

**Weekly Report**  
**March 31, 2023**

**GOVERNOR:**

**Operation Lone Star Update** – On March 24<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott, the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS), and the Texas National Guard are continuing to work together to secure the border; stop the smuggling of drugs, weapons, and people into Texas; and prevent, detect, and interdict transnational criminal behavior between ports of entry. Since the launch of Operation Lone Star, the multi-agency effort has led to over 359,000 illegal immigrant apprehensions and more than 26,000 criminal arrests, with more than 23,000 felony charges reported. In the fight against fentanyl, DPS has seized over 373 million lethal doses of fentanyl during this border mission. Governor Abbott said, "Operation Lone Star continues to fill the dangerous gaps left by the Biden Administration's refusal to secure the border. Every individual who is apprehended or arrested and every ounce of drugs seized would have otherwise made their way into communities across Texas and the nation due to President Biden's open border policies."

**National Border Patrol Council Dinner** – On March 26<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott championed Texas' support for U.S. Border Patrol agents in their efforts to secure the border during the keynote address at the National Border Patrol Council (NBPC) Dinner in Houston. Addressing more than 220 agents and their families, the governor thanked agents for their work to keep America safe and promised that Texas will always have their backs. The governor said, "Thank you to the National Border Patrol Council and Brandon Judd for being a huge help to me and Texas as we work to secure the border. America's Border Patrol agents are the unsung heroes of our country, putting your lives on the line each and every day to secure our border and uphold our nation's sovereignty. Instead of defending you, Washington leaves you all undermanned and underpaid. I am here tonight to say thank you, let you know that Texas appreciates all you do to keep our country safe, and that you have a Governor who has your backs." During the keynote address, the governor discussed how Texas' Operation Lone Star mission is helping U.S. Border Patrol agents combat the historic influx of illegal immigrants, deadly drugs like fentanyl, and dangerous weapons into the United States as a result of President Biden's open border policies. Joined by NBPC President Brandon Judd and NBPC Executive Vice President Paul Perez, Governor Abbott also outlined how Texas has done more than any other state in the history of our nation to secure the border. The governor also presented a proclamation to NBPC President Judd, naming him an honorary Texan in recognition of his service to the hardworking men and women of Border Patrol in Texas and the United States.

### **Parent Empowerment Events:**

**On March 23<sup>rd</sup>**, Governor Greg Abbott championed support from rural Texans to expand education freedom and increase school choice for Texas parents at a Parent Empowerment Night held at First Odessa Christian Academy. Governor Abbott said, "It does not matter what city you live in, parents are in charge of their children's education. The reality is that not every school has the flexibility to meet the unique needs of every student. We as a state have an obligation to ensure that every child's needs are met, and we do that by empowering parents to choose the education setting that is best for their child. Our job is to make sure school choice and education freedom becomes a reality. Together, we will ensure parents remain the primary decisionmakers in the education of their child for generations to come." Governor Abbott noted that he has authorized more funding for public education than any governor in Texas history and emphasized that all public schools will remain fully funded under his plan to expand state-funded Education Savings Accounts to every Texas student. Additionally, the governor urged Texans to voice their support for education freedom to their local legislators. Governor Abbott was joined by Senator Kevin Sparks, Texas Public Policy Foundation Campaign Director Mandy Drogin, First Odessa Christian Academy Interim Head of School Byron McWilliams, and other parent empowerment advocates.

**On March 27<sup>th</sup>**, Governor Greg Abbott joined over 375 parents, students, teachers, and other parent empowerment advocates in support of his mission to expand school choice options for all Texas students at a Parent Empowerment Night in Denton. Governor Abbott said, "Freedom is a word that resonates with Texans - it's who we are and what we believe in. Structuring education for the future has to be focused on one thing: the students. When you combine freedom and focusing on students, education comes down to one, six-word sentence: mom and dad are in charge. Our job is to ensure the rightful position of parents in their child's education is protected and embodied in the state of Texas so we can achieve the best results for our students. We must empower parents to have access to school curriculum, school libraries, and what children are being taught. We must also empower parents to choose the best education option for their child - we will do that this legislative session." The Governor was joined by Senator Tan Parker, Representative Lynn Stucky, Texas Public Policy Foundation Campaign Director Mandy Drogin, Denton Calvary Academy Head of School Andrea Chevalier, and other parent empowerment advocates.

**On March 28<sup>th</sup>**, Governor Greg Abbott advocated for expanding school choice options and getting back to teaching Texas children the basics to succeed at a Parent Empowerment Night held at Immanuel Lutheran School in Giddings. Governor Abbott said, "When I grew up in Longview and Duncanville, we were taught the basics: reading, math, and science. More importantly, we were inspired by the founding of the United States and how we stand apart from the rest of the world as the beacon of liberty and opportunity. We need to get kids back to the basics of learning, and we will empower parents, giving them access to curriculum, school libraries, and what their children are being taught. This

session, we will ensure that our schools remain a place for education - not indoctrination." Governor Abbott was joined by Representative Stan Gerdes, Texas Public Policy Foundation Campaign Director Mandy Drogin, Immanuel Lutheran School Principal Dale Wolfgram, and other parent empowerment advocates.

## **SENATE:**

The Senate was in session Monday through Thursday this week.

**On Monday**, the Senate passed:

- **SB 24** by Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) would be the **Thriving Texas Families Act** to consolidate services during pregnancy and early childhood including the Prevention and Early Intervention division and Department of Family & Protective Services and the Family Support Services division within the Health & Human Services Commission. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed to Third Reading by a vote of 22 to 8. It was finally passed by a vote of 23 to 7.*
- **SB 240** by Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) would require hospitals and nursing facilities to establish a healthcare workplace violence prevention committee to develop a **workplace violence prevention plan**. *It passed by a vote of 31 to 0.*
- **SB 380** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would clarify that a party who files a statement of **inability to afford to pay court costs**, is not required to pay for an **interpreter** (for a party with limited English proficiency) unless the statement has been contested in court and the party has been ordered to pay. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed by a vote of 26 to 4.*
- **SB 384** by Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) would prohibit the **sale of clear aligners** in the state without approval of a licensed dentist. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed by a vote of 23 to 7.*
- **SB 736** by John Whitmire (D-Houston) would require the **City of Houston** and the **Houston Firefighters** to submit to **binding arbitration** if they reach an impasse in collective bargaining and are unable to settle. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed by a vote of 29 to 0.*
- **SB 825** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would extend the **deadline for submitting a recount petition** to the third (instead of second) day after canvassing and provide that if the deadline falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or holiday, the deadline is extended to the next regular business day. *It passed by a vote of 30 to 0.*
- **SB 921** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would prohibit a **majority vote** from being determined using a preferential voting system to. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed to Third Reading by a vote of 20 to 10 on March 27<sup>th</sup>. I received final approval by a vote of 21 to 9 on March 28<sup>th</sup>.*

- **SJR 35** by Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury) would propose a constitutional amendment clarifying that a **voter must be a U.S. citizen**. *It passed by a vote of 29 to 1.*

**About SB 24, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick** said, “As a Christian and a conservative, I have always been committed to helping as many women choose life as possible. When the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade* in 2022, I said this was an acknowledgement of the truth: when an abortion is performed, a human life is ended. That victory was not just a victory for innocent life, but a victory for all of humanity. Over the years, Texas has led on Alternatives to Abortion programs, which have been a lifeline for many new mothers and families. SB 24 codifies and renames the program to the Texas Pregnancy and Parenting Support Network and will promote healthy pregnancy, childbirth, and family formation, and help families achieve economic self-sufficiency. SB 24 also moves more support services to the purview of the Texas Health & Human Services Commission to allow for better coordination between services. I know the reformed Texas Pregnancy and Parenting Support Network will provide key resources and help countless new mothers and families well into the future.”

**On Tuesday**, in addition to giving final approval to SB 921, the Senate passed:

- **SB 15** by Mayes Middleton (R-Wallisville) would require a student of a public institution of higher education who competes in **intercollegiate athletic competitions** to do so based on the student’s **biological sex**. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed to Third Reading by a vote of 19 to 8 on March 28<sup>th</sup>. It received final approval on March 29<sup>th</sup> by a vote of 19 to 10.*
- **SB 22** by Drew Springer (R-Muenster) would establish a grant program to provide **financial assistance to sheriff’s departments** and district and county attorney’s offices in **rural areas**. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed by a vote of 30 to 0.*
- **SB 63** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would require the Health & Human Services Commission and Texas Veterans Commission to jointly produce an instruction guide for caregivers of **veterans** who have **mental health disorders**. *It passed by a vote of 30 to 0.*
- **SB 65** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would **exclude** the furnishing of an **academic transcript** from the **sales tax** on information services. *It passed by a vote of 30 to 0.*
- **SB 162** by Charles Perry (R-Lubbock) would require inclusion of the **biological sex** on a **birth certificate**. *It passed to third reading by a vote of 19 to 11 on March 28<sup>th</sup>. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, it was finally passed by a vote of 19 to 12.*
- **SB 221** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would prohibit a petition requesting a ballot proposition from containing **misleading ballot language**. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed by a vote of 22 to 8.*
- **SB 467** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would increase the criminal penalty to a Third Degree felony for the offense of criminal mischief

involving **impairment of a motor fuel pump**. *It passed by a vote of 30 to 0.*

- **SB 493** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would provide that a veteran of the armed forces who received a less than honorable discharge due to the individual's **refusal to receive a vaccination against COVID-19** would be considered to have received an **honorable discharge**. *It passed by a vote of 28 to 2.*
- **SB 1080** by Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) would allow **Lost Pines Groundwater Conservation District** to establish a mitigation program. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed by a vote of 30 to 0.*
- **SB 1089** by Tan Parker (R-Flower Mound) would repeal Sections 2.56 and 124.003(e) of the Election Code which allows a separate ballot listing for **unopposed candidates** and declares them elected. *It passed by a vote of 29 to 1.*
- **SB 1104** by Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury) would provide that during a **declared state of disaster**, only the legislature has the authority to restrict the operation of businesses by category or region; and would require the governor to convene the legislature in special session to respond to a declared state of disaster. *It passed by a vote of 30 to 0.*
- **SB 1151** by John Whitmire (D-Houston) would require **criminal defendants** to post a minimum of 10 percent of their bond in order to be released from jail. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed by a vote of 27 to 3.*
- **SB 1308** by Kelly Hancock (R-North Richland Hills) would make it an offense for a person to intentionally or knowingly operate an **unmanned aircraft** over an **airport or military installation** less than 400 feet above ground level or close enough to allow interference with the operations or cause a disturbance to the airport or military installation. *It passed by a vote of 30 to 0.*
- **SJR 58** by Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury) would propose a constitutional amendment requiring the governor to convene a **special session** of the legislature to renew a **disaster declaration**. *It passed by a vote of 30 to 0.*

**About SB 15, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick** said, "In athletic competitions across America, statistics show the reality that men can run and swim faster, throw farther and jump higher than women. This is common knowledge. To pretend otherwise denies all women athletes the right to compete on a level playing field. Women have been fighting for equality in sports for decades and have achieved massive success as athletes. Allowing men to play women's college sports, in denial of basic common sense, deprives them of the right to be the best in their sport. The woke left's continual push to have men play women's sports is an insult to all women athletes across Texas. Last session, we banned boys from playing girls sports in Texas K-12 sports, and now, the Texas Senate has taken yet another principled stand for the truth and passed SB 15 to prohibit men from participating in women's college sports in Texas."

