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Liz Campos

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Ann Johnson  
Ken King  
Oscar Longoria

J. M. Lozano  
Toni Rose

John Smithee  
David Spiller

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# HOUSE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

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## daily floor report

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Tuesday, April 29, 2025  
89th Legislature, Number 52  
The House convenes at 10 a.m.  
Part Two

One bill is on the Major State Calendar, two resolutions are on the Constitutional Amendments Calendar, and 137 bills are on the General State Calendar for second reading consideration today. The list of bills in Part Two of the *Daily Floor Report* appears on the following page.



Gary VanDeaver  
Chairman  
89(R) - 52

# HOUSE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

## Daily Floor Report

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

89th Legislature, Number 52

### Part 2

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**SUBJECT:** Establishing the Texas Health Care Workforce Education Fund

**COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 10 ayes — Wilson, Howard, A. Davis, Lalani, V. Perez,, Shaheen, Shofner, Tinderholt, VanDeaver, Ward Johnson

0 nays

1 absent — Lambert

**WITNESSES:** For - (*Registered, but did not testify*: Rebekah Chenelle, Dallas Regional Chamber; Kevin Warren, DHR Health; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries; Christopher Lee, North Texas Commission; Matt Creel, Opportunity Austin; Nzingha Williams-Eugene, Teaching Hospitals of Texas; Kelle Kieschnick, Texas Business Leadership Council; Matt Abel, Texas Economic Development Council; McCann Turner, Texas Health Resources (THR); Benjamin Williams, Texas Hospital Association; Ross Giesinger, Texas Medical Center; Elisa Hernandez, University Medical Center of El Paso)

Against - None

On - Kevin Cruser, Carine Feyten, Texas Woman’s University;  
(*Registered, but did not testify*: Ed Torres, Comptroller of Public Accounts / Texas Treasury Safekeeping Trust Company)

**BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that dedicating funds for healthcare workforce education in alignment with the governor’s priority to invest in job training grants for high-demand, well-paying health care jobs could help the declining health care workforce meet the demands of the state’s growing population.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 5265 would establish that its purpose was to allocate appropriations from the Texas Health Care Workforce Education Fund to provide a dedicated, independent, and equitable source of funding to

enable general academic teaching institutions to increase the production of health care professional degrees to meet workforce needs in the state.

A “health care professional degree” would be a baccalaureate degree, master’s degree, doctoral of professional practice degree, or a research doctorate degree specified in the Education Code as a health profession or related clinical science as classified by the United States Department of Education.

The Texas Health Care Workforce Education Fund would be established as a fund outside the state treasury held by the comptroller and administered by the Texas Treasury Safekeeping Trust Company. The trust company would be required to administer and invest the fund and to determine the amount available for distribution from the fund in accordance with a distribution policy adopted by the comptroller, designed to preserve the purchasing power of the fund’s assets and provide as nearly as practicable a stable and predictable stream of annual distributions. The comptroller could solicit and accept gifts, grants, or donations for the fund.

A general academic teaching institution would be eligible to receive distributions from the fund for a state fiscal year if the institution was designated as a comprehensive university, doctoral university, or master’s university under the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board’s accountability system and awarded health care professional degrees during the preceding state fiscal year.

Each state fiscal year, the comptroller would be required to distribute to eligible institutions money appropriated from the fund for that fiscal year not to exceed a total amount equal to 7 percent of the average net market value of the investment assets of the fund, as determined by the comptroller, for a period set by comptroller policy. The amount appropriated from the fund for distribution in a state fiscal year would have to allocate 95 percent to the permanent endowment for health care workforce education and five percent to the health care workforce education startup fund.

For each state fiscal year, an eligible institution would be entitled to a distribution of a portion of the total allocation for the permanent endowment for health care workforce education for that fiscal year. The

portion of the total allocation to which an eligible institution was entitled would be based on a formula established in the bill based on the number of the following types of degrees that the institution awarded in the preceding three years:

- Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts health care professional degrees;
- Master of Arts or Master of Science health care professional degrees; and
- Doctor of Professional Practice or Research Doctorate health care professional degrees.

Before distributions were made, the comptroller would be required to:

- reduce the amount to which eligible institutions were entitled as necessary to ensure that no single eligible institution or university system received more than 25 percent of the annual distribution from the fund for that state fiscal year; and
- reallocate any amounts by which one or more eligible institutions' distributions were reduced to each other eligible institution whose distribution was not reduced based on the institution's pro rata share, subject to the 25 percent limit.

Each state fiscal year, THECB would be required to award grants to eligible institutions to start new or expand existing health care professional degree programs. An eligible institution that reached the 25 percent limit could not receive such a grant.

An eligible institution could use money received under the bill only for the support and maintenance of educational and general activities that promoted increased capacity to award health care professional degrees in a manner that aligned with the goals of the state's master plan for higher education. The use of money would be limited to the following permitted activities in health care professional degree programs:

- increasing enrollment capacity;
- providing faculty support and paying faculty salaries;
- purchasing equipment or library materials;
- awarding loan repayment guarantees to students enrolled in graduate health care professional degree programs who committed

to teaching at general academic teaching institutions in this state for at least four years after graduation;

- investing in clinical facilities or administration for clinical placement programs that expanded enrollment capacity of undergraduate health care professional degree programs; and
- increasing the number of graduates from health care professional degree programs.

Money received in a state fiscal year by an eligible institution that was not used in that fiscal year could be held and used by the institution in subsequent state fiscal years for the purposes prescribed by the bill.

For each state fiscal biennium, the Legislative Budget Board, in consultation with THECB, would be required to determine the amount of each distribution from the fund to which each eligible institution was entitled and report the determinations to the Legislature and the comptroller.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2026, only if the constitutional amendment proposed by the Legislature establishing the Texas Health Care Workforce Education Fund was approved by the voters. If that amendment was not approved, the bill would have no effect.

NOTES: CSHB 5265 is the enabling legislation for HJR 203.

- SUBJECT:** Creating alert system for plant and wildlife pests and diseases
- COMMITTEE:** Agriculture & Livestock — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Guillen, Guerra, Cain, Kitzman, J. Lopez, McLaughlin
- 2 nays — Hopper, Money
- 1 absent — Muñoz
- WITNESSES:** For — Bill Carson, Native Texas Nursery (*Registered, but did not testify*: Josie Castro Garcia, Dallas County; Melissa Hamilton, Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association; Kenneth Hodges, Texas Corn Producers; Drew Fuller, Texas Farm Bureau; Rob Hughes and Joe Morris, Texas Forestry Association; John Shepperd, Texas Foundation for Conservation; Curtis Smith, Texas Nursery and Landscape Association; Justin Dreibelbis, Texas Wildlife Association; Sarah Berel-Harrop; Thomas Parkinson)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Daniel Hale, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised about the agricultural industry’s ability to identify and manage emerging plant diseases and pests under current information systems. Some have suggested that the state’s agricultural response system should be updated to ensure the timely distribution of information regarding emerging threats.
- DIGEST:** HB 1592 would require the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to collaborate with the Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA), the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) to develop and implement a statewide internet-based alert system for notifications related to wildlife and plant pests, diseases, and quarantines.

The bill would require that the alert system issue notification for:

- a confirmed case of a dangerous plant or wildfire pest or disease;
- the establishment, modification, or removal of a pest or disease quarantine order; and
- any compliance agreements entered into with the TDA related to a pest or disease quarantine.

The alert system would issue email notifications and provide for enrollment in the system for delivery of a notification.

The extension service would be required to enter into a memorandum of understanding with TDA, TAHC, and TPWD to ensure the extension service could issue a required notification within 72 hours of an applicable action by those agencies.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Establishing the Grant Program for Hurricane and Windstorm Loss
- COMMITTEE:** Insurance — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Dean, Vo, J. González, Goodwin, Paul, Spiller, Wharton  
2 nays — Hopper, Morgan
- WITNESSES:** For - Scot Kibbe, American Property Casualty Insurance Association (APCIA); Chris Merideth, Farmers Insurance; Jon Schnautz, Insurance Council of Texas; Ward Tisdale, National Association of Mutual Insurance Companies; Brennan Griffin, Texas Appleseed; Beaman Floyd, Texas Coalition for Affordable Insurance Solutions (*Registered, but did not testify*); Charles Cascio, AARP Texas; Mike Meroney, Chubb, Inc.; Ryan Skrobarczyk, City of Corpus Christi; Sally Bakko, City of Galveston; Joshua Sanders, City of Houston; Sharon OConnor, Coastal Windstorm Insurance Coalition; Rebekah Chenelle, Dallas Regional Chamber; Regan Ellmer, Independent Insurance Agents of Texas; Cyrus Reed, Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club; Joel Romo, Nueces County & City of Port Aransas; Kenneth Flippin, Texas Chapter US Green Building Council; Laura Matz, Texas Community Association Advocates (TCAA); William Higgins, Texas Legislative Action Committee - Community Association Institute; Meredyth Fowler, Texas Mortgage Bankers Association; Julia Parenteau, Texas Realtors; Kevin Matula, USAA)
- Against - None
- On - Ware Wendell, Texas Watch (*Registered, but did not testify*); David Muckerheide, Texas Department of Insurance)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that consumers are facing rising insurance premiums as a result of severe weather events, an increase in catastrophic losses, inflation in repair and labor costs, and challenges within the insurance industry itself. Some have suggested establishing a grant program under the Texas Department of Insurance to help Texans strengthen their homes against hurricanes and windstorms could provide a proactive, long-term solution.

DIGEST:

HB 1576 would require the commissioner of the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI) to establish the Grant Program for Hurricane and Windstorm Loss to provide grants to retrofit eligible residential property to resist hurricane and windstorm losses.

An owner of residential property could apply for a grant if the property to be retrofitted was a single-family home or HUD-code manufactured home and the owner's residence homestead and the owner and the property met other eligibility requirements prescribed by commissioner rule.

The commissioner could award grants to ensure the stated purpose of protecting public safety during a hurricane or windstorm was achieved. The commissioner could only award a grant under a contract between TDI and a grant recipient that included provisions under which TDI was given sufficient control to ensure that purpose was accomplished and the state received the return benefit.

A grant would have to be used to retrofit the property to the fortified home hurricane standard or fortified home high wind and hail standard adopted by the Institute for Business and Home Safety (IBHS). Another mitigation program, construction technique, or standardized code could be submitted by an insurer and approved by the commissioner.

The commissioner could make grants or funding available through the program to a nonprofit organization for use by the organization to retrofit eligible property. A nonprofit organization that received a grant or funding under the bill would be required to administer the grant or funding in the same manner as the program. The organization would have to provide any documentation requested by TDI in a timely manner.

A property that was a HUD-code manufactured home in wind zone III as designated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development would have to be retrofitted to the fortified home hurricane manufactured/modular home guidelines adopted by IBHS.

