

# Austin Board Update

88th Texas Legislature

April 26, 2024



Texas Workforce Commission

TEXAS  
WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

## Texas Senate Interim Charges

Lt. Governor Patrick released Senate Interim Charges for the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature. Below is a list of Interim Charges relevant to TWC. The full list of Interim Charges can be found [here](#).

### Senate Committee on Business and Commerce

**Artificial Intelligence:** Examine the development and utilization of artificial intelligence (AI). Evaluate the implications of AI adoption across the public and private sectors. Make recommendations for a responsible regulatory framework for AI development, including data privacy, industry standards, consumer protections, and compliance processes. Propose any necessary changes to state law to protect the Texas radio, television, music, and film industries against unauthorized use by AI. Monitor the findings of the Teas Artificial Intelligence Advisory Council.

### Senate Committee on Education

**Reading and Math Readiness:** Study current local, state, and national policies and programs that improve student achievement in reading and mathematics, with an emphasis on “early readiness” in grades pre K-5. Make recommendations to ensure every student has a strong academic foundation in reading and math.

**Monitoring:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Education passed by the 88<sup>th</sup> Texas Legislature, as well as relevant agencies and programs under the committee’s jurisdiction. Specifically, make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, or complete implementation of the following:

- Measures ensuring public school safety;

- Oversight of public school library procurement and content policies; and
- High-quality instructional materials and open-educational resources for public schools.

## **Senate Committee on Finance**

**Monitoring Property Tax Relief and Infrastructure Funds:** Monitor the appropriations supporting, and implementation of, the following legislation passed during the 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature, Regular or Special Sessions, and approved by voters, amending the Texas Constitution:

- Property Tax Relief: SB 2 and HJR 2, 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature, 2<sup>nd</sup> Called Session
- Texas Energy Fund: SB 2627 and SJR 93, 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature, Regular Session
- Texas Water Fund: SB 28 and SJR 75, 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature, Regular Session
- Centennial Parks Conservation Fund: SB 1648 and SJR 74, 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature, Regular Session
- Broadband Infrastructure Fund: HB 9 and HJR 125, 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature, Regular Session

## **Senate Committee on Health and Human Services**

**Monitoring:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services passed by the 88<sup>th</sup> Legislature, as well as relevant agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction. Specifically, make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, or complete implementation of the following:

- Senate Bill 7, Third Called Special Session, relating to prohibiting a private employer from adopting or enforcing certain COVID-19 vaccine mandates; authorizing an administrative penalty;
- Senate Bill 24, relating to the powers and duties of the Health and Human Services Commission and the transfer to the commission of certain powers and duties from the Department of Family and Protective Services;
- Senate Bill 25, relating to support for nursing-related postsecondary education, including scholarships to nursing students, loan repayment assistance to nurses and nursing faculty, and grants to nursing education programs;
- Senate Bill 26, relating to local mental health authority and local behavioral health authority audits and mental and behavioral health reporting, services, and programs;
- Senate Bill 1849, relating to an interagency reportable conduct search engine, standards for a person's removal from the employee misconduct registry and eligibility for certification as certain Texas Juvenile Justice Department officers and employees, and the use of certain information by certain state agencies to conduct background checks;
- Initiatives to reduce Medicaid fraud, waste, and abuse, as well as other cost containment strategies; and
- Medicaid managed care oversight and accountability.

## **Senate Committee on Higher Education**

**Innovation and Technology in Higher Education:** Investigate the opportunities and challenges of emerging technology on teaching and learning, focusing on artificial intelligence (AI), online education, and digital resources. Examine aspects of intellectual property as they relate to the development of AI programs and platforms by institutions of higher education and explore the ethical issues institutions of higher education

should contemplate when developing AI programs and platforms. Make recommendations to responsibly and ethically utilize emerging technology to enhance learning and higher education.

**Public Junior College State Finance Program:** Monitor the implementation of the new community college funding model as recommended by the Texas Commission on Community College Finance. Report on whether the rulemaking process is being successfully completed to focus on student outcomes and enhancing the role of public junior colleges in workforce training and preparation.

## **Senate Committee on Local Government**

**Secure Texas Against "Squatters":** Review current laws relating to "squatters" or those claiming adverse possession of property. Make recommendations to streamline the process for the immediate removal of "squatters" and to strengthen the rights of property owners.

