with the unveiling of her portrait by artist Jess Coleman. Her portrait will be hung in the Senate, making her the second Black woman to have her portrait in the Senate Chamber after Congresswoman Barbara Jordan. Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, the day that slavery officially came to an end in America when the last enslaved people in Galveston received an order informing them they were finally free - more than two years after the Emancipation Proclamation was signed. Juneteenth has been a holiday in Texas since 1980 and was made a federal holiday in 2021. Senator Royce West (D-Dallas) said to Mrs. Lee, "We want to make certain that you understand and appreciate how important this particular day is in the history of the State of Texas. Your portrait will join the portraits of other great Texans around here, and will be here in perpetuity. Young people will know the story of Opal Lee as they know the stories of so many other persons whose portraits are displayed here in this chamber." Lt. Governor Dan Patrick called Wednesday "an historic day" for the Senate, noting that this was the first time in 43 years that a new portrait had been commissioned for the Chamber. "This does not happen often," he said from the rostrum. "It's a great honor...it's a great day for Texas."

Next Week: The Senate adjourned until 11:00 a.m. on Tuesday, February 14, 2023.

HOUSE:

The House also convened briefly on Tuesday and Wednesday conducting routine business. Committee assignments were announced on Wednesday.

Speaker Phelan Announces House Committee Assignments – On February 8th, House Speaker Dade Phelan announced House committee assignments for the 88th Legislature. Speaker Phelan said, "The issues facing our great state will require thorough conversations and collaboration inside the Texas House, and

our chamber does its best work when lawmakers use their skill sets and strengths to work together and build consensus. These assignments were made after careful consideration and extensive reflection, taking into account the committee preferences expressed by each member as well as the diverse talents they bring to the table - a combination that will help drive our chamber's success and impact on issues facing Texans this legislative session." Speaker Phelan, who in recent weeks has met individually with House members to discuss their committee preferences and legislative priorities, crafted committee assignments based on a number of factors, such as seniority, personal preferences, the demographics of the chamber and the regional make-up of the body. Highlights from committee assignments for the 88th Legislature:

- Currently, 86 Republicans and 64 Democrats serve in the Texas House.
- There are 37 committee chairs appointed in total, including the Speaker Pro Tempore, a leadership position equivalent to a chair. Of those 37 appointments, 28 (~75 percent) are Republicans and 9 (~25 percent) are Democrats.
- Under the House Rules adopted by members at the beginning of the legislative session, there are 34 standing committees.
- Speaker Phelan also continued two select committees formed during the interim of the 87th Legislature: the Select Committee on Health Care Reform and the Select Committee on Youth Health and Safety.
- Of the 36 combined standing and select committees:
 - 11 chairs and 17 vice chairs are Black, Hispanic or Asian-American;
 - 22 chairs and 32 vice chairs represent urban areas of the state; and
 - 14 chairs and 4 vice chairs represent rural areas of the state.

In the interest of a fair and objective process, Speaker Phelan has chosen not to appoint chairs of other committees to simultaneously serve on the House Calendars Committee.

Representative Bryan Slaton (R-Royce City) criticized Speaker Phelan's committee assignments saying, "Today, the Texas grassroots experienced some victories. Our push took Democrats from 13 chairmanships down to 8. The pressure from the grassroots led to Democrats not being appointed as chairs to key committees such as Public Education and Pensions & Investments. Unfortunately, Speaker Phelan appointed some very radical Democrats to chair committees handling our criminal justice system and the family courts as just a few examples. Today's partial win has invigorated many of us to continue our pressure until we have zero Democrats chairing committees in the Texas House. I look forward to working with the grassroots to help pass the other seven legislative priorities of the Texas GOP this session."

