

## Weekly Legislative Report

5.13.21



### GOVERNOR:

#### Congressional District 6

No candidate received a majority of votes in the May 1, 2021 special election in Congressional District 6 to fill the unexpired term of former Congressman Ron Wright (R-Arlington), who passed away on February 7, 2021. Therefore, there will be a Run-off between two Republicans Susan Wright of Arlington, widow of the late Congressman; and State Representative Jake Ellzey of Midlothian. Democrat Jana Lynne Sanchez of Fort Worth came within 354 votes (out of 78,374 total votes cast) to making the Run-off. Here are the results:

- Tammy Allison (D-Grand Prairie) – 4,238 votes – 5.41 percent
- Michael Ballantine (R-Arlington) – 2,224 votes – 2.84 percent
- Lydia Bean (D-Arlington) – 2,920 votes – 3.73 percent
- John Anthony Castro (R-Mansfield) – 4,321 votes – 5.51 percent
- Daryl J. Eddings, Sr. (D-Midlothian) – 1,652 votes – 2.11 percent
- Mike Egan (R-Arlington) – 1,543 votes – 1.97 percent
- **Jake Ellzey (R-Midlothian) – 10,851 votes – 13.85 percent**
- Phil Gray (L-Tyler) – 265 votes – 0.34 percent
- Brian Harrison (R-Midlothian) – 8,476 votes – 10.81 percent
- Matt Hinterlong (D-Dallas) – 252 votes – 0.32 percent
- Sery Kim (R-Arlington) – 888 votes – 1.13 percent
- Shawn Lassiter (D-Arlington) – 6,964 votes – 8.89 percent
- Adrian Mizher (I-Kennedale) – 351 votes – 0.45 percent
- Patrick Moses (D-Mansfield) – 1,189 votes – 1.52 percent
- Travis Rodermund (R-Arlington) – 460 votes – 0.59 percent
- Dan Rodimer (R-Mansfield) – 2,086 votes – 2.66 percent
- Manuel Richard Salazar, III (D-Arlington) – 1,119 votes – 1.43 percent
- Jana Lynne Sanchez (D-Fort Worth) – 10,497 votes – 13.39 percent
- Jenny Garcia Sharon (R-Austin) – 150 votes – 0.19 percent
- Brian K. Stephenson (D-Houston) – 271 votes – 0.35 percent
- Chris Suprun (D-Arlington) – 102 votes – 0.13 percent
- Michael Wood (R-Arlington) – 2,503 votes – 3.19 percent
- **Susan Wright (R-Arlington) – 15,052 votes – 19.21 percent**

#### Peace Officers' Memorial Ceremony

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott delivered remarks at the 2021 Peace Officers' Memorial Ceremony. The Texas Peace Officers' Memorial was established to honor Texas law enforcement officers who died in the line of duty. Following his remarks, the Governor and First Lady Cecilia Abbott presented families of fallen officers with

medals commemorating the officers' service. Governor Abbott said, "Today, we gather to honor Texas law enforcement officers who lost their lives in the line of duty. These courageous men and women gave their lives so that we may be safe, and we are eternally grateful for their service and sacrifice. The Texas Peace Officers' Memorial is more than a structure on the Capitol Grounds, it is a solemn reminder of the lives that were taken too soon. May we always remember these men and women who gave their lives in service to their fellow Texans."

### **Travel & Tourism Week**

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott issued a proclamation recognizing May 2-8, 2021 as Travel and Tourism Week in Texas. The week highlights the critical impact of the travel and tourism industry on the state of Texas and celebrates the resilience and ingenuity of Texans working in this industry during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the proclamation, Governor Abbott also released a video celebrating Travel and Tourism Week. Governor Abbott said, "In Texas, we know that it is not our challenges that define us, but rather how we overcome them, and the men and women of our travel and tourism industry have set their sights firmly on the future by charting a road to recovery. At this time, I join my fellow Texans in recognizing the power of travel to drive economic recovery in Texas and in celebrating the contributions of the travel and tourism industry in the Lone Star State. Prior to the pandemic, 1 in 10 Texas jobs were created by travel, and the travel industry was responsible for a \$169.8 billion economic impact to the Texas economy. Texas has already started to see rebounds in travel based on hotel bookings during and since spring break." The Governor's Office of Economic Development and Tourism (Travel Texas) is responsible for promoting Texas as a premier travel destination. The office works in concert with its partners (convention and visitors bureaus, local chambers of commerce, private travel-related organizations and associations) to promote travel to Texas in both the domestic and international tourism marketing arenas.

