

SENATE – The Senate was in session Monday through Thursday of this week.

On Monday, the Senate passed numerous bills including:

- **HB 139** by Brad Buckley (D-Salado) and Beverly Powell (D-Burleson) would allow the Commissioner of Education to adopt rules establishing exceptions to **educator certification** requirements for **military veterans or military spouses**; and would require state agencies to ensure that a military veteran or military spouse receives appropriate credit for the individual's experience, including clinical and **professional experience in a licensed profession**. *It passed the SENATE by a vote of 30-0.*
- **HB 390** by Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston) and Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would require the operator of a commercial lodging establishment to require each employee to complete an annual **human trafficking awareness and prevention training program**. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the SENATE by a vote of 30-0.*
- **SB 247** by Charles Perry (R-Lubbock) would prohibit the State Bar of Texas from adopting rules and policies that limit an applicant's ability to obtain, maintain, or renew a **law license** based on the applicant's **sincerely held religious beliefs**. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 17-13.*
- **SB 741** by Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury) would authorize **school marshals** to carry a concealed handgun on the premises of a school. *It passed the Senate by a vote of 18-12. It is set for a hearing in the House Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee on May 12, 2021.*
- **SB 1353** by Borris Miles (D-Houston) would require the Department of State Health Services to include information on immunization accessibility by county, age, race, and geographic location in the biennial **legislative report on immunizations**. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 27-3.*
- **SB 1744** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would expand the allowable services offered by **colonia self-help centers** to include economic development-related services. *It passed the Senate by a vote of 28-2.*
- **SB 1772** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would create the **Texas Pollinator-Smart program** to encourage the voluntary establishment and conservation of habitats for bees, birds, and other pollinators at and near solar energy sites. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 29-1.*
- **SB 2195** by Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) would prohibit a **pharmacy benefit manager** from reducing the amount of a claim payment to a

pharmacy after adjudication of the claim or from requiring an enrollee to use a mail order pharmacy. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 30-0. It is set for a hearing in the House Insurance Committee on May 11, 2021.*

The Senate also unanimously adopted **SR 341** by John Whitmire (D-Houston), which repeals the Senate **mask requirement** and allows each Senator to have two (instead of one) staff member on the floor of the Senate while the Senate is in session. They also unanimously passed **SR 342** by Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown) would urge the Public Utility Commission to significantly reduce the high **system-wide offer cap for energy prices** and evaluate changes to the energy market structure. **Lt. Governor Dan Patrick** commented on Senate passage of **SR 342** saying, "I congratulate Sen. Charles Schwertner, R-Georgetown, and the Texas Senate for unanimously passing Senate Resolution 342 today. During Winter Storm Uri, the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) deployed the \$9,000 per megawatt hour system-wide energy price cap, resulting in exorbitant energy costs for some and windfall profits for others. Today the Texas Senate officially called on the PUC to significantly lower the pricing cap. I remain committed to making sure that we fix what went wrong during the winter storm and significantly lowering the sky-high pricing cap is one thing that can be done immediately. What happened during the February storm cannot be allowed to happen again."

On Tuesday, the Senate passed 13 bills including:

- **HB 17** by Joe Deshotel (D-Beaumont) and Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury) would **prohibit regulatory authorities** from adopting a policy restricting the connection of a utility service based on the **type or source of energy** to be delivered to the end-use customer. *It passed the SENATE by a vote of 28-2.*
- **HB 33** by Alex Dominguez (D-Brownsville) and Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would require the Texas Workforce Commission to evaluate courses and programs of study offered by colleges and career schools leading to **industry certification or workforce credentials** and identify those for which skills gained through **military experience** and training frequently align. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the SENATE by a vote of 30-0.*
- **HB 1033** by Tom Oliverson (R-Cypress) and Kelly Hancock (R-North Richland Hills) would require pharmaceutical drug manufacturers to report **prescription drug price increases**. *It passed the SENATE by a vote of 30-0.*
- **SB 1109** by Royce West (D-Dallas) would require students to receive **instruction on the prevention of child abuse**, family violence, and dating violence as part of the health curriculum. *It passed the Senate by a vote of 29-1.*

- **SB 1616** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would remove the criminal penalties and replace them with civil penalties of no more than \$500 for **failure to obey a rule**, order, or instruction from the state or local **health authority** related to an **area of quarantine**. *It passed the Senate by a vote of 19-11.*
- **SB 2026** by Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood) would require educators to **cultivate in students an informed patriotism**. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 30-0.*

They also passed **SB 1365** by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston), which would make several changes to public **school organization and fiscal management**, on Second Reading. *The committee substitute and five floor amendments were adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 20-11. (It has been voted favorably from the House Public Education Committee).*

On Wednesday, the Senate passed its Third Reading bill. After much debate, they passed **HB 1927** by Matt Schaefer (R-Tyler) and Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown) would allow anyone who is eligible to **own a gun** to carry it in Texas even **without a permit** “Constitutional carry.” *Eight floor amendments were adopted and it passed the SENATE by a party-line vote of 18-13.*

Other bills passed by the Senate on Wednesday included:

- **SB 1538** by Jose Menendez (D-San Antonio) would require the use of an original equipment manufacturer’s part, product, and repair process on a **motor vehicle** with an unexpired **original equipment** manufacturer’s **warranty**. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 26-5.*
- **SB 1876** by Borris Miles (D-Houston) would require **end stage renal disease facilities** to adopt a written emergency preparedness and contingency operations plan; and would prioritize power to those facilities. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 31-0.*

On Thursday, the Senate passed ten bills including:

- **HB 1082** by Phil King (R-Weatherford) and Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would **exempt from public disclosure** the home address, telephone number, emergency contact information or social security number of an **elected public officer** (current law applies to statewide officials and members of the legislature). *It passed the SENATE by a vote of 30-0.*
- **SB 168** by Cesar Blanco (D-El Paso) would require school districts and charters to adopt a policy on active shooter drills and provide notice to parents of an active shooter drill before the district can conduct an **active shooter drill**. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 27-3.*

- **SB 1232** by Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood) would establish the **Permanent School Fund Investment Management Organization** to manage the permanent school fund and to determine distributions from the permanent school fund to the available school fund. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 27-3.*
- **SB 1530** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would establish several new **judicial districts**. *The committee substitute and three floor amendments were adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 30-0.*
- **SB 1629** by Borris Miles (D-Houston) would make it a state jail felony for a person who knows that a **resident of a group home** is **being abused**, neglected, or exploited and fails to report that abuse. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 28-2.*
- **SB 1847** by Beverly Powell (D-Burleson) would allow **temporary nurse aides** who were hired under the emergency Medicaid waiver to put those hours worked toward their certification. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 30-0.*

Total number of bills reported out of Senate Committees this week: 71
Total number of bills passed on the Local & Uncontested Calendar: 33
Total number of bills passed by the Senate this week: 78
Total number of bills passed by the Senate this session: 662

Next Week: The Senate will reconvene on Monday, May 10, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.

