HOUSE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION • TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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HOUSE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

daily floor report

Wednesday, May 7, 2025
89th Legislature, Number 58
The House convenes at 10 a.m.
Part One

Seventy-nine bills are on the General State Calendar for second reading consideration today. The list of bills in Part One of the *Daily Floor Report* begins on the following page.

Gary VanDeaver
Chairman
89(R) - 58

HOUSE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION

Daily Floor Report
Wednesday, May 07, 2025
89th Legislature, Number 58
Part 1

SUBJECT: Modifying parole eligibility for certain young offenders

COMMITTEE: Criminal Jurisprudence — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 10 ayes — Smithee, Wu, Cook, J. Jones, Little, Louderback, Money, Moody, Rodríguez Ramos, Virdell

0 nays

1 absent — Bowers

WITNESSES: For — Michael Waters, Abundant Life A.M.E Church; Timothy Proctor and Jacob Reyna, Epicenter Ministries; Elizabeth Henneke, Lone Star Justice Alliance; Ruben Braziel, North Houston District of the AME Church; Shannon Jaquette, Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Alycia Castillo, Texas Civil Rights Project; Nikki Pressley, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Pamela Rivera, The 10th District of the AME Church; Justyn Payne, Word of Life Christian Faith Center - Buda, TX; Larry Robinson (*Registered, but did not testify*: Terra Tucker, Alliance for Safety and Justice; Nick Hudson, American Civil Liberties Union of Texas; Justin Keener, Doug Deason; Tyler Clark, Epicenter Ministries; Kathy Mitchell, Equity Action; Jay Dan Gumm, Forgiven Felons; Justin Martinez, LatinoJustice PRLDEF; Jennifer Toon, Lioness Justice Impacted Women's Alliance; Allen Place, Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association; Charlie Malouff, TX C.U.R.E., Inc.; Lakshmi Fox; John Hathaway; Tristan Stitt)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that current parole eligibility laws for individuals who committed offenses as juveniles may result in lengthy periods of incarceration without accounting for the individuals' potential for growth and rehabilitation. Some have suggested that allowing earlier parole eligibility and requiring parole panels to consider growth and maturity and give a "second look" to certain juvenile offenders could ensure that release decisions more appropriately reflected an individual's development since the time of the offense.

DIGEST:

CSHB 200 would revise parole eligibility and release considerations for individuals who were convicted of felony offenses before turning 18.

These individuals would become eligible for parole on the earlier of their existing eligibility date or the date when they would have served 20 years of calendar time, without consideration of good conduct time. This eligibility would not apply to capital murder involving a peace officer or firefighter, multiple murders committed under a common scheme, or aggravated assault committed as part of a mass shooting.

Parole panels would be required to assess the growth and maturity of an inmate serving a sentence for a felony offense committed before age 18, excluding the offenses listed above. These assessments would consider the inmate's diminished culpability relative to adults, the hallmark features of youth, and the greater capacity of juveniles to change compared to that of adults.

The bill would require the Board of Pardons and Paroles to adopt a policy to ensure that an inmate was provided a meaningful opportunity for release. The policy would be required to:

- consider the inmate's age at the time of the offense as a mitigating factor;
- allow for input from individuals familiar with the inmate before or after the offense; and
- establish a mechanism for the panel to consider the results of a comprehensive mental health evaluation conducted by an expert in adolescent development.

These requirements would not affect the rights of victims or their families or create a legal cause of action.

The bill also would require that juries in felony cases involving defendants who were younger than 18 at the time of the offense receive a written instruction about parole eligibility. The bill would prescribe language for the instruction, which would specify that:

- an award of parole may reduce the defendant's length of incarceration;
- the defendant would not become eligible for parole until the earlier of 20 years served without consideration of good conduct time or another applicable date;
- eligibility for parole does not guarantee release;
- parole decisions cannot be accurately predicted and depend on future actions of parole authorities; and
- the jury could consider the existence of the parole law, but not how it could be applied to the defendant.

The instruction would not apply in cases involving capital murder involving a peace officer or firefighter, multiple murders committed under a common scheme, or aggravated assault committed as part of a mass shooting.

CSHB 200 also would revise presumptive parole procedures to reflect the new eligibility schedule and would repeal provisions relating to parole eligibility and time credit calculations to conform with the new 20-year eligibility framework.

The bill would take effect January 1, 2026, and would apply to a person incarcerated on or after that date, regardless of when the offense was committed, except as specified for aggravated assault committed as part of a mass shooting.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the fiscal implications of the bill and its impact on state correctional populations and resource demands cannot be determined due to a lack of data to estimate the rate of parole approvals for eligible individuals, the number who would be released, and the timing of such releases.

SUBJECT: Expanding direct care agreements to include health care practitioners

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — VanDeaver, Campos, Bucy, Cunningham, Frank, Johnson, J. Jones, Olcott, Pierson, Shofner

1 nay — Collier

2 absent — Schofield, Simmons

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Charles Cascio, AARP Texas; Shelton Green, American Academy of Physician Associates; Travis McCormick, Make Texans Healthy Again; Shannon Meroney, National Association of Insurance and Benefits Professionals (NABIP-TX); Colette Vallot, Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA); Carl Isett, Texas Association of Benefit Administrators; Faith Villarreal, Texas Association of Business; Clifford Porter, Texas Public Policy Foundation)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Ch. 162, subch. F of the Occupations Code authorizes a direct primary care model under which a physician and patient may enter into a medical service agreement for the provision of primary care services in return for a direct fee.

Title 3 of the Occupations Code governs health professions.

Some have suggested that expanding a direct primary care model to allow other types of health care providers to participate could improve health care access and outcomes for Texans.

DIGEST: HB 541 would amend Occupations Code ch. 162, subch. F to allow any physician or health care practitioner to enter into a direct patient care agreement. A direct patient care agreement would be defined as a signed written agreement under which a physician or health care practitioner

would agree to provide health care services to a patient in exchange for a direct fee for a period of time. The bill also would define:

- “health care practitioner” as an individual who held a license, certificate, permit, or other authorization issued under Title 3 to engage in a health care profession and who provided health care in the ordinary course of business or practice of a profession. The term would not include a physician; and
- “health care service" as any care, service, or procedure provided by a physician or health care practitioner. The term would include any medical or psychological diagnosis, treatment, evaluation, advice, or other service that affected the structure or function of the human body.

HB 451 would transfer and redesignate ch. 162, subch. F as ch. 117 under Title 3 of the Occupations Code and make conforming changes to relevant definitions and provisions.

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 the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact

COMMITTEE: Public Health — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — VanDeaver, Campos, Bucy, Cunningham, Frank, Johnson, J. Jones, Pierson, Shofner, Simmons

3 nays — Collier, Olcott, Schofield

WITNESSES: For — Steve Bresnen, Scotte Hudsmith, Association of Dental Support Organizations; Sandy Tesch, Texas Dental Hygienist Association; Matt Shafer, The Council of State Governments (*Registered, but did not testify*: Shelton Green, American Academy of Physician Associates; Amy Bresnen, Association of Dental Support Organizations; Travis McCormick, Make Texans Healthy Again; Tessa Galloso, Texans Care for Children; Bradford Shields, Texas Academy of Audiology; Joel Romo, Texas Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics; Colette Vallot, Texas Academy of Physician Assistants (TAPA); Rebecca Ramirez, The National Association of Social Workers - Texas Chapter)

Against — Matt Roberts, Texas Dental Association (*Registered, but did not testify*: Logan Spence, American Association of Dental Boards; David Mintz, Texas Academy of General Dentistry; Faith Villarreal, Texas Association of Business)

On — Ambika Sanchez, Board of Dental Examiners; Lauren Studdard, Texas State Board of Dental Examiners

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that establishing a dentist compact would help to address difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified dental health care professionals by streamlining the approval process for licensed dental professionals who are seeking to work in Texas.

