



Policy Committee Meeting
Travis County Building I Austin, TX
April 21, 2022

Chairperson
Comm. Theresa Daniel
Dallas County

Chairperson-Elect
Judge Eddie Treviño Jr.
Cameron County

Immediate Past Chair
Judge Matt Sebesta
Brazoria County

Vice-Chairpersons
Judge David Blackburn
Bell County

Comm. Justin Rodriguez
Bexar County

Comm. Bo Alfred
Jefferson County

Comm. Andy Meyers
Fort Bend County

Comm. David Stout
El Paso County

Directors
Comm. Margaret Gomez
Travis County

Comm. Ken Clark
Galveston County

Executive Director
John B. Dahill

Policy Director
Adam P. Haynes

Member Counties
Bell · Bexar
Brazoria · Brazos
Cameron · Chambers
Collin · Comal
Dallas · Denton
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

9:30 AM Convene

1. Welcome, Introductions.
2. Overview of Policy Committee Procedures [Adam Haynes]
3. Consider the minutes from the November 18, 2021 meeting pg.2
4. Administrative items
 - a. Next meeting: July 21, 2022 at the Travis County Building (700 Lavaca Street, Austin)
 - b. Discuss 2022 Policy Committee meeting dates pg.6
5. Policy Director's Report [Adam Haynes]
 - a. Review House and Senate Interim Committee Charges pg.7
 - b. Report on Interim Hearings to Date
6. Review Policy Platform [Adam Haynes] pg.22
7. New Business

Adjourn

CUC Policy Committee

November 18, 2021

In Person: Travis County Building (700 Lavaca St, Austin)

Virtual: Please join the meeting from your computer, tablet or smartphone.

<https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/798636645>

Dial in using your phone.

United States (Toll Free): [1 866 899 4679](tel:18668994679)

United States: [+1 \(571\) 317-3117](tel:+15713173117)

Access Code: 798-636-645

Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT

Cameron County Judge Eddie Trevino, Chair

Bell County Judge David Blackburn

Bexar County Commissioner Justin Rodriguez

Collin County Commissioner Susan Fletcher

Dallas County Commissioner Theresa Daniel

Denton County Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell

El Paso County Commissioner David Stout

Fort Bend County Commissioner Andy Meyers

Galveston County Commissioner Ken Clark

Grayson County Judge Bill Magers

Jefferson County Commissioner Bo Alfred

Kaufman County Judge Hal Richards

McLennan County Commissioner Will Jones

Midland County Commissioner Robin Donnelley

Tarrant County Judge Glenn Whitley

Julie Wheeler, Travis County (Proxy for Commissioner Margaret Gomez)

Williamson County Judge Bill Gravell
Wise County Commissioner Kevin Burns

OTHERS PRESENT

Melissa Shannon, Bexar County
Bill Bilyeu, Collin County
Charles Reed, Dallas County
Claudia Russell, El Paso County
King Hillier, Harris County Hospital District
Chelsea Griffith, Tarrant County
Russell Schaffner, Tarrant County
John Dahill, Texas Conference of Urban Counties
Andrea Godoy, 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
Cicely Kay, Travis County
Lani Oglewood, Travis County

Judge Trevino called the meeting to order at 10:05 A.M.

The Committee discussed agenda **item 2**, policy committee attendance record 2021. On a motion by Commissioner Daniel and a second by Judge Whitley, the minutes were approved.

The Committee considered agenda **item 3**, the minutes from the August 18, 2021 meeting. On a motion by Judge Whitley and a second by Commissioner Daniel, the minutes were approved.

The Committee discussed agenda **item 4**, the Policy Director's Report.

The meeting adjourned at 11:15 A.M.