The recipient of a grant would be required to secure all required local permits and inspections for a retrofitting project to be performed using the grant and ensure that the project was performed in accordance with local building codes. TDI or a political subdivision in which grant-awarded property was located could inspect the property at any time during the

progress of or following completion of the retrofitting project for compliance with laws applicable to the project.

The bill would not create an entitlement for property owners or obligate the state to fund the inspection or retrofitting of residential property.

The hurricane and windstorm mitigation account would be a dedicated account in the general revenue fund to be appropriated only to TDI for the purpose of implementing the bill and would be composed of gifts, grants, donations, legislative appropriations, and interest earned on the investment of money in the account. Provisions regarding reallocation of interest accrued on certain dedicated revenue would not apply to the account.

TDI would administer the account and could solicit and receive gifts, grants, and donations from any source for the account.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Renaming offense of possession or promotion of child pornography
- COMMITTEE:** Criminal Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Smithee, Wu, Bowers, Cook, J. Jones, Louderback, Money, Moody, Rodríguez Ramos, Virdell
- 1 nay — Little
- WITNESSES:** For — Jean Poteet, Not on Our Watch Texas; Crystal Corl (*Registered, but did not testify*); John Litzler, Baptist General Convention of Texas Christian Life Commission; Andrea Sparks, Not on Our Watch Texas; Bill Kelly, Office of Harris County District Attorney Sean Teare; Ashley Brooks, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault; Stephanie Battaglia, Texas CASA; Brianna Waldock, TexProtects; Steven Deline; Thomas Parkinson)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*): Bo Stallman, Sheriffs’ Association of Texas)
- BACKGROUND:** Current law defines “child pornography” as an image of a child engaging in sexual conduct or sexual performance for purposes of certain offenses established in statute. Some have suggested that using "child sexual abuse material" in statute would more accurately reflect the exploitative and harmful nature of these offenses.
- DIGEST:** HB 1552 would rename the offense of “possession or promotion of child pornography” to “possession or promotion of child sexual abuse material” and make conforming changes throughout the Penal Code, Business and Commerce Code, Civil Practice and Remedies Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, Family Code, and Estates Code to reflect the revision.
- The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Relating to use of the Texas Farm and Ranch Land Conservation Program

COMMITTEE: Culture, Recreation & Tourism — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Metcalf, Flores, DeAyala, Kerwin, Martinez Fischer, Orr,  
Vasut, Ward Johnson

0 nays

1 absent — Cole

WITNESSES: For — Chad Ellis, TALT; Carl Ray Polk, Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association; Brian Jones, Texas Farm Bureau (*Registered, but did not testify*: John Kroll, HMWK, LLC; Mary Pearl Meuth, Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society; John Bender, Texas Corn Producers Association; John Shepperd, Texas Foundation for Conservation)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Zach Spector, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that clarifying the intended use of the Texas Farm and Ranch Land Conservation Program could ensure that working lands were the sole beneficiaries of the program.

DIGEST: CSHB 2018 would amend the definition of an agricultural conservation easement for purposes of the Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Program to specify that an agricultural conservation easement was designed to maintain the land's agricultural or timber productivity.

The bill also would require the Texas Farm and Ranch Lands Conservation Council to give priority to applications that protect and maintain the agricultural or timber productivity of lands that are susceptible to development. The bill would include the agricultural or timber productivity of land among the criteria that the council would be

required to consider when evaluating and scoring grant applications under the program.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Authorizing PUC to establish standards for EV interconnection to ERCOT
- COMMITTEE:** State Affairs — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 14 ayes — King, Hernandez, Anchía, Darby, Y. Davis, Geren, Hull, McQueeney, Metcalf, Phelan, Raymond, Smithee, Thompson, Turner
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Guillen
- WITNESSES:** For - Phillip Martin, Environmental Defense Fund; Will McAdams, Tesla; Matthew Boms, Texas Advanced Energy Business Alliance (*Registered, but did not testify*); Luke Metzger, Environment Texas; Colin Leyden, Environmental Defense Fund; Katelyn Caldwell, Harris County Commissioners Court; Blanca Laborde, Highland Electric Fleets; Cyrus Reed, Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club; Kenneth Flippin, Texas Chapter of US Green Building Council; Clay Pope, Texas EV Alliance; Rebecca Edwards, Texas Impact; Bri Weber, Texas Solar and Storage Association; Steven Deline; Elizabeth Theilig)
- Against - None
- On - Lori Clark, North Central Texas Council of Governments (*Registered, but did not testify*); Barksdale English, Public Utility Commission of Texas)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that despite rapid growth in electric vehicle (EV) adoption in Texas, there is still no clear regulatory guidance for EV owners to sell stored electricity back to the ERCOT grid. Some have suggested that this ambiguity should be addressed by expressly authorizing the Public Utility Commission (PUC) to implement standards for interconnecting EVs to the grid.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3511 would authorize PUC by rule to establish safety, technical, and performance standards for the interconnection of EVs in the ERCOT power region. In adopting the rules, PUC would have to ensure that the

standards did not conflict with applicable standards published by the Underwriters Laboratories, the National Electrical Code, the National Electrical Safety Code, and the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers.

The bill also would authorize PUC by rule to establish a program to allow an EV owner to make electricity stored by the EV available for sale in the wholesale energy and ancillary services markets through a registered aggregator or load serving entity and to participate in ERCOT market mechanism through such an aggregation.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Creating Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuance Grant Program

COMMITTEE: Culture, Recreation & Tourism — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — Metcalf, Flores, DeAyala, Orr, Vasut, Ward Johnson

0 nays

3 absent — Cole, Kerwin, Martinez Fischer

WITNESSES: For — John Leifester, San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo (*Registered, but did not testify*: John Kroll, HMWK, LLC; Lance Lively, Rodeo Austin; Clint Magee, State Fair of Texas; Drew Fuller, Texas Farm Bureau; Karen Rove; Gilbert Turrieta; Fred Weber)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Korry Castillo, Comptroller of Public Accounts)

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that many local rodeos and livestock shows cannot receive state funds, as many do not qualify for the Events Trust Fund and the Major Events Reimbursement Program. Some have suggested that a grant program to award money to county fairs and local rodeos could help ensure the continuation of these events.

DIGEST: CSHB 1781 would establish the Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Grant Program, the Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Board, and the Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Fund.

**Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Grant Program.** The Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Grant Program would be established and administered by the Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Board to award money from the Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Fund to county fairs and local rodeos to assist with:

- facility and infrastructure maintenance or construction;
- event programs;
- personnel salaries; and
- public health and safety.

To be eligible for a grant under the program, the bill would require an applicant to:

- apply in the manner the board prescribed;
- be in good standing under the laws of the state;
- specify how the grant money would benefit county livestock programs or local youth agricultural programs within the county; and
- demonstrate a legitimate need for the grant money that provided a public benefit in accordance with board rules.

The board could only award a grant in accordance with a contract between the board and a grant recipient that included conditions providing the board with sufficient control to ensure that the public purpose of continuing to promote and improve the state's livestock and agricultural programs and to educate the public regarding those programs was accomplished, and that the state received a return benefit.

The bill would require each local rodeo or county fair applicant awarded a grant under the grant program to submit:

- for a rodeo or county fair with an operating budget greater than \$10 million, a report on the economic impact attributable to the preparation for and presentation of the rodeo or fair in the area served by the rodeo or fair; or
- for a rodeo or county fair with an operating budget of less than \$10 million, a report demonstrating the economic development needs of the community.

By December 1 of each even-numbered year, CSHB 1781 would require the board to prepare and submit to each member of the Legislature a report that included:

- the fund balance as of the date of the report;
- the total amount of grant money awarded under and other disbursements from the fund during the two preceding state fiscal years;
- the number of grant applications submitted to the board during the two preceding state fiscal years; and
- the economic impact reports and community need reports submitted to the board during the two preceding state fiscal years.

**Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Board.**

CSHB 1781 would create the Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Board, consisting of seven members appointed by the governor.

The bill would require the governor to ensure each member had demonstrated interest in issues related to rodeos and county fairs in the state through:

- competing in rodeos;
- previous service on a board of a rodeo organization, county fair organization, 4-H program, Future Farmers of America organization; or
- previous service with any of these organizations or programs in the preceding 15 years.

CSHB 1781 would require the board to include at least two members with rodeo experience and two with county fair experience. Each appointed board member would have to represent a different region of the state. The bill would prohibit a board member from holding any other public office and establish that a board member served without compensation but was entitled to reimbursement for actual expenses incurred in attending board meetings and performing board duties.

Board members would serve staggered six-year terms, with the terms of two or three members expiring on January 1 of each even-numbered year. A board member would be prohibited from serving more than two terms. The bill would require the governor, by January 1, 2026, to appoint members to the board, select a presiding officer, and designate two members to serve terms expiring January 1, 2028, two members to serve terms expiring January 1, 2030, and three members to serve terms expiring January 1, 2032.

The bill would require the board members to elect an assistant presiding officer from among the board members who served at the board's pleasure. The presiding officer and assistant presiding officer would serve two-year terms.

The governor would be required to appoint a member to fill a vacancy on the board to serve the remainder of the unexpired term. The board would be required to meet quarterly.

**Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Fund.** CSHB 1781 would create the Texas Livestock and Rodeo Education and Continuation Fund outside the state treasury. The bill would establish that the fund's administration was considered to be a trustee program within the office of the governor.

The bill would restrict the use of the fund to the implementation of the grant program, including the costs of grant program administration and operation. The bill would authorize the governor at the board's direction to disburse money from the fund without appropriation only as provided by the bill and rules adopted under the bill.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Prohibiting POAs from restricting property owners from keeping chickens

COMMITTEE: Agriculture & Livestock — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Guillen, Cain, Hopper, Kitzman, J. Lopez, McLaughlin, Money

0 nays

2 absent — Guerra, Muñoz

WITNESSES: For — James Lockridge, Texas Farmer Ranchers (*Registered, but did not testify*: Travis McCormick, Make Texans Healthy Again; Seth Juergens, Texas Realtors; Elaina Brown, James Brown, Christianna Brown, Sheila Franklin, Julie McCarty and Charlene Reagan, True Texas Project; Steven Deline; Fran Rhodes; Brita Treat; Mark Treat; Carole Widmann)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Laura Matz, Texas Community Association Advocates (TCAA); Ainsleigh Broadwell, Texas Legislative Action Committee of the Community Associations Institute)

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that certain property owners' associations have enforced provisions to restrict property owners from keeping chickens, even though a municipality may permit the practice.

DIGEST: HB 2013 would prohibit a property owners' association from including or enforcing provisions in a dedicatory instrument to prohibit a property owner from keeping chickens on the property owner's property if a municipal ordinance authorized the property owner to keep chickens on the property.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

**SUBJECT:** Changing training and records requirements for child custody evaluators

**COMMITTEE:** Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 10 ayes — Leach, Johnson, Dyson, Flores, J. González, Hayes, LaHood, Landgraf, Moody, Schofield

0 nays

1 absent — Dutton

**WITNESSES:** For — Claudia Laird; Cody Taylor (*Registered, but did not testify*: Steven Deline)

Against — None

On — Christy Bradshaw Schmidt; Taran Champagne; Amy Lee Owen Kloesel

**BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested the law on child custody evaluations could be clarified by requiring specific training for evaluators on the needs of children with intellectual and developmental disabilities, improving record transparency, and restricting the use of evaluations in certain cases.