**About SB 22, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick** said, “The Biden Administration’s failure to perform their constitutional duty to secure the southern border means that every county sheriff and prosecutor in Texas is a border sheriff or border prosecutor in addition to their normal duties to protect and serve their citizens. In many counties, elected sheriffs and their deputies are covering thousands of square miles of territory with little or no backup. As I traveled through rural Texas last year, I was shocked to learn how little some of our elected sheriffs and their deputies were earning. There are elected sheriffs in Texas earning just over \$30,000 per year and their deputies earning less than that. It is difficult to find men and women to take these dangerous jobs at these pay levels. That is why I named SB 22 a priority this session. For the first time in Texas history, the state is assisting in funding law enforcement in rural counties. SB 22 establishes the Rural Sheriff’s Office Salary Assistance Grant Program and the Rural Prosecutor’s Office Salary Assistance Grant Program. These programs are available to sheriff’s and prosecutor’s offices located in the 236 Texas counties with a population of less than 300,000. SB 22 provides \$350 million to help increase sheriff, deputy, jailer, and prosecutor pay, hire their backups, and purchase much-needed vehicles, firearms, and safety equipment. In Texas, we believe in the rule of law. By passing SB 22 today, the Texas Senate has reiterated its commitment to supporting the brave men and women of law enforcement.”

**About SB 221, Senator Paul Bettencourt** (R-Houston) said, “In 2021, the Texas Supreme Court reprimanded the City of Austin for ‘deceitful’ ballot language on a police staffing ordinance. Other examples of this problem include the City of San Marcos suing petition organizers and other cities where they refused to count petitions. I refiled SB 221 after numerous voters and municipalities encountered problems facing various ballot initiatives and charter challenges between 2017 and 2021. In 2017, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick assigned the Senate Intergovernmental Relations Committee to examine the petition and voter referendum processes and to determine if safeguards were necessary. Testimony from this committee outlined that the city of Houston was reprimanded three times by the Texas Supreme Court over their inability to either draft proper ballot language, or follow proper procedures when responding to a petition process.” SB 221 would do the following:

- Require clear ballot language that accurately defines the proposition being placed before voters.
- Require the publishing of the language of charter amendments prior to being placed on a ballot and create statutory petition requirements that are easily understood by voters.
- Remove restrictions on who can collect signatures and prohibit exclusion of petitions based on illegibility and create a standard form for use by residents for referendum or recall petitions.
- Provide a cost-effective option for citizens to question proposed charter amendment language via the Texas Secretary of State so they do not have to pursue costly litigation over ballot language.

- When judicial remedies are required, SB 221 would allow for a "rocket docket" in state district court for expedited review upon filing of a mandamus petition, and allows a court to rewrite ballot language if the court deems the language inaccurate.
- Prohibit free legal services by entities with lucrative city contracts and ensure that residents who prevail in mandamus actions have access to legal fees from the municipality.
- Provide a "bad actor" provision by removing home-rule municipalities' authority to write their own ballot language for a period of four years if they have been found in the past to continuously act in bad faith.

**On Wednesday**, in addition to giving final approval to SB 15 and SB 162, the Senate passed:

- **SB 10** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would **increase the monthly annuity for Teacher Retirement System members** of four percent if the annuitant retired before September 1, 2013 and two percent if the annuitant retired between September 1, 2013 and January 1, 2022; and would provide a one-time \$7,500 payment to members age 75 or older. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed by a vote of 31 to 0.*
- **SB 14** by Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) would prohibit medical professionals from providing **gender transitioning medical interventions to a child** under 18; require the license of a physician to be revoked for providing prohibited gender transitioning medical interventions; and would prohibit the use of public funds to pay for gender transitioning medical interventions on children. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed to Third Reading by a vote of 19 to 12.*
- **SB 190** by Borris Miles (D-Houston) would increase the penalty for signs with **commercial advertising** placed on a public road. *It passed by a vote of 24 to 7.*
- **SB 371** by Sarah Eckhardt (D-Austin) would require students to complete one year of ROTC training for each year that a student is enrolled in a degree or certificate program (up to four years) to qualify for the **Texas Armed Services Scholarship Program**. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed by a vote of 31 to 0.*
- **SB 505** by Robert Nichols (R-Jacksonville) would require an **additional registration or renewal fee for electric vehicles** of \$400 for the registration of a new electric vehicle; or \$200 for the registration or renewal of an annual inspection. *It passed by a vote of 31 to 0.*
- **SB 747** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would provide that **if a run-off candidate withdraws** from the election before 5:00 p.m. of the 21<sup>st</sup> day after the state canvass, the candidate who received the third highest number of votes in the primary election is entitled to a place on the runoff ballot. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed by a vote of 25 to 6.*

- **SB 922** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would give Texas Parks & Wildlife Department **peace officers** the same legislative leave as state troopers. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed by a vote of 31 to 0.*
- **SB 936** by Kelly Hancock (R-North Richland Hills) would expand the prohibition on discriminating based on **labor agreements** for **public work contracts** to include local governmental money, financial assistance, money from ratepayers, or money from user fees. *It passed to Third Reading by a vote of 19 to 12 on March 29<sup>th</sup>, and received final approval by the same vote on March 30<sup>th</sup>.*
- **SB 1001** by Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown) would authorize the Texas Department of Transportation to contract to perform the department's duties related to **electric vehicle supply equipment**, including inspections. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed by a vote of 29 to 2.*
- **SB 1318** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would enable counties to integrate their **jail records management systems** and case management systems with the Office of Court Administration's public safety report system; and would create an offense for **violating a condition of bond** which would be punishable at various penalty levels or if the person violated the condition of bond by possessing a firearm. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed by a vote of 30 to 1.*
- **SB 1602** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would provide that venue for an action involving **copyright by a social media platform** shall be brought and maintained in Texas courts and that Texas law applies. *It passed by a vote of 30 to 1.*

**About SB 10, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick** said, "Other than a parent, no person is more important to the development of a child than an educator. As I traveled the state last year, I spoke with retired educators about the financial hardships they were facing, and I promised them that the Senate was committed to helping them out. I am very pleased that we delivered on that promise. Today, I could not be more proud that the entire Texas Senate joint authored SB 10, which will deliver a cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for all eligible retired educators and a supplemental check of \$7,500 for the approximately 186,000 retired educators aged 75 and older. Educators who retired before January 1, 2022, and less than 10 years ago will receive a 2 percent COLA. Educators who retired 10 years ago or more will receive a 4 percent COLA. SB 10 will not require any additional contributions from current educators or school districts. The state will fund the whole program using money from our budget surplus. Texas retired educators have given so much for our students and for the future of Texas. It is only right that the state help give back to them. I thank Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance, Senator Joan Huffman, and the other 30 Senators for their hard work and commitment in behalf of our retired educators."

**On Thursday**, the Senate gave final approval to SB 936 and passed:

- **SB 25** by Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) would allow part-time nursing faculty to be eligible for the **Nurse Faculty Loan Repayment Program**;



would extend the **Nursing Innovation Grant Program** until 2027 and remove the matching fund requirement. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed by a vote of 31 to 0.*

- **SB 29** by Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury) would prohibit **governmental entities** from implementing or enforcing a **vaccine mandate**, mask requirement; and would **prohibit the closure of a school or a private business** to prevent the spread of COVID-19. *It passed to Third Reading by a vote of 20 to 11.*
- **SB 796** by Mayes Middleton (R-Wallisville) would require a **surplus lines insurance contract** that contains an arbitration agreement to provide that the arbitration will be conducted in this state and governed by the laws of this state. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 31 to 0.*
- **SB 895** by Nathan Johnson (D-Dallas) would be the **Texas Money Services Modernization Act** and would authorize the Texas Department of Banking to protect the interests of purchasers of money services and the public, preserve and protect the safety and soundness of money services businesses, and protect against drug trafficking, terrorist funding, and money laundering, structuring, or related financial crime. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed by a vote of 30 to 1.*
- **SB 1045** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would **establish the 15<sup>th</sup> Court of Appeals** district based in Austin with jurisdiction over matters brought by or against the state or a state agency. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed by a vote of 19 to 12.*

**Total number of bills reported out of Senate Committees this week: 99**

**Total number of bills passed by the Senate this week: 35**

**Total number of bills passed by the Senate this session: 79**

**Next Week:** The Senate recessed until 9:00 a.m. on Monday, April 3, 2023 for its first Local & Uncontested Calendar. It will then adjourn until 2:00 p.m. on Monday, April 3, 2023.

## **HOUSE:**

The House was in session Monday through Thursday this week.

