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TEXAS LEGISLATIVE UPDATE
02/22/25
PHTA

GOVERNOR

Governor Provides Update on Wildfires, Flooding, and Winter Weather – On February 17th, Governor Greg Abbott provided an update during a press conference on Texas' response to wildfire threats in West Texas, potential flash flooding in East Texas, and severe winter

weather impacting large portions of the state following a briefing with state officials at the State Operations Center in Austin.

The Governor urged caution of exposure to ultra-cold temperatures that risk the safety of Texans. He reassured Texans on the stability and resiliency of the Texas power grid to perform during severe winter weather. On February 14th, Governor Abbott directed TDEM to activate state emergency response resources ahead of increased severe weather threats. Texas has deployed more than 2,000 state responders and more than 1,500 vehicles and equipment assets, and more than a dozen state agencies are currently responding to this winter weather threat across Texas.

Governor Abbott Addresses Texas Public Policy Foundation – On February 19th, Governor Greg Abbott gave the keynote address at the Texas Public Policy Foundation’s (TPPF) annual Texas Policy Summit in Austin.

Governor Abbott said, “The reality is that those who are entrenched in the status quo do not believe in school choice because it disrupts the monopoly that they have on education. Those anti-school choice, they’re going to fight to the very end to discourage members to vote in favor of school choice. But you can tell that we are winning. You can tell that the fight is over because there is a process that shows you the end is near. That is when your opponents have nothing else to resort to other than lying about the facts. Our goal must be to take the actions needed to put Texas on a pathway to having the best education for the kids of our state. Texas must rank No. 1 in educating our kids, and school choice is the path to achieving that goal.”

Speaking to a crowd of over 500 legislative and policy leaders, Governor Abbott pushed back against school choice opponents for criticizing the impact of a Texas school choice program. The Governor added, “Public education will continue to be fully funded; every Texas family across every region, demographic, and socioeconomic background will have access to a school choice program; per-student funding is at an all-time high of over \$15,000; and parents who homeschool their children will have control over their curriculum.” Additionally, the Governor reiterated that property taxes continue to be a top priority, mentioning that Texas must end the loopholes that local taxing entities use to raise Texans property taxes by requiring two-thirds voter approval for all tax increases. The Governor also highlighted Texas’ unprecedented border security efforts and pledged to continue working with the Trump Administration to bolster border security measures that will help secure the border for the next 40 years.



SENATE

The Senate was in session on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday this week.

On Tuesday, the Senate passed resolutions recognizing Prairie View A&M University Day, Texas Music Advocacy Day, Alabama Coushatta of Texas Day, Kaufman County Day, Edinburg Day, Texas Game Warden Day, Texas Manufacturers Day, and Mission Day; were introduced to Texas Electric Cooperatives and Meals on Wheels Texas; and adopted a resolution honoring the life of former State Representative, State Senator and Member of Congress Eddie Bernice Johnson.

On Wednesday, the Senate passed resolutions recognizing Lubbock Day, Rio Grande Valley Day, El Paso Day, Texas Oncology Day, Texas Affiliation of Affordable Housing Providers Day, Richardson Chamber of Commerce Day, Texas A&M University Corpus Christi Day, Texas Building Owners and Managers Day, and Northeast Texas Regional Alliance Day; and honored Brown County, and Representative Harold Dutton on his 80th birthday.


The Senate took up:

- SB 9 by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would shift the authority to set initial bonds for specific high-risk defendants, including those on parole, repeat felony offenders, and those charged with violent crimes or detained under immigration holds, from hearing officers to a Presiding Judge that is accountable to voters.
- SB 40 by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would ban the use of taxpayer money by a political subdivision to fund nonprofit organizations that use public donations to pay bail bonds for defendants; would allow taxpayers or residents to seek injunctive relief if the prohibition is violated.
- SJR 1 by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would propose a constitutional mandating the denial of bail for an illegal alien accused of a felony upon probable cause.

On Thursday, the Senate took up:

- SJR 5 by Joan Huffman (R-Houston) would propose a constitutional amendment allowing judges to deny bail to the most violent offenders who pose a clear and convincing threat to public safety.

Next Week: The Senate adjourned until 9:00 a.m. on Monday, February 24, 2025.



HOUSE

The House was in session on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday this week.