## **Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development**

**Enhancing Workforce Productivity:** Study ways to increase the state's workforce productivity, including access to childcare. Make recommendations within existing resources, to maintain childcare availability to support a growing workforce.

**Overcoming Federal Incompetence:** Consider the impact to the Texas economy from federal interference including, but not limited to, restricting liquified natural gas exports, supply chain limitation, a net-zero carbon agenda, and other air emission provisions. Report on what impact these federal interferences will have on the Texas economy and workforce, and make recommendations to minimize the damage to Texas.

## **Senate Committee on State Affairs**

**Responsible Investing:** Study the impact of environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors on our state's public pensions, with a focus on proxy voting services. Make recommendations to ensure our state's pension systems vote and invest in accordance with their fiduciary responsibility to maximize profit. Additionally, monitor the implementation of Senate Bill 13, 87th Legislature, relating to state contracts with and investments in certain companies that boycott energy companies. Specifically, examine how a company is removed from the list of companies that boycott energy companies when the company ceases to boycott energy companies. Report on how frequently the list maintained by the comptroller is updated and make recommendations to ensure an ongoing accurate list.

## **Senate Committee on Transportation**

**The Future of Our Economy:** Evaluate President Biden's plan to transition to all-electric vehicles, and the impact on Texans and the state economy. Assess and report on the viability of the charging infrastructure, including the need for more charging stations and upgrades to the power grid, loss of gas tax revenue for transportation and public education, barriers to widespread adoption such as consumer costs for purchasing new vehicles and installing residential charging infrastructure, and the impacts to the oil and gas economy in Texas.

## **Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs**

**Veteran Mental Health:** Review current programs that provide direct and indirect mental health services to veterans in Texas. Identify barriers to accessing mental health resources for rural veterans. Make recommendations to improve access to mental health support for all veterans.

**Support Service Database for Texas Veterans:** Review and report on the progress toward the creation of a single database to facilitate the seamless provision of veteran benefits by state agencies. Make

recommendations to improve coordination among state, federal, and local agencies and others that provide benefits to veterans.

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## Upcoming Committee Hearings

### Wednesday, May 15, 2024

**9:00 AM**

[Senate Veteran Affairs](#)

**Veteran Mental Health:** Review current programs that provide direct and indirect mental health services to veterans in Texas. Identify barriers to accessing mental health resources for rural veterans. Make recommendations to improve access to mental health support for all veterans.

**Support Service Database for Texas Veterans:** Review and report on the progress toward the creation of a single database to facilitate the seamless provision of veteran benefits by state agencies. Make recommendations to improve coordination among state, federal, and local agencies and others that provide benefits to veterans.

### Thursday, June 13, 2024

**10:00 AM**

[Senate Natural Resources & Economic Development](#)

**Overcoming Federal Incompetence:** Consider the impact to the Texas economy from federal interference including, but not limited to, restricting liquified natural gas exports, supply chain limitations, a net-zero carbon agenda, and other air emission provisions. Report on what impact these federal interferences will have on the Texas economy and workforce, and make recommendations to minimize the damage to Texas.

### Tuesday, September 17, 2024

**10:00 AM**

[Senate Natural Resources & Economic Development](#)

**Enhancing Workforce Productivity:** Study ways to increase the state's workforce productivity, including access to childcare. Make recommendations, within existing resources, to maintain childcare availability to support a growing workforce.

### Wednesday, September 18, 2024

**9:00 AM**

[Senate Transportation](#)

**The Future of Our Economy:** Evaluate President Biden's plan to transition to all-electric vehicles, and the impact on Texans and the state economy. Assess and report on the viability of the charging infrastructure, including the need for more charging stations and upgrades to the power grid, loss of gas tax revenue for transportation and public education, barriers to widespread adoption such as consumer costs for purchasing new vehicles and installing residential charging infrastructure, and the impacts to the oil and gas economy in Texas.

# Resources

If you have any questions regarding this report, contact the TWC Governmental Relations Department at (512) 463-1802.

- The Texas Legislature Online <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>
- Daily House Journal <http://www.journals.house.state.tx.us/hjrn/home.htm>
- Daily Senate Journal <http://www.journals.senate.state.tx.us/sjrn/home.htm>
- House Research Organization Floor Reports <http://www.hro.house.state.tx.us/>

Texas Constitution and Texas Statutes <http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/>