**On Tuesday**, the House gave preliminary approval to their first bills on the session:

- **HB 300** by Donna Howard (D-Austin) would exempt **diapers for children and adults, baby wipes, baby bottles and feminine hygiene products** from the sales tax. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed to Third Reading on a voice vote. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, it received final approval by a vote of 145 to 2.*
- **HB 446** by Tom Craddick (R-Midland) would change all statutory references from mentally retarded to **intellectual disability**. *One floor*

*amendment was adopted and it passed to Third Reading on a voice vote. It received final approval on March 29<sup>th</sup> by a vote of 146 to 0.*

- **HB 590** by Ernest Bailes (R-Shepherd) would prohibit a person from labeling, selling or keeping, offering, or exposing for a sale a product identified on its label as “**Texas honey**” unless the product consists exclusively of honey produced from apiaries in Texas. *It passed to Third Reading on a voice vote. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, it passed by a vote of 130 to 16.*
- **HB 608** by Matt Shaheen (R-Plano) would authorize counties to allow the **sale of fireworks** during the five days preceding the Hindu religious **holiday of Diwali**. *It passed to Third Reading on a voice vote. On March 29<sup>th</sup>, it passed by a vote of 139 to 8.*

**About HB 300, Representative Donna Howard** (D-Austin) said, “Today the Texas House, on a bipartisan basis, passed HB 300, also known as the Tax FREE (Family Relief for Everyday Essentials) Act. I would provide Texans with sales tax relief at every stage of life. It is a bill that is years in the making and I am grateful to Speaker Phelan for making it a priority this session. I am proud to champion this effort along with other members of the House and look forward to working with my Senate counterparts to get this bill to Governor Abbott’s desk.”

**On Wednesday**, the House gave final approval to the Third-Reading bills and gave preliminary approval to:

- **HB 28** by Shelby Slawson (R-Stephenville) would be the Todd-Hogland Act, and would enhance the penalty for **assault with a deadly weapon** during the commission of an assault that **causes a traumatic brain or spine injury** that results in a persistent vegetative state or irreversible paralysis. *It passed to Third reading on a voice vote. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, it passed by a vote of 145 to 1.*
- **HB 584** by Giovanni Capriglione (R-Keller) would require the Department of Information Resources to enter into an agreement with a public junior college district to offer a program leading to a **state information technology credential** to address shortages in the state information resources workforce. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed to Third Reading on a voice vote. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, it passed by a vote of 143 to 0.*
- **HB 624** by Cody Harris (R-Palestine) would authorize **emergency medical transport** by fire fighters. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed to Third Reading on a voice vote. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, it passed by a vote of 147 to 0.*
- **HB 727** by Toni Rose (D-Dallas) would exempt persons with **severe mental illness** from the death penalty. *It passed to Third Reading by a vote of 84 to 61. On March 30<sup>th</sup>, it was postponed to Wednesday, April 5, 2023.*

**On Thursday**, the House gave final approval to HB 28, HB 584, and HB 624.

**Total number of bills reported out of House Committees this week: 84**

**Total number of bills passed by the House this week:** 7  
**Total number of bills passed by the House this session:** 7

**Next Week:** The House adjourned until 2:00 p.m. on Monday April 3, 2023. HB 1 (the appropriations bill) and SB 30 (supplemental appropriations) will be on the House calendar on Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>. Proposed floor amendments to HB 5 and SB 30 must be filed with the Chief Clerk by 9:00 a.m. on Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>. The Chief Clerk's office will be open on Saturday and Sunday to receive proposed amendments.

## **BUDGET:**

### **Senate Finance Committee:**

**On Monday**, the Senate Finance Committee considered recommendations from the workgroups.

**On Wednesday**, the Senate Finance Committee took up:

**SB 1246** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would allow the comptroller to invest funds generated by a state agency's **investment in repurchase agreements**. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

**SB 1332** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would establish the **Historic Infrastructure Sustainability Trust Fund** to maintain, preserve, rehabilitate, and restore historic sites throughout the state. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

**SB 1333** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would establish the **Texas State Buildings Preservation Endowment Fund** to maintain, preserve, rehabilitate and restore the buildings and grounds over which the State Preservation Board has authority. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

**SB 1509** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would repeal Section 814.109 of the Government Code which allows a **state employee to retire** without separating from a position in that class if the member is at least 60 years old and has accrued enough service credit in the class to receive the maximum annuity. *It was reported favorably and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1831** by Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-McAllen) would grant exclusive authority of the **Employees Retirement System** over the **purchases of goods and services** related to the operations of its home office facilities unless the purchases are made with General Revenue money. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

### **Reported from Committee:**

**SB 767** by Tan Parker (R-Flower Mound) would require **municipalities** with a **proposed budget** that includes a new or increased fee to provide a notice on the cover page saying, "This budget includes estimated revenue from the following new or increased fees: (and include a description of the fee). *It was reported favorably as substituted from the Senate Local Government Committee and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1509** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would repeal Section 814.109 of the Government Code which allows a **state employee to retire** without separating

from a position in that class if the member is at least 60 years old and has accrued enough service credit in the class to receive the maximum annuity. *It was reported favorably from the Senate Finance Committee and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**Rainy Day Fund Expected to Hit Cap** – On March 29<sup>th</sup>, Comptroller Glenn Hegar released the March issue of Fiscal Notes where the comptroller’s office looked at the Rainy Day Fund, which is projected to surpass \$27 billion by fiscal 2025, a drastic uptick from less than \$11 billion at the close of fiscal 2022. This means that the fund could reach the upper limit of its constitutionally mandated balance for the first time in its nearly 35-year history. The extraordinary economic factors that have given the 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature an unprecedented amount of money for general-purpose spending also are generating record high revenues for Texas’ Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF), the state savings account that’s commonly called the Rainy Day Fund. Comptroller Hegar said, “The revenue increases that we have seen truly have been historical and unprecedented. We have never experienced anything like this in the past, and I don’t think we’ll witness anything like this in the future. Although the ESF has a historically high balance, this money belongs to the people of Texas, and we must always be prepared to use those funds to address their needs. I am glad to see that lawmakers are giving careful thought to how this tremendous asset can be best put to work for Texans. This issue of Fiscal Notes also looks at the important mile markers the state Broadband Development Office (BDO) has reached on the road to connecting every Texan to high-speed internet, whether it be the release of the inaugural statewide broadband plan last year or the broadband development map early this year. Since its inception, the BDO has been busy corralling dollars from various state and federal funding sources, so it can award grants, low-interest loans and other financial incentives that will help fulfill broadband planning goals.”

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#### **ELECTIONS:**

**Senate State Affairs Committee** – On Monday, the Senate State Affairs Committee took up:

**SB 397** by Bob Hall (R-Edgewood) would require the presiding election judge to **print the tape** to show the number of votes cast for each candidate or ballot measure for **each voting machine** on the last day of early voting. *It was left pending.*

**SB 477** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would require (instead of allow) an **election officer** to accept a **person with a mobility problem** to vote before accepting others to vote at the polling place. *It was left pending.*

**SB 924** by Drew Springer (R-Muenster) would allow counties with a population between 150,000 and 1.2 million to consolidate precincts (of up to 10,000 active voters) if the polling place will adequately serve the voters of the consolidated precinct. *It was left pending.*

**SB 990** by Bob Hall (R-Edgewood) would eliminate the **county-wide polling** place program. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1039** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would establish a procedure for the county clerk to investigate **complaints of voting irregularities** with appeals going to the secretary of state. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1054** by Robert Nichols (R-Jacksonville) would require a trial in the **contest of an election on a proposed constitutional amendment** to be between 45 and 180 days after the date of the contested election, although it could be earlier than 45 days at the request of the contestant. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1661** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would prohibit a central counting station from purchasing or using a **ballot scanner** unless the scanner is only capable of using a storage device that can only be used once. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1705** by Mayes Middleton (R-Wallisville) would require **third-party candidates** for office to participate in a primary election to decide their party's nominees. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1807** by Drew Springer (R-Muenster) would establish civil penalties for **election** or elected **officials** who fail to **conduct** their **elections** according to the Texas Election Code after being advised by the Secretary of State on how to correct the violation. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1907** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would increase the criminal penalty for an election judge to knowingly fail to deliver **precinct election records** on time. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1911** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would increase the penalty for the intentional **failure to deliver election supplies timely**, intentionally obstructing the distribution of election supplies, and unlawfully revealing how a candidate or measure is doing or if a voter has or has not voted in an election. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1938** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would extend the ability of the Secretary of State to withhold funds to a voter registrar that fails to timely perform a duty regarding the approval, change, or **cancellation of a voter registration**. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1950** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would prohibit a county clerk, elections administrator, early voting clerk, or early voting ballot board from suspending the requirements of the **mail ballot review**. *It was left pending.*

**House Defense & Veterans' Affairs Committee** – On Thursday, the House Defense & Veterans' Affairs Committee took up:

**HB 2979** by Josey Garcia (D-San Antonio) would require would require **voter registration certificates** to include an indication that a **voter is a veteran** if the voter served in active military service. *It was left pending.*

**House Elections Committee** – On Thursday, the House Elections Committee took up:

**HB 153** by Valoree Swanson (R-Spring) would allow voters the opportunity to select "**I choose not to vote in this race**" instead of voting for the candidates

appearing on the ballot or the list of write-in candidates for each race. *It was left pending.*

**HB 371** by John Bucy (D-Austin) would set the date of **run-off elections** on the sixth Saturday after the date of the main election. *It was left pending.*

**HB 703** by Jessica Gonzalez (D-Dallas) would allow **election judges** to be compensated for two (instead of one) hour of work before the polls open. *It was left pending.*

**HB 1217** by Valoree Swanson (R-Spring) would remove the population threshold (a county with a population of 55,000 or more) to provisions related to **hours for early voting**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 1632** by Dennis Paul (R-Webster) would require the secretary of state to provide a **standardized training program** in election law and procedure for presiding or alternate **election judges**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2020** by Tom Oliverson (R-Cypress) would authorize the **secretary of state to suspend the employment of a county elections administrator** if the secretary has received an administrative election complaint and has good cause to believe that a recurring pattern of problems in the county served by the administrator, including for malfunction of voting system equipment, unfair distribution of election supplies, errors in tabulation, delays in reporting returns, and discovery of voted ballots after the polls close. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3046** by Kyle Kacal (R-College Station) would allow the authority responsible for preparing ballots to omit the **name of a deceased candidate** from the ballot. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3611** by Briscoe Cain (R-Deer Park) would prohibit a **majority vote** from being determined using a preferential voting system to reassign votes. *It was left pending.*