Judge Eddie Trevino
Vice Chairman of Policy

Date

Urban Counties Policy Committee Contact List

2022 - 2023 Term

Judge David Blackburn (Chair)
Bell County
254.933.5105
david.blackburn@bellcounty.texas.gov

Commissioner Justin Rodriguez
Bexar County
210-335-2612
justin.rodriguez@bexar.org

Judge Matt Sebesta
Brazoria County
956.544.0830
matts@brazoria-county.com

Commissioner Russ Ford
Brazos County
(979) 361-4115
rford@brazoscountytexas.gov

Commissioner Susan Fletcher
Collin County
972.548.4631
sfletcher@collincountytexas.gov

Commissioner Theresa Daniel
Dallas County
214.653.6668
Theresa.Daniel@dallascounty.org

Commissioner Bobbie Mitchell
Denton County
972.434.4780
bobbie.mitchell@dentoncounty.com

Commissioner David Stout
El Paso County
915.546.2111
commissioner2@epcounty.com

Commissioner Andy Meyers
Fort Bend County
281.238.1400
meyersan@co.fort-bend.tx.us

Commissioner Ken Clark
Galveston County
281.316.8744
ken.clark@co.galveston.tx.us

Judge Bill Magers
Grayson County
903.813.4228
bmagers@co.grayson.tx.us

Judge Lina Hidalgo
Harris County
713.274.7000
judge.hidalgo@cjo.hctx.net

Judge Richard Cortez
Hidalgo County
956.318.2600
richard.cortez@co.hidalgo.tx.us

Commissioner Bo Alfred
Jefferson County
(409) 835-8443
ealfred@co.jefferson.tx.us

Commissioner Will Jones
McLennan County
254-757-5063
will.jones@co.mclennan.tx.us

Commissioner Robin Donnelly
Midland County
432.688.4802
rdonnelly@eastlandinternational.com

Judge Glen Whitley
Tarrant County
817.884.1441
gwhitley@tarrantcounty.com

Commissioner Margaret Gomez
Travis County
512.854.9444
margaretjgomez@gmail.com

Judge Bill Gravell
Williamson County
512.943.1550
bgravell@wilco.org

Commissioner Kevin Burns
Wise County
940.427.4881
kevin.burns@co.wise.tx.us

Urban Counties Staff

John B. Dahill
Executive Director
214.907.4603
john@cuc.org

Adam P. Haynes
Policy Director
512.476.6174
adam.haynes@cuc.org

Windy Johnson
Program Manager
512.476.6174
windy@cuc.org

Gabriela Villareal
Program Manager
512.476.6174
gabriela.villareal@cuc.org



April 21, 2022

Chairman

Judge Matt Sebesta
Brazoria County

Chairperson-Elect

Comm. Theresa Daniel
Dallas County

Immediate Past Chair

Comm. Kevin Burns
Wise County

Vice-Chairpersons

Judge Eddie Treviño Jr.
Cameron County

Comm. Andy Meyers
Fort Bend County

Judge Lina Hidalgo
Harris County

Comm. Robin Donnelly
Midland County

Judge Glen Whitley
Tarrant County

Directors

Comm. David Stout
El Paso County

Comm. Bo Alfred
Jefferson County

Executive Director

John B. Dahill

Policy Director

Adam P. Haynes

Member Counties

- Bell · Bexar*
- Brazoria · Brazos*
- Cameron · Chambers*
- Collin · Comal*
- Dallas · Denton*
- 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

To: Urban Counties Membership
 From: Gabriela Villareal, Program Manager
 Re: **2022 Meeting Dates**

The following 2022 Policy Committee and Membership Luncheon meeting dates have been confirmed and reserved with Travis County:

Thursday, July 21, 2022; and
 Thursday, November 17, 2022.



Chairperson

Comm. Theresa Daniel
Dallas County

April 21, 2022

Chairperson-Elect

Judge Eddie Treviño Jr.
Cameron County

To: Urban Counties Policy Committee

From: Windy Johnson and Gabriela Villareal, Program Managers

Immediate Past Chair

Judge Matt Sebesta
Brazoria County

Re: **87th Legislature Interim Charge Activity**

Vice-Chairpersons

Judge David Blackburn
Bell County

Interim charges are assigned to Senate and House committees at the discretion of the Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the House, respectively. Interim charges indicate what House and Senate leadership view as priorities for the next legislative session.