HOUSE: The House was in session Monday through Saturday this week.

On Monday, the House passed four bills including:

- **HB 1433** by Giovanni Capriglione (R-Keller) would prohibit an insurer from waiving a deductible owed by a policyholder under a **property insurance policy** in exchange for the policyholder's use of the insurer's recommended contractor for the claim subject to the deductible. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 76-67.*
- **HJR 2** by Dan Huberty (R-Humble) would propose a constitutional amendment establishing the **State Utilities Reliability Fund** to provide financial support for projects that enhance the reliability of water, electricity, natural gas, and broadband utilities. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 126-18. Note: the enabling bill, HB 2000, passed to Third Reading on Monday and received final approval on Tuesday. The committee substitute and nine floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 138-9.*
- **HJR 143** by Charlie Geren (R-Fort Worth) would authorize **charitable raffles** at rodeo events. Note: the enabling bill, HB 3012, passed to Third Reading on Monday and received final approval on Tuesday. *One floor*

amendment was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 123-17.

Also on Monday, the House gave preliminary approval to an additional 45 bills including:

- **HB 20** by Andrew Murr (R-Junction) would require the development and use of a public safety assessment to be used when **setting bail**, require those making bail decisions to receive training, and restrict to magistrates with specified qualifications the authority to release defendants on bail. *The committee substitute and ten floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 98-46.*
- **HB 158** by Shawn Thierry (D-Houston) would require the Health and Human Services Commission to establish a pilot program to provide Medicaid reimbursement for **doula services** (nonmedical birthing coaching and emotional and physical support services). *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 105-40.*
- **HB 957** by Tom Oliverson (R-Cypress) would remove **firearm suppressors** from the list of prohibited weapons in the Penal Code; and would provide that a firearm suppressor that was manufactured and remained in Texas would be exempt from federal regulation. *It passed the House by a vote of 95-51.*
- **HB 1416** by Giovanni Capriglione (R-Keller) would define “**business day**” as a day other than a Saturday or Sunday, a national holiday or a state holiday for purposes of the **public information law**. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 144-0.*
- **HB 1505** by Chris Paddie (R-Marshall) would prohibit a **broadband provider** from **accessing a pole owned by an electric cooperative** for the purpose of placing a pole attachment unless the provider applies for that access. *The committee substitute and four floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 138-7.*
- **HB 2025** by Todd Hunter would continue to apply the 2010 census numbers to **statutory population brackets** until 2023. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 105-40.*
- **HB 2169** by Scott Sanford (R-McKinney) would remove **tax delinquency** as a prohibition for a **handgun license**. *It passed the House by a vote of 129-16.*
- **HB 2199** by Tan Parker (R-Flower Mound) would establish the **digital identity work group** to develop recommendation for the use of digital identity in the state and identify optimal policies and state investments related to **digital identity technology**. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 143-3.*
- **HB 2219** by Terry Canales (D-Edinburg) would authorize the Transportation Commission to issue **Texas Mobility Fund** bonds. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote*

of 114-31.

- **HB 2505** by Reggie Smith (R-Sherman) would make it a state jail felony to be **intoxicated** while **operating a watercraft** with a passenger younger than 15 years of age. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 130-15.*
- **HB 2990** by Penny Morales Shaw (D-Houston) would require a list of applicants for environmental and **water-use permits** to be posted online. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 146-0.*
- **HB 3015** by Ana Hernandez (D-Houston) would create a complaint mechanism at the Office of the Attorney General for requestors to report government bodies that fail to respond to **Texas Public Information Act requests**. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 145-0.*
- **HB 3697** by Ana Hernandez (D-Houston) would qualify an individual for **unemployment benefits** who leaves the workplace to **care for** the individual's **minor child** due to an unexpected illness, accident, or other unforeseeable event if no reasonable alternative care was available. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 109-38.*
- **HB 3948** by Tracy King (D-Batesville) would revise processes related to the production and regulation of hemp and **consumable hemp products**. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 132-13.*
- **SB 13** by Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury) and Phil King (R-Weatherford) would prohibit state governmental entities from acquiring securities in a company or contracting with a company that **boycotts energy companies**. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the HOUSE by a vote of 105-40.*

On Tuesday, the House passed the 45 Third Reading bills and gave preliminary approval to 42 additional bills including:

- **HB 246** by Andrew Murr (R-Junction) would prohibit a school from releasing to the general public the name of an employee of the school who is accused of an offense of **improper relationship between an educator and a student** until the employee is indicted; and would clarify the definition of "sexual contact" in improper relationship between an educator and a student cases. *Two floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 145-0.*
- **HB 368** by Carl Sherman, Sr. (D-DeSoto) would allow a state **legislator** or a prosecutor to apply for a **driver's license** that omits the legislator's or prosecutor's actual residence address. *Two floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 130-15.*
- **HB 1128** by Jacey Jetton (R-Sugar Land) would specify the list of **persons** eligible to be lawfully present **in a polling place**. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the*

House by a vote of 98-45.