**HB 4780** by Reggie Smith (R-Sherman) would allow a voter to provide a signature sheet in lieu of completing the carrier envelope certificate when **submitting a mail ballot**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 5053** by Mano DeAyala (R-Houston) would allow **election offenses** classified as a felony to be prosecuted in a judicial district adjoining the judicial district in which the offense occurred; a misdemeanor offense could be prosecuted in a county adjoining the county in which the offense occurred. *It was left pending.*

**Senate State Affairs Committee** – On Thursday, the Senate State Affairs Committee took up:

**SB 220** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would require the secretary of state to appoint a **state election marshal**, who would appoint election marshals for Department of Public Safety regions to enforce election laws. *It was left pending.*

**SB 260** by Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) would require voter registrars to deliver a voter a written confirmation notice requesting **confirmation of the voter's current address** if the voter's residence address is a commercial post office box or similar location that does not correspond to a residence. *It was left pending.*

**SB 823** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would authorize the **secretary of state to suspend the employment of a county elections administrator** if the

secretary has received an administrative election complaint and has good cause to believe that a recurring pattern of problems in the county served by the administrator, including malfunction of voting system equipment, unfair distribution of election supplies, errors in tabulation, delays in reporting returns, and discovery of voted ballots after the polls close. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1070** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would require the **interstate voter registration crosscheck program** to identify voters who have been convicted of a felony or who are registered to vote in more than one state; and would allow the secretary of state to contract with a provider of a private sector data system to crosscheck voters whose address has changed; who are registered to vote in more than one state; who are deceased; or who are not eligible to vote for another reason, including a felony conviction. *It was voted out favorably.*

**SB 1599** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would require election officers to maintain a **register of ballots to be voted by mail** returned at a polling place including the name of each voter who returns a mail ballot and the ballot's number; and would establish a procedure for **correcting a defect in a mail ballot** and for tracking mail ballots. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1600** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would require the Secretary of State to prescribe rules that require a person to submit **proof of citizenship** to a voter registrar to determine **voter eligibility**. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1750** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would require counties with a population over 1 million (Bexar, Collin, Dallas, Harris, Tarrant, and Travis Counties) to have their **elections administered** by the **county clerk**. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1846** by Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) would prohibit a manufacturer of **voting systems** from entering into a contract for software development services with an entity or individual located in China, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, or Russia. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1933** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would allow the Secretary of State (SOS) to conduct an **election audit** in one randomly selected small county if the SOS completes the required audits of two small counties by the end of the two-year election cycle. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1993** by Mayes Middleton (R-Wallisville) would require the Secretary of State to call a new election in a county if two percent or more polling locations in a county of 1 million or more (Bexar, Collin, Dallas, Harris, Tarrant, and Travis Counties) are denied paper ballots for more than one hour. *It was left pending.*

**SB 2433** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would authorize the employment of the **Harris County Elections Administrator** to be **suspended**, with or without pay, or terminated for good and sufficient cause on the three-fifths vote, rather than four-fifths vote of the county election commission and approval of that action by a majority vote of the commissioners court. *It was left pending.*

**SB 2451** by Jose Menendez (D-San Antonio) would require the Secretary of State to prescribe instructions to be printed on **mail ballot materials** for marking the ballot envelope correctly. *It was left pending.*

**SB 2532** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would **double the number of signatures** a candidate must collect as a percentage of the total vote received

by all candidates for governor in the previous election; and would **double the filing fee** for a place on the ballot (\$2,500 instead of \$1,250 for state senator; and \$1,500 instead of \$750 for state representatives). *It was left pending.*

**Reported from Committee:**

**SB 1910** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would clarify that **election information** related to a general, primary, or special election is not exempt from the **Texas Public Information Act**. *It was reported favorably from the Senate State Affairs Committee.*

**Next Week:**

**Tuesday, April 4, 2023 – House Elections Committee** will meet at 10:30 a.m. in Room 120 of the John H. Reagan State Office Building to take up:

**HB 246** by Valoree Swanson (R-Spring) would require the secretary of state to establish a pilot program requiring a county to use a **video recording** device to record **ballot counting activity** in at least 20 percent of precincts in the county.

**HB 1980** by Mark Dorazio (R-San Antonio) would require the procedures adopted by the Texas Department of Transportation for the issuance of a **personal identification certificate** to a person who surrenders the person's driver's license to require that the person issued a personal identification certificate be provided a voter registration form to update the person's voter registration information to include the identification number of the newly-issued certificate.

**HB 3159** by Jeff Leach (R-Allen) would allow a voter with a disability to cast a ballot using an **accessible absentee mail system**.

**HB 3372** by Kronda Thimesch (R-Lewisville) would require a **political candidate** or officeholder who accepts a political **contribution made using a credit card** to report the full amount as a political contribution including any amount deducted from the contribution by the credit card issuer as a processing fee.

**HEALTH:**

**HB 2059** by Four Price (R-Amarillo) would provide grants to local mental health authorities or local behavioral health authorities to cover **training costs** related to the risk factors and **warning signs for various mental illnesses** and the skills, resources, and knowledge to assess a situation and develop and implement an appropriate intervention to help an individual experiencing a mental health crisis obtain appropriate professional care for employees of institutions of higher education; school districts, charters, and private schools; child-care facilities; first responders; military service members and veterans; and judges. *It was left pending.*

**HIGHER EDUCATION:**

**House Higher Education Committee** – On Monday, the House Higher Education Committee took up:

**HB 683** by Sheryl Cole (D-Austin) would require institutions of higher education to give a tuition and fee exemption for students enrolled in an **emergency**



**medical services curriculum** who is employed as a paramedic by a political subdivision. *It was voted out favorably.*

**HB 989** by Donna Howard (D-Austin) would require the Department of State Health Services to develop a state plan for preventing and treating **human papillomavirus** and the health problems caused by the infection among students enrolled at **institutions of higher education**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 1595** and **HJR 3** by Greg Bonnen (R-Friendswood) would propose a constitutional amendment renaming the National Research University Fund as the **Texas University Fund** to fund public institutions of higher education to achieve national prominence as major research universities. *They were left pending.*

**HB 1604** by Mary Gonzalez (D-Clint) would require the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to report on **enrollment and success** in higher education for **students with disabilities**. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

**HB 1912** by Angie Chen Button (R-Richardson) would increase the student union and buildings fee at the **University of Texas at Dallas** from \$60 per semester to \$100 per semester. *It was voted out favorably.*

**HB 2132** by Caroline Harris (R-Round Rock) would establish a campus of the **Texas State Technical College System** in Williamson County. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2804** by John Kuempel (R-Seguin) would prohibit the use of an institution's facility, uniform, registered trademark, copyright-protected product, or official logo, mark, or other indicia in connection with a contract for the **use of a student athlete's name, image, or likeness**, unless the student athlete obtains the institution's express permission and the institution is compensated for the use in a manner consistent with market rates. *It was left pending.*

**HB 4434** by John Kuempel (R-Seguin) would require (instead of allow) a student to graduate with a **Texas First high school diploma**. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

**HB 4437** by John Kuempel (R-Seguin) would clarify that **information** regarding current, former, or prospective applicant or student of an institution of higher education that is obtained, received, or **held by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board** to be considered **confidential** and excepted from disclosure as an educational record. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

**Senate Health & Human Services Committee** – On Wednesday, the Senate Health & Human Services Committee took up:

**SB 867** by Royce West (D-Dallas) would allow **opioid antagonists** to be provided to **institutions of higher education**. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1429** by Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-McAllen) would prohibit a standardized examination prepared by a private entity from being a graduation requirement for a **nursing education program**. *It was left pending.*

**Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education** – On Thursday, the Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education took up:

**SB 18** by Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) would **prohibit** institutions of higher education from **granting tenure** or any type of permanent employment after September 1, 2023. *It was left pending.*

**SB 200** by Sarah Eckhardt (D-Austin) would allow institutions of higher education considering **students applying for an academic fresh start** to consider academic course credits or grades earned by the applicant five (instead of 10) or more years before the starting date the student seeks to enroll; and if the institution enrolls the applicant, the institution must award the applicant academic credit for a number of semester credit hours equal to the lesser of the number of semester credit hours or the equivalent earned by the applicant during the previous five-year period or six semester credit hours. *It was left pending.*

**SB 336** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would expand the **compliance programs** at public institutions of higher education to include agents, contractors, subcontractors, or other persona acting on behalf of an institution of higher education. *It was left pending.*

**SB 526** by Royce West (D-Dallas) would require prior approval by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for an institution of higher education to offer a **degree or certificate program to persons who are incarcerated** or subject to involuntary civil commitment. *It was left pending.*

**SB 532** by Royce West (D-Dallas) would reduce the **mental health** professional student loan **repayment assistance program** to three years (instead of five years). *It was left pending.*

**SB 646** by Robert Nichols (R-Jacksonville) would authorize formula funding for distance education provided by **Lamar State College–Orange** students who reside in another state that is contiguous to the county in which the college is located. *It was left pending.*

**SB 2294** by Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) would require (instead of allow) a student to graduate with a **Texas First high school diploma**. *It was left pending.*

**SJR 81** by Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury) would propose a constitutional amendment establishing the **Technical Institution Infrastructure Fund** to provide funding for capital projects and equipment purchases related to career and technical education programs offered by the **Texas State Technical College System**. *It was left pending.*

#### **Reported From Committee:**

**SB 459** by Angela Paxton (R-McKinney) would require institutions of higher education that provide **early registration** for courses or programs for any group of students, to provide early registration to **parenting students**. *It was reported favorably from the Senate Education Committee and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1563** by Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) would repeal Section 96.66(h) of the Education Code which prohibits the **Sam Houston State University College of Osteopathic Medicine** from receiving formula funding. *It was reported favorably from the Senate Education Committee.*

**Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board** – On March 27<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott reappointed Javaid Anwar to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board for a term set to expire on August 31, 2027. The board provides leadership and coordination for the Texas higher education system.