[Here](#) is a link to the governor's proclamation. [Here](#) is a link to the video.

### **Omni PGA Frisco Resort**

On May 4<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott delivered remarks at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Omni PGA Frisco Resort. The groundbreaking coincided with Travel and Tourism Week in Texas, and the governor thanked Omni Hotel & Resorts and PGA of America for playing a crucial role in promoting tourism in Texas. The governor also spoke of the tremendous economic recovery happening in Texas as vaccines become more widely available, and thanked the state's public and private partners for leading that recovery. Governor Abbott was joined for the groundbreaking by Frisco Mayor Jeff Cheney, PGA of America President Jim Richerson, and Omni Hotels & Resorts President Peter Strebel. Governor Abbott said, "Despite the challenges of the past year, Texas has remained the economic engine of America, and projects like the Omni PGA Frisco Resort are continuing to fuel Texas' economic might. Thank you to Omni Hotels & Resorts and PGA of America for partnering on this tremendous economic investment. Together, we will continue to elevate the city of Frisco and the state of Texas to extraordinary new heights." Omni PGA Frisco Resort, which is planned to open in

Spring 2023, is a new resort with two championship level golf courses as well as a short course, 501 guest rooms and suites, Golf Villas, multiple dining outlets, a Mokara Spa, meeting and event spaces, and more. The resort is a partnership between Omni Hotels & Resorts and the PGA of America. Announced in winter 2018, The PGA of America unveiled it will be moving its headquarters from Palm Beach County, Florida to Frisco, Texas, where it will anchor a 600-acre, mixed-use development with an initial investment worth more than half a billion dollars.

### **NRG Energy Corporate Headquarters**

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott commented on NRG Energy's announcement that they will relocate their corporate headquarters to Houston from New Jersey saying, "We are proud to welcome NRG Energy's corporate headquarters to Houston as they expand their already strong presence in the Lone Star State. With this move, NRG joins 50 other Fortune 500 companies headquartered in Texas, including 22 in the Houston area alone. America's leading businesses continue to invest in Texas - and grow jobs in Texas - because of our welcoming business climate, low taxes, reasonable regulations, and our young, growing, and skilled workforce. I thank NRG Energy for designating Texas, the energy capital of the world, as their corporate headquarters, and I look forward to our continued partnership as we ensure a more prosperous future for all who call the Lone Star State home."

### **SENATE:**

The Senate was in session Monday through Thursday of last week.

**On Monday**, the Senate passed 17 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).*

**Senator Paul Bettencourt** commented on the passage of **SB 1365** saying, "SB1365 clarifies the provisions put in place by the legislature allowing the TEA commissioner to take action after the 5-year timeline regarding the failed academic and financial performance of several school districts, which were undone by a recent Third Court of Appeals ruling. This legislation will ensure that students get a quality education and don't have to stay at a school that is failing improvement requests. This bill started because of Kashmere High School in Houston ISD staying on the state 'closure' list for over a decade. While others may keep looking the other way, I am not going to. The changes in SB 1365 apply to school districts and open-enrollment charter schools to continue operations of the accountability system. SB 1365 provides that in Year 3 of a school receiving an F rating, the school is required to implement a commissioner-approved campus turnaround plan and requires the commissioner to appoint a board of managers, or close the school if the district fails to submit a campus turn-around plan within 2 years. In Year 5 of school receiving an F rating, it requires the commissioner to appoint a board of managers to turn around campus or close the school. We are talking about restoring all the reforms that have been made in the Public Education system for the last 5 years, because of a Third Court of Appeals ruling, striking down the A-F reform and other actions the Texas legislature has taken in a bipartisan matter over the past few years. When a school district, like HISD continues to have chronically failing schools and board members that are unable to function together to turn it around, the State has an obligation to step in on behalf of students and parents in Texas."