- **HB 1300** by Ryan Guillen (D-Rio Grande City) would allow a **child** under 14 years of age to read or **mark a ballot** at the direction of the child's parent. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 125-17.*
- **HB 1340** by Jeff Leach (R-Allen) would create new provisions in the conspirator liability statute governing criminal responsibility for another's conduct in **capital murder cases**. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 135-6.*
- **HB 1397** by James White (R-Hillister) would require **voting system vendors** to disclose the identity of each person or entity that has a five percent or greater ownership interest in the vendor, the vendor's parent company, and each subsidiary or affiliate of the vendor. *It passed the House by a vote of 144-0.*
- **HB 1518** by Harold Dutton (D-Houston) would authorize **hotel bars** to sell alcoholic beverages to a registered guest of the hotel at any time for on-premises consumption of the beverage. *It passed the House by a vote of 126-19.*
- **HB 2063** by Claudia Ordaz Perez (D-El Paso) would establish the **state employee family leave program**, allowing state employees to apply for leave time under a family leave pool. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 135-10.*
- **HB 2497** by Tan Parker (R-Flower Mound) would establish the **1836 Project** to promote patriotic education and increase awareness of Texas values. *The committee substitute and five floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 124-19.*
- **HB 3046** by Mayes Middleton (R-Wallisville) would require the attorney general to provide a monthly report identifying each **rule adopted by a federal agency in response to a presidential order** related to pandemics or other health emergencies; the regulation of natural resources, the agriculture industry, or the financial sector; use of land; the regulation of the constitutional right to keep and bear arms, and the free exercise of religion. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 105-40.*
- **HB 3752** by James Frank (R-Wichita Falls) would authorize the **Texas Mutual Insurance Company** to offer a competitive health coverage option to individuals and small employers (50 employees or less). *The committee substitute and three floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 100-46.*
- **HB 3924** by Tom Oliverson (R-Cypress) would authorize the **Texas Farm Bureau** to offer **health benefit plans**. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 106-39.*
- **HB 4139** by Garnet Coleman (D-Houston) would change the Center for Elimination of Disproportionality and Disparities to the **Office for Health**

Equity. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 77-51.*

- **HB 4346** by Ben Leman (R-Brenham) would prohibit an instrument granting an access **easement** from restricting or prohibiting an easement holder from **possessing or transporting a firearm** while using the easement. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 88-56.*
- **HB 4534** by Gary Gates (R-Rosenberg) would require the **Employees Retirement System** to conduct a study to evaluate potential reforms to improve the financial health of the retirement system. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 129-13.*
- **SB 43** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) and Line Ortega (D-El Paso) would protect consumers against **predatory wrap lending** practices. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the HOUSE by a vote of 101-46.*

On Wednesday, the House passed 42 Third Reading bills and passed 48 bills on Second Reading. Two of those bills related to abortion restrictions:

- **HB 1280** by Giovanni Capriglione (R-Southlake) contingent upon a decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* or significantly altering current law, it would **prohibit abortion** unless the pregnant female has a life-threatening physical condition. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 81-61.*
- **SB 8** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) and Shelby Slawson (R-Stephenville) would be the **Texas Heartbeat Act**. It would prohibit a physician from knowingly performing or inducing an abortion on a pregnant woman unless the physician has determined whether the woman's unborn child has a detectable fetal heartbeat. *Two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the HOUSE by a vote of 83-64.*

The House also gave preliminary approval to a bill aimed at curbing the authority of the City of Austin:

- **HB 1925** by Giovanni Capriglione (R-Keller) would make it a criminal offense for a person to **camp in a public place**. *Five floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 88-56.*

Other bills passed by the House on Wednesday included:

- **HB 9** by Stephanie Klick (R-Fort Worth) would enhance the penalty for **disorderly conduct involving obstructing a highway** if the actor knowingly prevents the passage of an authorized emergency vehicle or obstructs access to a hospital or other health care facility that provides emergency medical care. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 90-5.*
- **HB 492** by Gene Wu (D-Houston) would **limit “no-knock” warrants** by peace officers. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 143-1.*

- **HB 678** by Philip Cortez (D-San Antonio) would require the Board of Pharmacy to specify conditions under which a **pharmacist** may administer an **immunization or vaccination**. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 137-7.*
- **HB 1802** by Alex Dominguez (D-Brownsville) would require the Department of State Health Services to conduct a study to **evaluate the therapeutic efficacy of alternative therapies**, including the use of 3,4 methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA), psilocybin, and ketamine, **in the treatment of mental health**. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 134-12.*
- **HB 2059** by John Bucy (D-Austin) would specify that **run-off elections** must be held on the first Saturday after the 27th day after the date of the main election; and would prohibit home-rule cities from prescribing a later run-off date. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 145-0.*
- **HB 2595** by Four Price (R-Amarillo) would require the Commissioner of Insurance to create a **portal for complaints** by health benefit plan enrollees regarding **mental health parity** and would require the development of educational materials and training on parity for mental health conditions. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 122-24.*
- **HB 2954** by Senfronia Thompson (D-Houston) would require the Texas Education Agency to establish a **suicide prevention, intervention, and postvention program** for optional implementation at an elementary school campus that has experienced suicide loss. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 96-48.*
- **HB 3034** by Liz Campos (D-San Antonio) would require the Texas Interagency Council for the Homeless to collaborate with a state agency to establish a **statewide homeless data system** through which state and local entities can share information related to individuals experiencing homelessness. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 78-56.*
- **HB 3915** by Craig Goldman (R-Fort Worth) would require the Public Utility Commission to establish a process for priority of designation and eligibility requirements for a **transmission and distribution utility** to designate a premise as critical load. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 142-0.*
- **HB 4492** by Chris Paddie (R-Marshall) would provide **securitization financing** to enable **electric utilities** to recover extraordinary costs the electric utilities incurred and may incur to secure electric supply and provide service during natural and man-made disasters and system failures. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 129-15.*

- **SB 315** by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) and Todd Hunter (R-Corpus Christi) would prohibit an individual younger than 18 years of age from being on the premises of a **sexually oriented business**. *It passed the HOUSE by a vote of 142-0.*

On Thursday, the House passed 47 Third Reading bills and gave preliminary approval to 45 bills. The House was in session until 3:00 on Friday morning in debate on:

- **SB 7** by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) and Briscoe Cain (R-Deer Park) would make several changes related to **election security**. *The committee substitute and 18 floor amendments were adopted and it passed the HOUSE by a vote of 78-64.*

On Thursday, the House gave approval to another bill targeting the City of Austin, although it would also affect ten other cities:

- **HB 1900** by Craig Goldman (R-Fort Worth) would prohibit a **municipality** (of 250,000 or more in population) **that reduces funding for law enforcement** from expanding its territory through annexation and would allow a de-annexation election for each area annexed in the preceding 30 years; would prohibit the municipality from increasing its tax rate; would prevent the comptroller from sending the municipality's share of taxes to the municipality. *The committee substitute and three floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 90-49.*

Other bills receiving preliminary approval in the House on Thursday included:

- **HB 211** by Shawn Thierry (D-Houston) would establish a new **tax on e-cigarette vapor products** of five cents per milliliter. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 84-56.*
- **HB 458** by Matt Shaheen would add wages paid to employees of **transportation network companies** and operators of a **technology platform** used to make deliveries to customers to the definition of "earnings" in the Family Code for **child support** purposes. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 141-1.*
- **HB 764** by Matt Krause (R-Fort Worth) would eliminate **student assessments** that are not required by federal law. *The committee substitute and three floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 136-6.*
- **HB 1069** by Cody Harris would allow **first responders** who are handgun license holders to carry a **handgun** while carrying out their duties. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 110-33.*
- **HB 1501** by Jay Dean (R-Longview) would prohibit a governmental entity from adopting or enforcing a regulation that prohibits or restricts the use of **natural gas or propane** in the construction, renovation, maintenance, or

- alteration of a **residential or commercial structure**. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 118-22.*
- **HB 1676** by Vikki Goodwin (D-Austin) would require **child care facilities** to provide **personal flotation devices** to a child that is accessing a body of water. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 106-36.*
 - **HB 2281** by Cole Hefner (R-Mount Pleasant) would extend the prohibition of **handguns** on the premises of a school to **postsecondary educational institutions**. *It passed the House by a vote of 87-55.*
 - **HB 2485** by Abel Herrero (D-Robstown) would allow **firefighters** and **police officers** to be exempt from **jury service**. *It passed the House by a vote of 122-17.*
 - **HB 2633** by Ann Johnson (D-Houston) would establish the **trafficked persons grant program** to provide grants to applicants to provide dedicated housing and treatment facilities for human trafficking victims. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 114-27.*
 - **HB 2728** by Trey Martinez Fischer (D-San Antonio) would designate January 27 as International **Holocaust Remembrance Day**. *It passed the House by a vote of 142-0.*
 - **HB 2911** by James White (R-Hillister) would include **Next Generation 9-1-1 service** in the 9-1-1 service system with an implementation target date of September 1, 2025 and subject it to 9-1-1 fees. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 103-40.*
 - **HB 3459** by Greg Bonnen (R-Friendswood) would exempt physicians and health care providers from **preauthorization requirements** if they had at least 80 percent of their preauthorization requests approved in the preceding calendar year. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 127-16.*
 - **HB 3626** by Ramon Romero (D-Fort Worth) would expedite the process for out-of-state **marriage and family therapists** and **professional counselors** to become licensed in Texas. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 141-0.*
 - **HB 3774** by Jeff Leach (R-Allen) would establish several new **judicial districts**. *The committee substitute and three floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 141-0.*
 - **HB 3963** by Ken King (R-Canadian) would authorize **electric vehicle charging equipment** at the state parks. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 111-28.*
 - **HB 4272** by Stephanie Klick (R-Fort Worth) would standardize consent requirements related to the **immunization registry**; require records to be retained for seven years; and establish a secure online portal for an individual to opt out of the registry. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 135-0.*

- **HB 4294** by Will Metcalf (R-Conroe) would clarify who is responsible for paying expenses related to **joint interim committees** and would authorize legislative agencies' governing boards to meet remotely during a disaster. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 143-0.*
- **SB 1126** by Drew Springer (R-Muenster) and Lynn Stucky (R-Sanger) would establish the **Texas Woman's University System**. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the HOUSE by a vote of 132-2.*
- **SB 1230** by Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood) and Leo Pacheco (D-San Antonio) would establish the **Texas Commission on Community College Finance**. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the HOUSE by a vote of 119-15.*

On Friday, the House passed 46 Third Reading bills and passed fifteen bills on Second Reading including:

- **HB 2237** by Dustin Burrows (R-Lubbock) would reform mechanic's, contractor's, and materialman's **lien laws**. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 136-1.*
- **HB 3261** by Dan Huberty (R-Humble) would make several changes related to **electronic administration of assessment instruments**; and would allow the Instructional Materials and Technology Allotment to be used for services, equipment, and technology infrastructure necessary to ensure Internet connectivity and adequate bandwidth and for training in the electronic administration of assessment instruments. *The committee substitute and four floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 136-4.*
- **HB 3610** by Barbara Gervin-Hawkins (D-San Antonio) would clarify that property of **open-enrollment charter schools** is exempt from **ad valorem taxation**. *Three floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 65-60.*
- **HB 3731** by Harold Dutton (D-Houston) would make several changes to the **public school accountability** rating system. *The committee substitute and two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 74-65.*
- **HB 3833** by Phil King (R-Weatherford) would reduce the change in use calculation requirement when **open space land is converted** to developed property from five years to three years and decrease the annual interest rate. *Two floor amendments were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 136-2.*
- **HB 4242** by Morgan Meyer (R-Dallas) would extend the **Texas Economic Development Act** (Chapter 313 of the Tax Code) from through 2022 to through 2024. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 112-29.*
- **HB 4465** by Harold Dutton (D-Houston) would require the Commissioner

of Education to establish a **grant program** to help school districts overcome the **educational impact of disasters**. *The committee substitute and one floor amendment were adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 113-22.*

- **SB 609** by Carol Alvarado (D-Houston) and Geanie Morrison (R-Victoria) would establish the **Texas Music Incubator Rebate Program**. *It passed the HOUSE by a vote of 102-40.*
- **SB 930** by Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) and Mayes Middleton (R-Wallisville) would provide that **disease outbreaks** at nursing homes must be reported as public information. *It passed the House by a vote of 142-0.*

On Saturday, the House passed 148 bills on the Local & Consent Calendar and passed the Third Reading bills before adjourning for Mother's Day weekend.