House Committees and Chairs:

Deans of the Texas House – Tom Craddick (R-Midland) and Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston)

Speaker Pro Tempore – Charlie Geren (R-Fort Worth)

Agriculture & Livestock – Briscoe Cain (R-Deer Park)

Appropriations – Greg Bonnen (R-Friendswood)
Business & Industry – Oscar Longoria (D-Mission)
Calendars – Dustin Burrows (R-Lubbock)
Corrections – Abel Herrero (D-Robstown)
County Affairs – Victoria Neave Criado (D-Dallas)
Criminal Jurisprudence – Joe Moody (D-El Paso)
Culture, Recreation & Tourism – Trent Ashby (R-Lufkin)
Defense & Veterans' Affairs – Terry Wilson (R-Georgetown)
Elections – Reggie Smith (R-Sherman)
Energy Resources – Craig Goldman (R-Fort Worth)
Environmental Regulation – Brooks Landgraf (R-Odessa)
General Investigating – Andrew Murr (R-Junction)
Higher Education – John Kuempel (R-Seguin)
Homeland Security & Public Safety – Ryan Guillen (R-Rio Grande City)
House Administration – Will Metcalf (R-Conroe)
Human Services – James Frank (R-Wichita Falls)
Insurance – Tom Oliverson (R-Cypress)
International Relations & Economic Development – Angie Chen Button (R-Garland)
Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence – Jeff Leach (R-Plano)
Juvenile Justice & Family Issues – Harold Dutton, Jr. (D-Houston)
Land & Resource Management – DeWayne Burns (R-Cleburne)
Licensing & Administrative Procedures – Ken King (R-Canadian)
Local & Consent Calendars – Cody Harris (R-Palestine)
Natural Resources – Tracy O. King (D-Batesville)
Pensions, Investments & Financial Services – Giovanni Capriglione (R-Keller)
Public Education – Brad Buckley (R-Killeen)
Public Health – Stephanie Klick (R-Fort Worth)
Redistricting – Drew Darby (R-San Angelo)
Resolutions Calendars – Bobby Guerra (D-McAllen)
State Affairs – Todd Hunter (R-Corpus Christi)
Transportation – Terry Canales (D-Edinburg)
Urban Affairs – J.M. Lozano (R-Kingsville)
Ways & Means – Morgan Meyer (R-Dallas)
House Select Committee on Health Care Reform – Sam Harless (R-Spring)
House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety – Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston)

About House Committees:

Number of Committees:

- The House has 34 standing and procedural committees and two select committees for a total of 36.
- In 2021 and 2019, the House had 34 standing and procedural committees.
- In 2017, the House had 38 standing and procedural committees.

Republican Committee Chairs:

- Republicans are chairing 27 of the House's 36 standing, procedural and select committees (75 percent).
- In 2021, Republicans chaired 21 of the House's 34 standing and procedural committees (62 percent).
- In 2019, Republicans chaired 22 of the House's 34 standing and procedural committees (65 percent).
- In 2017, Republicans chaired 25 of the House's 38 standing and procedural committees (66 percent).

Democratic Committee Chairs:

- Democrats are chairing 9 of the House's 36 standing, procedural and select committees (25 percent).
- In 2021, Democrats chaired 13 of the House's 34 standing and procedural committees (38 percent).
- In 2019, Democrats chaired 12 of the House's 34 standing and procedural committees (35 percent).
- In 2017, Democrats chaired 13 of the House's 38 standing and procedural committees (34 percent).

Next Week: The House adjourned until 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 14, 2023.

BUDGET:

Friday, February 3, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee met for seven and a half hours and heard from representatives of the Legislative Budget Board and the following agencies:

- State Library and Archives Commission
- Commission on the Arts
- Texas Veterans Commission
- State Preservation Board
- Office of the Attorney General
- Office of the Governor
- Texas Secretary of State
- Texas Facilities Commission
- Public Finance Authority
- Bond Review Board
- Department of Information Resources
- State Office of Risk Management
- Texas Ethics Commission

Public Testimony included representatives of Texas Travel Alliance, Texas Council on Family Violence, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, Children's Advocacy Centers of Texas, Texas 2036, and Audits in the Public Interest.