DIGEST: HB 1803 would establish the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact.

Purpose. The bill would establish that the purpose of the Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact was to facilitate the interstate practice of

dentistry and dental hygiene and improve public access to these services by providing dentists and dental hygienists licensed in a participating state the ability to obtain a compact privilege to practice in other states in which they were not licensed. The compact also would promote mobility and address workforce shortages, facilitate the sharing of licensure and disciplinary information among participating states, protect public health and safety, and facilitate the relocation of military members and their spouses who were licensed to practice dentistry or dental hygiene.

The compact would include relevant definitions, state and licensee participant requirements, fee exemptions for active duty military personnel and their spouses, requirements for the maintenance of a data system, and enforcement and disciplinary policies.

Commission. The compact would create and establish a Dentist and Dental Hygienist Compact Commission, which would be a joint government agency whose membership consisted of all participating states that had enacted the compact. The bill would establish provisions regarding commission participation, voting, and meetings. The commission would have certain powers, including powers to establish the fiscal year, create a code of conduct, initiate legal proceedings, maintain records, hire employees, charge fees, establish a budget, appoint committees, and elect an executive board, under certain conditions. All meetings of the commission would be required to be open to the public, unless the meeting was to receive legal advice or to discuss certain topics.

The commission would pay reasonable expenses of its establishment, organization, and ongoing activities. It could accept any and all appropriate sources of money and resources, and could levy on and collect an annual assessment from each participating state and impose fees on licensees to cover certain costs.

State participation. For a state to participate in the compact, it would have to, under certain conditions:

- enact a compact similar to the model compact;
- participate in a data system;
- have a mechanism in place for certain complaints;

- notify the compact commission of adverse action or significant investigative information;
- implement a criminal background check requirement;
- comply with commission rules;
- accept certain examinations as a licensure examination;
- accept certain dentistry and dental hygiene education accreditations;
- require a clinical assessment;
- require continuing professional development for license renewal; and
- pay a participation fee.

A participating state could take adverse actions, meaning a disciplinary action or encumbrance imposed on a license or compact privilege by a state licensing authority, issue subpoenas for certain hearings and investigations, and recover certain costs from licensees. Participating states could jointly investigate licensees with other participating states.

Active military fee exemptions. An active military member and their spouse would not be required to pay compact privilege fees to the commission. If a participating state chose to charge a fee for a compact privilege, it could choose to charge a reduced fee or no fee to an active military member and the member's spouse.

Compact privilege. A licensee of a participating state who had a qualifying license in that state and did not hold an encumbered license in any other participating state would be issued a compact privilege in another state under certain conditions. To obtain compact privilege, a licensee would have to, among other requirements, submit an application and pay any applicable fees in any state in which a licensee applied for compact privilege.

A licensee providing dentistry or dental hygiene in a state under the compact privilege would be required to function within the scope of practice authorized by the state. A state could, by adverse action, revoke or remove a licensee's compact privilege in the state for a specific period of time and impose fines or take any other necessary actions to protect the

health and safety of its citizens. If a state imposed an adverse action that limited the compact privilege, it would apply to all compact privileges in all participating states. If a licensee's compact privilege was removed by a state, the individual would lose or be ineligible for the compact privilege in any other participating state. Licensees would have to meet certain requirements to restore their compact privileges.

Data system. The commission would provide for the development, maintenance, operation, and utilization of a coordinated database and reporting system containing licensure, adverse action, and significant investigative information on all licensees and applicants in participating states. Each participating state would be required to submit a uniform data set to the data system on all individuals to whom the compact was applicable.

Enforcement. The rules of the commission would have the force of law unless these rules conflicted with any laws of a participating state. If a majority of participating state legislatures rejected all or a portion of a commission rule, then the rule would have no further force and effect in any participating state.

The executive and judicial branches of each participating state's government would be required to enforce the compact.

If the commission determined that a participating state had defaulted in performance of its obligations or responsibilities under the compact, the commission would provide written notice to the defaulting state. If a defaulting state failed to resolve the default, the defaulting state could be terminated from the compact upon an affirmative vote of a majority of the commissioners. Termination of participation in the compact would be imposed only after all other means of securing compliance had been exhausted.

The commission, in the reasonable exercise of its discretion, would be required to enforce the provisions of the compact and the commission's rules. By majority vote, the commission could initiate legal action against a defaulting participating state in certain federal courts. A participating state also could initiate legal action against the commission in certain

federal courts to enforce compliance with the provisions of the compact and its rules.

Implementation. The State Board of Dental Examiners would be the compact administrator and could adopt rules necessary to implement the bill.

The compact would come into effect on the date on which the seventh participating state enacts the compact into law. The bill would establish that the compact and the commission's rulemaking authority would be liberally construed and that the provisions of the compact would be severable. Nothing within the compact would prevent or inhibit the enforcement of any other law of a participating state that was inconsistent with the compact, and any laws or regulations in a participating state in conflict with the compact would be superseded to the extent of the compact.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Amending property tax rate formulas for taxing units in disaster areas

COMMITTEE: Ways & Means — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 8 ayes — Meyer, Button, Capriglione, Hickland, Muñoz, Noble, Troxclair, Vasut

5 nays — Martinez Fischer, Bernal, Gervin-Hawkins, V. Perez, Turner

WITNESSES: For — James Quintero, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Carl Walker, Texas Taxpayers and Research Association (*Registered, but did not testify*: Samuel Sheetz, Americans for Prosperity; Jorge Martinez, The LIBRE Initiative)

Against — Adam Haynes, Conference of Urban Counties; Jeff Branick, Jefferson County and County Judges and Commissioners Association (*Registered, but did not testify*: Melissa Shannon, Bexar County Commissioners Court; Clifford Sparks, City of Dallas; Ariel Traub, City of Garland; Joshua Sanders, City of Houston; Katelyn Caldwell, Harris County Commissioners Court; Julie Wheeler, Travis County Commissioners Court; Ruven Brooks; Steven Deline)

On — Sally Bakko, City of Galveston (*Registered, but did not testify*: Ryan Skrobarczyk, City of Corpus Christi)

BACKGROUND: Tax Code sec. 26.04 provides formulas for calculating a taxing unit's voter-approval tax rate (VATR), which is the maximum tax rate a taxing unit may adopt without requiring an election for voters to approve or disapprove the tax rate. The VATR formula used for a special taxing unit is different than the VATR formula used for other taxing units.

If any part of a taxing unit is located in a disaster area, as declared by the governor, Tax Code sec. 26.042(a) authorizes the taxing unit to calculate the VATR for the taxing unit in the manner provided for a special taxing unit during the current tax year.

Tax Code sec. 26.042(d) provides that a VATR election is not required to approve a tax rate adopted by certain taxing units for the year after a disaster occurs. This exception only applies when the governor has declared any part of the taxing unit as a disaster area and increased expenditure of money is necessary to respond to a disaster, including a tornado, hurricane, flood, wildfire, or other calamity, but not including a drought, epidemic, or pandemic.