Note: Several additional bills that passed the House are in the issue categories below.

End-Of Session Slow-Down Rules – Rules that institute deadlines prior to the end of the legislative session begin to kick in on Monday, May 10, 2021 in the House. The House is already working through a backlog of Second Reading bills. When the House adjourned on Saturday, 30 Second Reading bills remained on the calendar and will be carried over to Monday's calendar.

May 11, 2021 – Last House Daily Calendar with House Bills and House Joint Resolutions must be distributed by 10:00 p.m. due to the 36-hour layout rule for calendars (120th day).

May 12, 2021 – Last House Local and Consent Calendar with Consent House Bills must be distributed by 9:00 a.m. due to the 48-hour layout rule for Local and Consent calendars (121st day).

May 13, 2021 – Last day (midnight deadline) for the House to consider Second Reading House Bills and House Joint Resolutions on the regular calendar (122nd Day).

May 14, 2021 – Last day (midnight deadline) for House to consider consent House Bills on Second and Third Reading and all Third reading House Bills and House Joint Resolutions on the regular calendar (123rd Day).

May 19, 2021 – Last House Local and Consent Calendar with local House Bills must be distributed by 9:00 a.m. due to the 48-hour layout for Local and Consent calendars (128th day).

May 21, 2021 – Last day for the House to consider local House Bills on Second and Third Reading. First day the Senate can consider bills and resolutions the first day they are posted on the Intent Calendar (130th Day).

May 22, 2021 – Last day for House Committees to report Senate Bills and Senate Joint Resolutions (131st Day).

May 23, 2021 – Last House Daily Calendar with Senate Bills and Senate Joint Resolutions must be printed and distributed (10:00 p.m. deadline) due to the 36-hour layout rule for regular calendars (132nd Day).

May 24, 2021 – Last House Local and Consent Calendar with Senate Bills must be distributed by 9:00 a.m. due to the 48-hour layout rule for Local and Consent calendars (133rd Day).

May 25, 2021 – Last day for the House to consider Second Reading Senate Bills and Senate Joint Resolutions on the regular calendar (134th Day).

May 26, 2021 – Last day for the House to consider local and consent Senate bills on Second and Third Reading and to consider all Third Reading Senate bills and Senate Joint Resolutions on the regular calendars. Last day for the Senate to consider all bills and joint resolutions on Second or Third Reading (135th Day).

May 27, 2021 – All Senate amendments must be distributed in the House before midnight due to the 24-hour layout rule (136th Day).

May 28, 2021 – Last day for the House to act on Senate amendments. Senate copies of conference committee reports on tax, general appropriations and reapportionment bills must be printed and distributed before midnight due to the 48-hour lay-out rule (137th Day).

May 29, 2021 – In the House, all conference committee reports must be printed and distributed by midnight due to the 24-hour layout rule. In the Senate, all conference committee reports must be printed and distributed (other than those required to be printed the 137th day) before midnight due to the 24-hour lay-out rule (138th Day).

May 30, 2021 – Last day for the House to adopt conference committee reports and to discharge conference committees and adopt Senate amendments. Last day for the Senate to adopt conference committee reports or concur in House amendments (139th Day).

May 31, 2021 – Corrections only in the House and Senate. Last day of the session with midnight deadline to adjourn *Sine Die* (140th Day).

Total number of bills reported out of House Committees this week:	377
Total number of bills passed on the Local & Consent Calendar:	148
Total number of bills passed by the House this week:	347
Total number of bills passed by the House this session:	983

Next Week: The House will reconvene on Monday, May 10, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

BUDGET:

Revised Biennial Revenue Estimate – On May 3rd, Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar revised the Biennial Revenue Estimate (BRE) and now projects **2020-21 revenue** available for general-purpose spending to be \$113.88 billion and the ending balance in General Revenue-Related (GR-R) funds to be \$725 million, an **increase of \$1.67 billion** from the negative balance projected in the January 2021 BRE. The increased ending balance, combined with upwardly revised projections of revenue collections for the **2022-23 biennium**, results in an estimate of \$115.65 billion available for general-purpose spending in 2022-23, an **increase of \$3.12 billion** from the January BRE. In a May 3 letter to state leadership, Hegar said the revisions are based on changes in estimated revenue collections and updated Legislative Budget Board estimates of the state

obligation for Foundation School Program (FSP) funding. This estimate does not account for any appropriations made by the 87th Legislature, and the projected ending balance does not account for any savings from state agency budget reductions, replacement of eligible GR-R appropriations with federal relief funds or reductions in non-FSP appropriations made in House Bill 2. Comptroller said, “When we finalized our economic forecast for the January BRE, COVID case counts and hospitalizations were on the rise, and the rollout of vaccines had just begun. Those conditions warranted caution about the near-term economic outlook. Since then, case counts and hospitalizations have plummeted, many restrictions have been lifted and economic activity in the state - and across the country - has accelerated.” Some of the increased revenue projected is attributable to upwardly revised estimates of oil and natural gas production tax collections. Consequently, the comptroller’s office is expected to transfer \$1.26 billion each to the State Highway and Economic Stabilization funds in fiscal 2022 and another \$1.67 billion each in fiscal 2023. Not counting any appropriations made from the Economic Stabilization Fund by the 87th Legislature, Hegar said he now expects its balance to be \$12.12 billion at the end of the 2022-23 biennium. Comptroller Hegar concluded, “Our revised revenue forecast assumes continued economic growth through the next biennium, but uncertainty remains about the ultimate course of the economy and thus state revenue. Texas remains well-positioned to recover from the COVID outbreak and return to its norm of economic growth in excess of the national rate - if we haven’t already.”

[Here](#) is a link to the revised revenue estimate.