**DIGEST:** **Child custody evaluator training on intellectual and developmental disabilities.** CSHB 2340 would require, as a condition to be qualified to conduct a child custody evaluation, an individual to complete, during the two-year period preceding the evaluation, at least three hours of initial or continuing training related to the care of a child with an intellectual or developmental disability, including education, therapy, preparation for independent living, or methods for addressing physical or mental health challenges.

The bill would prohibit a court from admitting into evidence a child custody evaluation report if the child who was the subject of the report had an intellectual or developmental disability and the child custody evaluator had not satisfied the required training on the date the evaluation

was made. This exclusion would not apply if the evaluator was exempt from minimum qualifications as applicable to certain counties.

These provisions would apply only to a child custody evaluator appointed on or after January 1, 2026.

**Child custody evaluator records requests and retention.** CSHB 2340 would exclude records from law enforcement, criminal justice agencies, or corrections departments from the records that a private child custody evaluator was required to make available upon written request of an attorney for a party, a party who does not have an attorney, and any person appointed in the child custody suit. The records would have to be made available after the filing of a notice that a report was complete, rather than after the preparation and filing of the report. The same changes would apply to records requests of an evaluator who was an employee of or contractor with a domestic relations office.

The parties to whom an evaluator who was an employee of or contractor with a domestic relations office would be required to provide records upon written request would be limited to an attorney for a party, a party who did not have an attorney, and any person appointed in the suit in which the evaluator conducted the evaluation, unless a court had issued an order restricting disclosure of the records.

The bill would change the date on which record retention requirements were based from the date the evaluator filed the child custody evaluation report to the date the evaluator filed the notice that the report was complete.

The child custody evaluator would have to redact any Social Security number or child's birth date from records subject to disclosure before making the records available.

These provisions would apply to a disclosure or records in the possession of a child custody evaluator on or after the effective date of the bill.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Exempting certain transactions from the Real Estate License Act
- COMMITTEE:** Licensing & Administrative Procedures — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 11 ayes — Phelan, Thompson, Gerdes, Geren, Harless, Hernandez, Longoria, McQueeney, Patterson, M. Perez, Walle
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Harris, Romero
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* David Cape, American Association of Professional Landmen; Jennifer Owen, Texas Land & Mineral Owners Association)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Vanessa Burgess, Texas Real Estate Commission)
- BACKGROUND:** Property Code sec. 75.001 defines “mineral” as oil, gas, uranium, sulphur, lignite, coal, and any other substance that is ordinarily and naturally considered a mineral in this state, regardless of the depth at which the oil, gas, uranium, sulphur, lignite, coal, or other substance is found.
- Water Code sec. 11.021(a) defines “state water” as the water of the ordinary flow, underflow, and tides of every flowing river, natural stream, and lake, and of every bay or arm of the Gulf of Mexico, and the storm water, floodwater, and rainwater of every river, natural stream, canyon, ravine, depression, and watershed in the state is the property of the state.
- The Real Estate License Act, established by the 77th Legislature, provides statutory guidelines for real estate brokers and sales agents.
- Concerns have been raised that landmen negotiating non-mineral leases are required to obtain a license from the Texas Real Estate Commission

due to an administrative error in previous legislation. These mandated licenses disrupt the industry, and some have suggested that clear and concise definitions of minerals and other energy sources in real estate law could help correct this regulatory burden.

DIGEST:

CSHB 2349 would exempt a transaction involving the sale, lease, or transfer of a real property interest in minerals, mining, quarries, standing timber, or other energy sources from the Real Estate License Act. The bill also would exempt the sale, lease, or transfer of real estate owned, leased by, being acquired by, or leased to a limited partnership (LP) or a limited liability company (LLC) by:

- a general partner of an LP or a manager or managing member of an LLC;
- an employee of a general partner of an LP or a manager or managing member of an LLC who negotiated the transaction in the course of employment; or
- an employee of an LP or an employee or member of an LLC who negotiated the transaction in the course of employment.

The bill would define “mineral” as the meaning assigned by Property Code sec. 75.001, “other energy source” as a natural resource other than water or a mineral that was necessary to produce energy, including geothermal, nuclear, solar, and wind energy, and “water” as diffused surface water, groundwater, or state water as defined by Water Code sec. 11.021(a).

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Exempting surviving spouses of certain veterans from property taxes
- COMMITTEE:** Ways & Means — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 12 ayes — Meyer, Martinez Fischer, Bernal, Button, Capriglione, Gervin-Hawkins, Muñoz, Noble, V. Perez, Troxclair, Turner, Vasut
- 1 nay — Hickland
- WITNESSES:** For — Liesl Manone (*Registered, but did not testify*: Shannon Halbrook, Every Texan; Jim Brennan, Texas Coalition of Veterans Organizations; William West, The American Legion, Dept of Texas)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Adam Cahn)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that the surviving spouses of deceased veterans who died as a result of certain diseases presumed to be service-connected may not be entitled to receive residence homestead property tax exemptions.
- DIGEST:** HB 2508 would entitle the surviving spouse of a qualifying veteran to an exemption from taxation of the total appraised value of the surviving spouse's residence homestead if the surviving spouse had not remarried since the death of the veteran, regardless of the date of the veteran's death.
- The bill would define a qualifying veteran as a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces who died as a result of a qualifying condition or disease, regardless of the veteran's disability rating at the time of the veteran's death. Qualifying condition or disease would mean a condition or disease for which the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act of 2022, or a regulation adopted under the act, established a presumption of service connection.
- The bill would entitle a surviving spouse who received such an exemption and had not remarried to receive an exemption for a property that the surviving spouse subsequently qualified as the spouse's residence homestead in an amount equal to the dollar amount of the exemption for

the first property in the last year in which the surviving spouse received the exemption.

HB 2508 also would entitle a surviving spouse to receive a written certificate from the chief appraiser of the appraisal district of the first exempted property providing the information necessary to determine the exemption amount for the subsequently qualified homestead. The bill would make conforming revisions throughout relevant sections of the Tax and Government Codes.

The bill would take effect January 1, 2026, only if the constitutional amendment proposed by the 89th Legislature was approved by the voters. If the amendment was not approved by the voters, the bill would have no effect.

NOTES:

HB 2508 is the enabling legislation for HJR 133, which was placed on the calendar for second reading consideration on April 28, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Establishing requirement for Gulf Coast Protection District projects
- COMMITTEE:** Natural Resources — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 11 ayes — Harris, Martinez, Ashby, Barry, C. Bell, Buckley, Fairly, M. González, Romero, Villalobos, Zwiener
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Gámez, J. Garcia
- WITNESSES:** For — Bob Sanders, Enterprise Products Partners; Clint Winegar, Houston Pilots (*Registered, but did not testify*: Lindsey Miller, Greater Houston Port Bureau; Vincent DiCosimo, Targa Resources Corp.; Logan Harrell, Texas Chemistry Council; Jay Brown, Valero Energy Corporation; Steven Deline)
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that projects by the Gulf Coast Protection District, established by the 87th Legislature in 2021 to collaborate with the federal government on certain coastal restoration projects, should ensure that vessels can safely navigate shipping channels near Galveston Bay in order to maintain economic stability and maritime safety.
- DIGEST:** HB 2970 would establish that implementation of a project by the Gulf Coast Protection District could not disrupt navigation safety or two-way traffic in a manner that violated a rule adopted by the board of pilot commissioners for the ports of Harris County under the Houston Pilots Licensing and Regulatory Act.
- The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Revising definitions and notice requirements of the Open Meetings Act
- COMMITTEE:** Delivery of Government Efficiency — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Capriglione, Bhojani, Alders, Bowers, Campos, Cook, Curry, L. Garcia, Olcott, Troxclair
- 1 nay — Tinderholt
- 2 absent — Cain, Rodríguez Ramos
- WITNESSES:** For - (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jaime Puente, Every Texan; Kelley Shannon, Freedom of Information Foundation of Texas; Raif Calvert, TASB; Michael Schneider, Texas Association of Broadcasters; Donnis Baggett, Mike Hodges, Texas Press Association; Steven Deline)
- Against - None
- BACKGROUND:** Education Code ch. 39A authorizes the commissioner of education to appoint a board of managers to exercise the powers and duties of a school district's board of trustees if the district is subject to commissioner action related to a district's failure to meet certain accreditation criteria, standards of academic performance standards and financial accountability, or due to a special investigation related to certain other performance measures.
- Government Code sec. 551.074(a) specifies that the Open Meetings Act does not, with certain exceptions, require a governmental body to conduct an open meeting to deliberate the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee, or to hear a complain or charge against an officer or employee.
- Concerns have been raised that boards of managers appointed by the Texas Education Agency during authorized state takeovers have not fully complied with requirements of the Open Meetings Act. It has been suggested that statute should be clarified to define such boards as governmental bodies for purposes of the Open Meetings Act.

DIGEST: HB 2520 would add a board of managers under Education Code ch.39A to the entities defined as governmental bodies under the Open Meetings Act.

HB 2520 also would amend the Open Meetings Act to require the written notice of a governmental body's meeting to include an agenda for the meeting that was sufficiently specific to inform the public of each subject to be considered in the open portion of the meeting and describe any subject to be considered in the closed portion of the meeting, if applicable.

The bill would specify that the exemption from the requirement to hold an open meeting under Government Code sec. 551.074(a) would not apply if the governmental body's deliberations concerned operational issues that generally impacted a class or group of employees.

HB 2520 would repeal a provision of the Open Meetings Act establishing that a school board operating under certain consultation agreements is not required to conduct an open meeting to deliberate the standards, guidelines, terms, or conditions the board will follow in a consultation with a representative of an employee group.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Limiting liability arising from a firearm hold agreement
- COMMITTEE:** Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 11 ayes — Leach, Johnson, Dutton, Dyson, Flores, J. González, Hayes, LaHood, Landgraf, Moody, Schofield
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Abbie Kamin, Houston City Council District C; Mitch Fuller, VFW Department of Texas; Wesley Lewis (*Registered, but did not testify*: Alexa Aragonéz, City of Houston; M Paige Williams, Dallas Criminal District Attorney’s Office; Nicole Golden, Texas Gun Sense; Robert Watson, Texas Impact; Stefanie Page, Texas Pediatric Society; Gary Zimmerman)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Chris McNutt, Texas Gun Rights)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that a federal firearms licensee who holds a firearm for an individual as part of a firearm hold agreement can face liability for the actions of the firearm’s owner after the weapon is returned.
- DIGEST:** HB 865 would eliminate any cause of action against a federal firearms licensee that operated lawfully in the state for any act or omission that arose from a firearm hold agreement that resulted in personal injury or death. This would include the return of a firearm to the owner by the licensee at the termination of the agreement. The immunity from civil liability would not apply to a cause of action that arose from the unlawful conduct or gross negligence of the licensee.
- HB 865 would define “federal firearms licensee” as any person who was licensed to manufacture, import, or sell firearms under federal law.
- The bill would define “firearm” as any device that was designed, made, or adapted to expel a projectile through a barrel using the energy generated

by an explosion or burning substance, or any device that was readily convertible for that use.