Concerns have been raised that local taxing units may use the exception under Tax Code sec. 26.042(d) to increase tax rates by a large amount after a declared disaster without voter approval. Some have suggested that allowing taxing units to use a new tax formula that incorporates a disaster debris rate would help communities to recover from disasters while maintaining public trust.

DIGEST:

CSHB 30 would repeal Tax Code sec. 26.042(d) that exempts certain taxing units impacted by certain disasters from the requirement to hold voter-approved tax rate (VATR) elections.

For a taxing unit wholly or partly located in an area declared a disaster area by the United States president and for which an estimate had been made under certain federal laws relating to debris removal, CSHB 30 would authorize the taxing unit to calculate the VATR as the lesser of:

- the VATR calculated in the manner provided by Tax Code sec. 26.04 for a special taxing unit; or
- the VATR calculated in the manner provided by Tax Code sec. 26.04 for a taxing unit other than a special taxing unit plus the disaster debris rate.

The bill would define "disaster debris rate" as a rate expressed in dollars per $100 of taxable value and calculated according to the formula: disaster debris rate = (disaster debris cost) / (current total value – new property value).

The bill would define "disaster debris cost" as a taxing unit's share of the cost to remove debris or wreckage in the taxing unit as determined by an estimate made under certain federal laws relating to debris removal.

For a taxing unit in a declared disaster area for which no debris removal estimate had been made, CSHB 30 would authorize the taxing unit to calculate the VATR in the manner provided for a special taxing unit.

CSHB 30 would amend Tax Code sec. 26.042(a) to authorize a taxing unit to calculate the VATR of the taxing unit in the manner provided under the bill, rather than in the manner provided for a special taxing unit, if any part of the taxing unit was located in an area declared a disaster area during the current tax year.

The bill would take effect January 1, 2026.

SUBJECT: Establishing optional certifications and grants for child-care providers

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

VOTE: 8 ayes — Button, Talarico, K. Bell, Bhojani, Harris Davila, Longoria, Lujan, Ordaz

2 nays — Luther, Richardson

1 absent — Meza

WITNESSES: For — Tamkeen Shroff, Goddard School Long Meadow Farms; David Feigen, Texans Care for Children (*Registered, but did not testify*: Catherine Davis, Child Care Associates; Kim Kofron, Children at Risk; Amanda Posson, Every Texan; Shawneequa Blount, Institute to Advance Child Care at CCA; Brian Van Dyck, Kiddie Academy of College Station and Kiddie Academy of Bryan; Lori Henning, Texas Association of Goodwills; Andrea Chevalier, Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education (TCASE); Kelsey Bernstein, Texas Council of Community Centers; Matt Abel, Texas Economic Development Council; Kurt Hutson, Texas Licensed Childcare Association; Sabrina Gonzalez Saucedo, The Arc of Texas; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas; Steven Deline; Justin Wood)

Against — None

On — Lauren Gerken, Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities; Reagan Miller, Texas Workforce Commission

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that many parents of children with disabilities struggle to find childcare providers who provide for the inclusion of children with disabilities alongside their typically developing peers due to funding limitations. Some have suggested that incentivizing child-care providers to enhance their rating under the Texas Rising Star Program could help address the shortage of such providers.

DIGEST:

CSHB 175 would require the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) to create a set of optional certifications for child-care providers participating in the Texas Rising Star Program. The optional certifications would have to include a certification for providers who include children with disabilities in care settings with their typically developing peers.

The bill also would require TWC to establish and administer a grant program for providers who earned these optional certifications. The commission would have to award a grant to a provider in each year the provider held or maintained an optional certification. To receive a grant, an eligible provider would be required to follow application procedures prescribed by the commission. In determining the amount of a grant, the commission would be required to consider the age groups of children served by the provider and the provider's enrollment capacity.

TWC would be authorized to solicit and accept public or private grants and donations for the grant program and would be required to adopt rules to implement these provisions.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Authorizing quarterly homestead property tax payments in certain counties

COMMITTEE: Ways & Means — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — Meyer, Martinez Fischer, Bernal, Button, Capriglione, Gervin-Hawkins, Hickland, Muñoz, Troxclair, Turner, Vasut

0 nays

2 absent — Noble, V. Perez

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Melissa Shannon, Bexar County Commissioners Court; Christine Wright, City of San Antonio; Shannon Halbrook, Every Texan)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Adam Cahn)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that allowing qualifying residents of certain counties to pay property taxes on a residence homestead in quarterly installments could help relieve the financial strain on many Texans caused by rising property taxes.

DIGEST: HB 249 would authorize individuals who qualify for a residence homestead tax exemption to make quarterly installment payments of the property taxes imposed on their residence homestead if the property was located in a county with a population of more than 1.5 million in which more than 70 percent of the population lives in a single municipality.

The bill would take effect January 1, 2027, and would apply only to ad valorem taxes imposed for a tax year beginning on or after the bill's effective date.

SUBJECT: Excluding regional or local health care programs from cost transparency

COMMITTEE: Insurance — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 8 ayes — Dean, Vo, J. González, Goodwin, Hopper, Morgan, Paul, Wharton

0 nays

1 absent — Spiller

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jessica Schleifer, Teaching Hospitals of Texas)

Against — None

On — Craig Kovacevich, The University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston (UTMB) (*Registered, but did not testify*: Rachel Bowden, Texas Department of Insurance)

BACKGROUND: Insurance Code ch. 1662 establishes health care cost transparency requirements for health plan issuers and administrators, including:

- certain enrollee disclosure requirements, including for the estimate of an enrollee's cost-sharing liability for relevant services or supplies, accumulated amounts, network provider rates, bundled payment arrangements, and included services under a plan; and
- certain public disclosure requirements, including machine-readable files on coverage option information, allowed amounts, and prescription drugs.

Health and Safety Code sec. 75.104 authorizes a regional or local health care program to contract with health care providers within the boundaries of the participating county or counties to provide health care services directly to the employees of participating small employers and the employees' dependents.

Concerns have been raised that certain requirements for health benefit plan issuers and administrators relating to health care cost transparency overburden certain regional or local health care programs, including The University of Texas Medical Branch Health Multi-Share Plan, that are small-staffed with modest budgets.

DIGEST:

HB 721 would establish that health care cost transparency provisions under Insurance Code ch. 1662 did not apply to regional or local health care programs operating under Health and Safety Code sec. 75.104.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Requiring annual reporting of certain property tax benefits

COMMITTEE: Ways & Means — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 13 ayes — Meyer, Martinez Fischer, Bernal, Button, Capriglione, Gervin-Hawkins, Hickland, Muñoz, Noble, V. Perez, Troxclair, Turner, Vasut

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — None

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

BACKGROUND: Tax Code sec. 33.065 entitles an individual to defer or abate a suit to collect a delinquent tax imposed on the portion of the appraised value of the individual's residence homestead property that exceeds the sum of 105 percent of the appraised value of the property for the preceding year and the market value of all new improvements to the property.

Concerns have been raised that a lack of comprehensive data on how many homestead owners qualify for and utilize certain property tax limitations and benefits has impacted the state's ability to develop relevant policies.

DIGEST: HB 851 would require the chief appraiser for each school district in an appraisal district to report to the comptroller the number of:

- residence homesteads subject to the limitation on tax increases for individuals age 65 or older or who are disabled for the current tax year;
- residence homesteads for which a property owner deferred during the preceding tax year the collection of a tax, abated a suit to collect a delinquent tax, or abated a tax foreclosure sale as a result of the property owner being 65 or older, disabled, or a disabled veteran; and
- appreciating resident homesteads who utilized Tax Code sec. 33.065 during the preceding tax year.