PUBLIC EDUCATION:

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

HB 4064 by Terry Meza (D-Irving) would require the comprehensive developmental guidance programs implemented by school counselors to include management of **conflicts involving bullying or harassment** (not just bullying). *It was left pending.*

SB 226 by Angela Paxton (R-McKinney) would add **virtual learning** and virtual instruction to the required minimum academic qualifications for **teacher certification**. *It was left pending.*

SB 347 by Angela Paxton (R-McKinney) would include local **school health advisory councils** as governmental bodies for purposes of the **open meetings** and public information laws. *It was left pending.*

SB 462 by Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville) would authorize the **transportation allotment** to be used for transporting a meal or instructional materials to a student’s residence. *It was left pending.*

SB 797 by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) and Tom Oliverson (R-Cypress) would **require** public schools and institutions of higher education **display** in each building a copy of the United States national motto, **“In God We Trust”** on a poster with a representation of the United States and Texas flags. *It was left pending.*

SB 1063 by Carol Alvarado (D-Houston) would allow the one-half credit in economics required in the high school curriculum to be on **personal financial literacy and economics** with one-third of the time allocated for economics and two-thirds in personal financial literacy. *It was left pending.*

SB 1522 by Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood) would authorize the Commissioner of Education to adjust the **average daily attendance** of a school district for the amount of instructional days during the **semester in which a calamity occurs**. *It was left pending.*

Senate Education Committee – On Tuesday, the Senate Education Committee took up:

SB 487 by Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) would require a municipality to consider an open-enrollment **charter school** a school district for purposes of **zoning, permitting, code compliance** and development. *It was left pending.*

HB 699 by Jon Rosenthal (D-Houston) and Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would require school districts to excuse a student from attending school for an **absence** resulting from a **serious or life-threatening illness** or treatment that makes the student's attendance infeasible. *It was left pending.*

HB 725 by Jared Patterson (R-Frisco) and Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would grant eligibility for free **pre-kindergarten** programs to children who have been in **foster care** in another state or territory if the child now resides in Texas. *It was voted out favorably.*

HB 785 by Alma Allen (D-Houston) and Judith Zaffirini (D-Laredo) would require **behavior improvement or intervention plans** for students with disabilities receiving special education services to be reviewed at least annually. *It was voted out favorably.*

HB 1147 by Dan Huberty (R-Humble) and Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood) would count enlistment in the Texas National Guard as **military readiness**. *It was voted out favorably as substituted.*

HB 1603 by Dan Huberty (R-Humble) and Kel Seliger (R-Amarillo) would remove the sunset date authorizing **individual graduation committees** to satisfy high school graduation requirements for charter schools. *It was voted out favorably.*

Reported/Voted From Committee:

HB 24 by Alex Dominguez (D-Brownsville) would require the Commissioner of Education to distribute funds to each school district to provide at least one **playground** in the district that is inclusive and **accessible for students with disabilities**. *It was reported out favorably from the House Public Education Committee.*

HB 204 by Shawn Thierry (D-Houston) would require school districts and charters to provide a **landline telephone or panic button** in every classroom that allows for immediate contact with emergency services and law enforcement agencies. *It was reported out favorably as substituted from the House Public Education Committee.*

HB 363 by Gary VanDeaver (R-New Boston) and Charles Perry (R-Lubbock) would require operators that possess any **private student data** to use the unique

identifier established by the Texas Student Data System. *It was voted out favorably from the SENATE Education Committee.*

HB 392 by Rhetta Andrews Bowers (D-Rowlett) would prohibit a public school or institution of higher education from **discriminating** against a student in dress or grooming policy **based on hair texture** or protective hairstyle commonly or historically associated with race. *It was reported favorably from the House State Affairs Committee.*

HB 547 by James Frank (R-Wichita Falls) would allow **home-schooled students** to participate in activities sponsored by the University Interscholastic League (UIL). *It was reported favorably as substituted from the House Public Education Committee.*

HB 1417 by Sam Harless (R-Spring) would require **campus improvement plans** to include goals and methods for bullying prevention and dropout deterrence, including providing a research-based teacher development program that provides teachers continuing education in **creating a nurturing classroom environment**. *It was voted out favorably from the House Public Education Committee.*

HB 4023 by Armando “Mando” Martinez (D-Weslaco) would establish the **Life Skills Counselor Pilot Program** with a campus in each high school in a selected border county to address emotional and mental health concerns of students. *It was reported out favorably from the House Public Education Committee and recommended for the Local & Consent Calendar.*

SB 29 by Charles Perry (R-Lubbock) would require students participating in interscholastic **athletic activities** to participate based on the **student’s biological sex**. *It was voted out favorably as substituted from the HOUSE Public Education Committee.*

SB 89 by Jose Menendez (D-San Antonio) would require school districts to prepare a supplement to the written statement of the **individualized education program** developed for **special education students** indicating whether the written report of the child’s full individual and initial evaluation was completed by the date required. *It was voted out favorably from the HOUSE Public Education Committee.*

SB 179 by Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville) and Mary Gonzalez (D-Clint) would require **school counselors** to spend at least 80 percent of their total work time on direct counseling program services. Time spent in administering assessment instruments would not be considered a direct counseling service. *It was voted out favorably from the HOUSE Public Education Committee.*

SB 203 by Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown) would require the **University Interscholastic League** to select **locations** for statewide competitions in extracurricular activities using a statewide request for proposals process. *It was voted out favorably from the HOUSE Public Education Committee.*

SB 289 by Kel Seliger (R-Amarillo) would allow school districts to excuse a **student** who is 15 years of age or older from attending school to **visit a driver’s license office** to obtain a driver’s license or learner license of no more than one day for each license. *It was voted out favorably from the HOUSE Public Education Committee.*

SB 338 by Beverly Powell (D-Burleson) and Eddie Lucio, III (D-Brownsville) would authorize school districts to adopt uniform general conditions adopted by the Texas Facilities Commission to be incorporated in all of the **school district building construction contracts**. *It was voted out favorably from the HOUSE Public Education Committee.*

