

**FORT WORTH  
CHAMBER★**

**2021 FORT WORTH CHAMBER  
87TH TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION AGENDA**

# 2021 FORT WORTH CHAMBER 87TH TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION AGENDA

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Reauthorize Chapter 313 (Texas Economic Development Act) of the Tax Code and maintain competitive funding for the Texas Enterprise Fund, Event Trust Fund, Texas Tourism, the Texas Music Office and the Texas Film Commission.

Ensure Texas remains a welcoming State and the premier place to live, work and grow a business, regardless of race, religion, or gender expression including supporting comprehensive nondiscrimination policies.

Support public policies that will support a healthy workforce for Texas businesses, including: maximizing federal dollars for Medicaid, expanding telemedicine, funding for inpatient, outpatient and community based behavioral health programs, programs to combat opioid abuse, and promote stable, adequate, and predictable funding for health care providers in Texas, including trauma care.

Support the use of federal funds to supplement rather than supplant funds to local education agencies and institutions of higher education for COVID-19 related expenses.

Support legislation that temporarily reduces state standardized testing requirements and suspend or adjust the accountability standards to reflect the loss of instructional time due to COVID-19.

Funding for the Skills Development Fund grants to improve workforce training including 60x30TX, 300x300. Continue investment in Small Business Development Centers and their professional business advising and training programs for small business owners support small businesses.

Maintain the progress of previous legislation and protect an equitable, accountable, and wellfunded public education system that serves all children and strengthens our talent pipeline.

Provide access to quality and affordable childcare options that will enable workforce participation for parents and improve long-term academic success for all children.

## ADDITIONAL ISSUES

Innovative financing tools that would leverage state funds to create jobs and expedite delivery of needed infrastructure projects and maintenance.

Protect the local prioritization of policies and funding for improved transportation.

Maintain all current project delivery tools to allow for innovative infrastructure financing.

Local responsibility for property taxation decisions and appraisals.

Military & Aerospace funding, infrastructure, innovation, and job growth.

Support the preservation of local governments' responsibility for property taxation decisions and appraisals and ability to establish appropriate means to adequately fund services and govern including establishing and maintaining charters and ordinance making authority.

Support development plans and resources for greater broadband connectivity to enhanced access to public education, healthcare, employment, news, and information, for all Texans.

**SUPPORTING COVID-19  
RECOVERY AND A SUSTAINABLE  
HEALTHY WORKFORCE**

## EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

To meet the business community needs, prioritize funding of higher education and research to increase educational attainment and foster innovation, including restoring the 5% midbiennial cuts.

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## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### SUPPORT

Reauthorizing Chapter 313 to enable Texas the ability to compete for major capital intensive projects.

Continued appropriations for economic development incentive programs such as: the Texas Enterprise Fund, Texas Tourism, the Texas Music Office, and the Texas Film Commission at levels that keep Texas Competitive with other states.

Keep Texas open for business by insuring all persons are welcome and have a safe and equitable work environment regardless of race, religion, or gender expression including supporting comprehensive non-discrimination policies.

Innovative financing tools that would leverage state funds to create jobs and expedite delivery of needed infrastructure projects and maintenance.

Continuing the exercise of equitable eminent domain to allow for construction of roads, pipelines, power transmission lines, rail, and water infrastructure as well as for the development of new and/or expanded infrastructure for services including food, water, fuel, ports, flood control and telecommunications.

Developing plans and resources needed for greater broadband connectivity to enhanced access to public education, healthcare, employment, news, and information.

Legislation that enhances statewide goals and accountability for the Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) Program and increased funding/programs for "MWBE"-related businesses to ensure taxpayer-funded procurement transactions are transparent and equitable.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### OPPOSE

Legislation which weakens the effectiveness of existing economic development statutes or damage Texas' reputation as a business friendly state.

## WATER

### SUPPORT

Continue to implement and adequately fund the Texas State Water Plan to meet the water supply needs associated with future population growth and the economic development of the State, and **OPPOSE** any strategies that would impede water provider's ability to implement water management strategies as provided in the State Water Plan.

Continuing to plan, implement and adequately fund the Texas State Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF) to meet the statewide effort to help protect urban and rural Texas from flood and natural flood related events and the associated loss of life and economic costs.

Support efforts to expedite State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT) applications made to the State while maintaining adequate oversight.

## MONITOR

Implementing SB 8, TWDB Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF), to ensure that regional flood planning groups do not over reach and impede responsible growth and economic development during the planning process.

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## TRANSPORTATION

### SUPPORT

Continue policy of ending diversions of transportation resources (excludes education diversion).

Continue policy laid out by the legislature in the 83rd and 84th Legislative Session and approved by voters which provides a reliable revenue stream for transportation infrastructure (Proposition 1 and 7).

Protect the various “tools” for mitigating congestion, including toll roads, managed lanes, high speed rail, commuter rail, freight rail, highways and transit, funding of such projects through financing/funding sources available including public-private partnerships (P3’s) and Comprehensive development agreements (CDA’s).

Legislation that creates a favorable regulatory environment for the pursuit of innovative transportation solutions.

Index the motor fuel sales tax to the Highway Cost Index, or some other agreed upon index that mirrors the transportation industry as well as preserve the current state of roadways.

Continued use of eminent domain authority and related tools to allow planning and development of new and/or expanded transportation corridors including high speed rail, commuter rail, freight rail, highways and transit.

