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Judge Eddie Treviño
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Member Counties
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Brazoria · Brazos
Cameron · Chambers
Collin · Comal
Dallas · Denton
Ector · El Paso
Fort Bend · Galveston
Grayson · Harris
Hays · Hidalgo
Jefferson · Johnson
Kaufman · Lubbock
McLennan · Midland
Nueces · Potter
Randall · Rockwall
San Patricio · Smith
Tarrant · Travis
Webb · Williamson
Wise

500 West 13th Street
Austin, TX 78701

512.476.6174

www.cuc.org

Policy Committee Meeting

Travis County Building | 700 Lavaca Street Austin, Texas 78701
August 1, 2019

10:00 AM Convene.

1. Welcome, Introductions.

2. Consider the minutes from the June 6, 2019 meeting. [pg. 3]

a. Administrative items. Next meeting: At 9:30a.m. on Thursday, November 7, 2019 at the Travis County Building 700 Lavaca Street, Austin Texas. [Veronikah Sanford]

b. Policy Committee Attendance Record 2019.

Policy Committee Attendance Record 2019		01/09/19	02/13/19	03/13/19	04/17/19	05/08/19	06/06/19	08/01/19	11/07/19
Policy Committee Members	County								
Judge Matt Sebesta (Chair)	Brazoria County	V	V	V	E	V	V		
Judge David Blackburn	Bell County	V	V	E	V	V	V		
Commissioner Kevin Wolff	Bexar County	P	V	V	P	V	P		
Judge Eddie Treviño	Cameron County	E	V	V	V	V	E		
Commissioner Susan Fletcher	Collin County	V	V	P	V	V	V		
Commissioner Theresa Daniel	Dallas County	V	V	P	V	P	V		
Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell	Denton County	E	V	P	V	E	V		
Commissioner David Stout	El Paso County	V	V	V	V	V	V		
Commissioner Andy Meyers	Fort Bend County	X	V	V	V	X	V		
Commissioner Ken Clark	Galveston County	V	V	V	V	V	V		
Judge Bill Magers	Grayson County	V	V	P	V	V	X		
Judge Lina Hidalgo	Harris County		V	P	V	P	V		
Judge Richard Cortez	Hidalgo County			X	X	X	X		
Commissioner Brent Weaver	Jefferson County	V	V	V	V	V	V		
Judge Hal Richards	Kaufman County		X	V	V	V	X		
Commissioner Bill McCay	Lubbock County	E	E	V	V	V	P		
Commissioner Robin Donnelly	Midland County	V	E	V	V	E	V		
Judge Barbara Canales	Nueces County		V	X	P	X	X		
Judge Glen Whitley	Tarrant County	V	V	V	V	V	V		
Judge Sarah Eckhardt	Travis County	V	V	V	V	V	P		
Judge Bill Gravell	Williamson County	V	V	X	X	V	V		
Commissioner Kevin Burns	Wise County	V	V	P	V	X	V		

V - Present | P - Present by Proxy | X - Absent | E - Excused Absence

3. Policy Director's Report. [Adam Haynes]

a. Review Results of 86th Legislative Wrap-Up

b. Review Potential Interim Charges

- c. Unfunded Mandates Report.
4. Interim Strategy Discussion [Adam Haynes]
5. New business.

[pg. 5]

11:30 AM Adjourn.

Policy Committee Meeting

Travis County Building | 700 Lavaca Street, Austin, TX 78701

June 6, 2019

Minutes

Members Present

Judge Matt Sebesta, Brazoria County
Judge David Blackburn, Bell County
Commissioner Kevin Wolff, Bexar County (Proxy Melissa Shannon)
Commissioner Susan Fletcher, Collin County
Commissioner Theresa Daniel, Dallas County
Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell, Denton County
Commissioner David Stout, El Paso County
Commissioner Ken Clark, Galveston County
Judge Lina Hidalgo, Harris County
Commissioner Brent Weaver, Jefferson County
Commissioner Bill McCay, Lubbock County (Proxy Claudia Russell)
Judge Glen Whitley, Tarrant County
Judge Sarah Eckhardt, Travis County (Proxy Deece Eckstein)
Judge Bill Gravell, Williamson County
Commissioner Kevin Burns, Wise County