SB 481 by Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) would allow a **student** enrolled in a school district that offers only virtual instruction for any part of a school year to **transfer** for that school year to another **school district that offers in-person instruction**. *It was voted out favorably from the HOUSE Public Education Committee.*

SB 1267 by Royce West (D-Dallas) and J.M. Lozano (R-Kingsville) would make several changes regarding **continuing education** and training requirements for educators. *It was voted out favorably as substituted from the HOUSE Public Education Committee.*

SB 1776 by Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) and Keith Bell (R-Forney) would require school districts and charters to offer a high school **elective course** for one-half credit on the **founding principles of the United States**. *It was reported out favorably from the HOUSE Public Education Committee.*

Bills Passed:

HB 30 by James Talarico (D-Round Rock) would require the **Windham School District** to provide a course of instruction that includes the required **curriculum leading to a standard high school diploma** to each incarcerated student. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 142-1.*

HB 189 by Terry Canales (D-Edinburg) would apply statutory provisions related to **severance payments to school superintendents** for early termination to open-enrollment **charter school** administrators or chief executive officers. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

HB 269 by Philip Cortez (D-San Antonio) would require the Texas Department of Transportation to issue **specialty license plates** for classroom **teachers** with at least 15 years of service and retirees with at least 20 years of service. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

HB 278 by Terry Canales (D-Edinburg) would require a criminal history background check on prospective managers before the Commissioner of Education appoints a **board of managers** for a school district. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

HB 622 by Barbara Gervin-Hawkins (D-San Antonio) would require the State Board for Educator Certification to create abbreviated **educator preparation programs** for a person seeking a certification to teach courses in **marketing** and **health science technology**. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 123-23.*

HB 1014 by John Bucy, III (D-Austin) would require high school and higher education **student identification cards** to include contact for a **suicide prevention hotline**. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

HB 1080 by Jared Patterson (R-Frisco) would allow **students who receive outpatient mental health services** to participate in University Interscholastic League activities. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 146-0.*

HB 1207 by Ryan Guillen (D-Rio Grande City) would require the State Board for Educator Certification to establish the training requirements and course work a **principal** must successfully complete to receive a **school turnaround specialist endorsement** as an addendum to a principal certificate. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the House by a vote of 103-37.*

HB 1726 by Steve Allison (R-San Antonio) would ensure schools and school districts **track bullying and cyberbullying incidents** and use this information to adopt preventative measures to help students. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

HB 2256 by Bobby Guerra (D-McAllen) would require the State Board of Educator Certification to establish a **bilingual special education certificate**. *It passed the House by a vote of 113-30.*

HB 2721 by Eddie Lucio, III (D-Brownsville) would prohibit a **student who assaults a referee**, judge or other official from participating in an extracurricular activity sponsored or sanctioned by the University Interscholastic League. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

HB 3033 by Stephanie Klick (R-Fort Worth) would require school districts to **report** through the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) the total number of students transported from the school district or charter for an **emergency mental health detention**. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

HB 3256 by Sam Harless (R-Spring) would make **home addresses of teachers** and principals in government records confidential and exempt from disclosure. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

HB 3400 by Chris Paddie (R-Marshall) would provide that if a **peace officer**, who is a parent reasonably fears for the officer's **student's safety**, the student must be transferred to another campus or district that is agreeable to the peace officer upon request. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

HB 3597 by Will Metcalf (R-Conroe) would update language regarding a school safety plan to require **school safety** and security memoranda of understanding to be shared with the Texas School Safety center. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

HB 3864 by Andrew Murr (R-Junction) would require school districts to excuse a student from attending school for a **career investigation day**. *It passed the House on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

SB 123 by Nathan Johnson (D-Dallas) would require the State Board of Education to integrate **social and emotional skills** into the essential knowledge and skills adopted for kindergarten through grade 12. *It passed the Senate on the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

SB 348 by Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) would entitle parents to observe any virtual instruction and review any teaching materials, instructional materials, or other teaching aids provided to the parent's child while the parent's child is

participating in **virtual or remote learning**. *It passed the Senate on the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

SB 838 by Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) would require the Texas School Safety Center to develop best practices for school districts and charter schools that authorize **school guardians**. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 24-6. It is set for a hearing in the House Homeland Security & Public Safety Committee on May 12, 2021.*

SB 879 by Eddie Lucio Jr. (D-Brownsville) and Harold Dutton (D-Houston) would reduce the eligible age for a **dropout recovery school** from 17 to 16 years of age. *It was reported favorably from the HOUSE Public Education Committee. It was substituted for HB 998 and passed the HOUSE on the Local & Consent Calendar.*

SB 1082 by Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) would entitle parents to review **curriculum** materials used in any **human sexuality instruction** provided to their child. *It passed the Senate on the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

SB 1171 by Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood) would make several changes related to **electronic administration of assessment instruments**. *It passed the Senate on the Local & Uncontested Calendar.*

SB 1191 by Kel Seliger (R-Amarillo) would clarify that “**school resource officer**” does not include a peace officer who provides law enforcement at a public school or event only for extracurricular activities. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 30-0.*

SB 1590 by Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) would require the State Board for Educator Certification to propose **flexible options for field-based experience** or internships. *One floor amendment was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 30-0.*

SB 1716 by Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood) would require the Texas Education Agency to establish and administer a **supplemental special education services and instructional materials program**. *The committee substitute was adopted and it passed the Senate by a vote of 21-9.*

Sales Tax Revenue in April – On May 3rd, Texas Comptroller Glenn Hegar said state sales tax revenue totaled \$3.4 billion in April, a record-high monthly total and 31.4 percent more than in April 2020. Year-over-year increases for most tax revenues this month and in the coming months will be among the highest in the history of the data series. This is due to base effects: year-ago revenue collections to which this year’s collections are compared were severely suppressed by the pandemic. Nonetheless, this month’s sales tax collections were notably strong; compared to April 2019, sales tax collections were up 19.2 percent. The majority of April sales tax revenue is based on sales made in March and remitted to the agency in April. That compares to:

- March collections were \$2.63 billion, 2.4 percent less than in March 2020
- February collections were \$2.68 billion, 7.5 percent less than in February 2020
- January collections were \$3.07 billion, 0.3 percent less than in January 2020.