Monday, February 6, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee took up Article III – Education (Public Education) Agencies. They heard from Legislative Budget Board staff and:

- Texas Education Agency (Commissioner Mike Morath)
- Windham School
- Permanent School Fund Corporation
- Texas School for the Deaf
- Teacher Retirement System
- Optional Retirement Program
- Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Public testimony included representatives of the American Heart Association, Austin Retired Teachers Association, Disability Rights Texas, Texas Association of School Business Officials, National Association of Social Workers-Texas, Association of Texas Professional Educators, Young Adult Leadership Council, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, Texas School Alliance and Plano ISD, Texas Retired Teachers Association, Texas Mobile STEM Lab, Texas Classroom Teachers Association, Texas 2036, Texas American Federation of Teachers, Texas School Coalition, Texas Network of Youth Services, Operation Warm, Communities in Schools of Texas, Every Texan, Texans Care for Children, Texas Association of School Boards, and three individual teachers.

Tuesday, February 7, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee took up Article III – Education (Higher Education) Agencies. They heard from Legislative Budget Board staff and:

- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (Commissioner Harrison Keller)
- Available University Fund
- Higher Education Fund
- Available National Research University Fund
- Permanent Fund Supporting Military Veterans Exemptions
- Higher Education Group Insurance
- Texan Woman’s University System
- Texas Southern University
- Stephen F. Austin State University
- Texas A&M University System and System Agencies
- Texas State University System and components
- University of North Texas System

Public testimony included representatives of Texas 2036, Western Governor’s University, Hogg Foundation for Mental Health, Texas Hospital Association, Teaching Hospitals of Texas, National Association of Social Workers, Texas Medical Association, Texas Academy of Family Physicians, Texas Veterinary Medical Association, and three individuals.

Wednesday, February 8, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee took up Article III – Education (Higher Education) Agencies. They heard from Legislative Budget Board staff and:

- University of Texas System and components
- University of Houston System
- Angelo State University
- Midwestern State University
- Texas Tech University System
- Texas State Technical College System

Public testimony included representatives of The Commit Partnership, Texas Association of Community Colleges, Texas 2036, and one individual.

Thursday, February 9, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee took up Article V – Public Safety & Criminal Justice Agencies.

Upcoming Hearings:

Friday, February 10, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee will meet at 9:00 a.m. in E1.036 of the capitol extension to take up Article I – General Government, and Article II – Health and Human Services Agencies.

Monday, February 13, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee will meet at 10:00 a.m. in E1.036 of the capitol extension to take up Article IV – Natural Resources Agencies.

Tuesday, February 14, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee will meet at 9:00 a.m. in E1.036 of the capitol extension to take up Article VII – Business & Economic Development Agencies.

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee will meet at 9:00 a.m. in E1.036 of the capitol extension to take up Article VIII - Regulatory Agencies.

Thursday, February 16, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee will meet at 9:00 a.m. in E1.036 of the capitol extension to take up Article IV - Judiciary Agencies.

Friday, February 17, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee will meet at 9:00 a.m. in E1.036 of the capitol extension if necessary for any pending business.

Tuesday, February 21, 2023 – Senate Finance Committee will meet at 9:00 a.m. in E1.036 of the capitol extension to take public testimony on Article II – Health and Human Services.

PUBLIC EDUCATION:

Proposed Secure Classroom Act – On February 2nd, Representative Steve Toth (R-The Woodlands) unveiled the Secure Classroom Act to protect teachers, administrators, and children from the abuses of chronically violent students. Representative Toth said, “It’s past time to restore order and discipline to Texas classrooms. The violent conduct our teachers and kids face on a daily basis disrupts the learning environment and threatens the safety of our classrooms. Look no further than TikTok to see scores of accounts and pages dedicated to broadcasting and encouraging violence on school grounds. I’ve introduced legislation that leans on existing, underutilized state programs to remove violence

from the classroom while preserving due process and allowing habitually violent students to continue their education. No student should fear violence directed at them in school. No teacher should have to make the choice between providing for their family or protecting their own well-being. **HB 34** aims at keeping Texas classrooms free from violence and increasing teacher retention. Currently the law allows for and even incentivizes the swift return of violent students to the same classrooms where they engaged in criminal conduct. HB 34 provides for early identification of and the removal of violent students from the classroom.”