**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.*

**Senator Charles Schwertner**, in debating **HB 1927** said, "HB 1927 would recognize the United States Constitution as our permit to carry and allow all law-abiding adults, aged 21 years or older, to carry a handgun for the protection of themselves or their families, in public places, in a holster, without the requirement of a state-issued license. Texas would become the 21<sup>st</sup>, and largest, state to adopt permitless carry. People who are prohibited from possessing a handgun will still be prohibited from possessing a handgun under this bill. Nothing in this bill regarding possession is changed. To me, this bill is about two things: the advancement of self-defense, and a belief in - and trust of - law-abiding citizens to avail themselves of their Second Amendment right to self-defend by carrying a sidearm. I think this is an advancement that is going to improve safety both for the individual and society at large."

**Lt. Governor Dan Patrick** commented on the House passage of **HB 1927** saying, "I am proud that the Texas Senate passed HB 1927 today, the Constitutional Carry bill, which affirms every Texan's right to self-defense and our state's strong support for our Second Amendment right to bear arms. In the Lone Star State, the Constitution is our permit to carry. I congratulate Senator Charles Schwertner for his leadership on this important issue and for the thoughtful and respectful debate in the Texas Senate today. We have moved quickly on this legislation and I want to thank all those involved who helped gather the votes needed to pass this historic bill."

**Senate Democratic Caucus** commented on the passage of **HB 1927** saying, "HB 1927 strips away the last remaining safeguards protecting Texans from untrained and unfit individuals being able to carry a handgun in public. Current state laws protect Texans from felons, domestic abusers and those subject to domestic violence restraining orders who seek to arm themselves. People charged or convicted of class A or B misdemeanors in the prior five years, persons who are chemically dependent or people 'incapable of exercising sound judgment with respect to the proper use and storage of a handgun' cannot currently get a license to carry in Texas. However, under HB 1927, these people would be free to carry a handgun in public. By getting rid of the basic requirement to obtain a license to carry and background checks, Texas Senate Republicans are making it easier for dangerous individuals to carry a gun nearly everywhere they go. Texas is in the midst of a gun violence epidemic. Twenty-seven Texans were killed in Sutherland Springs. Six months later, 10 more were killed at Santa Fe High School. One year later, 23 were gunned down at a Walmart in El Paso. One month after that, seven were killed in Midland-Odessa. In an average year, nearly 3,500 Texans are killed by a gun, and another 9,000 suffer from a gun-related injury. Despite these alarming facts and strong opposition from the Texas Police Chiefs Association and the Texas Municipal Police Association, the Republicans in the Texas

Senate have prioritized more unregulated guns at the expense of public safety. Texans know we need more gun safety laws, not less. Law enforcement knows this bill puts officers in harm's way. License to carry instructors testified that some individuals they train lack such basic knowledge of firearms that they load bullets into a gun's chamber facing the wrong direction. Private property rights are being undermined and businesses are saddled with the burden of enforcement while trying to recover from the pandemic. It seems that the only people in Texas who support doing away with a license to carry, background checks and basic firearm safety training are Republican lawmakers. HB 1927 makes Texans less safe, plain and simple. That is why the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus stood united in staunch opposition to this dangerous legislation."