- December collections were \$2.86 billion, 5 percent less than December 2019.
- November collections were \$2.98 billion, 6.3 percent less than in November 2019
- October collections were \$2.72 billion, 3.5 percent less than in October 2019;
- September collections were \$2.57 billion, 6.1 percent less than in September 2019;
- August collections were \$2.82 billion, 5.6 percent less than in August 2019;
- July collections were \$2.98 billion; 4.3 percent more than July 2019;
- June collections were \$2.67 billion, down 6.5 percent from June 2019; and
- May collections were \$2.16 billion, 13.2 percent less than May 2019.

Comptroller Hegar said, “Spurred by a number of factors, April state sales tax collections increased sharply from a year ago. Collections from all major sectors other than mining and construction rose significantly, led by receipts from restaurants and retailers. Part of the growth over last year is from depressed collections that began last April, especially from retail trade, restaurants, entertainment and other hospitality businesses most immediately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Spending this March affecting April tax collections was supported by widespread business reopenings and the lifting of capacity restrictions, greater consumer confidence in going out as the vaccine rollout progressed, federal stimulus checks and spending delayed from February into March due to the winter storm and power outage. Retail sector remittances were up across the board, with especially notable increases from clothing stores, online retailers, general merchandisers, sporting goods stores and building materials and home furnishings stores. Clothing stores were especially hard hit by the closure orders early in the pandemic and continued soft consumer demand as much of the workforce worked from home, but now appear to be rebounding strongly as consumers return to stores and those resuming office work buy clothes again. Despite reopenings and the lifting of all capacity restrictions in March, stay-at-home behavioral trends established during the pandemic continue to support rapid growth in online shopping and elevated spending for home improvements and sporting goods. Tax receipts from restaurants were up significantly over the previous year’s levels, with the growth principally attributable to the restaurants geared to takeout and delivery, but some popular dine-in chains exhibited a vigorous rebound. Nonetheless, the dine-in segment continues to languish, with many establishments now permanently closed.” Total sales tax revenue for the three months ending in April 2021 was up 4.5 percent compared to the same period a year ago. Sales tax is the largest source of state funding for the state budget, accounting for 59 percent of all tax collections. Texas collected the following revenue from other major taxes, all of which were up sharply from a year ago due to base effects:

- **motor vehicle sales and rental taxes** — \$378 million, up 130 percent from April 2020 and up 27 percent from April 2019;

- **motor fuel taxes** — \$325 million, up 15 percent from April 2020 and up 1 percent from April 2019;
- **oil production tax** — \$334 million, up 75 percent from April 2020 and down 3 percent from April 2019;
- **natural gas production tax** — \$232 million, up 247 percent from April 2020 and up 81 percent from April 2019;
- **hotel occupancy tax** — \$51 million, up 116 percent from April 2020 and down 20 percent from April 2019; and
- **alcoholic beverage taxes** — \$119 million, up 110 percent from April 2020 and down 7 percent from April 2019.

STATEWIDE – COVID-19 RESPONSE:

DSHS Weekly Vaccine Distribution Update – On May 1st, the Department of State Health Services issued its weekly update on Vaccine distribution in Texas for the week of May 3rd. It indicated that the Texas Department of State Health Services is allocating 446,460 first doses of COVID-19 vaccine to providers that requested it for the week of May 3rd. That represents 753 sites in 101 counties and leaves more than 500,000 additional doses available to providers. Those doses will be shipped to the DSHS pharmacy in Austin and used to fill vaccine requests. DSHS Commissioner John Hellerstedt, MD, sent a letter to all vaccine providers encouraging any who need vaccine to make requests by May 4th, so vaccine can be delivered by the end of the week. The letter said. “If you have any new strategies for reaching additional people, please also let us know by Tuesday, May 4th, including whether we can support you with vaccines, technical support, or even personnel.” In the following weeks, providers should continue to request vaccine as needed, and DSHS will place or fill orders for those amounts, rather than drawing down all doses in the state allotment. In addition to the 446,460 first doses, DSHS is ordering 639,400 second doses for people vaccinated a few weeks ago. An estimated 480,000 first and second doses are expected to be available to pharmacy locations, federally qualified health centers and dialysis centers as allocated directly by the federal government. Additional information provided:

- Texas has now administered more than 18.3 million doses of vaccine.
- More than 11 million people have received at least one dose, and over 7.9 million are now fully vaccinated.
- That means nearly half of all eligible Texans have gotten a COVID-19 shot, and more than one-third are fully vaccinated.

Vaccine continues to be available across the state at large vaccine hubs, community vaccination providers, and special clinics operated by the DSHS public health regions, local health departments and Texas Military Forces. Many of the large vaccine providers have reduced their vaccine requests as shots become more widely available at smaller, more convenient locations around the state like pharmacies and doctors’ offices.

[Here](#) is a link to Dr. Hellerstedt’s letter to vaccine providers.

Extension of Emergency ANAP Benefits – On May 4th, Governor Greg Abbott announced that the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) is providing approximately \$246 million in emergency Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) food benefits for the month of May as the state continues its response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Governor Abbott said, "Thank you to the USDA for extending these crucial emergency SNAP benefits for the month of May. Through the continued extension of the benefits, Texas families have been able to provide for their families and put food on the table throughout the pandemic." HHSC received federal approval from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to extend the maximum, allowable amount of SNAP benefits to recipients based on family size, and all SNAP households will receive a minimum of \$95 in emergency allotments. The emergency May allotments are in addition to the more than \$3.1 billion in benefits previously provided to Texans since April 2020. Recipients will also continue to receive a 15 percent increase in their total benefits, which will continue monthly until September 2021. This 15 percent increase and the additional emergency allotment amount should appear in recipients' accounts by May 31.

COVID-19 Disaster Declaration Extended – May 5th, Governor Greg Abbott renewed the COVID-19 Disaster Declaration for all counties and political subdivisions to receive resources necessary to cope with the disaster. The disaster proclamation has to be renewed every 30 days.