Proposals to Expand SBOE Authority – On February 3rd, Representative Terri Leo-Wilson (R-Galveston) announced the filing of three major pieces of her public education legislative package. As a three-time elected State Board of Education (SBOE) member and former public educator, Representative Leo-Wilson’s knowledge of the public education system has guided her to file these reforms. Representative Leo-Wilson concluded, “These are common-sense bills that will ensure that the SBOE regains its constitutional jurisdiction. Elected board members are beholden to the voters unlike bureaucratic state agency employees. Parents know what’s best for their children’s educational needs and it is important that we empower their elected SBOE representatives, not textbook publishers who are beholden to other interests.” Bills in the package include: **HB 1884** - Instructional Materials Adopted by the SBOE – It would create several new criteria for the instructional materials approved by the SBOE each year.

Among these are:

- Presenting a scientific theory in an objective education manner,
- Presenting violence in the context of the causes and consequences of the violence and not for unwholesome excitement or sensationalism,
- Presenting positive aspects of the U.S. and its heritage,
- Presenting contrasting viewpoints regarding significant political or social movements in history in a balanced and factual manner,
- Treating all groups fairly and avoiding biases or stereotypes while also reflecting positive contributions of all individuals and groups to the American way of life, and
- Including information needed to develop mutual respect and understanding among all persons.

Additionally, it would prohibit instructional materials based on critical race theory, works that condone civil disorder, social strife, or disregard to the law, works that contain blatantly offensive language or illustrations, works that encourage lifestyles not accepted by the standards of society, or works that are authored by an employee of the Texas Education Agency. The SBOE would have final say on the adoption of these instructional materials based on the content presented by the publishers.

HB 1832: Review of Advanced Placement Courses by the SBOE – It would give the SBOE authority to review any advanced placement course offered in the state. AP courses would have to be compliant with state law and the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) adopted by the board. Otherwise, Texas

public and charter schools will be unable to offer the AP course as part of their curriculum.

HB 1837: Appointment of Experts to TEKS Writing Curriculum – It would give the SBOE members the opportunity to appoint expert members to any TEKS writing committee established by the TEA. This ensures that each elected member with jurisdiction to adopt the TEKS has a say throughout the process of writing educational content standards.

Milken Educator Award Presentation - February 9th, Governor Greg Abbott presented the Milken Educator Award to Jenna Dean of Nederland Independent School District's (NISD) Helena Park Elementary School at an award ceremony with the entire school. The Milken Educator Awards recognize and inspire excellence in the world of education by honoring top early-to-mid career education professionals for their already impressive achievements and the promise of what they will accomplish in the future. Governor Abbott said, "Nothing is more important to the enduring success of our state than the education of our youngest Texans. Because of talented and passionate teachers like Jenna Dean, our students continue to reach new heights of success as we prepare them to be Texas' leaders and innovators of tomorrow. Receiving a Milken Educator Award is a distinct testament to an educator's dedication to fostering brighter futures for our students, and I congratulate Jenna and Nederland ISD for this tremendous honor. In addition to the Milken Educator Award, the governor presented Dean with a proclamation in recognition of her exceptional work in preparing the next generation of Texans as a 4th grade teacher. The governor was joined at the award ceremony by Texas Education Commissioner Mike Morath, Milken Educator Awards Senior Vice President Dr. Jane Foley, NISD Superintendent Stuart Kieschnick, and other local education leaders.

Governor's Commission for Women - February 6th, Governor Greg Abbott appointed Ashley Cash to the Governor's Commission for Women for a term set to expire on December 31, 2023. Governor Abbott has charged the commission with developing a strategy and implementation plan to help make Texas the number one state for women-owned businesses and to address human trafficking. Housed within the Office of the Governor, the Governor's Commission for Women specializes in outreach, education, research, and referral services.