House Administration Committee – On February 18th, the House Administration Committee approved general House budget items, expenditure requests by House members, management of House facilities, coordination with House support personnel, and general enforcement of House policies and procedures. Actions taken include:

- Set the monthly credit to each member's operating account in the amount of: \$21,250 for each month that falls wholly or partly during the regular legislative session or a special legislative session of the 89th Legislature; and \$18,500 in any other month.
- Authorized an increase in the amount credited each month to each member's operating account in an amount to allow for an increase in longevity pay as authorized by legislation.
- Authorized a member to employ, with funds from the member's operating budget, such staff as the member deems necessary.
- Authorized a member, at the close of each fiscal year, to carry forward and have credited to the member's operating account for the next fiscal year the unexpended balance of the member's current fiscal year operating account, not to exceed \$30,000; provided that, if the member is the chair of a committee or permanent standing subcommittee, the member may transfer and have credited to that committee's or permanent standing subcommittee's operating account all or part of that unexpended balance, not to exceed \$30,000, and may have the remainder of that amount credited to the member's operating account; and further provided that a member who is the chair of a committee or permanent standing subcommittee may not transfer and have credited to that member's operating account any portion of the unexpended balance of the committee's or permanent standing subcommittee's operating account.
- On the third business day of each calendar month, the House Business Office is required to determine the available, unobligated balance at the end of the preceding calendar month for each member's operating account and each committee's operating account; provided that, if the House Business Office determines that a member's operating account has a negative balance at the end of the preceding calendar month, the office shall provide notice to the member and the member shall deposit funds in the account equal to the negative balance not later than the 10th business day after the date the member receives notice of the deficit from the House Business Office. If a member deposits funds in the member's operating account to cover a negative balance, and the member later has a positive balance in the member's operating account at the end of a calendar month in the same fiscal year in which the member deposited the funds to cover the negative balance, the member may use the excess money in the member's operating account at that time to reimburse the member in an amount not to exceed the amount the member earlier deposited to cover the negative balance.
- Prohibited a committee operating account from operating at a deficit.

- Adopted the committee rules to implement House Rule 5, Section 20, related to the accreditation of media representatives.
- Approved the electronic form of sworn statements used in the electronic witness registration system and paper sworn statement and translator identification forms as provided to the committee by the Committee Coordinator.
- Approved the standard process for electronic submission and posting of public comments and the continued use of the informational links on committee meeting notices relating to live broadcasts of committee hearings, instructions for public access to the meeting location, instructions for witness registration, and access to the public comment input portal, which were used during the 88th Legislature.
- Approved the appropriate workplace conduct training process.
- Adopted the House Policies and Procedures Manual of the 88th Legislature.
- Chairman Charlie Geren (R-Fort Worth) appointed the following Subcommittee to Review the House Policies and Procedures Manual:
 - Representative Sheryl Cole (D-Austin),
 - Representative Drew Darby (R-San Angelo), and
 - Representative Angie Chen Button (R-Garland)

The Chair directed the subcommittee to work with the executive director of the House Business Office to update the manual and to complete its work expeditiously.

Next Week: The House adjourned until 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, February 25, 2025.

TRACKED LEGISLATION

[HB 1133](#)

Relating to the authority of a property owners' association to prohibit or regulate certain swim instruction provided in a pool on an owner's or resident's property.

Author: Carrie Isaac

Last Action: (11/12/2024) - Filed

[HB 1245](#)

Relating to a prohibition on the use of water on nonresidential property to irrigate nonfunctional turf during a drought.

Author: Vikki Goodwin

Last Action: (11/12/2024) - Filed

[HB 2613](#)

Relating to liability of a water park entity for injuries arising from certain activities.

Author: Caroline Harris Davila

Last Action: (2/10/2025) - Filed

SB 63

Relating to the licensing and regulation of child swim instruction operators; requiring an occupational license; imposing penalties, including administrative penalties; authorizing fees.

Author: Judith Zaffirini

Last Action: (2/3/2025) - Referred to Business & Commerce

SB 100

Relating to the issuance of a license by the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation to certain out-of-state applicants; authorizing a fee.

Author: Bob Hall

Last Action: (2/3/2025) - Referred to Business & Commerce

SB 1119

Relating to liability of a water park entity for injuries arising from certain activities.

Author: Bryan Hughes

Last Action: (2/5/2025) - Filed

Key Dates – 89th Legislative Session

- 89th Legislative Session Begins: January 14, 2025
- Inauguration of US President – January 20, 2025
- Bill Filing Deadline: March 14, 2025
- 89th Legislative Session Ends: June 2, 2025
- Governor’s Veto Deadline: June 22, 2025

Keep Track of the Texas Legislature

To keep track of bills or access legislative information for this or previous sessions, visit [Texas Legislature Online \(TLO\)](#).

To learn more about the Texas State Senate and its activities, visit the [Texas State Senate](#) website.

To learn more about the Texas House of Representatives and its activities, visit the [Texas House of Representatives](#) website.

Thank you for taking the time to read our Texas Legislative newsletter. We look forward to providing weekly news and information important to each of you while working to make the 89th Legislative Session a very successful one for PHTA!

Sincerely,

Jake Posey and Steve Koebele
Texas Pool & Spa Coalition (TPSC) Lobbyists