Others Present

Donna Warndorf, Harris County
Ender Reed, Harris County
Joe Madden, Harris County
Commissioner Devan Allen, Tarrant County
Chandler Merritt, Tarrant County
Peter Einhorn, Travis County
John Dahill, Texas Conference of Urban Counties
Adam Haynes, Texas Conference of Urban Counties
Windy Johnson, Texas Conference of Urban Counties
Gabriela Villareal, Texas Conference of Urban Counties
Veronikah Sanford, Texas Conference of Urban Counties

9:35 AM Convene.

The Committee considered agenda item 2, Consider the minutes from the June 6, 2019 meeting. On a motion by Judge Glen Whitley and a second by Commissioner Theresa Daniel the Minutes were approved as amended.

The Committee discussed agenda item 2a. the next meeting date of 9:30am on Thursday August 1, 2019 at the Travis County Building 700 Lavaca Street, Austin, TX 78701.

The Committee discussed agenda item 2b. the Policy Committee Attendance Record 2019. On a motion by Judge Glen Whitley, and a second by Commissioner Susan Fletcher the record was approved as presented.

The Committee discussed agenda item 3, Policy Director's Report.

The Committee discussed agenda item 3a., Review priority bills of interest list.

The Committee discussed agenda item 3b., Review bills of interest related to the platform.

The Committee discussed agenda item 3c., CUC Activity Summary – 86th Regular Legislative Session.

The Committee discussed agenda item 3d., Property Tax Reform Legislation.

The Committee discussed agenda item 3e., SB 2's Indigent Defense Provision.

The Committee discussed agenda item 3f., School Finance Legislation.

The Committee discussed agenda item 4., Judicial Pay Increase.

The Committee discussed agenda item 5., Appropriations for 2020/21.

The Committee discussed agenda item 6., Flood Control and Resilience Legislation.

The Committee discussed agenda item 7., Interim Strategy.

The meeting adjourned at 11:43 AM.

Judge Matt Sebesta
Vice Chairman of Policy

Date



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August 1, 2019

To: Urban Counties Policy Committee
From: Adam Haynes, Policy Director

Re: **Unfunded Mandates from the 86th Legislative Session**

Disaster Preparedness

Requires TDEM to coordinate state, local government efforts to make 911 capable of receiving texts from a cell phone; develop standards for use of social media by governmental entities during and after a disaster; develop a disaster mobile app and a disaster web portal. Requires disaster preparedness community outreach to be conducted by counties, cities, and select state agencies. Permits a public safety entity, county hospital, public hospital, hospital district to purchase IT products (e.g. computers) through state Dept of IT if providing disaster education or for disaster preparation. [HB 2325, by Metcalf/Hancock](#)

Cybersecurity Training

Requires annual cybersecurity training for all employees of a local government who have access to a local government computer system or database and all elected officials. [HB 3834, by Capriglione/Paxton](#)

Inmate Mental Health Interview

Currently jail inmates must be screened for mental illness. Bill requires inmates be interviewed by a qualified mental health or intellectual disability expert. Interviews may be conducted in person, by telephone, or through a telemedicine service or telehealth service. Counties are responsible for paying for the mental health interview. Allows the county to create a fee schedule. [HB 601, by Price/Zaffirini](#)

Principles of the Urban Counties Policy Platform

1. Urban Counties believe local government is more responsive and accountable to the citizens and communities and should be utilized for service delivery whenever practical.
2. Urban Counties believe permissive authority provides better policy options while state mandates, revenue restrictions, and one-size-fits-all directives undermine voter self-determination and local responsibility.
3. Urban Counties believe the State increases local property taxes when it imposes obligations on local governments without providing adequate funding.
4. Urban Counties believe State funds collected for specific programs should be allocated based upon population, number of clients, or some other appropriate measure of the need for that program or service.
5. Urban Counties believes that funds collected for a purpose should be used for that purpose and support ending the reliance on dedicated revenues to balance the State budget.