A “firearm hold agreement” would mean a private transaction that occurred between a federal firearms licensee and an individual firearm owner in which the licensee took physical possession of the owner’s lawfully possessed firearm at the owner’s request, held the firearm for an agreed period of time, and returned the firearm to the owner according to the terms of the agreement.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025, and would not apply to a cause of action that accrued before that date.

- SUBJECT:** Including nursing school programs in a certain application service
- COMMITTEE:** Higher Education — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Wilson, Howard, A. Davis, Lambert, V. Perez, Shaheen, Shofner, Tinderholt, VanDeaver, Ward Johnson
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Lalani
- WITNESSES:** For - Laura Kincheloe, Texas Nurses Association (*Registered, but did not testify*); Priscilla Camacho, Alamo Colleges District; Jack Frazee, Nursing Legislative Agenda Coalition; Stacy Schmitt, Opportunity Austin; Nzingha Williams-Eugene, Teaching Hospitals of Texas; Amanda Garcia, Texas AFT-AAUP; Kelsey Bernstein, Texas Council of Community Centers)
- Against - None
- On - Matthew Meeks, University of Texas System
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that including nursing school programs in the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service could provide a more streamlined nursing school application process that would help address the state’s nursing shortage.
- DIGEST:** HB 2851 would require a service or organization providing consolidated application services for applications to medical or dental schools, including the Texas Medical and Dental Schools Application Service operated through The University of Texas System, to include applications for nursing schools in the state.
- The bill would take effect September 1, 2025, and would apply beginning with applications for admission to a nursing school for the 2026 fall semester.

- SUBJECT:** Establishing a farm winery permit and marketing assistance fund
- COMMITTEE:** Licensing & Administrative Procedures — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 12 ayes — Phelan, Thompson, Geren, Harless, Harris, Hernandez, Longoria, McQueeney, Patterson, M. Perez, Romero, Walle
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Gerdes
- WITNESSES:** For — Cliff Bingham, Bingham Family Vineyards and Farm; Bryan Chagoly, Sandy Road Vineyards; John Rivenburgh, Texas Wine Growers; Chris Brundrett, William Chris Wine Company (*Registered, but did not testify*: Betty Bingham, Bingham Family Vineyards and Farm; Milton Reed, Hawk’s Shadow Winery and Vineyard; Rae Wilson, La Valentía Wines; Michael Sides, Lost Draw Wines; Meredith Reed, Meredith Margaret Wines; Sarah Emery, Rivenburgh Wine; Kelly Olson, Texas Wine Growers; Blake DeBerry, Torr Na Lochs Vineyard & Winery; Tate Gregory, Uplift Vineyard; Raymond Harvell, Uplift Vineyard, Texas Canned Wine Group, Texas Winery Owners Group; Anne Spalding, Wine for the People)
- Against — Jason Englert, Heath Family Brands; Chris Hornbaker, North Texas Winery Association; Julie Herbort, Kyle Frazier, Texas Wine and Grape Growers Association (*Registered, but did not testify*: Mark Vane, Wine Road 290)
- On — Matthew Cherry, TABC (*Registered, but did not testify*: Thomas Graham, TABC; Lindsay Baerwald, Dan Hunter, Texas Department of Agriculture)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that some Texas wineries struggle with increasing sales and producing items with Texas-grown fruit due to state limits on winery activities. Some have suggested that a new permit structure could increase in-state wine sales and support local agriculture

by incentivizing farmers to produce Texas wine, boosting Texas as a leader in the wine industry.

DIGEST:

CSHB 3385 would establish a farm winery permit for producers of Texas wine and a marketing assistance fund for farm wineries. The bill would define Texas wine as wine that was at least 75 percent by volume fermented juice of grapes or other fruit grown in this state or a lesser percentage established by the commissioner of agriculture and bottled in this state.

**Farm winery permit.** A farm winery permit could be issued only to a holder of a winery permit who produced Texas wine. The bill would authorize the holder of a farm winery permit to:

- operate up to five locations off of the winery premises where the permit holder could sell Texas wine to ultimate consumers for consumption on the location's premises; and
- sell Texas wine on the winery premises or at a location described above to ultimate consumers in unbroken packages for consumption off the winery's or location's premises in an amount not to exceed 250,000 gallons annually.

The bill would require the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission (TABC) to adopt rules to implement these provisions, including rules that would:

- require the farm winery permit holder to notify TABC of each location operated by the permit holder;
- establish a procedure to verify the wet or dry status of each location off of the winery premises; and
- require the farm winery permit holder to provide any other information TABC determined necessary.

The bill would mandate that a fee for a farm winery permit could not exceed \$500 annually. Fifty percent of the revenue attributable to the fees collected would be deposited to the credit of the Farm Winery Marketing Assistance Fund, and the remainder to the credit of the general revenue fund.

Provisions of the Alcoholic Beverage Code applicable to the sale of Texas wine on the permitted premises of the holder of a farm winery permit would apply to the sale of Texas wine at locations off of the winery premises.

**Farm Winery Marketing Assistance Fund.** CSHB 3385 would establish the Farm Winery Marketing Assistance Fund as a dedicated account in the general revenue fund. The fund would consist of:

- legislative appropriations to TABC or the Department of Agriculture for a purpose of the fund;
- money from farm winery permit fees;
- interest or other earnings on money credited to or allocable to the fund; and
- gifts, grants, including grants from the federal government, and donations received for the fund.

The bill would require the Department of Agriculture to use money in the fund only to promote and market farm wineries, including to implement and administer provisions related to the farm winery permit.

TABC would be required to adopt rules to administer the bill.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2025.

**NOTES:**

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the fiscal implications of the bill cannot be determined due to the unknown number of permits that may be issued and the unknown number of permits that would be consolidated.

- SUBJECT:** Establishing a tax credit for the agricultural use of spent grain byproduct
- COMMITTEE:** Ways & Means — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 13 ayes — Meyer, Martinez Fischer, Bernal, Button, Capriglione, Gervin-Hawkins, Hickland, Muñoz, Noble, Perez, Vincent, Troxclair, Turner, Vasut
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — KD Hill, Barrow Brewing Co.; Adriane Hodges, Bold Republic Brewing Company; Matthew May, MMM Cattle Co. (*Registered, but did not testify*: Peyton Schumann, Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association; Travis Bailey, Texas Craft Brewers Guild; Caroline Wallace, Texas Craft Brewers Guild; Amber Hausenfluck, Texas Distilled Spirits Association; Drew Fuller, Texas Farm Bureau; Rebecca Garcia)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Adam Cahn)
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Andrea Maceyra, Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that rising operational and agricultural costs have placed financial strain on both small breweries and ranchers. Some have suggested that providing a tax credit to small breweries in Texas that donate spent grain to local ranchers for animal feed could provide targeted economic support to both industries and also encourage sustainable practices.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3336 would entitle certain taxpayers who donated spent grain to the agricultural industry to a tax credit. The tax credit would be equal to eight cents per pound of the dry weight of spent grain byproduct donated by the taxpayer during the state fiscal year for agricultural use, including for use in composting or as animal feed and to a location no more than 100 miles from where the byproduct was used to produce liquor or malt beverage.

“Spent grain byproduct” would mean the byproduct material remaining from grain used to produce liquor or malt beverages.

Under the bill, a taxpayer would be entitled to an alcoholic beverage tax credit if the taxpayer:

- paid alcoholic beverage taxes and held a distiller’s and rectifier’s permit, nonresident seller’s permit, brewer’s license, nonresident brewer’s license, or brewpub license; or
- paid a tax on the first sale of liquor or a malt beverage that was imported to Texas.

An eligible taxpayer could not claim a tax credit under the bill that exceeded the lesser of \$30,000 or the total amount of alcoholic beverage taxes paid by the taxpayer during the state fiscal year.

CSHB 3336 would authorize the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission to request reasonable information from a taxpayer to determine if the taxpayer was eligible for the credit and, if eligible, the amount of the credit, and to adopt the necessary rules and procedures to execute these duties. The bill would allow the taxpayer to apply for a tax credit only for a donation made on or after the bill’s effective date. Any credit could only be applied to a tax bill originally due on or after the bill’s effective date.

CSHB 3336 would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Permitting the sale of distilled spirits at certain racing facilities
- COMMITTEE:** Licensing & Administrative Procedures — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 12 ayes — Phelan, Thompson, Gerdes, Geren, Harless, Hernandez, Longoria, McQueeney, Patterson, M. Perez, Romero, Walle
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Harris
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Rob Ramage, Texas Motor Speedway; Rick Donley, JP Urrabazo, The Beer Alliance of Texas; Doug Davis, Tom Spilman, Wholesale Beer Distributors of Texas; Tyler Rudd, Wine Institute)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Matthew Cherry, Thomas Graham, TABC; Thomas Parkinson)
- BACKGROUND:** Under Alcoholic Beverage Code sec. 28.20, the holder of a mixed beverage permit may temporarily sell wine and malt beverages in an area of a racing facility with a seating capacity of more than 40,000 that is open to the public and not otherwise covered by a license or permit during a motor vehicle racing event sponsored by a professional motor racing association.
- Some have suggested that this provision should be updated to include distilled spirits, modernizing racing venues in Texas to align with the practices of other major event venues.
- DIGEST:** HB 3529 would amend Alcoholic Beverage Code sec. 28.20 to include distilled spirits as a beverage that mixed beverage permit holders could sell at racing events. The bill also would allow such beverages to be sold at events held at a racing facility under this provision. The bill would remove prohibitions on selling alcohol more than four times in a calendar

year or at more than 50 percent of open food and beverage concession stands.

The bill would make conforming changes to include distilled spirits throughout the Alcoholic Beverage Code regarding alcohol sales at racing facilities.

HB 3529 would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Authorizing automated traffic control systems in certain work zones
- COMMITTEE:** Transportation — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 12 ayes — Craddick, M. Perez, Curry, Gámez, Harris Davila, Hefner, LaHood, Little, C. Morales, E. Morales, Patterson, Paul
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Canales
- WITNESSES:** For — Jeff Gibson, AGC of Texas; Kennie Fouts, FoutsCo Paving Company; Mark Vojvodich (*Registered, but did not testify*: Anne Oryan, AAA Texas; Steven Albright, AGC of Texas; Joshua Sanders, City of Houston; Ky Ash, Department of Public Safety Officers Association (DPSOA); Katrina Miller, Farm&City; Debra Richmond, Kiewit Infrastructure; Jay Crossley, Vision Zero Texas; Tara Snowden, Zachry Corporation; Steven Deline)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Thomas Parkinson)
- On — Terri Hall, TURF, Texans for Tollfree Highways, We the People - Liberty in Action (*Registered, but did not testify*: Scott Hewitt, Texas Department of Public Safety; Carl Johnson, Texas Department of Transportation)
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that local authorities or law enforcement agencies should be authorized to implement or operate an automated traffic control system to enforce traffic laws in construction or maintenance work zones where, under current law, the penalty for speeding is typically doubled.
- DIGEST:** HB 3309 would authorize a local authority or law enforcement agency to implement or operate an automated traffic control system concerning a highway or street under its jurisdiction to enforce compliance with traffic laws, including posted speed limits, in a construction or maintenance work zone.