Ashley Cash of Lubbock is president and manager of CCC Capital Solutions, Inc., a real estate and investment company. She is also a manager of CX5 Partners, LLC; CX5 Holdings, LLC; and CCC Oil & Gas, LLC. Ashley and her husband co-manage family ranches and other investments through their Cash Family Office. She serves on the Board of Quest Trust Company headquartered in Houston and on the Advisory Board at the Gordon W. Davis College of Agriculture Sciences and Natural Resources at Texas Tech University. She is vice president and director for the Cash Family Foundation. For the past three years, Cash has served on the Finance Advisory Committee for Congressman Jodey Arrington (TX-19). Cash previously served on the Boards of The National

Ranching Heritage Association, Southcrest Christian School and the March of Dimes, Midland Chapter. She has also served other organizations, including the Junior League, Special Olympics, United Way, American Cancer Society, Habitat for Humanity, Lubbock Impact, and March of Dimes. Cash received a Bachelor of Business Administration in Marketing and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish from Southern Methodist University.

Legislative Black Caucus Legislative Agenda – On February 7th the Legislative Black Caucus held a press conference to outline their legislative agenda. Caucus Chair Ron Reynolds (D-Missouri City) kicked off the press conference by announcing that this year is the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the Legislative Black Caucus. He said, “We are steadfast in our pursuit of a more equitable Texas. We continue to be the conscience of the Texas Legislature. Speaking truth to power. According to the most recent census in 2020, Texas has the highest number of African Americans of any other state in the country. We should be the blueprint for state reforms by bringing Black voices to the table. We are proud that during this Black History Month we are unveiling our 88th Legislative Session priorities.” The group has recommendations in six broad categories - criminal justice reform, economic development, education, environmental justice, health and human services, and voting rights.

Representative Shawn Thierry (D-Houston) discussed the maternal mortality rate among Black women. She has filed an omnibus maternal mortality bill, HB 1958 addressing maternal mortality on a number of levels including expanding the database, extending Medicaid up to one year postpartum, and a pilot program on Medicaid reimbursement for doulas. Representative Senfronia Thompson talked about criminal justice reform. She said, “Black people constitute 13 percent of Texas residents but make up 27 percent of the prison population.” She will re-file the Sandra Bland Act and a bill instituting a disciplinary matrix for police officers. Senators Royce West (D-Dallas) and Borris Miles (D-Houston) joined her to talk about criminal justice reform. Senator West also discussed spending priorities in the area of kinship care and increasing student financial aid. Others attending the press conference were Representatives Christian Manuel (D-Port Arthur), Jarvis Johnson (D-Houston), Jolanda Jones (D-Houston), Rhetta Andrews Bowers (D-Rowlett), Alma Allen (D-Houston), Josey Garcia (D-San Antonio), and Carl Sherman, Jr. (D-DeSoto).

Texas Freedom Caucus Priorities for 88th Session – On February 7th, the Texas Freedom Caucus held a press conference to outline their legislative priorities. Caucus Chair Matt Schaefer (R-Tyler) said, “Our mission is to amplify the voices of liberty-minded people throughout the state. We hope these priorities reflect what is important to our constituents and to the state at large.” Each caucus member discussed their priority

Border Security – Representative Schaefer said, “A war on Texans is happening at the border. Fentanyl is a weapon of mass destruction. It is the #1 killer of adults between the ages of 18-45 in the United States. And there is human trafficking, a mass breach of the peace. We support our governor

invoking the invasion clause under the U.S. and Texas Constitutions and Texas taking full responsibility to stop the chaos on the border.” He recommended a permanent border corps instead of a part-time guard deployed to the border.

Grid Security and ESG – Representative Schaefer also discussed grid security and ESG. He said, “Harmful ESG policies lead us into poverty for energy. We need to increase the thermal capacity on our grid for natural gas and nuclear. . . . We will work on a number of measures to oppose ESG policies, not only in the energy sector, but in the insurance sector and across state agencies.”

