

**Interim Committee Charges
Texas House of Representatives
84th Legislature**

House Committee on Agriculture & Livestock

2. Determine the sources of water used by Texans in the production of food and fiber, and examine current water delivery methods and water conservation goals for agricultural use. Evaluate whether there are more efficient and effective water-usage management practices that could be employed in the agricultural industry, and determine the impact of crop insurance requirements on producers. *(Joint charge with the House Committee on Natural Resources)*

House Committee on Appropriations

12. Examine the historical growth of the Texas Medicaid program, including factors affecting caseload and cost trends. Review legislative or policy initiatives created to detect or deter waste, fraud and abuse; to reduce cost; or improve the quality of healthcare in the Texas Medicaid program. Evaluate the effectiveness of, and identify savings associated with, these initiatives.

14. Conduct a review of current funding formulas for community colleges. Specifically, focus on the elements of the instructional funding structure created by the 83rd Legislature: core operations, student success points, and contact hour funding and also the adequacy of state funding to sustain community colleges in light of the variance in resources available to individual colleges. Make recommendations for possible changes to the funding structure of community colleges or changes in the levels of current funding given the future workforce and higher educational needs of the state. *(Joint charge with the House Committee on Higher Education)*

15. Examine the formulas used to fund institutions of higher education. Study the initial development of the formulas and the underlying assumptions used. Make recommendations for new discipline weights, if necessary, evaluating any discrepancies in formula funding for the same program offered at different types of institutions and the inclusion of new medical schools on general academic campuses.

House Committee on Economic & Small Business Development

2. Evaluate what local governments are doing to attract businesses to their communities and examine ways the state can leverage these practices and provide support. Include ways to improve local economic development programs to ensure a continued return on investment for taxpayers. In addition, study the authority, financial accountability, and types of statutorily allowed expenditures of economic development corporations. Provide analysis of 4A and 4B sales tax programs and determine if they are still meeting their intended purpose effectively.

3. Study opportunities and financial incentives for expansion and growth of small businesses in Texas. Examine if adequate resources and capital exist for small businesses. Include analysis of any regulatory or tax hurdles and provide recommendations to alleviate these burdens. Furthermore, review programs available to provide training and support to develop business management and finance skills. Consider financial incentives that would incentivize expansion of existing small businesses and growth for new small businesses.

8. Examine partnerships between higher education institutions, public school districts, and workforce that promote postsecondary readiness. Provide coordination recommendations to ensure vocational, career, and technical education programs are more accessible. Determine the most effective ways to invest in these partnerships and programs to direct at-risk students to stable career paths. Examine current rules and laws limiting employers from providing meaningful internships, apprenticeships, and other opportunities. Consider new methods to finance workforce training programs and associated assets in high schools and postsecondary schools, including ways to reduce or eliminate these costs and options to incentivize businesses to invest in training equipment for schools. *(Joint charge with the House Committee on Public Education)*

House Committee on Higher Education

1. Conduct a review of current funding formulas for community colleges. Specifically, focus on the elements of the instructional funding structure created by the 83rd Legislature: core operations, student success points, and contact hour funding and also the adequacy of state funding to sustain community colleges in light of the variance in resources available to individual colleges. Make recommendations for possible changes to the funding structure of community colleges or changes in the levels of current funding given the future workforce and higher educational needs of the state. *(Joint charge with the House Committee on Appropriations)*

2. Review the state's community college system, including a discussion of taxing districts, service areas and any barriers to access. Examine the governance structure to ensure that campuses in multi campus districts that are outside of a college taxing district receive fair and equitable treatment. Review the accounting and reporting requirements of community college districts to ensure open government and transparency. Study ways community colleges could offer accessible and affordable baccalaureate degree programs in areas where the state has a significant workforce shortage without compromising quality of education and training. Make recommendations to maximize efficient student pathways and to offer more affordable educational opportunities such as through dual credit and early college start programs.