These numbers, as determined by the chief appraiser, would have to be reported to the comptroller no later than September 1 of each tax year.

The bill would require the comptroller to report these numbers to the lieutenant governor, speaker of the House of Representatives, and each member of the Legislature no later than November 1 of each tax year. The report would be required to include the number of applicable resident homesteads in each school district or a reference to where the information for each school district could be accessed.

The bill would take effect January 1, 2026, and would apply only to the determination and reporting of information during a tax year that begins on or after the bill's effective date.

SUBJECT: Authorizing state agencies to sell or lease certain real property in Austin

COMMITTEE: Land & Resource Management — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — Gates, Lalani, Y. Davis, Hunter, R. Lopez, Morgan

0 nays

3 absent — Alders, Hinojosa, Virdell

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Rolland Niles, Health and Human Services Commission; Gloria Meraz, Texas State Library and Archives Commission)

BACKGROUND: It has been proposed that some state agencies should be authorized to dispose of certain properties that are no longer necessary to accomplish their missions.

DIGEST: CSHB 897 would require the General Land Office (GLO), as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date, to offer to sell or lease real property of around 20.3127 acres located at 4400 Shoal Creek Boulevard in Austin, Travis County, under terms provided by the bill. The bill would require GLO to negotiate and close a transaction under specific statutory authority.

Proceeds from the transaction would have to be deposited in a new dedicated account in the general revenue fund, to be known as the Bicentennial Texas State Library and Archives Commission (TSLAC) Fund. Proceeds from the fund would have to be used for capital improvements to the Same Houston Regional Library and Research Center and the Lorenzo de Zavala State Archives and Library Building, and to make original source materials more accessible to the public.

The sale or lease of the real property would be contingent upon the construction and occupation of an alternative state records facility that would replace the facility being operated by TSLAC on the real property on the effective date of the bill.

CSHB 897 also would authorize the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to lease, as soon as practicable after the bill's effective date, approximately 7.5 acres adjoining the south right of way line of West 45th street and the east right of way line of Lamar Boulevard in Austin, Travis County, under terms provided by the bill. HHSC would be required to negotiate the execution of one or more leases.

Proceeds from such a lease would have to be deposited in the Texas capital trust fund for the benefit of HHSC. The lease of all or a portion of the real property would have to provide for HHSC approval and restriction of the lessee's proposed use of the property and grant HHSC easements to its properties adjacent to the leased property.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the fiscal implications of the bill would have an indeterminate revenue gain to the state because the timing of the sales or leases and the amount of proceeds that would be received are unknown.

SUBJECT: Exempting judges from concealed carry prohibition at a polling place

COMMITTEE: Homeland Security, Public Safety & Veterans' Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 7 ayes — Hefner, Canales, Dorazio, Holt, Isaac, Louderback, McLaughlin

1 nay — R. Lopez

3 absent — Cortez, Hickland, Pierson

WITNESSES: For — Michelle Mostert; Gary Zimmerman (*Registered, but did not testify*: John Poole, Executive Director, Texas State Rifle Association; John Beckmeyer, Leigh Gibson, Richard Hayes, Gun Owners of America; Emily Taylor, Gun Owners of America - Texas; Nick Tuccio, National Rifle Association; Chris McNutt, Texas Gun Rights; Kyle Carruth; John Swicegood; Janet Womack; Richard Womack)

Against — Veronikah Warms, Texas Civil Rights Project; Susana Carranza (*Registered, but did not testify*: Mary Ibarra, ACLU of Texas; Emily French, Common Cause Texas; Niloufar Hafizi, Emgage Action; Tyler Smith, Everytown for Gun Safety; Roger Garza, Scott Spreier, Giffords; Macey Chandler, GIFFORDS Texas Courage Fellow, Texas Gun Sense Young Rising Leaders (San Antonio Ambassador); Santiago Franco, Harris County Commissioners Court; Judith Reynolds, League of Women Voters of Texas; Paula Hansen, Robin Breed, Heather Kennedy, Sarah West, Moms Demand Action; Molly Bursey, Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America; Amber Mills, MOVE Texas Civic Fund; Jenifer Olson, Texas Chapter of Moms Demand Action; Nicole Golden, Caia Marcee, Texas Gun Sense Young Rising Leaders (El Paso Ambassador); David Weinberg, The Brennan Center for Justice; Julie Wheeler, Travis County Commissioners Court; and 40 individuals)

BACKGROUND: Under Penal Code sec. 46.03(a)(2), a person commits an offense if the person intentionally, knowingly, or recklessly possesses or goes with a firearm or certain other prohibited weapon on the premises of a polling place on the day of an election or while early voting is in progress.

Concerns have been raised that the restriction on carrying concealed handguns in polling places could be an issue for election judges who may need to protect themselves or ensure safety during an election.

DIGEST:

HB 1128 would amend the applicability of Penal Code sec. 46.03(a)(2) to exempt from this prohibition a person who:

- was licensed to carry a handgun under state law; and
- was engaged in the performance of the person's duties as an election judge or as an early voting clerk or a deputy early voting clerk who was serving as an election judge at an early voting polling place.

HB 1128 would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Establishing a criminal offense for intentionally releasing balloons outside

COMMITTEE: Environmental Regulation — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Landgraf, Anchía, K. Bell, Bumgarner, Morales Shaw, Reynolds

0 nays

3 absent — Ordaz, Oliverson, Toth

WITNESSES: For — Leticia Gutierrez, Air Alliance Houston; Cyrus Reed, Lone Star Chapter Sierra Club; Charles Maley, South Texans' Property Rights Association (*Registered, but did not testify*: Adrian Shelley, Public Citizen; Peyton Schumann, Texas & Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association; Kenneth Flippin, Texas Chapter of US Green Building Council; Drew Fuller, Texas Farm Bureau; Justin Dreibelbis, Texas Wildlife Association)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that the intentional release of balloons into the environment can pose an environmental hazard. Some have suggested that classifying released balloons as litter under the Texas Litter Abatement Act and creating a related criminal offense would help prevent balloon releases and reduce environmental harm.

DIGEST: HB 1904 would define a balloon as a bag made of rubber, latex, Mylar, or similar inflatable material. The bill would include balloons among the combustible waste material that constituted nondecayable solid waste litter for the purpose of prohibited actions under the Texas Litter Abatement Act.

The bill would create the criminal offense of release of a balloon for a person who intentionally released, or caused the release of, a balloon inflated with lighter-than-air gas outside a roofed structure.

The bill would establish exceptions to the application of the offense if the balloon was released for scientific or meteorological purposes on behalf of a governmental agency or under a governmental contract, or if the balloon was a hot air balloon recovered after launching.

The bill would establish the following graduated criminal penalties based on the deflated weight or volume of balloons released:

- a class C misdemeanor (maximum fine of $500) if the total deflated weight of the balloons released did not exceed five pounds or the total deflated volume did not exceed five gallons;
- a class B misdemeanor (up to 180 days in jail and/or a maximum fine of $2,000) if the total deflated weight was between five and 500 pounds or the total deflated volume was between five gallons and 100 cubic feet;
- a class A misdemeanor (up to one year in jail and/or a maximum fine of $4,000) if the total deflated weight was between 500 and 1,000 pounds, the total deflated volume was between 100 cubic feet and 200 cubic feet, or if the release was for a commercial purpose and the total deflated weight was between five and 200 pounds, or the deflated volume was between five gallons and 200 cubic feet; and
- a state-jail felony (180 days to two years in a state jail and an optional fine of up to $10,000) if the total deflated weight was 1,000 pounds or more, the total deflated volume was 200 cubic feet or more, or the release was for a commercial purpose and the total deflated weight was 200 pounds or more, or the deflated volume was 200 cubic feet or more.