1 Taxation

1. Support the significant reduction of property tax rates by measures to reduce the cost of government and by replacing property tax revenue with revenue from other sources.
2. Require sales price disclosure on sale or transfer of real property.
3. Oppose any expansion of the pollution control property tax exemption that would include property used to produce goods or services.
4. Oppose expansion of tax exemptions for property owned by a taxpayer to include leased property other than property leased to a charter school for one or more grades from kindergarten through grade 12.
5. Support allowing local taxing units to set a residence homestead exemption as a percentage, a flat-dollar level, or a percentage with a minimum or maximum individual value.
6. Support reforms to process for equity appeals of appraisals.
7. Oppose reducing the penalty when land that was previously appraised as agricultural or other open space property is converted to another use.
8. Oppose all new property tax exemptions, expansion of existing exemptions, or any other narrowing of tax base unless approved by the Urban Counties.
9. Support a significant increase in the school homestead exemption and ensure adjustments are made in state funding to schools to account for the exemption.
10. Support property tax transparency and information proposals, including but not limited to:
 - a. Removing projected tax assessment information from the central appraisal district (CAD) notice of assessed value;

- b. Requiring proposed tax rates and hearing information be provided to the CAD where they would be made available to taxpayers online;
 - c. Renaming the “effective” tax rate as the “no-new-revenue” tax rate;
 - d. Improving training and education requirements for appraisal review board members;
 - e. Establishing a property tax administration advisory board to help with uniformity of appraisal forms, systems, and reports across districts; and
 - f. Streamlining notice procedures for taxpayers, including separation of individual taxing entities’ rates and respective tax amounts.
11. Support allowing school districts to increase their tax rate to a previously approved level after a decrease rather than having to hold a second increase ratification election;
 12. Support protections for innocent and unwitting taxpayers that acquire property subject to governmental errors in previous tax years from having to pay back taxes due to those errors.
 13. Oppose arbitrary limits on local governments to undermine fiscal resources that enable officials to meet their obligations and local priorities.

2 Crime and Courts

1. Support full state funding for all mandatory JJAEP placements in an amount adequate for year-round programs.
2. Support an increase in state funding for indigent defense purposes to cover increased costs incurred by local county taxpayers since the passage of the Fair Defense Act in 2001.
3. Support additional state funding for juvenile probation departments if the age of criminal responsibility is raised to 18.
4. Support sufficient State funding for local juvenile probation departments to pay for the full costs of keeping in local programs, or in regional detention facilities, all children diverted from State facilities through a restructuring of the State Juvenile Justice Department.
5. Support state payment to counties for costs of detaining in county jails technical parole violators and new-offense violators held solely for parole revocation purposes to end the practice of the state pushing costs associated with state prisoners onto local county taxpayers.
6. Oppose changes in court costs in criminal cases that are expected to have a negative fiscal impact to counties.
7. Support changes to pre-trial release to require the use of locally verified evaluation tools to determine a criminal defendant’s risk of flight or danger to the community. Promote: (1) establishing pretrial risk assessments; (2) the elimination of bond schedules; (3) greater discretion for magistrates regarding pre-trial release; and (4) rebuttable presumptions in favor of personal bond.
8. Maintain current fee structure for the district court records and archives fee, the county court records management and preservation fee, and the records archive fee through 2029.

9. Support granting counties authority to judicially designate as uncollectible certain fees and costs of court.

3 Transportation

1. Oppose eliminating local tolling options.
2. Support enhanced funding for freight transportation infrastructure projects to address economic growth and an ever-increasing population.
3. Support current weight requirements for vehicles operating on county roads, except for localized proposals supported by the local commissioners court.
4. Support local option fees for road improvements/additions if the fees are approved by the county's commissioners court.

4 Health and Human Services

1. Support increased funding for mental health and substance abuse services state-wide.
2. Expand capacity of both forensic and civil beds in the state hospital system.
3. Support the continuation of the 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver.
4. Support state action related to state participation in the funding of indigent health care to maximize access to available federal funds.
5. Support the repeal of the Drivers Responsibility Program and the replacement of state funding for trauma care.