The bill would require a local authority or law enforcement agency that implemented or operated such a system to adopt policies requiring the prompt deletion of data produced by that system unrelated to an active criminal or civil investigation or proceeding. The bill would authorize a local authority or law enforcement agency to issue a citation for a violation of a traffic law detected using such a system for that purpose only if a peace officer issued the citation and signs in compliance with the bill were posted at the time of the violation.

HB 3309 would require a local authority or law enforcement agency that implemented or operated an automated traffic control system to enforce traffic laws in a construction or maintenance work zone to post clear and conspicuous signs at least 100 feet from the beginning of the construction or maintenance work zone that:

- indicated an automated traffic control system was actively being used to monitor motor vehicles in the construction or maintenance work zone; and
- conformed to the manual and specifications adopted under the statutory rules of the road provision relating to adopting a sign manual for state highways.

**Limitations and exemptions.** The bill would extend the applicability of the prohibition against a municipality implementing or operating an automated traffic control system concerning a highway or street under its jurisdiction to enforce compliance with posted speed limits to any local authority or law enforcement agency, with certain exceptions, and to expand the purposes to include enforcing compliance with any traffic laws.

HB 3309 would exempt an automated traffic control system, as authorized by the bill, from statutory provisions relating to the prohibition of implementing or operating a photographic traffic signal enforcement system.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Amending breast-feeding rights, prohibiting interference
- COMMITTEE:** State Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 12 ayes — King, Anchía, Darby, Y. Davis, Geren, Guillen, Hull, McQueeney, Metcalf, Phelan, Raymond, Turner
- 0 nays
- 3 absent — Hernandez, Smithee, Thompson
- WITNESSES:** For — Kristine Keller, Operation Lactation, Dallas Lactation Consultant Association, National Lactation Consultant Association (*Registered, but did not testify*: Charles E. Lee Brown, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists District XI; Tessa Galloso, Texans Care for Children; Brianna Menard, Ben Wright, Texas Medical Association; Stefanie Page, Texas Pediatric Society; Thomas Parkinson)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Lori Gabbert-Charney, Department of State Health Services)
- BACKGROUND:** Although current law protects a mother’s right to breast-feed, some have suggested that additional measures are needed to prevent interference with breast-feeding rights and to support breast-feeding policies within state agencies.
- DIGEST:** HB 1127 would amend the locations in which a mother would be authorized to breast-feed her baby or express breast milk to add any location in which the child’s presence was otherwise authorized. The bill would prohibit such an authorization from being revoked solely because the mother was breast-feeding the child. The bill would prohibit any person from interfering with or restricting the right of a mother to breast-feed in accordance with this section.

HB 1127 would require each state agency to develop a policy supporting the practice of worksite breast-feeding in accordance with the bill. The bill would require the comptroller annually to include in the comptroller's tax policy e-newsletter, or another electronic notification, information about a mother's right to breast-feed and the prohibition against interference with or restriction of that right as provided by the bill's provisions. The bill would require the comptroller to make the required notice available at each taxpayer seminar the office of the comptroller offered. The bill also would authorize the comptroller to provide the required notification with any other notice or document the comptroller mailed to a person.

HB 1127 would authorize a mother to bring a civil action against a person who allegedly violated the mother's right to breast-feed and the prohibition against interference with or restriction of that right. The bill would entitle a mother who prevailed in an action brought under this section to obtain injunctive relief, damages in an amount not to exceed \$500 for each day the violation occurred, and reasonable attorney's fees and court costs. A person liable for damages would be liable for only one award of \$500 for each day a violation occurred, and for all violations the person committed on that day, regardless of the number of violations alleged or the number of mothers alleging a violation.

The bill also would authorize a mother to recover only one award for damages for each day a violation occurred, regardless of the number of persons who violated that section. The bill would waive the sovereign immunity of Texas and the governmental immunity of a political subdivision to the extent of liability created by the bill.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Protecting whistleblowers from reprisals for reporting on elected officers
- COMMITTEE:** State Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 15 ayes — King, Hernandez, Anchía, Darby, Y. Davis, Geren, Guillen, Hull, McQueeney, Metcalf, Phelan, Raymond, Smithee, Thompson, Turner
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For - Tanner Franklin, Texas Employment Lawyers Association; Kevin Hale, The Libertarian Party of Texas; Mike Grim; Jim Maynard; Walter L. Taylor (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jim Crosby, Austin Justice Coalition; Jake Anderson, City of Dallas; Jennifer Szimanski, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT); Bryan Mitchell, Dallas County Criminal District Attorney - John Creuzot; Kathy Mitchell, Equity Action; Ray Hunt, Houston Police Officers' Union; Cyrus Reed, Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club; Bryan Flatt, TMPA; Steven Deline; Susan Stewart)
- Against - None
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that whistleblower protections in state law contain a gap in their protections by not including reports of illegal activity made by the employees of elected officers.
- DIGEST:** HB 1232 would prohibit a state or local governmental entity from suspending or terminating the employment of, or taking other adverse personnel action against, a public employee who in good faith reported to law enforcement a violation of law by an elected officer of the employing governmental entity.
- The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Establishing TSLAC’s responsibilities over certain historical items
- COMMITTEE:** Culture, Recreation & Tourism — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 6 ayes — Metcalf, Flores, DeAyala, Orr, Vasut, Ward Johnson
- 0 nays
- 3 absent — Cole, Kerwin, Martinez Fischer
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Steven Deline)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Arthur Mann)
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify:* Jeff Gordon and James Harkins, General Land Office; Gloria Meraz, Texas State Library and Archives Commission)
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that it would be appropriate to transfer William B. Travis’s victory or death letter to its place of origin while the Alamo Plaza is undergoing restoration and revitalization efforts.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 1397 would designate the Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) as responsible for the care and custody of the Texas Constitution, the Texas Declaration of Independence, and the victory or death letter written by Lieutenant Colonel William B. Travis dated February 24, 1836, and signed “Victory or Death.”
- The bill would require TSLAC to designate an appropriate place in the Alamo complex for the secure display of the letter and, on the Texas Historical Commission's determination that the transfer to and display of the letter at the Alamo complex is safe and appropriate, to transfer the letter to that location for display.
- Before the letter was transferred to the Alamo complex, TSLAC would be required to display the letter in a public location at the Capitol Complex, as determined in collaboration with the Texas Historical Commission

(THC) and State Preservation Board, at which the Texas Constitution and the Texas Declaration of Independence are displayed.

CSHB 1397 would require costs attributable to the display of these historical items to be paid for by TSLAC, using money available to TSLAC for that purpose.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Establishing a task force to review the school district property value study
- COMMITTEE:** Ways & Means — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 13 ayes — Meyer, Martinez Fischer, Bernal, Button, Capriglione, Gervin-Hawkins, Hickland, Muñoz, Noble, V. Perez, Troxclair, Turner, Vasut
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — Shannon Halbrook, Every Texan; Jordan Wise, Texas Association of Appraisal Districts; Carl Walker, Texas Taxpayers and Research Association (*Registered, but did not testify*: Revlynn Lawson, AECT; Paige Johnson, AT&T Texas; Melissa Shannon, Bexar County Commissioners Court; Lindsay Mullins, BNSF Railway; Jeff Bonham, CenterPoint Energy, Inc; Adam Haynes, Conference of Urban Counties; Kevin Kieschnick, County of Nueces, Nueces County Appraisal District Board; Myra Leo, CPKC Railroad; Josie Castro Garcia, Dallas County; Elisa M. Tamayo, El Paso County; Sabina Brown, Energy Transfer; Scott Hutchinson, Entergy Texas; Josh Sanderson, Equity Center; Samantha Omev, ExxonMobil; Santiago Franco, Harris County Commissioners Court; Peter Slover, Linebarger, Goggan, Blair & Sampson, LLC; Lamont Hill, Oncor; JD Salinas, Rio Grande Valley Partnership; Vincent DiCosimo, Targa Resources; Kyle Mauro, Texas Association of Property Tax Professionals; Whitney Broughton, Texas Association of School Boards; Amy Beneski, Texas Association of School Administrators)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Shannon Murphy, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that potential inconsistencies in the methods and results of the property value studies conducted by the comptroller to determine the validity of school district appraisals have left certain school districts with losses in local and state funding. Some have suggested that a task force should be created to evaluate the school district property value study and consider potential alternative tools.

DIGEST: CSHB 4236 would establish a task force to examine the use and effect of the school district property value study and develop recommendations on the elimination or replacement of the study and alternative methods by which the purpose of the study could be accomplished.

The bill would require the task force to evaluate:

- the effects of the school district property value study on appraisals and all taxing units;
- the administrative burden the study imposed on appraisal districts, the comptroller, and taxing units;
- the effectiveness of the study in achieving its purpose;
- the viability of alternative means and methods to ensure the accuracy of the determination of taxable property value to achieve the equitable distribution of financial aid for public education; and
- the consistency and reliability of the results of the study with other appraisal district studies conducted by the comptroller, including the ratio study, the review of appraisal districts' standards and methodology, and the targeted review of appraisal districts.

The task force would be required to develop recommendations for the most appropriate methods to address issues identified with the continued use of the school district property value study, which could include the elimination or replacement of the study, and report its findings to the governor, the lieutenant governor, the speaker of the house, and the members of the Legislature by November 1, 2026.

The task force would be composed of nine members, consisting of:

- two members appointed by the governor to represent the interests of taxpayers;
- one member appointed by the governor to represent appraisal districts;
- two members appointed by the governor to represent taxing units, at least one of whom would be required to represent school districts;
- two members of the Senate, appointed by the lieutenant governor; and
- two members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker.

The bill would require the appointments to be made by November 1, 2025.

A task force member could not receive compensation for service on the task force but could be reimbursed for expenses incurred in performing task force duties. The task force could accept gifts, grants, and donations to pay for such expenses.

The bill would require the task force to designate a presiding officer and secretary from among its members and to meet at least quarterly.

CSHB 4236 would permit the task force to meet by telephone conference call, videoconference, or other similar method. Such meetings would be subject to the laws governing meetings of governmental bodies by telephone, video conference, or the internet.

The bill would require the comptroller, the Texas Education Agency, appraisal districts, and taxing units to comply with requests for relevant information by the task force.