The punishment for an offense under the bill would be increased to the punishment for the next higher category of offense if it was shown on the trial of the offense that the defendant had a prior conviction under the bill. For an offense punishable as a class A misdemeanor, the bill would increase the minimum term of confinement to 180 days.

On conviction and in addition to any other applicable penalties, the court would be required to order the defendant to perform community service that could not exceed 60 days and consisted of picking up litter in the

county where the defendant resided or working at a recycling facility if such a program was available in the community where the court was located.

The bill would apply Penal Code provisions regarding preparatory offenses to balloon release offenses. If the conduct that constituted an offense under the bill also constituted another offense under any other law, the actor could be prosecuted either under the bill or the other law, but not both.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Granting exclusive jurisdiction to certain courts for post-divorce partitions

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 — Heather King, Texas Family Law Foundation (*Registered, but did not testify*: Amy Bresnen, Texas Family Law Foundation)

Against — Angelia Dedek (*Registered, but did not testify*: Steven Deline)

On — Amy Lee Owen Kloesel

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that there is confusion about which court has jurisdiction when a divorced person wants to partition property that was not divided in the final divorce decree. Some have suggested that granting exclusive jurisdiction to the court that rendered the final divorce decree and previously had jurisdiction in dividing the community property would clarify the law and eliminate forum shopping.

DIGEST: HB 1916 would establish that a court that rendered a final decree of divorce or annulment or another final order dividing property in the dissolution of a marriage would retain continuing, exclusive jurisdiction to render an order to divide property not divided or awarded to a spouse in the final decree.

The bill would apply to a suit to divide property that was pending in a trial court on the effective date or that was filed on or after that date.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Increasing the cap on civil penalties for GCD rule violations

COMMITTEE: Natural Resources — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 11 ayes — Harris, Martinez, Ashby, Barry, Buckley, Fairly, Gámez, J. Garcia, M. González, Romero, Villalobos

0 nays

2 absent — C. Bell, Zwiener

WITNESSES: For — Brian Sledge (*Registered, but did not testify*: Kenneth Flippin, Chispa Texas, Texas Chapter US Green Building Council; Vanessa Puig-Williams, Environmental Defense Fund; Ty Embrey, Middle Trinity GCD, Clearwater UWCD; North Texas GCD; Northern Trinity GCD; Middle Pecos GCD; Central Texas GCD; Evgenia Spears, Sierra Club; Charles Maley, South Texans' Property Rights Association; Adam Foster, Texas Alliance of Groundwater Districts;)

Against — Marvin Jones, Texas Association of Water Companies; Ed McCarthy, Wimberley Water Supply Corporation

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that the current civil penalty cap for violations of groundwater conservation district (GCD) rules may be inadequate to deter overpumping and other violations by large water projects and should be raised to more effectively protect the state's water supplies.

DIGEST: HB 5560 would raise the limit on civil penalties that a groundwater conservation district could recover from a person for a breach of the district's rules from $10,000 to $25,000 per day per violation.

In an enforcement action brought by a groundwater conservation district against a person, the court could assess a penalty greater than the maximum penalty if the court determined that the person gained an economic benefit greater than the maximum penalty as a result of the violation. A penalty assessed under the bill would have to be in an amount determined by the court to be necessary and appropriate to outweigh the

economic benefit gained by the person as a result of the violation and discourage future violations.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025, and would apply only to a suit involving a groundwater conservation district filed on or after this date.

SUBJECT: Requiring TCEQ to cancel certain solid waste landfill facility permits

COMMITTEE: Environmental Regulation — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 7 ayes — Landgraf, Ordaz, Anchía, K. Bell, Bumgarner, Morales Shaw, Reynolds

0 nays

2 absent — Oliverson, Toth

WITNESSES: For — None

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Adam Burklund, Waste Connections, Inc.)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Charly Fritz, TCEQ)

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that inactive permits issued by the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for municipal solid waste facilities can be reactivated decades later, despite significant changes in surrounding land use. Some have suggested that requiring the cancellation of certain long-dormant permits would help protect nearby communities that have since developed, including residential areas and public institutions, from potential environmental and quality-of-life impacts.

DIGEST: CSHB 3071 would require Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to cancel a permit issued for a municipal solid waste landfill facility if the facility had not accepted waste for 25 consecutive years and, if the permit was issued to the owner of the facility, the person to whom the permit was issued no longer owned the facility. TCEQ would be prohibited from approving a new permit application for a municipal solid waste landfill facility if the original permit was canceled under the bill.

The bill would apply only to a facility located in a county with a population exceeding 2.1 million and the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the county's principal municipality with a population greater than 900,000.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025, and apply only to the transfer of ownership of a municipal solid waste facility that occurred on or after that effective date.

SUBJECT: Creating a commission on teacher retirement funding transparency

COMMITTEE: Pensions, Investments & Financial Services — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — Lambert, Plesa, Bryant, Bumgarner, Hayes, Holt

1 nay — Schoolcraft

2 absent — L. Garcia, Vo

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Timothy Lee, Texas Retired Teachers Association)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: James Hallamek, Texas State Teachers Association; Patty Quinzi, TX-AFT; Steven Deline)

On — Monty Exter, Association of Texas Professional Educators (*Registered, but did not testify*: Brian Guthrie, Teacher Retirement System of Texas; Carla Steffen, Texas Education Agency)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that including funding appropriated towards contributions for the retirement of public education personnel in assessing the total amount of money spent by the state on public education could help improve transparency in public education spending.

DIGEST: CSHB 5627 would establish the Texas Commission on Public School Teacher Retirement Funding Transparency to develop and make recommendations on incorporating state resources for teacher retirement benefits within the Foundation School Program, aligning staffing incentives with state priorities, and providing uniformity in resourcing retirement obligations to fund teacher retirement benefits. The commission would be required to be composed of seven members, including:

- one member, appointed by the governor, who would be required to have an interest in public school staffing issues;

- three senators, appointed by the lieutenant governor; and
- three members of the House of Representatives, appointed by the speaker of the House.

The governor would have to designate the commission's presiding officer. A commission member would not be entitled to compensation for service on the commission but would be entitled to reimbursement for actual and necessary expenses incurred in performing commission duties.

The Texas Education Agency (TEA) would be required to provide administrative support for the commission. The Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) and the Office of the Comptroller of Public Accounts would have to provide additional support required by the commission. Funding for administrative and operational expenses would have to be provided by legislative appropriation made to TEA for that purpose.

The bill would require the commission to develop recommendations on:

- incorporating current and future appropriations that constituted state contributions for retirement of public education personnel into the Foundation School Program as part of the basic allotment or another formula mechanism;
- reviewing state and employer contribution requirements to ensure that staffing incentives prioritized classroom instruction and that retirement obligations between public schools were uniform; and
- establishing employer contribution requirements sufficient to ensure the actuarial soundness of TRS for the foreseeable future.

The commission could establish one or more working groups composed of no more than three commission members to study, discuss, and address specific policy issues and recommendations.

By December 31, 2026, the commission would have to prepare and deliver a report to the governor and the Legislature that recommended statutory changes to implement recommendations. The commission could hold public meetings as needed to fulfill its duties. The commission would

not be subject to the Open Meetings Act, but would be subject to the Public Information Act.