5 Environment/Disaster Relief, Recovery, and Resilience

1. Support full funding for the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) and maintain the integrity of the TERP program.
2. Support local administration of the LIRAP and LIP programs to ensure funds collected in the county are used in the county.
3. Use the TERP funds only for programs that will assist nonattainment and near nonattainment areas in meeting Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Ozone standards.
4. Support using state funds for financing disaster mitigation, disaster prevention, disaster recovery, and resilience projects as long as local decision making is preserved to ensure local priorities are met.
5. Oppose any further erosion in the ability of local governments to hold violators of environmental laws and regulations accountable.

6 Development and Infrastructure

1. Oppose efforts to require local governments to pay penalties, including an opposing party's attorney fees and court costs in eminent domain proceedings.

2. Oppose changes to the criteria governments must meet to show “actual progress” on projects to prevent real property acquired through eminent domain to be subject to repurchase.

7 Public Safety and Emergency Management

1. Support giving all counties the option to adopt a fire code and rules necessary to administer and enforce the fire code.
2. Oppose creation of a new fireworks season unless commissioners courts are granted discretion over the sale of fireworks in that county for the new season.
3. Protect county authority to restrict or ban the sale and use of fireworks during drought conditions and when included in a local disaster declaration.
4. Support the current role of local emergency management authorities and the county judge in responding to potential and actual emergencies and disasters.
5. Support efforts to maintain the long-established prohibition of guns in any portion of a building used by court participants.
6. Support additional funding for DPS crime labs provided it does not negatively impact existing local crime labs.

8 Elections

1. Support the creation of an online voter registration system.
2. Expand the Countywide Polling Place Program for all counties.
3. Support state funding to counties for the purchase of new election equipment, including reimbursement for purchases made within the last 3 years.
4. Support grandfather provisions for all counties that purchased election equipment, in the last five years, that does not produce a paper audit trail.
5. Retain the current option to hold elections on uniform election dates.

9 Governance and Finance

1. Ensure commissioners court authority over county budgeting and contracting decisions.
2. Protect local taxpayers from unfunded state mandates, which drive local property tax increases, result in reductions in critical services, and infringe local control.
3. Support local control over compensation and benefits paid by the county.
4. Establish that any increase in the fees to be paid to attorneys appointed to represent indigent criminal defendants may not take effect until the adoption of the next county budget and require at least 90-day notice of the proposed increase to be provided to the commissioners court.
5. Support full state funding for representation of indigent parties in child welfare cases.
6. Support financial transparency requirements that permit the use of existing reports and other documents and that minimize the need to express the same information in different manner or reports that are duplicative of reports already required.

7. Support legislation that permits counties to post public notices electronically in lieu of print publication.
8. Oppose requirements to include on bond propositions information other than the total amount of bonds to be issued if approved and the proposed uses of the bonds.
9. Establish that the earliest effective date for any increase in salary budgets outside the control of commissioners court shall be the first day of the next county fiscal year following 90 days notice of the proposed increase to be provided to the commissioners court.
10. Support continued federal funding for local communities to help cover operational costs for holding undocumented criminal aliens in the criminal justice system and the costs to house them.
11. Oppose restrictions on the ability of local governments to effectively and efficiently communicate with the legislature and other state and federal entities.
12. Support proposals to permit public access to public information on the personal devices of public officers and employees that include reasonable provisions to guard against frivolous and abusive lawsuits against public officers and employees.
13. Oppose any measure that interferes with the authority of a county to select its legal counsel and establish the terms of representation.

Other Issues

Items in this list are legislative positions regarding initiatives of member counties or other groups or organizations.

1. VSCO Reports – Support granting commissioners courts discretion regarding oversight of veterans county service officers.
2. Sheriff and Constable Fees – Support the ability for a fee for sheriff or constable services that was previously approved by a county’s commissioners court to remain unchanged from the prior fiscal year unless changed by the court.