**Javaid Anwar** of Midland is owner and president of Midland Energy, Inc., Petroplex Energy, Inc., and Western T. Corporation. He is a lifetime member of the Society of Petroleum Engineers and member of the George W. Bush Childhood Home Board of Directors and Texas Lieutenant Governor's Energy Council. He has received the Golden Hammer Award from Midland Habitat for Humanity, Philanthropist of the Year Award from the Permian Basin Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, Businessman of the Year Award from the South Asian Chamber of Commerce in Houston, and humanitarian awards from the Pakistan Citizens Foundation and the Human Development Foundation. Anwar received a Bachelor of Science from the University of Wyoming.

**Texas State University System** – On March 28<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott appointed Russell Gordy and Tom Long and reappointed Earl C. “Duke” Austin Jr. to the Texas State University System Board of Regents for terms set to expire on February 1, 2029.

**Russell Gordy** of Houston is president of SG Interests, Gordy Oil, and RGGG Minerals. He is a trustee of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation and a former director of Rolling Plains Quail Foundation and NRP Resources. Previously, he served on the board of Houston Exploration Company from 1987-2001. Gordy received a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting from Sam Houston State University.

**Tom Long** of Frisco is co-CEO of Energy Transfer, previously serving as CFO from 2016-2020. He is a director of Energy Transfer LP and Texas Capital Bank and board chairman of USA Compression Partners LP. Long received a Bachelor of Business Administration in Accounting from Lamar University.

**Earl C. “Duke” Austin Jr.** of Houston is resident and chief executive officer of Quanta Services. He serves as governor on the Southwest Line Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association, a board member of Junior Achievement of Southeast Texas, and a member of the CEO Business Roundtable. Austin received a Bachelor of Science in Business Management and Accounting from Sam Houston State University.

***Next Week:***

**Monday, April 3, 2023 – House Higher Education Committee** will meet at 10:00 a.m. in E2.010 of the capitol extension to take up:

**HB 875** by Brian Harrison (R-Waxahachie) would allow **Texas State Technical College** to operate a campus in one or more locations in **Ellis County** (instead of the City of Red Oak).

**HB 1142** by Shawn Thierry (D-Houston) would add **students who are homeless** to the duties of the liaison officer to assist students who are or were in foster care.

**HB 1323** by James Talarico (D-Austin) would require the **outreach program for foster students** to receive free higher education tuition and fees to be provided to all residential child-care facilities, foster parents and caregivers and school districts, charters and private schools offering grades 9-12.

**HB 1474** by Ryan Guillen (R-Rio Grande City) would prohibit institutions of higher education from requiring a **pregnant or parenting student** to take a leave of absence or withdraw from the student's degree or certificate program; limit the student's studies; participate in an alternative program; change the student's major, degree, or certificate program; or refrain from joining or cease participating in any course, activity, or program at the institution.

**HB 2100** by Four Price (R-Amarillo) would make **mental health professionals** eligible for student loan repayment assistance.

**HB 2639** by Travis Clardy (R-Nacogdoches) would abolish Stephen F. Austin State University and require the **University of Texas System** to establish a **new university in Nacogdoches**.

**HB 2672** by Frederick Frazier (R-McKinney) would expand eligibility for student loan repayment assistance under the **math and science scholars loan repayment program** to include persons who agree to teach mathematics or science for a specified period in any public school (not just schools that receive federal funding under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965).

**HB 3211** by Lynn Stucky (R-Sanger) would add a campus of the **Texas State Technical College System** in Denton County.

**HB 3287** by Charles "Doc" Anderson (R-Waco) would change location requirements for campuses of **Texas State Technical College System** from cities to counties (Harlingen becomes Cameron County; Sweetwater becomes Nolan County; Abilene becomes Taylor County; Brownwood becomes Brown County; Breckenridge becomes Stephens County; Marshall becomes Harrison County; Waco becomes McLennan County; and Red Oak becomes Ellis County).

**HB 4005** by John Raney (R-Bryan) would establish the **Texas Competency-Based Education Grant Program** to provide financial assistance to enable eligible students to enroll in competency-based baccalaureate degree programs.

**HB 4997** by John Kuempel (R-Seguin) would add a campus or campuses in Comal and Guadalupe Counties to the **Texas State Technical College System**.

#### **PUBLIC EDUCATION:**

**House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety** – On Monday, the House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety took up:

**HB 3** by Dustin Burrows (R-Lubbock) is an omnibus **school safety** bill. *It was left pending.*

**HB 13** by Ken King (D-Canadian) would make several requirements related to **school safety**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 1905** by James Talarico (D-Austin) would require school districts to make **school safety training courses** to employees of **child-care facilities** and other organizations providing out-of-school-time care to children who reside in the district. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2269** by Harold Dutton (D-Houston) would authorize school districts to employ **security personnel** through a memorandum of understanding with a county or municipality that is the employing political subdivision of commissioned peace officers. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3623** by Cole Hefner (R-Mount Pleasant) would allow school districts and charters to enter into a memorandum of understanding between schools authorizing the **school marshals** of each school to provide services at an event at which both schools participate. *It was left pending.*

**HB 4406** and **HJR 170** by Ken King (R-Canadian) would propose a constitutional amendment creating the **State School Safety Fund** to provide financial support for projects that enhance the safety of schools. *They were left pending.*

**House Human Services Committee** – On Tuesday, the House Human Services Committee took up:

**HB 1238** by Gary VanDeaver (R-New Boston) would establish the **School Health and Related Services Program Advisory Council** to advise Texas Education Agency and the Health & Human Services Commission on administering the school health and related services program; and would require written parental consent for a student's personally identifiable information to be provided to a **school health and related services program**. *It was left pending.*

**House Public Education Committee** – On Tuesday, the House Public Education Committee took up:

**HB 681** by Keith Bell (R-Forney) would remove the sunset date on provisions allowing a **teacher certification** candidate to satisfy certification requirements through an internship that provides the candidate employment as a teacher for courses offered through a local remote learning program or the state virtual school network. It would also remove the sunset dates for **student remote learning options**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 1263** by Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston) would prohibit a local authority from adopting or enforcing an order that prohibits or precludes the designation of a **school crossing zone** or school crosswalk at a high school campus located in a municipality with a population of two million or more. *It was voted out favorably.*

**HB 1507** by Ken King (R-Canadian) would prohibit a school district or charter from organizing or hosting a program dedicated to celebrating or providing **special instruction regarding a sexual preference**; and would require the State Board of Educator Certification to impose sanctions against a district of school employee who organizes or hosts such a program including a fine of between \$500 and \$10,000 or termination or suspension of a teaching permit. *It was left pending.*

**HB 1959** by Candy Noble (R-Lucas) would authorize a **peace officer** to request a transfer of the officer's student to another school district or district campus. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2012** by Tom Olverson (R-Cypress) would require public schools and institutions of higher education to allow the **display of the national motto** "In God We Trust" in classrooms. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2209** by J.M. Lozano (R-Kingsville) would establish the **Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership (R-PEP) program** to incentivize and support multidistrict, cross-sector, rural college and career pathway partnerships that expand opportunities for underserved students to succeed in school and life while promoting economic development in rural areas. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2234** by Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston) would require the written notice to parents of **special education students** about **video cameras** activated in a self-contained classroom to be provided at least within the first ten days of activation of the video camera. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2890** by Charles Cunningham (R-Humble) would require a two-thirds vote of the membership of the State Board of Education to overrule the education commissioner's recommendation on **granting a charter**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2892** by Brad Buckley (R-Salado) would require school districts to transfer a student to another district or campus upon require of a **military parent** who is a member of the U.S. military or Texas National Guard. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3803** by Charles Cunningham (R-Humble) would authorize **parents to elect for a student to repeat** any **course or grade** the student was enrolled in during the previous school year unless the school or charter determines the student has met all of the requirements for graduation. *It was left pending.*

**HCR 90** by John Kuempel (R-Seguin) would designate April 6<sup>th</sup> as **Texas High School Football Coaches Day**. *It was left pending.*

**House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee** – On Tuesday, the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee took up:

**HB 2055** by Venton Jones (D-Dallas) would repeal the criminal offense of homosexual conduct and delete homosexual references in **sex education course materials**. *It was left pending.*

**House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee** – On Wednesday, the House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee took up:

**HB 2731** by J.M. Lozano (R-Kingsville) would authorize a member of the State Board of Education to request an **attorney general opinion**. *It was left pending.*

**House Land & Resource Management** – On Wednesday, the House Land & Resource Management Committee took up:

**HB 1707** by Stephanie Klick (R-Fort Worth) would require **political subdivisions** to consider an **open-enrollment charter school** a school district for purposes of zoning, project permitting, platting and replatting processes, business licensing, franchises, utility services, signage, subdivision regulation property development projects, posting bonds or securities, contract requirements, land development standards, tree and vegetation regulations, regulations of architectural features of a structure, construction of fences, landscaping, garbage disposal, noise levels, fees or other assessments, and construction of site development work; but clarifies that an open-enrollment charter school does not have the power of eminent domain. *It was left pending.*

**Senate Health & Human Services Committee** – On Wednesday, the Senate Health & Human Services Committee took up:

**SB 1966** by Carol Alvarado (D-Houston) would establish the **School-Based Health Care Grant Program** for health care organizations to implement, maintain and expand school-based health care initiatives for underserved students and to provide those students with preventative, primary, and behavioral health care. *It was left pending.*

**Senate Education Committee** – On Wednesday, the Senate Education Committee took up:

**SB 13** by Angela Paxton (R-McKinney) would make several changes related to **school library material**. *It was left pending.*

**SB 163** by Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) would remove the expiration date on provisions in the Education Code requiring **parental approval for human sexuality instruction**. *It was left pending.*

**SB 164** by Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) would require public **schools to display the founding documents** of the United States including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and Essays 10 and 57 of the Federalist Papers. *It was left pending.*

**SB 544** by Cesar Blanco (D-El Paso) would authorize a **teaching certificate** to be issued to applicants with at least two semesters' experience as instructors for the **Community College of the Air Force**. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1396** by Mayes Middleton (R-Wallisville) would establish a procedure for **Bible study and prayer in public schools**; would create a cause of action against an entity, attorney, or law firm that unsuccessfully challenges a school district's program; and would prohibit a state court from declaring or pronouncing the statute unconstitutional. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1861** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would implement the recommendations from the **Texas Commission on Virtual Education**. *It was left pending.*