The task force would be abolished on June 1, 2027.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Adding compliance measures for campaign finance reports and statements

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 14 ayes — King, Hernandez, Anchía, Darby, Y. Davis, Geren, Hull,  
McQueeney, Metcalf, Phelan, Raymond, Smithee, Thompson, Turner

0 nays

1 absent — Guillen

WITNESSES: For - None

Against - (*Registered, but did not testify*): Steven Deline)

On - J.R. Johnson, James Tinley, Texas Ethics Commission

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that certain candidates and political subdivisions are not complying with statutory reporting and posting requirements related to campaign finance. Some have suggested that additional compliance measures are needed to ensure transparency.

DIGEST: CSHB 1804 would establish that a candidate or officeholder who failed to file certain reports and financial disclosure statements required under the Election, Government, and Local Government Codes within 30 days of the report or statement's due date would become ineligible to be a candidate for or hold the public office until the next election.

The bill would permit the relevant filing authority to provide the person written notice of the failure and the date by which the person would have to file the document before becoming ineligible to be a candidate or officeholder. The authority would be authorized to grant a candidate or officeholder a 30-day extension based on extraordinary circumstance according to rules adopted by the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC). Unless a 30-day extension was granted, the filing authority would be required to notify in writing the applicable authority for declaring a candidate ineligible or acting on a resignation or declination of office of

each person who failed to file a required report or statement within 30 days of the due date. The notice would have to be delivered within 14 days after the candidate or officeholder became ineligible, and the appropriate authority would be required to declare the person ineligible upon receiving the notice. CSHB 1804 would not apply to certain reports that were corrected or amended in good faith.

A public officer who was declared ineligible under the bill's provisions could be removed from office using the same procedures for removing a county officer by petition and trial under the Local Government Code.

No later than December 1, 2025, CSHB 1804 also would require TEC to develop procedures for monitoring the websites of political subdivisions required under the Election Code to make certain political contribution and expense reports available online to ensure substantial compliance as defined by TEC rule. TEC would be authorized to assess an administrative penalty of up to \$5,000 against a political subdivision that was not in substantial compliance with this requirement. Each day of non-compliance would be a separate violation.

CSHB 1804 would take effect September 1, 2025. The bill would apply only to the eligibility of a person to be a candidate for an office for which a ballot application was required to be filed on or after January 1, 2026. A political subdivision would not be subject to an administrative penalty under the bill before January 1, 2026.

- SUBJECT:** Amending provisions for condo and property owners' associations
- COMMITTEE:** Trade, Workforce & Economic Development — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 9 ayes — Button, K. Bell, Bhojani, Harris Davila, Longoria, Lujan, Luther, Ordaz, Richardson
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Talarico, Meza
- WITNESSES:** For — Roland Love, Texas Real Estate Probate and Trust Law Institute (*Registered, but did not testify*: Susan Nold, Community Associations Institute Texas Legislative Action Committee; Laura Matz, Texas Community Association Advocates (TCAA); Thomas Parkinson)
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised about inconsistencies and outdated statutory references in current law applying to meetings of condominium unit owners' and property owners' associations. Some have suggested that the Property Code should be amended to conform to applicable Business Organizations Code provisions to address this issue.
- DIGEST:** HB 1926 would update statutory references in the Property Code governing condominium unit owners' and property owners' associations to reflect the Business Organizations Code. The bill would replace citations to repealed statutes related to corporate formation, meeting notices, and board actions.
- The bill would authorize condominium unit owners' and property owners' associations to hold meetings electronically, by telephone, or by any other method of communication as provided by Business Organizations Code provisions related to alternative forms of meetings. The bill also would allow association members to vote electronically.
- The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Authorizing RRC to assess penalties on propane distribution system retailers

COMMITTEE: Energy Resources — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — Darby, E. Morales, Craddick, Dyson, J. Garcia, Gates, Gerdes,  
Guerra, Reynolds, Rosenthal

0 nays

1 absent — Dean

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Julie Range, Commission Shift  
Action; Elisa M. Tamayo, El Paso County; Cyrus Reed, Lone Star  
Chapter Sierra Club)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Mark Evarts, Railroad Commission  
of Texas)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that stronger enforcement mechanisms are needed  
for the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) to enforce propane  
distribution system retailer performance standards.

DIGEST: HB 4041 would authorize the Railroad Commission of Texas (RRC) to  
impose an administrative penalty on propane distribution system retailers  
that were not in compliance with standards defined under the Utilities  
Code.

The penalty for each violation could not exceed \$1,000. Each day a  
violation continued or occurred could be considered a separate violation  
for the purpose of assessing a penalty, provided that the maximum penalty  
that could be imposed for any related series of violations could not exceed  
\$10,000.

In determining the amount of the penalty, RRC would be required to  
consider the distribution system retailer's history of previous violations,

the seriousness of the violation, and any hazard to the health or safety of the public.

An administrative penalty could be assessed only after the distribution system retailer was given an opportunity for a hearing. If a hearing was held, RRC would be required to make findings of fact and issue a written decision as to the occurrence of the violation and the penalty amount warranted, incorporating, if appropriate, an order requiring that the penalty be paid. If a distribution system retailer failed to take advantage of the opportunity for a hearing, an administrative penalty could be assessed by RRC after it determined that a violation occurred and the penalty amount warranted by the violation.

The bill would require RRC to, after assessing the administrative penalty, issue an order requiring the penalty to be paid. Not later than the 30th day after the date an order was issued, RRC would be required to inform the distribution system retailer found in violation of the amount of the penalty.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Creating a study to improve access to veterans' mental health services
- COMMITTEE:** Homeland Security, Public Safety & Veterans' Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Hefner, R. Lopez, Canales, Cortez, Dorazio, Hickland, Holt, Isaac, McLaughlin, Pierson
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Louderback
- WITNESSES:** For — William West, The American Legion, Dept of Texas; Yasmine Smith, Urban Leagues of Texas (*Registered, but did not testify*); Kathy Green, AARP Texas; Elisa M. Tamayo, El Paso County; Katie Ferrier, Greater San Antonio Chamber of Commerce; Ray Hunt, Houston Police Officers' Union; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries; Christine Busse, NAMI Texas; Lori Henning, Texas Association of Goodwills; James Cunningham, Texas Council of Chapters of MOAA AND TCVO; Kelsey Bernstein, Texas Council of Community Centers; Amanda Tollett, Texas Medical Association; Rebecca Ramirez, The National Association of Social Workers- Texas Chapter; Bryan Flatt, TMPA; Mitch Fuller, VFW Dept of Texas; Thomas Parkinson)
- Against — None
- On — Dr Blake Harris, TVC
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that the accessibility of mental health services offered through the Texas Veterans Commission's Military Veteran Peer Network should be increased to meet the needs of veterans and their families, particularly those in rural areas. Some have suggested that a study should be conducted on how to improve access to the mental health services offered through the peer network.
- DIGEST:** HB 1965 would require the Texas Veterans Commission (TVC), in collaboration with the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC),

to conduct a study to evaluate strategies to improve and expand mental health services provided through the commission's Military Veteran Peer Network.

The bill would require the study to include recommendations on expanding the number of certified service peer coordinators who provide mental health services to service members, veterans, and their families. The study also would have to focus on the provision of certified peer service coordinators in rural communities.

The commission would be required to submit a report to the Legislature containing the study's results and recommendations for action by December 1, 2026.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2025. The bill's provisions would expire September 1, 2027.

- SUBJECT:** Authorizing certain actions to be brought against a political subdivision
- COMMITTEE:** Agriculture & Livestock — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Guillen, Cain, Hopper, Kitzman, J. Lopez, McLaughlin, Money  
0 nays  
2 absent — Guerra, Muñoz
- WITNESSES:** For — Brian Adamek, Texas Farm Bureau; Cahil Murchison (*Registered, but did not testify*: Melissa Hamilton, Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association; Kenneth Hodges, Texas Corn Producers; Rob Hughes, Texas Forestry Association; Joe Morris, Texas Forestry Association & Texas Beekeepers Association; Curtis Smith, Texas Nursery and Landscape Association; JC Essler, Texas Poultry Federation)  
  
Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jon Weist, City of Irving)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that certain political subdivisions and municipalities have enforced regulations that hinder agricultural practices, in violation of protective right-to-farm laws. Some have suggested that a mechanism is needed to provide relief to farmers and ranchers whose operations have been affected by such violations.
- DIGEST:** HB 1964 would amend the Agriculture Code to authorize an individual aggrieved by a political subdivision’s enforcement of a governmental requirement in violation of applicable state law related to the effect of nuisance actions and governmental requirements on agricultural operations to bring an action against the political subdivision to obtain declaratory or injunctive relief blocking the enforcement of the governmental requirement.  
  
The bill would authorize an individual who prevailed in an action to recover court costs and reasonable attorney’s fees.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Authorizing closed meetings for certain defense, military, aerospace issues
- COMMITTEE:** Delivery of Government Efficiency — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Capriglione, Bhojani, Alders, Bowers, Campos, Cook, Curry, L. Garcia, Olcott, Troxclair
- 1 nay — Rodríguez Ramos
- 2 absent — Cain, Tinderholt
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Megan Mauro, Texas Association of Business; William West, The American Legion, Dept of Texas)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Joshua Fiveson, Office of the Attorney General)
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that permitting certain governmental bodies to discuss defense, military, or aerospace issues in closed session is necessary to protect Texas’ strategic interests, safeguard sensitive information, and prevent other states or entities from gaining a competitive advantage.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 2679 would amend the Open Meetings Act to authorize the governing board of a board, commission, department, committee, or agency within the executive or legislative branch of state government that was directed by one or more elected or appointed members to conduct a closed meeting to deliberate a defense, military, or aerospace issue, defined in the bill as:
- a matter related to the establishment of an office, base, or major facility in this state by the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) or the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA); or

- an economic incentive that a governmental body could offer to a private entity or nonprofit organization to meet a match requirement or other requirement established by the DoD or NASA in relation to grants or strategic endeavors.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Changing homestead exemption audit requirements for chief appraiser
- COMMITTEE:** Ways & Means — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 12 ayes — Meyer, Martinez Fischer, Bernal, Button, Capriglione, Gervin-Hawkins, Hickland, Muñoz, Noble, Troxclair, Turner, Vasut
- 1 nay — V. Perez
- WITNESSES:** For — Thomas Ratliff, Texas Association of Appraisal Districts  
(*Registered, but did not testify*: JJ Wells, Linebarger, Goggan, Blair & Sampson, LLP; Jordan Wise, Texas Association of Appraisal Districts; Seth Juergens, Texas REALTORS)
- Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Adam Cahn)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that certain chief appraisers of appraisal districts have contacted homeowners asking them to confirm or reapply for their homestead exemptions. Some have suggested chief appraisers should not be allowed to require confirmation or reapplication unless the chief appraiser has a reason to believe the homeowner no longer qualifies for the exemption.
- DIGEST:** HB 2730 would prohibit a chief appraiser from requiring a person allowed a residence homestead exemption to file a new application or confirm the person’s current qualification for the exemption unless the chief appraiser had reason to believe the person no longer qualified for the exemption and delivered to the person written notice, accompanied by an application form, stating the chief appraiser’s belief that the person may no longer qualify for the exemption and the specific reasons for that belief.
- The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.
- NOTES:** The bill would be intended to be harmonized with another Act of the 89th Legislature, Regular Session, 2025, relating to nonsubstantive additions to and corrections in enacted codes.