## TRANSPORTATION

### OPPOSE

Any attempt to increase truck size and weight limits or create additional heavy weight permits or corridors in Texas.

Any efforts that would increase the cost or slow the delivery of materials needed for public and critical infrastructure projects.

Attempts to impose state tax on jet fuel tax.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

### SUPPORT

Legislation that maintains public school funding levels established by HB3.

Maintain funding for P-Tech and other early college and workforce readiness programs.

Allow the Skills Development Funds to be more flexible in meeting industry needs in order to support their growth and development of a needed workforce.

Investing in technology including infrastructure for greater student connectivity and access.

Process of increased input from the business community with regards to curriculum development at the State Board of Education.

The use of federal funds to supplement rather than supplant funds to local education agencies and institutions of higher education for COVID-19 related expenses.

Legislation that temporarily reduces state standardized testing requirements and suspend or adjust the accountability standards to reflect the loss of instructional time due to COVID-19.

## PUBLIC EDUCATION

### OPPOSE

Any use of school district fund balances to offset state financial obligations.

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## HIGHER EDUCATION | WORKFORCE

### SUPPORT

Continue to invest in Small Business Development Centers and their professional business advising and training programs for small business owners, which are proven resources that strengthen the Texas economy.

Measures recommended in the 60x30 TX Plan to increase percentage of Texans with a certificate or degree to 60% by 2030; and 300X300, the partnership between local business leaders and the 50 Texas community college districts to prepare 300,000 students for in-demand careers in 300 days while also building an enduring workforce pipeline for the Texas economy.

Authorization of additional Tuition Revenue Bonds or their equivalent for capital improvements to address public higher education institutions capacity needs.

Invest in keeping talent in Texas by incentivizing Texas high school graduates to attend Texas colleges.

Continue to fund the Governor's University Research Initiative, The Texas Research Incentive Program, and the core research for institutions of higher education.

Use of Economic Stabilization Fund to address one time COVID-19 costs incurred by higher education institutions toward student refunds for housing, dining, meal plans and rapid conversion to online learning.

Legislation to increase meaningful employment, on-going education for veterans and cooperative integration of state, county, and local workforce training, education, and job placement resources.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### SUPPORT

Preserving local governments' responsibility to establish appropriate means to adequately fund services and govern including establishing and maintaining charters and ordinance making authority.

Legislation that provides for enhanced local decision-making of local government including increasing the 3.5% revenue caps imposed on cities and counties to 6% or higher.

Local responsibility for property taxation decisions and appraisals.

Any attempt by the state legislature to further preempt cities' or counties' ability to govern and raise funds as determined necessary (i.e., revenue caps), or penalize municipalities who increased taxes above the existing cap due to COVID-19 expenses.

## LOCAL GOVERNMENT

### OPPOSE

Any attempt to limit or prohibit the authority of city, county, political subdivisions, and/or school district officials to use public funds to communicate with legislators and state agencies, as well as pay membership dues to organizations that hire lobbyists.

Any legislation that increases revenues paid to the State of Texas by local governments as a result of the State of Texas increasing fines, fees or charges to local governments including, but not limited to, the 2 percent administrative fee all municipalities pay to the state for the collection and distribution of local sales taxes and municipal court fees.

Legislation that would erode municipal authority related to development matters, including with respect to the following issues: annexation, eminent domain, public right-of-way, zoning, and building codes.

## HEALTH CARE

### SUPPORT

Efforts to increase the number of Texans with comprehensive health insurance and maximize federal matching funds for the state's Medicaid program to offset healthcare costs for the indigent and uninsured working poor in Texas.

Preserve an adequate, stable source of state funding to support and enhance the statewide trauma and emergency health care system.

Necessary state funding to ensure timely and appropriate access to inpatient, outpatient and community - based behavioral health - care services.

Medicaid reimbursement rates for providers that reflect the cost of delivering care.

Continued appropriations to address the state's critical shortage of physicians, nurses, allied health and behavioral health care professionals, including increased funding for the Professional Nursing Shortage Reduction Fund, the state's graduate medical education programs and the loan repayment program for behavioral health care professionals.

Ensure adequate resources to address the social determinants of health by: promoting health equity, literacy & navigation; reducing healthcare disparities; encouraging cultural awareness and competency; and promoting prevention, wellness and chronic disease management initiatives.

Increase funding, regulatory relief, & resources for emergency preparedness, response, and recovery related to emergencies impacting public health, including natural disasters, pandemics, and other events.

Legislation that promotes increased Community Health and Wellness Programs, Healthy Work Environments and Places.

## MILITARY AFFAIRS

### SUPPORT

Promote compatible growth that lessens the impact on military installations and provides enhanced options for cities and counties to manage growth.

Effective requirements for notification, analysis & consultation for certain proposed activities that may adversely affect military operations (e.g. wind turbines, communications towers, drone technology, etc.) between project developers and military bases and City and County Officials.

Protecting the voluntary participation of coordination efforts by governmental entities surrounding military installations.

Enhancing communication efforts for new potential residents that may be affected by military operations and protect the voluntary participation of coordination efforts by governmental entities surrounding military installation.

Legislation to address incompatible land use near installation boundaries, training ranges, operating areas, flight paths can have long-term impacts.

Positive control of un-incorporated lands along with tools and resources to buffer development near defense installations & expand existing municipal authority. Measures to allow purchasing rights and restrictive easements for non-conservations lands. Fully support the Future Vertical Lift program as part of Army modernization.