The commission would be abolished and the bill would expire January 1, 2027.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Creating an exception to notice requirements for higher education leases

COMMITTEE: State Affairs — committee substitute recommended

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

0 nays

1 absent — Raymond

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Nadia Islam, City of San Antonio)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Sean Ray, The Texas A&M University System)

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised about the application of lease-related notice requirements to institutions of higher education. Some have suggested that the requirement to provide detailed notice at least 90 days before beginning construction or repairs on leased public property may present difficulties for higher education institutions managing projects with short timelines or urgent needs.

DIGEST: CSHB 5435 would except a lease between a public institution of higher education and another party from a requirement that a lease for public property include a provision obligating the lessee to provide notice of commencement to the governmental entity at least 90 days before beginning construction, alteration, or repair of improvements to the leased property.

The bill would apply only to leases entered into on or after the bill's effective date. The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Amending licensing and regulation of certain real estate professionals

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 — David Jones, Texas Realtors (*Registered, but did not testify*: Julia Parenteau, Texas Realtors; KJ Pool, TX Towing & Storage Association / Neal Pool Rekers; Brian Talley)

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

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Abby Lee, Texas Real Estate Commission; Steven J. Freeman II, Texas Society of Professional Surveyors)

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that current law does not allow real estate agents to show property without creating an agency relationship with a potential buyer, but many consumers do not want to commit to an agent so early in the process. Some have suggested that provisions guiding real estate agents should be modernized to provide consumers with more clarity, offer more choices on how to work with agents, and make agent-client rules more transparent.

DIGEST: CSHB 3913 would amend provisions relating to the licensing and regulation of real estate brokers and sales agents by the Texas Real Estate Commission (TREC) under The Real Estate License Act.

Real property showings without representation. The bill would permit a broker to show real property available for sale or lease to a party without representing the party if the broker:

- had not agreed with the party, either orally or in writing, to represent the party;
- was not otherwise acting as the party's agent at the time of showing the real property;
- did not provide to the party opinions or advice regarding the real property or real estate transactions in general; and
- did not perform any other act of real estate brokerage for the party.

Before a broker could show real property under these provisions, the broker would be required to disclose to the party if the broker represented the owner of a real property or provide to the party written notice regarding broker representation, obligations, duties and certain other information if the broker did not represent the owner of a real property.

A broker who showed real property under these provisions could confirm information to a party regarding the size, price, and terms of the real property available for sale or lease.

Written agreement. A license holder who performed any act of real estate brokerage for a prospective buyer of residential real property would be required to enter into a written agreement with the prospective buyer before showing any property to the buyer or, if no residential real property would be shown, presenting an offer to purchase residential real property on behalf of the prospective buyer.

The bill would require the written agreement to disclose in conspicuous language that broker compensation was not set by law and was fully negotiable, and state:

- the services that would be provided by the license holder;
- the termination date of the agreement;
- whether the agreement was exclusive;
- as applicable, that the license holder represented the prospective buyer as the buyer's agent or did not represent the prospective buyer as the buyer's agent if the only act of real estate brokerage being performed was showing real property; and

- the amount or rate of compensation the broker would receive and how this amount would be determined.

A license holder who entered into a written agreement with a prospective buyer for the sole purpose of showing real property under the bill would be required to enter into a separate agreement with the prospective buyer if additional real estate brokerage acts were to be provided after showing a property.

The bill would permit TREC to suspend or revoke a license or take other disciplinary action if a license holder failed to enter into a written agreement.

Education requirements. The bill would remove specifications regarding the range of topics included in each real estate course required for licensure. Courses offered by public high schools would be excluded from TREC standards for approval of qualifying real estate educational programs or courses of study.

The bill would require an applicant for a broker license to provide satisfactory evidence that the applicant had attended a broker responsibility course, which could be used to satisfy certain course hour requirements for licensure. The bill would require a sales agent license applicant to provide satisfactory evidence that the applicant had successfully completed at least 12 semester hours of qualifying real estate courses required by TREC rule.

The bill would revise language to specify that a licensed broker or a licensed sales agent who supervised another license holder or would be required to attend a broker responsibility course that could not exceed six classroom hours.

Other provisions. The bill would authorize TREC to provide a written notice of an investigation of a licensee to a license holder who was associated with the person who was the subject of the investigation.

The bill would require a license holder to provide TREC with their current business address, business telephone number, and if the license holder was

an associated broker, the name of the broker with whom the license holder was associated.

At the time of a license holder's first substantive communication with a party relating to a proposed transaction of real property, a license holder would be required to provide a written notice describing the basic obligations a broker had to a party to a real estate transaction that the broker did not represent.

The bill would repeal certain provisions of the Occupations Code relating to subagents.

The bill would take effect January 1, 2026.

SUBJECT: Expanding confidentiality protections for airport customers

COMMITTEE: Transportation — favorable, without amendment

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

0 nays

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

WITNESSES: For — Tim Joniec, Texas Commercial Airports Association (*Registered, but did not testify*: Joshua Sanders, City of Houston; Jack Martin, Dallas Love Field; Erica Mulder, DFW Airport; Jay Barksdale, Irving-Las Colinas Chamber; Henry Bryan, North Texas Commission; Ron Hinkle, Texas Commercial Airports Association; Steven Deline)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that expanding the scope of confidentiality protections for airport-related purchases and services could help protect customer privacy.

DIGEST: HB 2921 would extend statutory provisions establishing that certain personal identifying information collected by a local government was confidential and was not subject to disclosure under the Public Information Act to apply to a person's use of any airport facility, rather than only an airport parking facility. The bill also would add a person's profile name, travel dates and flight details, purchase history, and airport lounge memberships or trusted traveler information to the list of information made confidential by these provisions.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025, and apply only to a request for public information received by a governmental body or an officer for public information on or after the effective date.

SUBJECT: Increasing penalties for drug offenses involving social media

COMMITTEE: Criminal Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 10 ayes — Smithee, Wu, Bowers, Cook, J. Jones, Little, Louderback, Money, Moody, Virdell

1 nay — Rodríguez Ramos

WITNESSES: For — Jo Ann Gillen, Carrollton Farmers Branch ISD; Roberto Arredondo, Carrollton Police Department; Lilia Astudillo; Luis Gonzalez (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jennifer Tharp, Comal County Criminal District Attorney; Jennifer Szimanski, Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT); M. Paige Williams, Dallas Criminal District Attorney John Creuzot; James Parnell, Dallas Police Association; James Kershaw, Harris County Deputies' Organization FOP #39; Nathan Carroll, Houston Police Department; Ray Hunt, Houston Police Officers' Union; Bill Kelly, Office of Harris County District Attorney Sean Teare; Keith Schmidt and Brian Hawthorne, Sheriffs Association of Texas; John Wilkerson, Texas Municipal Police Association (TMPA); James Richards, Texas Police Chiefs Association)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised about the use of social media platforms to facilitate the delivery of controlled substances to minors. Some have suggested that increasing penalties for certain drug offenses committed through social media could help deter the use of these platforms to reach young Texans.

DIGEST: HB 2695 would establish that, if a defendant were shown at trial to have used a social media platform in furtherance of certain offenses involving the delivery of a controlled substance, the punishment would be increased to the next higher category. If the offense was a first-degree felony, the punishment would be increased by five years and the maximum fine would be doubled.