- SUBJECT:** Modifying conditions for participation in reemployment services
- COMMITTEE:** Trade, Workforce & Economic Development — committee substitute recommended
- VOTE:** 10 ayes — Button, Bell, Keith, Bhojani, Harris Davila, Longoria, Lujan, Luther, Meza, Ordaz, Richardson
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Talarico
- WITNESSES:** For — None
- Against — None
- On — Mary York, The Texas Workforce Commission
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested participation in reemployment services could be expanded by revising the conditions under which participation was required for unemployment benefit eligibility.
- DIGEST:** CSHB 3698 would amend the circumstances under which participating in reemployment services, such as a job search assistance service, would be a requirement to qualify for unemployment benefits. Participation in such services would be required if the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) determined, regardless of the results of the individual's assessment under TWC's profiling system, that the individual's participation would help to:
- reduce the duration of unemployment compensation through improved employment outcomes;
  - strengthen the integrity of the unemployment compensation program;
  - promote alignment with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act;
  - establish TWC's reemployment services and eligibility assessment program; and

- demonstrate the effectiveness of reemployment services.

The bill would provide a recipient with an exemption from this requirement if TWC had determined that there was reasonable cause for the individual's failure to participate in the reemployment services.

This bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

**SUBJECT:** Amending statutory definitions related to unemployment claims

**COMMITTEE:** Trade, Workforce & Economic Development — committee substitute recommended

**VOTE:** 10 ayes — Button, K. Bell, Bhojani, Harris Davila, Longoria, Lujan, Luther, Meza, Ordaz, Richardson

0 nays

1 absent — Talarico

**WITNESSES:** For — None

Against — None

On — Chuck Ross, The Texas Workforce Commission

**BACKGROUND:** Sec. 208.002(a) of the Texas Unemployment Compensation Act establishes that, when used in connection with an initial unemployment claim, “last work” and “person for whom a claimant last worked” refer to the last person for whom the claimant actually worked, if the claimant worked for that person for at least 30 hours during a week or the employer for whom the claimant last worked.

Concerns have been raised that current law can allow certain bad actors to qualify for unemployment insurance benefits, as a claimant could potentially create a new “last employer” using the provision requiring 30 hours of work if separation from the person’s actual last employer would disqualify them from benefits.

**DIGEST:** CSHB 3699 would amend sec. 208.002(a) of the Unemployment Compensation Act to specify that “last work” and “person for whom the claimant last worked” refer to the employer for whom the claimant last worked, unless otherwise specified by state or federal law, and would remove provisions referencing the last person for whom the claimant worked at least 30 hours in a week.

The bill would take effect January 1, 2026.

- SUBJECT:** Naming the Army Staff Sergeant Samuel T. Castle Memorial Highway
- COMMITTEE:** Homeland Security, Public Safety & Veterans' Affairs — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 11 ayes — Hefner, R. Lopez, Canales, Cortez, Dorazio, Hickland, Holt, Isaac, Louderback, McLaughlin, Pierson
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify:* William West, The American Legion, Dept of Texas; Mitch Fuller, VFW Department of Texas)
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that the life and service of Army Staff Sergeant Samuel T. Castle should be formally honored in a manner that memorializes his contributions to the state and country.
- DIGEST:** HB 2143 would designate a portion of State Highway 11 in Morris County between the eastern municipal limits of Daingerfield and the western municipal limits of Hughes Springs as the Army Staff Sergeant Samuel T. Castle Memorial Highway. This designation would be in addition to any other designation.
- Subject to Transportation Code provisions requiring a grant or donation of funds to cover the cost of the marker, the bill would require the Texas Department of Transportation to design and construct markers to indicate the designation with any other appropriate information and to erect a marker at each end of the highway and the appropriate intermediate sites along the highway.
- The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Authorizing epinephrine auto-injector policies
- COMMITTEE:** Public Health — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 13 ayes — VanDeaver, Campos, Bucy, Collier, Cunningham, Frank, Johnson, J. Jones, Olcott, Pierson, Schofield, Shofner, Simmons
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Eric Woomer, Texas Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Society; Jennifer Allmon, The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Bruce Harris)
- Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that allowing more entities in Texas to maintain and administer epinephrine auto-injectors could help save lives by increasing access to timely treatment for individuals experiencing anaphylaxis from food allergies or other triggers.
- DIGEST:** HB 163 would revise the applicability of statutory provisions relating to the possession and administration of an epinephrine auto-injector by certain entities. The bill would:
- repeal provisions applying to the possession and administration of epinephrine by certain entities such as amusement parks, restaurants, child-care facilities, day camps or youth camps, private or independent institutions of higher education, restaurants, sports venues, and youth centers; and
  - authorize an entity in Texas, including government entities, to adopt a policy regarding the maintenance, administration, and disposal of epinephrine auto-injectors.
- The bill would not apply to an entity that was required by another law to adopt and implement a policy governing the maintenance, administration, and disposal of epinephrine auto-injectors by the entity.
- The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.



- SUBJECT:** Expanding scope of FCIC to address motor fuel theft and related devices
- COMMITTEE:** Pensions, Investments & Financial Services — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Lambert, Plesa, Bryant, Bumgarner, Garcia, Linda, Holt, Schoolcraft
- 0 nays
- 2 absent — Hayes, Vo
- WITNESSES:** For — Jeff Headley, Texas Financial Crimes Intelligence Center (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jennifer Szimanski, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas; Melodie Durst, Credit Union Coalition of Texas; M Paige Williams, Dallas Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot; James Parnell, Dallas Police Association; Larry Young, Game Warden Peace Officers Association; James Kershaw, Harris County Deputies' Organization FOP #39; Ray Hunt, Houston Police Officers' Union; Wendy Foster, Independent Bankers Assoc of TX; David DeAngelo, RaceTrac, Inc.; Celeste Embrey, Texas Bankers Association; Stephen Raines, Texas Credit Union Association; Desiree Castro, Texas Food & Fuel Association)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Derek Burkhalter, TDLR)
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that the scope of the Financial Crimes Intelligence Center should be expanded to include crimes related to gas pump skimming and fuel theft, often enabled by high-tech devices.
- DIGEST:** HB 201 would add definitions for "motor fuel manipulation device" and "motor fuel theft" to provisions related to the Financial Crimes Intelligence Center (FCIC). The bill would also update an existing definition of "skimmer" to include credit card shimmers, devices that

capture data from the microchip of a card rather than from the magnetic strip.

HB 201 would expand the scope of the purpose and duties of the FCIC to add motor fuel theft to existing provisions regarding reporting requirements, public outreach, and assistance to law enforcement and other governmental agencies. In addition, the bill would authorize the FCIC, upon request by a law enforcement or other governmental agency, to assist the agency with any matter within the FCIC's expertise.

The bill would take effect on September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Expanding venue for prosecution of credit and debit card fraud
- COMMITTEE:** Pensions, Investments & Financial Services — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Lambert, Plesa, Bryant, Bumgarner, L. Garcia, Hayes, Holt, Schoolcraft
- 0 nays
- 1 absent — Vo
- WITNESSES:** For — Jeff Headley, Texas Financial Crimes Intelligence Center (*Registered, but did not testify*: Nzingha Williams-Eugene, Bank of America; Jennifer Szimanski, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas; Melodie Durst, Credit Union Coalition of Texas; M Paige Williams, Dallas Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot; James Parnell, Dallas Police Association; Larry Young, Game Warden Peace Officers Association; James Kershaw, Harris County Deputies' Organization FOP #39; Ray Hunt, Houston Police Officers' Union; Wendy Foster, Independent Bankers Assoc of TX; David DeAngelo, RaceTrac, Inc.; Celeste Embrey, Texas Bankers Association; Stephen Raines, Texas Credit Union Association; Desiree Castro, Texas Food & Fuel Association; Meredyth Fowler, Texas Mortgage Bankers Association)
- Against — None
- On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Derek Burkhalter, TDLR)
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that more venue flexibility for the prosecution of fraudulent use or possession of credit or debit card information would help the state better address credit and debit card skimming-related crime.
- DIGEST:** HB 272 would authorize the prosecution of fraudulent use or possession of credit card or debit card information in any county where the offense was committed or in the county of residence of any person whose credit

card or debit card information was unlawfully obtained, possessed, transferred, or used by the defendant.

The bill would add fraudulent use or possession of credit card or debit card information to the list of offenses where a prosecuting attorney did not have to prove at trial that a defendant acted with the intent to defraud any particular person.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

**SUBJECT:** Permitting the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo to employ peace officers

**COMMITTEE:** Intergovernmental Affairs — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 9 ayes — C. Bell, Zwiener, Cole, Garcia Hernandez, Lowe, Luther, Rosenthal, Spiller, Tepper

0 nays

2 absent — Cortez, Leo Wilson

**WITNESSES:** For — Robert Martinez Jr, E. Michael Silvas, Ysleta Del Sur Pueblo  
(*Registered, but did not testify:* Joey Bennett, Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas)

Against — None

On — Cullen Grissom, Texas Commission on Law Enforcement

**BACKGROUND:** Code of Criminal Procedure art. 2A.003(a) states that the tribal council of the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas or of the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe of Texas may employ and commission peace officers to enforce state law within the respective tribe's reservation.

Some have suggested that the tribal council of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo should be permitted to employ and commission peace officers as the other two federally recognized tribes of Texas, the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe and the Kickapoo Traditional Tribe, may do under state law.

**DIGEST:** HB 333 would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure art. 2A.003(a) to permit the tribal council of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo to employ and commission peace officers.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Reenacting provisions relating to fees and grants for certain fuel types
- COMMITTEE:** Agriculture & Livestock — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Guillen, Cain, Hopper, Kitzman, J. Lopez, McLaughlin, Money  
0 nays  
2 absent — Guerra, Muñoz
- WITNESSES:** For — None  
Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Beverly Biehl)  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Dan Hunter, Karen Reichek, Texas Department of Agriculture)
- BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that revisions to the Agriculture Code are needed to address duplicate subsections with conflicting fees and grant payouts for the fuel ethanol, renewable methane, biodiesel, and renewable diesel production incentive program, which has created uncertainty about proper fee assessments and grant payouts.
- DIGEST:** HB 405 would reenact Agriculture Code sec.16005(a) and sec.16006(b) as amended by the 81st Legislature, Regular Session, 2009, to create a uniform fee and payout program for the fuel ethanol, renewable methane, biodiesel, and renewable diesel production incentive program.  
The bill would reinstate Agriculture Code sec.16005(a) to require the Department of Agriculture to impose of a fee on each producer who operates a fuel ethanol, renewable methane, biodiesel, or renewable diesel plant in an amount equal to 3.2 cents for each gallon of fuel ethanol, renewable diesel, or MMBtu of renewable methane and 1.6 cents for each gallon of biodiesel produced in each registered plant operated by the producer.  
The bill would reinstate Agriculture Code sec.16006(b) to entitle a producer to receive from the incentive program’s account 20 cents for

each gallon of fuel ethanol, renewable diesel, or MMBtu of renewable methane and 10 cents for each gallon of biodiesel produced in each registered plant operated by the producer until the 10th anniversary of the date production from the plant begins.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2025.