5. Study the long-term viability of the Hazlewood Act, in particular the legacy tuition exemption provision. Review eligibility requirements and recommend changes to ensure that the program can remain solvent. Examine the costs of the program to institutions of higher education, including foregone tuition, additional infrastructure, administrative and instructional support costs, and the financial impact on nonveteran/legacy students. Analyze and report any effect changes to this program would have for veterans and their families. Review current data systems related to this exemption and recommend improvements to ensure quality and accuracy of information. *(Joint charge with the House Committee on Defense & Veterans' Affairs)*

House Committee on Investments & Financial Services

1. Study the current state of cybersecurity of financial institutions in Texas. Review state and federal laws, and evaluate what additional steps need to be taken to make financial institutions in Texas more secure.

House Committee on Licensing & Administrative Procedures

1. Identify all occupations licensed by the state to determine if they are necessary for public safety and health. Determine if any criminal penalties associated with licensure are unnecessarily punitive, recommend methods to improve reciprocity with other states, and determine if a mandatory certification program could be used in lieu of mandatory licensure.

House Committee on Public Education

5. Examine partnerships between higher education institutions, public school districts, and workforce that promote postsecondary readiness. Provide coordination recommendations to ensure vocational, career, and technical education programs are more accessible. Determine the most effective ways to invest in these partnerships and programs to direct at-risk students to stable career paths. Examine current rules and laws limiting employers from providing meaningful internships, apprenticeships, and other opportunities. Consider new methods to finance workforce training programs and associated assets in high schools and postsecondary schools, including ways to reduce

8. Study ways to increase parental choice in education, and review the successes and failures of school choice programs in other states. Examine the benefits and costs of implementing such a program in Texas. Recommend whether an expansion of school choice in Texas is needed, and suggest ways to ensure that any school receiving public support is held accountable for its academic and financial performance.

House Committee on Public Health

3. Examine the history of telemedicine in Texas and the adequacy of the technological infrastructure for use between Texas healthcare providers. Review the benefits of using telemedicine in rural and underserved areas and current reimbursement practices. Explore opportunities to expand and improve the delivery of healthcare and identify methods to increase awareness by provider groups, including institutions of higher education, and payers of telemedicine activities being reimbursed in Texas.

House Committee on Transportation

5. Evaluate local transportation funding mechanisms authorized by the state, such as transportation reinvestment zones, to determine their effectiveness. Identify methods for local entities to utilize these tools to improve congestion.

Interim Committee Charges
Texas Senate
84th Legislature

Finance

Franchise Tax: Study the benefits, including the dynamic effects, of continuing to phase out the franchise tax. Consider alternate approaches to funding the Property Tax Relief Fund.

Business and Commerce

Occupational Licensing: Review all occupations licensed under Texas law to determine the extent to which continued state regulation and licensure is required to protect public health and safety. Examine methods to ensure greater legislative oversight of new regulations, scope, and necessity of certain licenses and make recommendations for state licenses that should be repealed or transitioned to private-sector enforcement.

State Affairs

- **Religious Liberty:** Examine measures to affirm 1st Amendment religious liberty protections in Texas, along with the relationship between local ordinances and state and federal law. Make recommendations to ensure that the government does not force individuals, organizations or businesses to violate their sincerely held religious beliefs.
- **Monitoring Charge:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on State Affairs during the 84th Legislature, Regular Session and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, monitor the following: 1) Implementation of open and campus carry legislation and determine if the current laws regulating the places that handguns can be carried are easily understood or if clarification is needed to ensure the average citizen understands when, where, and under what circumstances it is lawful to carry a weapon, versus when it is a criminal offense for which there may be a defense; 2) Requirements for guardianships; 3) The electronic voting program for certain military members serving overseas; 4) Changes made to the Employment Retirement System regarding member contributions and proposed reforms to the Teacher Retirement System of Texas; and 5) The establishment of a public integrity unit under the authority of Texas Rangers.
- **Implementation of Federal Regulations:** Study the impact and identify challenges Texas faces implementing proposed federal Environmental Protection Agency regulations, including, but not limited to the Clean Power Plan, Reduction of Methane & Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) from oil and gas facilities, Ozone standards,

Regional Haze, and Waters of the U.S. Make recommendations for legislative or constitutional action the committee considers necessary.