Offenses eligible for penalty enhancement under the bill would include:

- the manufacture or delivery of a substance in Penalty Groups 1, 1-A, 1-B, 2, 2-A, 3, or 4;
- the manufacture, delivery, or possession of certain miscellaneous substances;
- the delivery of marijuana; and
- the delivery of a controlled substance or marijuana to a child.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board, the fiscal implications and impact on state correctional populations or resources cannot be determined due to insufficient data to estimate the prevalence of conduct subject to increased criminal penalties under the bill.

SUBJECT: Revising firefighter relief and retirement funds in certain municipalities

COMMITTEE: Pensions, Investments & Financial Services — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 6 ayes — Lambert, Plesa, Bryant, Bumgarner, Hayes, Schoolcraft

0 nays

3 absent — L. Garcia, Holt, Vo

WITNESSES: For — Brett Besselman, Houston Firefighters Relief & Retirement Fund; Patrick M "Marty" Lancton, Houston Professional Fire Fighters Association (*Registered, but did not testify*: Ray Hunt, Houston Police Officers' Union; Anthony Kivela, Houston Police Retired Officers Association; Mitch Landry, Texas Municipal Police Association; Steven Deline)

Against — None

On — Amy Cardona and David Fee, Pension Review Board

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised regarding the City of Houston's ability to recruit and retain firefighters due to inadequate pension benefits. Some have suggested modifying provisions governing the operation of the fund.

DIGEST: CSHB 2688 would revise provisions establishing a firefighters' relief and retirement fund in an incorporated municipality that had a population of at least 2 million, rather than 1,600,000.

The bill would redefine "normal retirement age" as the point at which a member has either completed 20 years of service or has reached at least age 50 with a minimum of 10 years of service.

The bill would amend entitlement to a service pension for a member who terminated active service for any reason other than death and was hired or rehired as a firefighter on or after the 2017 effective date, making the member entitled at the age at which the member attained 20 years of

service rather than when the sum of the member's age and period of participation in the fund equaled at least 70 years.

Deferred retirement option plans. The bill would remove a prohibition on a member eligible to receive a service pension electing to participate in a deferred retirement option plan (DROP) and would make additional changes to such plans, including increasing the monthly benefit of a DROP participant who had less than 20 years of participation on the 2017 effective date. An increase provided under the bill would be applied to a member's benefit at retirement and would not be added to the member's DROP account.

Deferred pension benefits. The bill would remove an entitlement to a monthly deferred pension benefit for a member who was hired before the 2017 effective date and involuntarily separated from service but retroactively reinstated in accordance with an arbitration, civil service, or court ruling.

The bill would entitle a member who terminated active service before 10 years of participation for any reason other than death, rather than a member who was hired or rehired as a firefighter on or after the 2017 effective date, only to a refund of the member's contributions without interest and not to a deferred pension benefit.

Years of participation. For purposes of computing a member's years of participation, the bill would extend the timeframe in which a member would have to return to active service as a firefighter to receive credit for applicable prior service from a date before the fifth anniversary of a previous date of termination to a date before the 10th anniversary of that termination.

Risk sharing valuation studies. Regarding risk sharing valuation studies, the fund would replace an ultimate entry age normal actuarial method with an entry age normal actuarial cost method, as defined by the bill.

The bill also would reduce from 30 years to 15 years the period of the amortization of a liability loss layer. With respect to any liability loss layer with an accelerated payoff year, the fund's board and municipality

could at any time enter into a written agreement to extend the payoff year of the liability loss layer to a payoff year that was not later than 15 years from the first day of the fiscal year beginning 12 months after the date of the risk sharing valuation study in which the liability loss layer was first recognized.

The bill would also add that the municipality and board could agree on a written transition plan for resetting the corridor midpoint on a one-time basis, to existing provisions allowing the corridor midpoint to be reset at certain times.

The bill would apply only to risk sharing valuation studies conducted after June 30, 2026, and would require all existing liability loss layers and liability gain layers to be re-amortized over a period of 15 years.

Municipal contribution rate. The bill would allow a municipality and board of the fund to enter, not later than April 30 of the next fiscal year, an agreement to increase the estimated municipal contribution rate to equal the minimum contribution rate rather than requiring the increase to be applied sequentially, to the extent required.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Exempting corporations that operate spaceports from the franchise tax

COMMITTEE: Ways & Means — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 12 ayes — Meyer, Bernal, Button, Capriglione, Gervin-Hawkins, Hickland, Muñoz, Noble, V. Perez, Troxclair, Turner, Vasut

1 nay — Martinez Fischer

WITNESSES: For — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Ben Lancaster, SpaceX; Robert Wood, Texas Association of Manufacturers; Andrew Brown, Texas Public Policy Foundation)

Against — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Adam Cahn)

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Shannon Brandt and Shannon Murphy, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts)

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that the current franchise tax may place Texas-based spaceports at a competitive disadvantage relative to those in other states.

DIGEST: CSHB 3045 would exempt from the franchise tax a corporation that operated a spaceport authorized by the Federal Aviation Administration and that had a contract with the U.S. Department of Defense to provide spaceflight or launch services to the department.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

NOTES: According to the Legislative Budget Board, the bill would have a negative impact of $2,920,000 to the Property Tax Relief Fund in the general revenue related funds through the biennium.

SUBJECT: Revising the authority of a special utility district to issue a public security

COMMITTEE: Natural Resources — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 11 ayes — Harris, Martinez, Ashby, Barry, Buckley, Fairly, Gámez, J. Garcia, M. González, Romero, Villalobos

0 nays

2 absent — C. Bell, Zwiener

WITNESSES: For — Clay Hodges, Cash Special Utility District; Rodolfo Segura, Texas Rural Water Association (*Registered, but did not testify*: John Carlton, Jonah Water Special Utility District; Steven Deline; Buddy Garcia)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised that special utility districts, upon conversion from a water supply corporation, may be limited in their ability to borrow money to finance and complete water and utility projects. Some have suggested that exempting a special utility district from certain bond approval and supervision provisions could help these districts finance infrastructure projects.

DIGEST: CSHB 3483 would exempt special utility districts from Water Code provisions related to the authority of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) over the issuance of district bonds and TCEQ supervision of certain water district projects and improvements.

For the purposes of Government Code provisions related to obligations for certain public improvements on state or local government authority to issue securities, the bill would add to the definition of "issuer" a conservation and reclamation district organized or operating as a special utility district.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

SUBJECT: Revising occupational licensing regulations for inmates and releasees

COMMITTEE: Corrections — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 9 ayes — Harless, V. Jones, Allen, Harrison, Lowe, Lozano, Meza, Schatzline, Wharton

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Deb Gore, Incarcerated Women's Project; Charlie Malouff, TX C.U.R.E.; Emily McDonald (*Registered, but did not testify*: Terra Tucker, Alliance for Safety and Justice; Nick Hudson, American Civil Liberties Union of Texas; Kris Heckmann, Doug Deason; Oliver Bernstein, EdTrust in Texas; Courtney Fontaine, Institute for Justice; Jennifer Toon, Lioness Justice Impacted Women's Alliance; Xochitl Acheson, Lone Star Justice Alliance; Jennifer Fagan, Texas Construction Association; Luis Soberon, Texas 2036; Cole Meyer, Texas Appleseed; Faith Villarreal, Texas Association of Business; Lori Henning, Texas Association of Goodwills; Kelle Kieschnick, Texas Business Leadership Council; Alycia Castillo, Texas Civil Rights Project; Ross Jackson, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Ashley Harris, United Ways of Texas; Thomas Parkinson)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Ron Foster, TDLR; Kristina Hartman and Robert O'Banion, Windham School District)

BACKGROUND: Occupations Code sec. 53.021 requires a licensing authority to revoke, suspend, or deny a license if the license holder is imprisoned after a felony conviction. Sec. 53.0211 authorizes a licensing authority to issue a six-month provisional license to a person with a prior conviction.