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.*

**Senator Cesar Blanco** commented on the passage of SB 168 saying, “SB 168 will ensure active shooter exercises are safely conducted and do not harm the mental health and well-being of students and teachers. School shootings are tragic and traumatize our communities. In response, many schools have adopted active shooter drills or simulations to train and prepare students and teachers. However, there has been a lot of concern about the impact active shooter exercises might have on the mental and developmental well-being of students and teachers. Moreover, schools lack uniform guidance on requirements and best practices for active shooter exercises. Evidence suggests that active shooter drills may be harmful to the mental health of students and school staff. According to a recent study, active shooter drills are associated with increases in depression (39 percent), stress and anxiety (42 percent), and physiological health problems (23 percent) for children as young as five years old up to high-schoolers, their parents, and teachers. SB 168 requires a school district to adopt best practices and policies regarding active shooter exercises. If schools are going to conduct active shooter exercises, we need to ensure those exercises do more good than harm. This bill will require schools that choose to conduct active shooter exercises provide advance notice and use best practices so active shooter exercises don't traumatize school kids, teachers, and parents.”

<b>Total number of bills reported out of Senate Committees this week:</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Total number of bills passed on the Local &amp; Uncontested Calendar:</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Total number of bills passed by the Senate last week:</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Total number of bills passed by the Senate this session:</b>	<b>662</b>

***This Week:*** The Senate reconvened on Monday, May 10, 2021 at 4:30 p.m.

## **HOUSE:**

The House was in session Monday through Saturday last 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.*

**Texas Alliance for Life** director Joe Pojman commented on the passage of **HB 1280** saying, "We commend those House members who voted to pass the Human Life Protection Act. This act completely protects unborn children from abortion beginning at conception as quickly as possible. In the last two decades, the progress Texas has made toward protecting unborn babies and providing compassionate alternatives to abortion has been nothing short of breathtaking."

**Planned Parenthood** Texas Executive Director Dyana Limon-Mercado commented on House passage of **SB 8** saying, "Fighting to protect abortion access is never easy in the Texas legislature, but we will always fight for essential health care access. We are incredibly grateful to our Legislative Champions in the Texas House who shared their moving personal stories and expressed how each person deserves the right to make personal, private health care decisions. Thank you to the Texas Women's Health Caucus and Chair Donna Howard for leading the efforts against these extreme bills that are overwhelmingly opposed by Texans from across the political spectrum. The majority of Texans support safe, legal abortion. This bill is about nothing more than politics and is fueled by extremist efforts to ban abortion outright. Planned Parenthood will do everything it can to protect its patients. This fight does not end here."

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 27<sup>th</sup> 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.*

**Fair Election Texas**, a coalition of businesses and Chambers of Commerce issued a statement in opposition to SB 7 stating, “We believe the growth of free enterprise is directly related to the freedom of its citizens. Freedom is preserved in our democracy when we hold free and fair elections that protect the fundamental rights of all Texans. We believe that Texas elections should be convenient, transparent, and secure. We believe the right to vote is sacred. When more people participate in our democratic process, we will all prosper. We stand together, as a nonpartisan coalition, calling on all elected leaders in Texas to support reforms that make democracy more accessible and oppose any changes that would restrict eligible voters’ access to the ballot. By supporting a stronger trustworthy democracy, we will elevate our economy.”

**Mexican American Legislative Caucus** Chair Rafael Anchía (D-Dallas), Texas **House Democratic Caucus** Chair Chris Turner (D-Grand Prairie), **Texas Legislative Black Caucus** Chair Nicole Collier (D-Fort Worth) and Vice-Chair of the House Committee on Elections Jessica González (D-Dallas) issued a joint statement in response to the Fair Election Texas letter saying, “We are grateful to the dozens of advocacy groups, companies, chambers of commerce and business leaders who stand with us in our efforts to make voting as safe, easy and accessible as possible. We will oppose legislation that undermines democracy and erects arbitrary barriers for Texas voters.”