**SB 2089** by Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) would require **instructional material** to present a **scientific theory in an objective educational manner** that clearly distinguishes the theory from fact and includes evidence for both the strengths and weaknesses of the theory; be free of gratuitous violence; present positive aspects of the United States and its heritage; present contrasting points of view regarding significant political or social movements in history in a balanced and factual manner; treat all groups fairly and avoid biases or stereotypes; and include information needed to develop mutual respect and understanding among all persons. *It was left pending.*

**SB 2482** by Jose Menendez (D-San Antonio) would require Texas Education Agency to review the implementation of **Holocaust Remembrance Week** at each school district and allow the agency to partner with the Texas Holocaust and Genocide Commission to assist school districts. *It was left pending.*

**SB 2565** by Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) would establish a **high-quality instructional materials** program. *It was left pending.*

**Reported from Committee:**

**HB 473** by Lacey Hull (R-Houston) would provide that before a threat assessment and safe and supportive school team may conduct a **threat assessment of a student**, the team must notify the parent of the student regarding the assessment and provide an opportunity for the parent to participate in the assessment and submit information to the team regarding the student. *It was reported favorably from the House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety.*

**HB 579** by DeWayne Burns (R-Cleburne) would allow parents or guardians of **students with significant cognitive disabilities** to request that the student be exempted from the administration of an alternative assessment instrument; and would require the student's admission, review and dismissal committee to determine if the student should be exempted. *It was reported favorably as substituted from the House Public Education Committee.*

**HB 890** by Keith Bell (R-Forney) would require the process through which a **school district** conducts **hearing of complaints** by personnel, students and parents to include an initial administrative hearing and an opportunity to appeal the administrative decision; and unless the parties agree, provide for a resolution of the complaint within 120 calendar days. *It was reported favorably as substituted from the House Public Education Committee.*

**HB 920** by Stephanie Klick (R-Fort Worth) would require the commissioner of state health services to establish an advisory committee to examine and review the administration by school districts, charters, and institutions of higher education of **medication for respiratory distress**. Based on recommendations from the advisory committee, it would allow trained personnel to administer medication to a student experiencing respiratory distress. *It was reported favorably from the House Public Education Committee.*

**HB 1002** by Four Price (R-Amarillo) would allow chiropractors and physical therapists to the list of persons that a school district or charter can include on a **public school concussion oversight team**. *It was reported favorably from the House Public Education Committee and recommended for the Local & Consent Calendar.*

**HB 1067** by Gary VanDeaver (R-New Boston) would provide that if the board of trustees of an affected school district fails to adopt a resolution approving or disapproving a **petition requesting the detachment and annexation of territory** within 45 days of receiving the petition, the petition is considered to be disapproved by the board of trustees. *It was reported favorably from the House Public Education Committee.*

**HB 1157** by J.M. Lozano (R-Kingsville) would require **excused absences** for a student to attend an appointment with a **mental health professional**. *It was reported favorably from the House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety and recommended for the Local & Consent Calendar.*

**HB 1358** by Sam Harless (R-Spring) would require **campus improvement plans** to include goals and methods for violence and **bullying prevention** and for **dropout deterrence**. *It was reported favorably from the House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety and recommended for the Local & Consent Calendar.*



**HB 1416** by Keith Bell (R-Forney) would eliminate the requirement that school districts establish an accelerated learning committee; would allow **accelerated instruction** for students that fail to perform satisfactorily on an assessment instrument in math or reading; would allow parents to elect or reduce a requirement for accelerated instruction; would allow automated or another augmented method for providing supplemental instruction in lieu of required individual or group instruction; and would waive the accelerated instruction requirement for students with a medical condition that prevents the student from attending school in an on-campus instructional setting. *It was reported favorably as substituted from the House Public Education Committee.*

**HB 1789** by Brad Buckley (R-Killeen) would exempt school **bus drivers** from nepotism prohibitions. *It was reported favorably from the House Public Education Committee.*

**HB 1955** by Brad Buckley (R-Killeen) would require students to establish **residency in a school district's** residency zone within 90 days (instead of 10 days) after the date of a military order. *It was reported favorably from the House Public Education Committee.*

**SB 8** by Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) would establish a **parental bill of rights** and school responsibilities regarding instructional materials; and would establish an **education savings account program**. *It was reported favorably as substituted from the Senate Education Committee.*

**SB 1008** by Pete Flores (R-Pleasanton) would require students to establish **residency in a school district's** residency zone within 90 days (instead of 10 days) after the date of a military order. *It was reported favorably from the Senate Education Committee and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1575** by Mayes Middleton (R-Wallisville) would authorize a member of the State Board of Education to request an **attorney general opinion**. *It was reported favorably from the Senate State Affairs Committee.*

**State Board for Educator Certification** – On March 29<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott reappointed Alma D. Rodríguez Ed.D. to the State Board for Educator Certification for a term set to expire on February 1, 2029. She serves as the Dean of a College of Education representative, which is a non-voting position and not subject to Senate confirmation. The board develops certification and continuing education requirements and standards of conduct for public school teachers.

**Alma D. Rodríguez Ed.D.** of Brownsville is the dean of the College of Education and P-16 Integration and a professor at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley. Previously, she was a teacher and an assistant principal for Brownsville Independent School District. She is a member of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and the Texas Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. Rodríguez received a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and a Master of Education in English as a Second Language from the University of Texas at Brownsville and Texas Southmost College and a Doctor of Education in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Houston.

**Next Week:**

**Monday, April 3, 2023 – House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety** will meet at 2:30 p.m. in E2.026 of the capitol extension to take up:

**HB 185** by Mary Gonzalez (D-Clint) would include **chronically absent students** (students absent more than 10 percent of school days) as students at risk of dropping out of school; and would require the total number of chronically absent students disaggregated by race, ethnicity, and status as special education students, students identified as having dyslexia, educationally disadvantaged students, and emergent bilingual students to be reported to the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS).

**HB 773** by Alma Allen (D-Houston) would prohibit a school district or charter from **releasing a student to the student's parent** before the end of the instructional day and after the parent receives a school-initiated communication if release of the student is a disciplinary management technique or a reaction to the student's behavior that impedes the student's ability to learn but does not violate the student code of conduct or require disciplinary action – unless the student is suspended or expelled.

**HB 1927** by Lacey Hull (R-Houston) would require a peace officer who takes a minor into custody to use age-appropriate trauma-informed practices in responding to the situation; and would authorize a parent of a **child** who is being placed under an **emergency detention** to take custody of the child and to voluntarily seek treatment or services for the child from a provider of the person's choice.

**HB 2090** by Ray Lopez (D-San Antonio) would allow school districts and charters to offer students in grade 12 an **elective course on community safety**, firearm safety, and mental health.

**HB 2111** by Steve Allison (R-San Antonio) would authorize school districts to employ current or former licensed **federal law enforcement agents** who are authorized to carry a weapon while on duty as the school district's security personnel.

**HB 2126** by Vikki Goodwin (D-Austin) would require school district that permit **corporal punishment** as a method of student discipline to provide and e-mail notice to parents that includes a statement of the person's right to prohibit the use of corporal punishment against the student.

**HB 2361** by Four Price (R-Amarillo) would allow local mental health authorities that are unable to fill an open position for a non-physician **mental health professional for schools** due to a shortage of qualified applicants to receive a waiver from the executive Commissioner of Health & Human Services to employ a licensed master social worker or a licensed professional counselor.

**HB 2812** by DeWayne Burns (R-Cleburne) would allow **school safety training** to be provided by a private religious academy or school that is accredited by an organization approved by the Texas Education Agency for private school accreditation.

**HB 2976** by Ryan Guillen (R-Rio Grande City) would allow school districts to offer an **elective course in firearms safety** to high school students.

**HB 3255** by Christian Manuel (D-Port Arthur) would require principals, assistant principals, school marshals, school district peace officers, school resource officers, and school security personnel to complete **emergency response management training**.

**HB 3642** by James Talarico (D-Austin) would allow the **school safety allotment** to be used for providing professional development opportunities for educators regarding classroom behavioral management.

**HB 3648** by Ryan Guillen (R-Rio Grande City) would add a school district's director of special education services to the board of the **Texas School Safety Center**.

**HB 4824** by Abel Herrero (D-Robstown) would allow school districts to employ **commissioned security officers** as school district security personnel.

**Tuesday, April 4, 2023 – House Public Education Committee** will meet at 8:00 a.m. in E2.036 of the capitol extension to take up:

**HB 11** by Harold Dutton (D-Houston) would make several changes to the **school finance** system.

**HB 100** by Ken King (D-Canadian) would make several changes to the **school finance** system.

**HB 114** by Ed Thompson (R-Pearland) would make it a Class B misdemeanor to possess five or more **e-cigarettes on school property**; and would allow school administrators and school resource or police officers to confiscate and dispose of e-cigarettes and report the student to local law enforcement

**HB 2164** by Bobby Guerra (D-McAllen) would require Texas Education Agency to adopt rules providing for robust monitoring of **bilingual education** and **special language programs**.

**HB 2168** by Bobby Guerra (D-McAllen) would require Texas Education Agency to develop a program of study for use in **career and technology education programs** that prepares and assists students in pursuing a **career teaching bilingual education**, English as a second language, or Spanish.

**HB 2411** by James Talarico (D-Austin) would require the Commissioner of State Health Services to establish an advisory committee to examine and review the **administration of opioid antagonists** to a person experiencing an apparent opioid-related drug overdose.

**HB 2546** by Will Metcalf (R-Conroe) would remove authority for **districts of innovation** to make modifications to the school day or year.

**HB 2891** by James Talarico (D-Austin) would allow school districts to maintain a supply of **undesignated glucagon medications** that treat low blood sugar and allow the school nurse to administer it.