Some have suggested that current provisions for license revocation and provisional licensing for inmates and individuals convicted of felonies may reduce the effectiveness of educational and vocational programs in supporting post-release success.

DIGEST:

CSHB 3673 would amend Occupations Code sec. 53.021 to limit the felony convictions for which a licensing authority was required to revoke a license upon the license holder's imprisonment. Revocation would apply only to felony convictions for offenses that were directly related to the duties and responsibilities of the licensed occupation, certain offenses that disqualified a defendant from judge-ordered community supervision, or sexually violent offenses as defined under sex offender registration law.

The bill also would revise Occupations Code sec. 53.0211 to allow a licensing authority to issue a provisional license to an applicant who was:

- an inmate imprisoned in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) or a person released on parole or mandatory supervision who resided at a halfway house or community residential facility; and
- enrolled in or had completed an educational program offered by the Windham School District or by an institution of higher education.

The provisional license term would be extended from six to 12 months and, for an inmate, would begin on the date of release from TDCJ. Upon request, TDCJ would be required to provide information to the licensing authority regarding an applicant who was an inmate for the purposes of determining the inmate's eligibility for a license, including otherwise confidential information about the applicant.

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: Lowering rate at which interest accrues on overdue child support

COMMITTEE: Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence — committee substitute recommended

VOTE: 11 ayes — Leach, Johnson, Dutton, Dyson, Flores, J. González, Hayes, LaHood, Landgraf, Moody, Schofield

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Lisa Marshall, Fighting Homelessness; Kelvin Malone, Texas Family Law Foundation (*Registered, but did not testify*: Guy Herman, Statutory Probate Judges of Texas; Amy Bresnen, Texas Family Law Foundation)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Joel Rogers, Office of the Attorney General - Child Support Division)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that lowering the interest rate that accrues on overdue child support would align the rate with current prevailing interest rates.

DIGEST: CSHB 4213 would lower from 6 to 3 percent the rate at which interest accrued on:

- the portion of delinquent child support that was greater than the monthly support payment;
- child support arrearages that had been confirmed and reduced to a money judgment; and
- a money judgment for retroactive lump-sum child support.

The interest rate under the bill would apply to a child support payment that became due, or a money judgment for child support rendered, on or after January 1, 2026, rather than January 1, 2002.

Child support arrearages that were in existence on January 1, 2026, rather than January 1, 2002, that were not confirmed and reduced to a money judgment on or before that date would accrue interest as follows:

- before January 1, 2026, the arrearages would be subject to the interest rate that applied before that date; and
- on and after January 1, 2026, the cumulative total of arrearages and interest accumulated would be subject to the interest rate under the bill.

The bill would take effect January 1, 2026.

SUBJECT: Exempting certain food bank vehicles from sales, use, or rental taxes

COMMITTEE: Ways & Means — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 13 ayes — Meyer, Martinez Fischer, Bernal, Button, Capriglione, Gervin-Hawkins, Hickland, Muñoz, Noble, V. Perez, Troxclair, Turner, Vasut

0 nays

WITNESSES: For — Brian Greene, Houston Food Bank; Eric Cooper, Frio County Food Bank, New Braunfels Food Bank, San Angelo Food Bank, and San Antonio Food Bank (*Registered, but did not testify*: Jamie Olson, Feeding Texas; Santiago Franco, Harris County Commissioners Court; Christine Yanas, Methodist Healthcare Ministries; Jennifer Allmon, The Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops; Steven Deline)

Against — None

On — (*Registered, but did not testify*: Lara Abi Habib, Julio Mendoza-Quiroz, Elliott Reed, Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts)

BACKGROUND: Some have suggested that exempting nonprofit food banks from state vehicle sales taxes could help mitigate the financial impact of transportation-related fees on food banks, extending their operational capacity and outreach efforts.

DIGEST: HB 4226 would exempt the sale, use, or rental of a motor vehicle purchased and used primarily by a nonprofit food bank for its purposes from taxes on the sale, use, or rental of a motor vehicle.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

NOTES: According to the Legislative Budget Board, HB 4226 would have a negative impact of $571,100 to general revenue related funds through the biennium. Additionally, the bill would have a direct impact of a revenue loss to the Property Tax Relief Fund of $4,000 for the biennium. Any loss

to the Property Tax Relief Fund would have to be made up with an equal amount of general revenue to fund the Foundation School Program.

SUBJECT: Creating civil liability for online impersonation

COMMITTEE: Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence — favorable, without amendment

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

0 nays

1 absent — Moody

WITNESSES: For — Renzo Soto, TechNet (*Registered, but did not testify*: Thomas Parkinson)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Concerns have been raised about the lack of a clear civil remedy for victims of online impersonation to seek restitution, removal of harmful content, or injunctive relief.

DIGEST: HB 783 would make a person liable to another person injured by the person's online impersonation if the person knowingly and with intent to harm, defraud, intimidate, or threaten the injured person used the online impersonation to create a false identity. The bill would exclude online impersonation of which the sole purpose was satire or parody.

The bill would define "online impersonation" to mean a person's use of an individual's name, voice, signature, photograph, or likeness through social media without that individual's consent or, if the individual was a minor, the consent of the individual's parent or legal guardian.

A claimant who prevailed in an action under HB 783 would be awarded actual damages, including expenditures for counseling, identity theft, or libel. The defendant's profits attributable to the online impersonation could be considered in the computation of actual damages. A claimant also could recover exemplary damages of not less than $500.

The bill would authorize a court to issue a temporary restraining order or an injunction to restrain and prevent the online impersonation of the claimant.

The cause of action created by the bill would be cumulative of any other remedy provided by common law or statute.

The bill would not apply to a law enforcement agency or its employee acting within the scope of employment in investigating internet crimes. The bill could not be construed to impose liability on an interactive computer service for content provided by another person.

The bill would take effect September 1, 2025.

NOTES:

According to the Legislative Budget Board and the Office of Court Administration, the fiscal implications of the bill cannot be determined because the number of new cases that would arise from the bill is unknown.

SUBJECT: Granting special districts certain powers and duties after disannexation

COMMITTEE: Land & Resource Management — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Gates, Lalani, Alders, Y. Davis, Hinojosa, Morgan

1 nay — Virdell

2 absent — Hunter, R. Lopez

WITNESSES: For — Megan Marrs (*Registered, but did not testify*: J.D. Hale, Texas Association of Builders; James Quintero, Texas Public Policy Foundation; Perry Fowler, Texas Water Infrastructure Network)

Against — None

BACKGROUND: Local Government Code sec. 43.1463 provides disannexation election procedures for certain populated areas that were forcibly annexed between March 3, 2015, and December 1, 2017, during the state's transition from nonconsent to a consent annexation model.

Concerns have been raised that while certain special districts created by strategic partnership agreements between an annexing municipality and an annexed area are allowed to continue if the area disannexes from the city, they are not expressly authorized by statute to continue operating with the same powers they had before disannexation.

DIGEST: HB 4373 would authorize a limited district that was created by the conversion of a special district under a strategic partnership and was located in and serving an area disannexed under Local Government Code sec. 43.1463 to exercise all powers and duties granted to the former special district by law in the portion of the disannexed area located in the district.

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.