**Mexican American Legislative Caucus** commented on House passage of SB 7 saying, “Today, the Texas House of Representatives voted on SB 7 - a racially motivated law that aims to intimidate and suppress the vote. Despite last minute changes after hours of push back, SB 7 passed the Texas House of Representatives on a vote of 78 - 64. Members of the Mexican American Legislative Caucus (MALC) pledge that the fight is not over. SB 7 rode into the Texas House cloaked in that long standing pretext of ‘purity of the ballot box’ that has denied full participation of African Americans and Latinos for generations. In a state where soon you can carry a gun without a permit, you must swear an oath under penalty of perjury just to help your elderly Madrina or

Padrino cast their vote. Texans need their legislators to be focused on our failing healthcare system, fixing a broken electrical grid, and funding public schools. Instead, our time is consumed with fighting for one of our country's most basic and fundamental rights. We will keep fighting though, because we recognize that good trouble has brought us out of this mess before."

**League of Women Voters of Texas** president Grace Chimene commented on House passage of SB 7 saying, "For democracy to work for all of us, it must include us all. In total disregard for what voters want, the Texas House of Representatives chose to pass a major election bill - SB 7 - that greatly limits voting methods, complicates voter assistance, and adds criminal penalties for election workers. The League of Women Voters of Texas (LWVTX) is deeply disappointed in both the outcome of this election bill and the process by which it ultimately passed. SB 7 erects deliberate barriers to silence our most vulnerable citizens: voters with disabilities, the elderly, and communities of color. Further, the process by which the bill was passed is shameful. Committee hearings lacked safety protocols and civility, discouraging in-person, public testimony. Voting and elections are fundamental to our democracy. We had hoped for a more democratic process and an outcome that would benefit all voters instead of a few legislators. The League advocates for an election system where every American can safely and freely cast their ballot. When finally passed, this bill will affect how we cast ballots and run elections in Texas for years to come - voters deserve better! Unfortunately, the majority of Texas legislators chose not to listen and to confirm their definition of 'election integrity' is restricting voting rights and instilling fear for all involved in the election process."

**U.S. Senator Ted Cruz** issued a statement after House passage of SB 7 saying, "Today, the Texas House passed SB 7 on second reading, a bill to safeguard our elections in Texas, despite immense pressure from woke corporations and the liberal media. The bill protects the voting rights of 29 million Texans and would make our elections in Texas more accessible and more secure. When Texans go to cast a vote, that vote should count. I am grateful for the Republicans and the leadership in the Texas House and Senate who have been leading the fight to protect the integrity of our elections in Texas, and I hope that this bill becomes law."

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 10, 2011** – Last day for House committees to report House Bills and House Joint Resolutions (119<sup>th</sup> day).

**May 11, 2011** – 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 (120<sup>th</sup> 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 (121<sup>st</sup> 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 (122<sup>nd</sup> 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 (123<sup>rd</sup> 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 (128<sup>th</sup> 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 (130<sup>th</sup> Day).

**May 22, 2021** – Last day for House Committees to report Senate Bills and Senate Joint Resolutions (131<sup>st</sup> 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 (132<sup>nd</sup> 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 (133<sup>rd</sup> Day).

**May 25, 2021** – Last day for the House to consider Second Reading Senate Bills and Senate Joint Resolutions on the regular calendar (134<sup>th</sup> 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 (135<sup>th</sup> Day).

**May 27, 2021** – All Senate amendments must be distributed in the House before midnight due to the 24-hour layout rule (136<sup>th</sup> 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 (137<sup>th</sup> 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 137<sup>th</sup> day) before midnight due to the 24-hour lay-out rule (138<sup>th</sup> 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 (139<sup>th</sup> Day).

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

<b>Total number of bills reported out of House Committees this week:</b>	<b>377</b>
<b>Total number of bills passed on the Local &amp; Consent Calendar:</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Total number of bills passed by the House last week:</b>	<b>347</b>
<b>Total number of bills passed by the House this session:</b>	<b>983</b>

***This Week:*** The House reconvened on Monday, May 10, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.

## **REVENUE:**

### **Revised Biennial Revenue Estimate**

On May 3<sup>rd</sup>, 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 87<sup>th</sup> 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 87<sup>th</sup> 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."