- **Expedited Permitting:** Evaluate the permitting process in Texas and neighboring states and make recommendations for eliminating unnecessary barriers and expediting the process to ensure that the regulatory process is consistent and predictable.
- **Oil Field Theft:** Study and make recommendations for solving the oil field theft problems facing Texas, including identifying the proper mechanisms for increasing enforcement effectiveness.
- **Monitoring Charge:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development during the 84th Legislature, Regular Session and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, monitor the following: 1) Legislation relating to Texas aerospace incentives; 2) Expedited permitting; and 3) Electric utility rate adjustments.

Ag, Water and Rural Affairs

- **State Water Plan:** Study and make recommendations on improving the process of developing and executing the State Water Plan.

Education

- **School Choice:** Study school choice programs enacted in states across the nation, examining education savings account and tax credit scholarship programs in particular. Examine the implementation process used in other states and what impact these programs have had on student academics and state and local district budgets. Make recommendations on which choice plan could best serve Texas students.
- **Charter School Approval, Expansion, Revocation:** Study the approval, expansion, and revocation of public charter schools in Texas, including the implementation of SB 2 (83R) and other legislation. In particular, examine the issues surrounding the disposition of state property when charters are revoked, non-renewed, or cease to operate. Make recommendations regarding policies to ensure an efficient and effective transfer and disposal of state property that preserves state interest while ensuring that certain investment capital and the bond market supporting charter construction remains robust. In addition, make recommendations if needed to clarify policies regarding expansion of existing high-quality charter schools in Texas. Additionally, examine facility funding for charter schools in other states and make recommendations on facility funding assistance for charter schools in Texas.
- **Efficiency/Productivity Review:** Conduct a comprehensive performance review of all public schools in Texas, examining ways to improve efficiency, productivity, and student academic outcomes. Study performance-based funding mechanisms that allocate dollars based upon achievement versus attendance. Identify any state mandates which hinder

student performance, district and campus innovation, and efficiency and productivity overall.

Higher Education

- **HB 5 Implementation, 60x30TX/Higher Education Alignment:** Monitor the ongoing implementation of HB 5 (83R), and examine current projections for preparation of Texas high school students for postsecondary education and workforce training. Examine best practices and recommend strategies to align the implementation with the 60x30TX higher education plan, including, but not limited to, dual credit, credit transferability, and fields of study. **(Joint Charge with Senate Education)**
- **Baccalaureate Degrees at Community Colleges:** Study regional workforce needs in the state and make recommendations on whether metrics should be applied to authorize public community colleges to offer certain baccalaureate degrees in order to meet the regional workforce needs.

Health and Human Services

- **Improving Access to Care through TeleHealth:** Study and make recommendations on the appropriate use, scope and application of tele-monitoring and telemedicine services to improve management and outcomes for adults and children with complex medical needs and for persons confined in correctional facilities. Examine barriers to implementation of these services and any impact on access to health care services in rural areas of the state.

Transportation

- **TxDOT Funding:** Monitor any new and anticipated revenue appropriated to the Texas Department of Transportation and make recommendations that address project prioritization and selection, effectiveness of staffing levels and project delivery methods.
- **Monitoring Charge:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Transportation during the 84th Legislature, Regular Session and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, monitor the following: **1)** Progress of the Texas Department of Transportation's efforts to propose a plan to eliminate toll roads; **2)** Removing eminent domain authority from private toll corporations; **3)** Ending the issuing of any new debt from the Texas Mobility Fund (TMF) and prohibiting future use of the TMF on toll projects; and **4)** The Sunset Advisory Commission's review of the Texas Department of Transportation.

Subcommittee on Border Security

- This is just a general awareness item – The Senate has been charged with investigating various aspects of immigration and border security (including sanctuary cities).