- SUBJECT:** Revising provisions related to honey production, sales, and distribution
- COMMITTEE:** Agriculture & Livestock — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 7 ayes — Guillen, Cain, Hopper, Kitzman, J. Lopez, McLaughlin, Money  
0 nays  
2 absent — Guerra, Muñoz
- WITNESSES:** For — Dorothy Stillman, Texas Beekeepers Association (*Registered, but did not testify*); Judith McGeary, Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance; Amber Hausenfluck, Texas Distilled Spirits Association; Beverly Biehl; Kathy Ponce; Stephen Zarate)  
Against — None
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that state laws regarding small honey production have restricted the operations of beekeepers. Some have suggested that such laws should be aligned with federal standards to prevent confusion among beekeepers and local enforcement.
- DIGEST:** HB 519 would revise the definition of “small honey production operations” by removing the word “small” and defining “honey production operation” as a beekeeper that sold or distributed honey or honeycomb the beekeeper produced that was, or from which was extracted, pure honey that was raw and not blended with any other product or otherwise adulterated. The bill would make conforming changes in relevant codes.  
The bill would remove certain sale, production, and labeling requirements for bottled honey.  
The bill also would establish that extracting honey from honeycomb and bottling extracted honey and packaged cut honeycomb met the definitions of harvesting and packaging a raw agricultural commodity.  
The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.



- SUBJECT:** Requiring notice and opportunity to correct early mail-in ballot defects
- COMMITTEE:** Elections — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 8 ayes — Shaheen, Bucy, Isaac, Morales Shaw, Plesa, Swanson, Toth, Wilson  
0 nays  
1 absent — Raymond
- WITNESSES:** For — Laura Rogers, County & District Clerks Association; Ed Johnson, Harris County Ballot Security; Kevin Hale, The Libertarian Party of Texas; Katherine Cano; Kathy Haigler (*Registered, but did not testify*: Charles Cascio, AARP Texas; Mary Ibarra, ACLU of Texas; Chase Bearden, Coalition of Texans with Disabilities; Adam Haynes, Conference of Urban Counties; Luis Figueroa, Every Texan; Katelyn Caldwell, Harris County Commissioners Court; Amber Mills, MOVE Texas Civic Fund; Veronikah Warms, Texas Civil Rights Project; Julie Wheeler, Travis County Commissioners Court; Steven Deline; Niloufar Hafizi; Leigh Joseph)  
  
Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Debbie Lindstrom, Citizens Defending Freedom; Russell Hayter)  
  
On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Christina Adkins, Texas Secretary of State)
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that a mail-in ballot can be rejected for failure to comply with statutory requirements without notifying the voter in time to correct the ballot. Some have suggested that creating a process for notifying voters of defects and allowing them to correct those defects could ensure that all eligible votes were counted.
- DIGEST:** If an early voting clerk received a timely mail-in ballot that did not fully comply with statutory requirements, rather than allowing the clerk to return the ballot in person or by mail, HB 569 would require the clerk to

send the voter a notice of the defect and a corrective action form, by mail or by common or contract carrier, no later than the second day after discovering the defect and before the time of delivery to the early voting ballot board. Additionally, the clerk would be required to notify the voter using the secretary of state's online tool and, if possible, permit the voter to correct the defect using the tool.

The bill would require the clerk to include with each notice a brief explanation of each defect in the noncomplying ballot and a notice that the voter could cancel the voter's application to vote by mail or correct the defect by submitting a corrective action form or coming to the early voting clerk's office within six days after Election Day.

If the clerk determined that the voter could not receive the notice within a reasonable time to correct the ballot, the clerk could notify the voter of the defect by telephone or e-mail and inform the voter that they could request to cancel their application to vote by mail, submit a corrective action form by mail or by common or contract carrier, or come to the early voting clerk's office in person within six days after Election Day to correct the defect.

The secretary of state would be required to develop a corrective action form that could be completed and submitted to an early voting clerk to correct a defect.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Creating process to defer and dismiss certain charges for deer hunting

COMMITTEE: Culture, Recreation & Tourism — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — Metcalf, Flores, Martinez Fischer, Orr, Vasut, Ward Johnson

0 nays

3 absent — Cole, DeAyala, Kerwin

WITNESSES: For — Brian Asp

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: John Shepperd, Texas Foundation for Conservation; Tammy Baker; Sheila Lackey)

On — Kevin Winters, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (*Registered, but did not testify*: Matt Wagner, Texas Chapter of The Wildlife Society; Alan Cain and Blaise Korzekwa, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; Kelly Fleming-Patrick; Jacob Hill; Grace Millsap)

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised regarding the application of criminal charges against a person who unknowingly hunted a deer whose antlers were one inch higher than the acceptable spread measurement. Some have suggested a process should be created for dismissing a charge if the defendant self-reported the violation and completed a hunter education course.

DIGEST: In proceedings against a defendant for hunting of certain mule deer or white-tailed deer based on the measurement of the deer's antlers, where the violation is based on a difference of one inch or less, CSHB 654 would authorize a court to defer the proceedings without entering an adjudication of guilt for a period up to 180 days if the defendant:

- reported the offense to a game warden before leaving the location where the conduct occurred and was subsequently charged with the offense;

- did not retain possession of the deer carcass or otherwise dispose of the carcass in the manner prescribed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department;
- had not previously been convicted of the offense or had a charge dismissed under the bill's provisions;
- pleaded nolo contendere or guilty to the offense in open court; and
- presented to the court an oral or written request to attend a hunter education course.

The bill also would authorize the court to transfer a case in which proceedings had been deferred to a different court if that court consented to the transfer and had jurisdiction over the case.

**Dismissal and enforcement.** CSHB 654 would require the court to dismiss a defendant's court-deferred charge if the defendant presented satisfactory evidence that the defendant had successfully completed the hunter education course before the last day of the deferral period and, during the deferral period, had not committed a violation. The bill would prohibit such a dismissed charge from being considered a conviction for any disqualifications or disabilities imposed by the law or being used as grounds for denying, suspending, or revoking a professional or occupational license or certificate.

The bill would require the court to enter an adjudication of guilt and impose the penalty for the offense if the defendant failed to satisfy the conditions for the charge's dismissal.

**Fees.** CSHB 654 would authorize a court to require a defendant who requested a hunter education course to pay, in addition to court costs and fees, a reimbursement fee in an amount up to \$10 to cover the costs of administering the bill's provisions and an additional \$10 reimbursement fee to cover the course provider's costs. Both fees would be nonrefundable, regardless of whether the defendant successfully completed the hunter education course. The bill would prohibit a court from requiring an indigent defendant to pay the reimbursement fees.

The bill could be cited as the Asp-Morgan Act and would take effect September 1, 2025.



- SUBJECT:** Revising notice requirements for parents and attorneys in DFPS cases
- COMMITTEE:** Human Services — favorable, without amendment
- VOTE:** 11 ayes — Hull, Manuel, A. Davis, Dorazio, C. Morales, Noble, Richardson, Rose, Schatzline, Slawson, Swanson
- 0 nays
- WITNESSES:** For - Judy Powell, Parent Guidance Center; Julia Hatcher, Texas Association of Family Defense Attorneys (*Registered, but did not testify*); Sydney Baker, Buckner International; Jason Sabo, Children at Risk; M. Paige Williams, Dallas Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot; Brandon Logan, Family Freedom Project; Kate Murphy, Texans Care for Children; Stephanie Battaglia, Texas CASA; Lauren Rose, Texas Network of Youth Services (TNOYS); Sarah Berel-Harrop
- Against - None
- On - Audrey O'Neill, DFPS Resource Witness; Cindy Dyar, Texas Legal Service Center
- BACKGROUND:** Concerns have been raised that the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) does not always provide parents with proper notice of significant events and other changes in a child's circumstances while in DFPS conservatorship. Some have suggested that requiring notice of significant events sooner and requiring notice to parents' attorneys would help protect the rights of parents and children.
- DIGEST:** HB 694 would revise provisions of the Family Code that require the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to, within 24 hours after the event, make a reasonable effort to notify a parent of a child in DFPS managing conservatorship of a significant change in the child's medical condition, the enrollment or participation of the child in a drug research program, and an initial prescription of a psychotropic drug to also require DFPS to notify the parent's attorney if the parent is represented by one. The bill also would add a change in the child's placement to the

events for which DFPS would be required to notify a parent or the parent's attorney under these provisions.

In addition to the parent, DFPS would be required under the bill to notify a parent's attorney no later than 48 hours before changing a child's residential child-care facility.

DFPS would also be required to provide notice of a significant event affecting a child to the parent's attorney if the parent was represented by one, and would amend the timeline for providing notice from as soon as possible but no later than 10 days after DFPS became aware of the event to as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours after DFPS became aware. The bill would make conforming changes to provisions requiring notice to be given at a hearing conducted during the notice period.

Notwithstanding existing provisions exempting DFPS from certain parental notice requirements, the bill would require DFPS to provide notice to the attorney of a represented parent if DFPS cannot locate the parent or the child is in the permanent managing conservatorship of DFPS and the parent has not participated in the child's case for at least six months despite DFPS's efforts to involve the parent.

DFPS also would be required to document all required notifications and attempted notifications.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

**SUBJECT:** Creating specialty license plates for CCHS students and alumni

**COMMITTEE:** Transportation — favorable, without amendment

**VOTE:** 9 ayes — Craddick, M. Perez, Curry, Gámez, Hefner, LaHood, Little, Patterson, Paul

0 nays

4 absent — Canales, Harris Davila, C. Morales, E. Morales

**WITNESSES:** For — Jason Longoria, Central Catholic High School (*Registered, but did not testify*); Jennifer Allmon, The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Steven Deline)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*): Annette Quintero, TxDMV)

**BACKGROUND:** Some have suggested that the students and alumni of Central Catholic High School in San Antonio would like the opportunity to purchase specialty license plates that recognize their connection to the school.

**DIGEST:** HB 791 would require the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles (TxDMV) to issue specialty license plates with the words "With Loyal Hearts" on the bottom and the logo of Central Catholic High School on the left side of each plate. The bill would require TxDMV to design the plates in consultation with a Central Catholic High School representative.

After deducting the department's administrative costs, the bill would require TxDMV to deposit the remainder of the fee for issuance of the license plates to the credit of the general revenue fund.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.