Property Tax Relief - Representative Carrie Isaac (R-Dripping Springs) talked about property taxes. She said, “Texans are struggling as a result of high property taxes and inflation. I have talked to too many property owners in Texas who are being taxed out of their home. Texas has over 30 billion in excess revenue. Texans have been over-taxed.” She recommended using the surplus to buy down the maintenance and operations portion of property taxes.

Education – Representative Richard Hayes (R-Denton) said, “Too many schools are failing our children and our grandchildren, through critical race theory, social emotional learning, to sexualizing the curriculum. It’s time for that to stop. Students are being indoctrinated instead of educated. They need to be educated in the basics that made Texas great. And, it is time to empower parents to have a choice on what school their children are going to be able to attend.”

Sexualization of Children – Representative Matt Shaheen (R-Plano) said, “Our children are being exposed to obscene materials in our schools. These are not debatable topics. Any reasonable individual, especially the parents who reach out to me are concerned about the targeting of our children. We will file legislation to protect these children. Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in our schools has gone way overboard and schools are really not focused on equity anymore.” Representative Steve Toth (R-The Woodlands) also spoke against sexualization of children.

Election Integrity and Transgender Participation in College Sports – Representative Valoree Swanson (R-Spring) said, “Texans have be able to trust the accuracy of our elections. We must empower the Secretary of State to be able to stop election fraud while it is happening on election day.” She has also filed HB 23, which would require college athletes to compete based on their biological sex. She announced that she already has 77 House co-sponsors.

Medical Freedom – Representative Brian Harrison (R-Waxahachie) said, “You cannot have freedom apart from medical freedom.” He wants to eliminate COVID vaccine mandates. He added, “We must not allow unelected bureaucrats in state agencies to make health care decisions. We need to put the free market back in charge of health care with only doctors and patients making health care decisions.”

Instructional Materials – Representative Terri Leo-Wilson (R-Galveston) said, “Publishers have had free reign over the content of our instructional materials. We must give that authority to our elected SBOE We must get a handle on the content in textbooks. Between 2011-2023, we have developed a ‘woke generation’ because they have been reading a steady dose of what is in front of them on their desks.”

Vocational Training – Representative Gary Gates (R-Rosenberg) said, “I see how college is not necessarily for everyone.” He supports increasing vocation training and he plans to file a bill that would provide a new diploma for vocational programs in high-need industries.

Disaster Declarations and Sanctity of Life – Representative Cody Vasut (R-Angleton) said, “Government must be limited in scope. Conservatives must ensure that every law we pass confines to the constitution. The legislature has failed at that when it comes to disaster powers and separation of powers. The governor has had to keep his disaster mandates in place to protect Texans from localities. We need to amend the disaster act to prohibit local officials from imposing vaccine mandates or closing businesses. The role of government is to keep us free.” He also talked about the sanctity of life. He said, “We need to pursue further pro-life reforms like cracking down on entities that seek to bypass protections of life we put into place. And, we need to expand alternatives to abortion.”

Adoption – Representative Nate Schatzline (R-Fort Worth) said, “We look at pro-life as pro-birth, and we are, but we are pro-life from the womb until natural death. 26,000 kids are currently in the foster care system, almost 7,000 of them are waiting to be adopted. Every Texas child deserves a healthy permanent home. We want to make adoption more affordable in the State of Texas.”

Second Amendment Rights – Representative Briscoe Cain (R-Deer Park) said, “We oppose and will ban red flag laws; we oppose and will ban creation of gun databases by credit card companies and banks; and we support automatic reciprocity with other states for gun licenses.”

Key Dates – 88th Legislative Session:

88th Legislative Session Began: January 10, 2023

Inauguration of Governor and Lt. Governor – January 17, 2023

Bill Filing Deadline: March 10, 2023

88th Legislative Session Ends: May 29, 2023

Governor’s Veto Deadline: June 18, 2023

State Websites - Additional information can be obtained via the Senate, House, and capitol websites:

www.senate.state.tx.us

www.house.state.tx.us

www.capitol.state.tx.us