#### **STATEWIDE:**

**Senate State Affairs Committee** – On Monday, the Senate State Affairs Committee took up:

**SB 1820** by Bob Hall (R-Edgewood) would prohibit the order, purchase, or **sale of a lottery ticket** by telephone or digitally by a mobile device including via a mobile application or website. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

**House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee** – On Tuesday, the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee took up:

**HB 6** by Craig Goldman (R-Fort Worth) would set the **criminal penalties** for **manufacturing or delivery** of less than one gram of **fentanyl**; and would enhance the penalty if an individual dies from a fentanyl overdose. *It was left pending.*

**HB 17** by David Cook (R-Mansfield) would add to the definition of “incompetency” for **district and county attorneys** to adopt a policy **prohibiting** or limiting the **enforcement of a criminal offense**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 382** by Nicole Collier (D-Fort Worth) would provide that possession of consumable hemp is not an offense if the person purchased the product from a retailer the person reasonably believed was authorized to sell a **consumable hemp product**. *It was left pending.*

**Senate Criminal Justice Committee** – On Tuesday, the Senate Criminal Justice Committee took up:

**SB 991** by Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa (D-McAllen) would require the Department of Public Safety to establish a **central computerized portal** that facilitates the process for requesting **crime laboratory records** and for transferring those records among crime laboratories, attorneys representing the state, and parties authorized to access the records; and would require crime laboratories that perform a forensic analysis for use in a criminal action to participate in the portal. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

**SB 1527** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would update **human trafficking** and prosecution of compelling and solicitation of prostitution statutes. *It was reported favorably and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1717** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would clarify and expand the evidence admissible for the prosecution of the **offense of stalking**. *It was reported favorably and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1727** by Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown) is the sunset bill for the **Texas Juvenile Justice Department**. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

**House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee** – On Wednesday, the House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee took up:

**HB 1952** by Steve Toth (R-The Woodlands) would require **birth certificates** to include a space for the **biological sex** of a child as either male or female and would require a child born with a Y chromosome to be classified as a male and a child born without a Y chromosome to be classified as a female; and would require this method to apply to other state laws with respect to the determination of a person’s sex or gender. *It was left pending.*

**House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee** – On Wednesday, the House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee took up:

**HB 3772** by Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston) would require the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation to establish an **Anti-Trafficking Unit**. *It was left pending.*

**House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee** – On Wednesday, the House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee took up:

**HB 1487** by Stan Gerdes (R-Smithville) would establish the **Rural County Law Enforcement Agency Grant Program** to pay for costs for recruitment of personnel, salaries and wages of jailers and other personnel; training for personnel including training regarding mental health issues; or the purchase or maintenance of equipment. *It was left pending.*

**House Juvenile Justice & Family Issues Committee** – On Wednesday, the House Juvenile Justice & Family Issues Committee took up:

**HB 924** by Jon Rosenthal (D-Houston) would prohibit the issuance of a **marriage license** to an applicant under age 18; and would eliminate the exceptions. *It was left pending.*

**HB 1884** by Salman Bhojani (D-Fort Worth) would authorize a person who is authorized by a religious organization to **conduct a marriage ceremony**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2091** by Ray Lopez (D-San Antonio) would allow applicants for a **marriage license application** to request confidentiality of marriage license records if either applicant has been a victim of family violence, dating violence, sexual assault, stalking or human trafficking. *It was left pending.*

**HB 4183** by Four Price (R-Amarillo) would allow justices of the peace to waive the waiting period for a **marriage ceremony**. *It was left pending.*

**House State Affairs Committee** – On Wednesday, the House State Affairs Committee took up:

**HB 1570** by Justin Holland (D-Rockwall) would set the schedule for state agencies to undergo **sunset review**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 1620** by Justin Holland (R-Rockwall) would adjust the **sunset dates** for 2023 state agencies to 2015. *It was left pending.*

**House Culture, Recreation & Tourism Committee** – On Thursday, the House Culture, Recreation & Tourism Committee took up:

**HB 1740** by Jeff Leach (R-Allen) would require the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department to **waive the park entrance fee for first responders** and active-duty members or veterans of the **armed services**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3050** by Greg Bonnen (R-Friendswood) would establish the **Texas State Buildings Preservation Endowment Fund** to maintain, preserve, rehabilitate, and restore the buildings and grounds on state property. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3051** by Greg Bonnen (R-Friendswood) would establish the **Historic Infrastructure Sustainability Trust Fund** to maintain, preserve, rehabilitate and restore historic sites throughout the state. *It was left pending.*

**House Redistricting Committee** – On Thursday, the House Redistricting Committee held an organizational meeting and received invited testimony from Texas Legislative Council.

**House Defense & Veterans' Affairs Committee** – On Thursday, the House Defense & Veterans' Affairs Committee took up:

**HB 836** by Richard Raymond (D-Laredo) would allow the **Texas State Guard** to place on retired status an officer or enlisted service member who is physically disabled as a result of their service. *It was left pending.*

**HB 837** by Richard Raymond (D-Laredo) would allow the **Texas Military Department** to use appropriated money to recruit or retain service members, employees, or other personnel. *It was left pending.*

**Senate Business & Commerce Committee** – On Thursday, the Senate Business & Commerce Committee took up:

**SB 553** by Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) would allow the Texas Facilities Commission to use up to \$20,000 for a ceremony to **dedicate a new state building**. *It was left pending.*

**Senate Border Security Committee** – On Thursday, the Senate Border Security Committee took up:

**SB 1484** by Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe) would require Texas Department of Public Safety to establish a **border operations training program** for peace officers employed by local law enforcement agencies. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1518** by Phil King (R-Weatherford) would require the Department of Public Safety to establish a **terrorist offender registry** and require the department to supervise those terrorist offenders. *It was left pending.*

**Reported from Committee:**

**HB 471** by Jared Patterson (R-Frisco) would create **line of duty pay/leave for first responders**; revise the qualifications for entitlement to Lifetime Income Benefits (LIBs); revise the prior tobacco use disqualification when applying the cancer presumption; and would expand the presumption for myocardial infarctions or strokes that occurred within 24 hours after the end of a shift. *It was reported favorably as substituted from the House Business & Industry Committee. It is on the House Calendar on April 4, 2023.*

**HB 1675** by Justin Holland (R-Rockwall) would require Texas Department of Public Safety to establish a **border operations training program** for peace officers employed by local law enforcement agencies. *It was reported favorably from the House Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee.*

**SB 12** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would prohibit a municipality from authorizing a **sexually oriented performance** on public property or in the presence of a child; and would prohibit a sexually oriented performance on the premises of a commercial enterprise in the presence of a child (younger than 18). *It was reported favorably as substituted from the Senate State Affairs Committee.*

**SB 20** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would prohibit **prosecuting attorneys** from adopting and enforcing a policy of prohibiting or demonstrating a pattern of limiting or prohibiting the **enforcement of a criminal offense**. *It was reported favorably as substituted from the Senate State Affairs Committee.*

**SB 281** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would authorize designation of more than one **state musicians** including a musician for the classical genre and a musician for the nonclassical genre. *It was reported favorably from the Senate Administration Committee and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 767** by Tan Parker (R-Flower Mound) would require **municipalities** with a **proposed budget** that includes a new or increased fee to provide a notice on the cover page saying, "This budget includes estimated revenue from the following new or increased fees: (and include a description of the fee). *It was reported favorably as substituted from the Senate Local Government Committee and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1244** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would impose a fee of not less than \$5 (instead of \$5) per customer of a sexually oriented business as determined in the General Appropriations Act to be allocated to the **sexual assault program fund**. *It was reported favorably from the Senate Finance Committee.*

**SB 1601** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would prohibit a **municipal library** that hosts an **event** at which a **man presents as a woman** or a woman presenting as a man reads a book or story to a minor from receiving state funds. *It was reported favorably from the Senate State Affairs Committee.*

**SB 1717** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would clarify and expand the evidence admissible for the prosecution of the **offense of stalking**. *It was reported favorably from the Senate Criminal Justice Committee and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 2087** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would authorize the spouses of officers and employees of the legislative branch to claim an **exemption from jury service**. *It was reported favorably from the Senate State Affairs Committee.*

**Texas Emergency Management Academy's Inaugural Class of Cadets** – On March 24<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott celebrated the graduation of the Texas Emergency Management Academy's inaugural class of cadets at the Texas Capitol in Austin. During a graduation ceremony held in the capitol's auditorium, the governor thanked the 17 new cadets for choosing to serve their state and highlighted their importance to the people of Texas during times of disaster. He said, "There will be disasters that arise in ways that you will not anticipate. You will not know when, where, or how a disaster will occur. There's one thing you've got to keep at the forefront of your mind: the people you're helping. When I was out jogging and that big tree fell on me, I was one of those people in an emergency needing help. I know what it's like for our fellow Texans who are suffering, in pain, and need your help - and I know what it's like to receive that help. We owe it to our fellow Texans to give them speed, accuracy, the highest level of professionalism, and compassion. Thank you for your service and congratulations on your accomplishments and for being the very first set of

cadets to graduate from this academy." The governor was joined at the graduation ceremony by Texas A&M University System Chancellor John Sharp, Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) Chief Nim Kidd, and other state and emergency management officials. The Texas Emergency Management Academy, a first-of-its-kind program in the nation operated by TDEM, comprehensively trains the next generation of the emergency management workforce in all phases of emergency management including preparedness, response, recovery, and hazard mitigation. Chief Kidd added, "This innovative Academy will change emergency management in Texas and across the nation, positively impacting the ways we protect life and property during disasters. I am so proud of this first group of cadets for completing this intensive, eight-month course curriculum, to prepare them for careers in emergency management. I look forward to working with these driven individuals as we implement their professional development and as they serve Texas communities in their new roles at TDEM." Successful graduates of the eight-month Texas Emergency Management Academy ascertain basic knowledge of emergency management planning, disaster finance, wildland firefighting, ambulance staging, Emergency Operations Center response management, hazard mitigation, risk assessments, disaster recovery, resource requests, operations technology, volunteer management, private sector partnerships, and other key aspects of emergency management. Academy graduates earn multiple nationally-recognized emergency management certifications, such as the Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) Professional Development Series, FEMA's Advanced Professional Series, FEMA's Continuity Excellence Series Level I Professional Continuity Practitioner program, and the National Emergency Management Basic Academy. Graduates also leave The Academy as certified basic emergency medical technicians (EMTs) and achieved National Registry Certification upon successful completion.

