

87th LEGISLATIVE SESSION: POST-SESSION UPDATE (6/3/21)

NORTH TEXAS REGIONAL CHAMBER COALITION PRIORITY BILLS

Maintain public school funding levels established in HB 3 last session, including full funding for high-quality pre-K and earlychildhood education for all eligible children.

- *State legislators passed **SB 1** (\$248 billion), maintaining public school funding levels provided last session. **HB 1525**, which corrects specific provisions in HB 3 and is expected to be signed by the Governor.*
- *Public schools are also receiving support through the extension of the **hold-harmless funding** and provision of **federal stimulus dollars** for recovery from the impacts of COVID-19.*

Maintain higher education formula funding from the 86th Session, including restoring 5% mid-biennium cuts to higher education institutions.

- ***SB 1** maintains formula funding. However, higher education institutions had to absorb the previous 5% budget cuts. While **Federal relief funding** for colleges and universities helps with some unanticipated COVID costs, there is still plenty of work remaining to advance higher education in the 88th legislative session.*
- ***HB 1530** would have authorized public colleges and universities to issue revenue bonds to fund capital projects. The bill passed the House but did not get a hearing in the Senate.*
- ***HB 3767 (SB 1622)** establishes a Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative that will help align industry needs with education efforts by enhancing the coordination of the Texas Education Agency, the Texas Workforce Commission, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. The Governor is expected to sign.*

Maintain funding for the Skills Development Fund grants to improve workforce training, including 60X30TX, the Texas Reskilling & Upskilling Through Education (TRUE) initiative, and continuing investment in SBDCs for small businesses.

- ***SB 1102 (HB 3003)**, the TRUE Initiative, will provide a grant program for community colleges to offer accelerated learning opportunities, which will result in an increased, more productive workforce supply prepared to meet industry demands. The Governor is expected to sign.*

Maintain all economic development tools available, reauthorizing Chapter 313 to enable Texas the ability to compete for major capital-intensive projects, fund the Texas Enterprise Fund, Event Trust Fund, Texas Tourism, the Texas Music Office, and the Texas Film Commission at levels that keeps Texas competitive with other states.

- *Chapter 313 will end in December 2022. It would have been extended in its current form for two years with **HB 4242**, which passed the House but was not passed in the Senate. The reform bill, **HB 1556**, which attempted to improve the existing process, died in the House due to a lack of support. Although defunded in the House during the budget process, funding was restored for the Texas Enterprise Fund, the Moving Image Industry Incentive Program, and other economic development programs.*

Support the reduction of the number of uninsured Texans by securing available federal and state funds to reform and renew opportunities to broaden the net of coverage for the uninsured.

- *Unfortunately, **SB 117/HB 387**, the "Live Well Texas" bills died. Despite a bipartisan effort in the House, **HB 3871** was not given a hearing in the House Human Services committee. **SB 1 Amendment 54** allowed for debate of the benefits of Medicaid expansion during, but ultimately failed on the House floor.*
- ***HB 133 (SB 121)** will extend Medicaid coverage from 2-months to 6-months for Medicaid-eligible women after giving birth. It is expected to be signed by the Governor.*

Keep Texas open for business by ensuring all persons are welcome regardless of race, religion, or gender expression, including supporting comprehensive non-discrimination policies.

- ***HB 3860**, which would provide comprehensive support for non-discrimination of LGBTQ individuals, did not move forward as it did not receive a hearing in the House State Affairs Committee.*
- ***SB 29** would have negatively affected transgender children and adolescents who want to participate in UIL sports as well as Texas' ability to recruit top talent. **SB 29** passed the Senate and was voted favorably from the House Public Education Committee, but died on the House floor. A similar bill (**HB 4042**) was left pending in committee.*

Support innovative financing tools that would leverage state funds to create jobs and expedite delivery of needed transportation and infrastructure projects as well as maintenance.

- **HB 2905** regarding the use of -related projects was left pending in the House Natural Resources Committee. **HB 3159** and **HB 3160** (regarding the use of comprehensive development agreements) were left pending in the House Transportation Committee. **HB 4420**, which would have required TxDOT and the TWDB to partner with the Comptroller to study the feasibility of alternative project delivery methods to increase funding to the state, passed the House but died in the Senate.
- **HB 2219**, which revitalizes a dormant mobility fund, passed and is expected to be signed by the Governor.

Oppose any attempt to limit or prohibit the authority of city, county, and/or school district officials to use public funds to communicate with legislators and state agencies, as well as to pay membership dues to organizations that hire lobbyists.

- Anti-local control bills, **SB 10** and **HB 749** both died. Although ultimately unsuccessful, **SB 10** passed the Senate and the House State Affairs Committee. The House committee substituted language was intended to enhance the transparency of political subdivisions' use of a contract lobbyist rather than impose an outright ban on the practice. Chairman Paddie held firm to his commitment to take down his committee substitute when it was no longer moving forward as a clean bill due to damaging amendments.

Continue the exercise of equitable eminent domain to allow for the construction of roads, pipelines, power transmission lines, rail, and water infrastructure.

- Neither **HB 3312** nor **HB 3633** (which would have negatively impacted the high-speed rail project) were successful as they were left pending in committee. **HB 2730** (eminent domain reform) passed.

Developing plans and resources needed for greater broadband connectivity to enhanced access to public education, health care, employment, news, and information.

- **HB 5** is the omnibus broadband bill that will establish a **Broadband Development Office** (inside the Office of the Comptroller) to create a **Statewide Broadband Plan**. The Governor is expected to sign.

Additional RCC Priority Bills that impact the business climate and economic viability of the North Texas region:

- Support of the **Pandemic Liability Act** was successful. **SB 6 (HB 3659)** will protect businesses that have operated in good faith during the pandemic. The Governor is expected to sign.
- Supported by the RCC, **HB 1195 (SB 372)** exempts PPP from the state franchise tax. The Governor signed.
- Our opposition to **SB 219 (HB 1418)** was ultimately unsuccessful. Texas will now have more limits on private property owners when it comes to contract negotiations for construction. A Governor veto has been requested.
- Our opposition to **SB 19 (HB 2558)** was unsuccessful. This bill will prohibit state contracts with companies that discriminate against firearms or ammunition manufacturers.
- **HB 4072** (which would have required local sales taxes to be collected/reported based on where an item is "shipped to" rather than from where the order is produced/sold) died in the House Calendars Committee.
- **SB 3** passed and will provide reforms and oversight of Texas' power grid. The Governor is expected to sign.

NTX Regional Chamber Coalition:

Dallas Regional Chamber
Fort Worth Chamber
Frisco Chamber
Greater Arlington Chamber
Greater Irving-Las Colinas Chamber

McKinney Chamber
North Dallas Chamber
North Texas Commission
Plano Chamber
Richardson Chamber