**Lt. Governor Dan Patrick** said, "I am not surprised by Comptroller Hegar's announcement today affirming that our conservative policies - low taxes and reasonable regulation - as well as our commitment to keeping our state open - have caused the Texas economy to take off like a rocket. Businesses are flocking to Texas, creating thousands of new jobs and fueling productivity, growth and innovation. The Texas economy continues to lead the nation and is a major force in the global marketplace."

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

## **STATEWIDE – COVID-19 RESPONSE:**

### **DSHS Weekly Vaccine Distribution Update**

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, the Department of State Health Services issued its weekly update on Vaccine distribution in Texas for the week of May 3<sup>rd</sup>. 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 3<sup>rd</sup>. 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 4<sup>th</sup>, 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 4<sup>th</sup>, 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 4<sup>th</sup>, 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**

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, 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.

### **State Mobile Vaccination Team Call Center**

On May 6<sup>th</sup>, Governor Greg Abbott, the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM), and the Texas Military Department (TMD) announced the launch of the State Mobile Vaccination Team Call Center. Beginning on May 7<sup>th</sup>, Texas businesses or civic organizations can call 844-90-TEXAS and select Option 3 to schedule a visit from a state mobile vaccine team to vaccinate employees, visitors, or members. To qualify for a visit, a business or civic organization must have 10 or more employees, visitors, or members who voluntarily choose to be vaccinated. Homebound Texans are also encouraged to call the hotline and select Option 1 to request a state mobile vaccination team to visit their home. Governor Abbott said, "Vaccines are the most effective tool in Texas' fight against COVID-19, and we are committed to making COVID-19 vaccines even more widely available to Texans across the state. The State Vaccine Call Center will help connect businesses and civic organizations with these life-saving shots and ensure that more Texans have an opportunity to get vaccinated. I urge organizations and businesses to call 844-90-TEXAS and schedule a visit from a state mobile vaccine team. Here in Texas, COVID-19 vaccines will always be strongly encouraged and always voluntary."

### **COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Changes**

Effective May 6<sup>th</sup>, the Texas Department of State Health Services will no longer allocate COVID-19 vaccine to providers on a weekly basis. Now that the supply of COVID-19 vaccine is regularly exceeding demand, DSHS will fill vaccine orders from providers as they come in and ship vaccine from the DSHS Pharmacy or place orders with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on a daily basis. Imelda Garcia, DSHS associate commissioner for laboratory and infectious disease services said, "This is a big step in vaccine distribution. The ability to ship vaccine to pharmacies, doctors' offices, and other providers as they need it will go a long way to making sure it is available when and where Texans want to be vaccinated. Vaccine is available more widely than ever at hundreds of locations across Texas, many with no waiting and no appointment needed. Convenience will be key to getting the next group of Texans vaccinated, and DSHS is working with existing providers, employers and community organizations to make vaccination as easy as possible. With an ample supply of vaccine, providers no longer need to use every dose in the week they receive it but should store it under the conditions that will maximize its shelf life. DSHS is also encouraging providers to vaccinate anyone who wants to be vaccinated, even if that means opening a new vial for that person without knowing whether all doses will be used." More than 11.3 million people have received at least one dose, and over 8.3 million are now fully vaccinated. More than half of all eligible Texans have gotten a dose of vaccine, and about 37 percent are fully vaccinated.

As a result of the change to regular vaccine ordering, DSHS will no longer post weekly allocation tables. The state will also retire the weekly report on vaccine doses reported by providers as wasted.

### **DSHS Invites Pediatric Health Care Providers to Enroll in Vaccine Program**

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, in anticipation of the expansion of the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine's Emergency Use Authorization to include adolescents age 12 years and older, the Texas Department of State Health Services invites pediatric health care providers to enroll in the COVID-19 Vaccine Program. Currently, the Pfizer COVID-19 vaccine is authorized for people 16 years and older. DSHS Commissioner John Hellerstedt, MD said "Vaccinating adolescents will bring us closer to ending the pandemic and getting back to normal. Starting the enrollment process now will enable pediatric providers to start vaccinating their patients soon after the FDA expands the Pfizer vaccine's EUA."