**DPS to Assist City of Austin Police Department** – On March 27<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott directed the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) to provide assistance to the City of Austin Police Department (APD) to help reduce crime and improve safety in the state's capital. Governor Abbott said, "In Texas, public safety remains our top priority, and we will do whatever it takes to support the brave men and women in law enforcement who protect our communities. I welcome the opportunity to work with Mayor Kirk Watson and city officials to provide the personnel and resources needed to make Austin safer. Texas has always been - and always will be - a law and order state." At the direction of the governor, the DPS will support APD by providing a data-driven violent crime suppression task force composed of troopers, special agents, and intelligence-level policing.

**TAX:**

**House Ways & Means Committee** – On Monday, the House Ways & Means Committee took up:



**HB 581** by Richard Pena Raymond (D-Laredo) would allow an exemption for **property owned by a charitable organization** that provides services as a HUD-approved counseling agency and **rental housing to low-income** and moderate-income households at below market rates. *It was left pending.*

**HB 640** by Julie Johnson (D-Carrollton) would provide that if a municipality has a **sales tax for street maintenance** that has not expired, it could be renewed for eight or ten years subject to voter approval; would remove the bracket making other municipalities eligible to authorize a sales tax for street maintenance (subject to voter approval); and would only allow the revenue to be used to maintain and repair a municipal street or sidewalk or water, wastewater, or stormwater system located in the width of a way of a municipal street. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2121** by Dennis Paul (R-Webster) would eliminate the requirement that a property rendition report must be sworn as true and accurate if the property owner who is rendering **business personal property** has a good faith estimate of the market value of that property that is not more than \$500,000. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2398** by Cole Hefner (R-Mount Pleasant) would require the chief appraiser to accept an **application for qualified open-space land** following the death of the owner of the land; and would repeal the late filing fee. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2482** by Giovanni Capriglione (R-Keller) would expand eligibility for the **sales tax exemption for data centers** to include one or more buildings located on a single parcel of land or on contiguous or noncontiguous parcels of land connected by fiber and associated equipment; and would include one or more qualifying occupants. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2488** by Charlie Geren (R-Fort Worth) would provide that the **burden of proof** in a trial de novo **appeal of the appraised value of property** is on the chief appraiser and the appraisal district to support an increase in the appraised value of the property. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2908** by Andrew Murr (R-Junction) would allow an **appraisal district** to finance the purchase or construction of improvements necessary for its **facilities**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 2981** by Cole Hefner (R-Mount Pleasant) would allow the comptroller to serve **notice of permit revocation** hearings electronically. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3273** by Shawn Thierry (D-Houston) would require **property tax data** to be posted on each taxing unit's website and provide instructions on how a property owner can register to have notifications regarding updates to the property tax database delivered by e-mail. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3325** by Vikki Goodwin (D-Austin) would allow the eligibility notice for a residence **homestead exemption application** to be filed **online**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3358** by Angie Chen Button (R-Garland) would temporarily remove the \$50 million annual aggregate cap on sales tax refunds for the purchase of **telecommunication equipment**. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3555** by Mihaela Plesa (D-Dallas) would require **tax bills** sent to property owners in a school district subject to recapture to separately state the percentage

of maintenance & operations **taxes paid by the taxpayer that are recaptured** and the percentage that are not recaptured. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3640** and **HJR 150** by Candy Noble (R-Lucas) would propose a constitutional amendment authorizing the legislature to provide an ad valorem tax exemption on a portion of the **homestead** of an adult who has an **intellectual or developmental disability**. *They were left pending.*

**HB 3651** by Ernest Bailes (R-Shepherd) would make several changes related to **motor fuel taxes** to prevent fraudulent acquisition of motor fuels. *It was left pending.*

**HB 3709** by Candy Noble (R-Lucas) would move the **historic structures franchise tax credit** to its own chapter in the Tax Code (Chapter 172). *It was left pending.*

**HB 4101** by Hugh Shine (R-Temple) would limit **binding arbitration requests** to include complying with model hearing procedures prepared by the comptroller. *It was left pending.*

**HB 4181** and **HJR 165** by Sergio Munoz, Jr. (D-Palmview) would propose a constitutional amendment expanding the qualification of a residence homestead of a surviving spouse to a member of the military killed in the line of duty to qualifying military service member including a **military technician**. *They were left pending.*

**Senate Local Government Committee** – On Monday, the Senate Local Government Committee took up:

**SB 612** by Nathan Johnson (D-Dallas) would provide that if a municipality has a **sales tax for street maintenance** that has not expired, it could be renewed for eight or ten years subject to voter approval; would remove the bracket making other municipalities eligible to authorize a sales tax for street maintenance (subject to voter approval); and would only allow the revenue to be used to maintain and repair a municipal street or sidewalk or water, wastewater, or stormwater system located in the width of a way of a municipal street. *It was reported favorably and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1145** by Royce West (D-Dallas) would authorize the legislature to provide an ad valorem tax exemption for **property used to operate a child-care facility**. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1191** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would require the chief appraiser to accept an **application for appraisal of land as open-space land** following the death of the owner of the land if the application is filed before the delinquency date by the surviving spouse or child of the former owner or the executor of the estate of the former owner. *It was reported favorably as substituted and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1215** by Angela Paxton (R-McKinney) would require the comptroller to prescribe a form to request a **property tax refund** and would require tax assessors to deliver the refund. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1381** by Sarah Eckhardt (D-Austin) would allow the **surviving spouse** of a person with a **homestead exemption** to not have to apply for a homestead exemption when the spouse dies if the surviving spouse is otherwise eligible for

the exemption. *It was reported favorably and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1439** by Drew Springer (R-Muenster) would allow an **appraisal district** to finance the purchase or construction of improvements necessary for its **facilities**. *It was reported favorably and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1486** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would require tax collectors to accept an **electronic payment** of taxes. *It was reported favorably and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1487** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would allow a property owner to elect to make **electronic property tax communications** between the owner and tax officials. *It was left pending.*

**SB 1801** by Drew Springer (R-Muenster) would require chief appraisers to develop a program for the **periodic review** (at least every five years) of residence **homestead exemptions** granted by the district to confirm that the recipient of the exemption still qualifies. *It was reported favorably and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 2355** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would remove the requirement that a **request for binding arbitration** and required deposit be filed with the **appraisal district**, but would allow them to be filed directly with the comptroller. *It was reported favorably and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**Senate Finance Committee** – On Wednesday, the Senate Finance Committee took up:

**SB 1013** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would move the **historic structures franchise tax credit** to its own chapter in the Tax Code (Chapter 172). *It was reported favorably and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 1498** by Robert Nichols (R-Jacksonville) would set the **motor vehicle** rental tax for a motor vehicle rented through a **marketplace rental provider** at 10 percent (instead of 6.25 percent) if the vehicles rented for 30 days or less if the owner of the motor vehicle rents at least five motor vehicles within a 12-month period. *It was left pending.*

**Senate Business & Commerce Committee** – On Thursday, the Senate Business & Commerce Committee took up:

**SB 1222** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would update statutes regulating **property tax appraisers**. *It was left pending.*

**Senate State Affairs Committee** – On Thursday, the Senate State Affairs Committee took up:

**SB 946** by Kevin Sparks (R-Midland) would require an **election** for the **authorization** of the issuance of **bonds or a tax increase** to be held on the November uniform election date. *It was left pending.*

**SB 2071** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would establish the process for an **automatic recount** if a candidate or ballot measure for the **approval of bonds** is approved or defeated by 0.5 percent. *It was left pending.*

**Reported from Committee:**

**HB 2 and HJR 1** by Morgan Meyer (R-Dallas) would propose a constitutional amendment imposing a five percent **appraisal cap** on all real property. *They were reported favorably as substituted from the House Ways & Means Committee.*

**HB 796** by Angie Chen Button (R-Garland) would require appraisal districts to maintain a publicly-accessible, searchable **protest hearing internet database** that includes the names of the appraisal review board members, hearing dates and times, appraised value and ARB determinations. *It was reported favorably as substituted from the House Ways & Means Committee. It is on the House Calendar on April 4, 2023.*

**HB 1058** by Craig Goldman (R-Fort Worth) would provide a franchise tax credit or an insurance premium tax credit for **low-income housing** developments. *It was reported favorably from the House Ways & Means Committee. It is on the House Calendar on April 3, 2023.*

**HB 1228** by Will Metcalf (R-Conroe) would require **appraisal data** to be provided to a property owner without a fee. *It was reported favorably from the House Ways & Means Committee. It is on the House Calendar on April 5, 2023.*

**HB 1285** by Hugh Shine (R-Belton) would authorize the central appraisal district board to appoint one or more deputy taxpayer liaison officers to assist the taxpayer liaison officer; and would establish that the **taxpayer liaison officer** is the taxpayer assistance officer for the district. *It was reported favorably as substituted from the House Ways & Means Committee.*

**HB 1689** by Andrew Murr (R-Junction) would require a county that uses revenue derived from hotel occupancy tax revenue to create, maintain, operate, or administer an **electronic tax administration system**, to allow a person who is required to collect and pay the tax to the county to withhold up to one percent of the amount of the tax for the cost of collecting the tax. *It was reported favorably from the House Ways & Means Committee.*

**SB 348** by Drew Springer (R-Muenster) would allow **appraisal districts to post an arial photograph**, a street level photograph only of the exterior of a building, a field record or over-head sketch, the outline of one or more buildings on the property, the general landscape features, and the dimensions of or distances between buildings of a residential property on the district's Internet website. *It was reported favorably from the Senate Local Government Committee and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**SB 361** by Sarah Eckhardt (D-Austin) would allow teachers to serve on an **appraisal review board**. *It was reported favorably from the Senate Local Government Committee and recommended for the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

**Next Week:**

**Monday, April 3, 2023 – House Ways & Means Committee** will meet at 10:00 a.m. in Room 140 of the John H. Reagan State Office Building to take up 37 local bills, mostly related to hotel occupancy taxes.

**Key Dates – 88<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session:**

88<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session Began: January 10, 2023

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

Bill Filing Deadline: March 10, 2023

88<sup>th</sup> 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](http://www.senate.state.tx.us)

[www.house.state.tx.us](http://www.house.state.tx.us)

[www.capitol.state.tx.us](http://www.capitol.state.tx.us)