Comm. Justin Rodriguez
Bexar County

A summary of select interim charges of interest includes:

Comm. Bo Alfred
Jefferson County

Comm. Andy Meyers
Fort Bend County

Comm. David Stout
El Paso County

Directors

Comm. Margaret Gomez
Travis County

Comm. Ken Clark
Galveston County

APPROPRIATIONS

- Monitor and oversee the implementation of appropriations bills and other relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature, including the following:
 - SB 1 (87R), General Appropriations Act;
 - HB 5 (87S2) and SB8 (87S3), relating to making supplemental appropriations and giving direction regarding appropriations; and
 - SB 52 (87S3), relating to the issuance of revenue bonds to fund capital projects at public institutions of higher education. *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Evaluate the history of appropriations from General Revenue-Dedicated Accounts 5010 (Sexual Assault Fund) and 0469 (Crime Victims Compensation Fund). Consider whether revenue sources for these accounts are sufficient to maintain historical commitments to victims services grants. *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Monitor the use of appropriated funds by the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) from the Flood Infrastructure Fund. Examine the criteria used by TWDB in making loan and grant awards and any unintended consequences that limit the competitiveness of projects in certain communities. *House Committee on Appropriations*

Executive Director

John B. Dahill

Policy Director

Adam P. Haynes

Member Counties

Bell · Bexar
Brazoria · Brazos
Cameron · Chambers
Collin · Comal
Dallas · Denton
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

- Report on the state use of federal COVID-19 relief funds provided under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, the American Rescue Plan Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Acts, and similar federal legislation. Examine local use of federal relief funding, including funding provided to school districts through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. Evaluate the overall fiscal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on state agencies, including costs incurred due to federal mandates. Identify barriers to the effective utilization of funds and make recommendations on the expenditure of unappropriated funds. In addition, evaluate and report on the spending by state agencies that have been utilizing "one-time" federal funding (temporary enhancements, e.g. FMAP and ESSER) sources, where federal funding will likely be significantly reduced in future biennia. *Senate Finance Committee*
- Monitor the financial impact of federal decision-making affecting supplemental Medicaid funding for Texas hospitals and health care systems, including negotiations between the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Texas Medicaid agency regarding the state's 1115 Medicaid waiver and other federal proposals reducing supplemental funding streams for Texas. *Senate Finance Committee*
- Examine the state mental health service delivery system. Study the state's Comprehensive Plan for State-Funded Inpatient Mental Health Services and the Statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan and evaluate the existing state investments in mental health services and state hospital capacity. Review current forensic and civil mental health service waitlists, and recommend ways to improve coordination and outcomes to reduce waitlists. Explore and report on options for additional mental health service capacity, including building state hospitals in the Panhandle and Rio Grande Valley areas. *Senate Finance Committee*

TAXATION

- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - SB 2 (86R - the Texas Property Tax Reform and Transparency Act of 2019) and related property tax reform legislation passed by the 87th Legislature, including HB 1869, HB 2429, HB 2723, and SB 1438; and

- Legislation relating to reform of the property tax appraisal system, including HB 988, HB 2941, HB 3971, SB 63, SB 916, and SB 1919. *House Committee on Ways and Means*
- Study and consider methods of providing additional property tax relief, including the use of \$3 billion in available American Rescue Plan Act funds that were held for future tax relief by the 87th Legislature, and other sources of revenue. Explore options to reduce business property tax burdens and options for limiting the growth of property tax bills. *House Committee on Ways and Means*
- Study Texas' property tax appraisal system and make appropriate recommendations to improve the appraisal system. The study should include:
 - Assessing the accuracy of appraised values and operational effectiveness of appraisal districts;
 - Evaluating methods of selecting chief appraisers, appraisal review boards, and appraisal district directors; and
 - Evaluating existing appraisal protections for taxpayers and ease of taxpayer participation in the appraisal process. *House Committee on Ways and Means*
- Study the use and effect of the optional homestead exemption available to independent school districts. Examine and report on costs to the state if school districts receive incentives to increase the optional percentage exemption. *Senate Education Committee*
- Examine and recommend ways to reduce Texans' property tax burden. Review and report on proposals to use or dedicate state revenues in excess of the state spending limit to eliminate the school district maintenance and operations property tax. *Senate Finance Committee*
- Review and report on the impact of inflation on units of local governments' revenue collections and property taxpayers' tax bills, including the homestead exemption. *Senate Finance Committee*
- Examine Texans' current tax exemptions and report on whether adjustments are merited because of inflation or any other factors. *Senate Finance Committee*
- Review the effect of Senate Bill 2 (86th Legislature), the Texas Property Tax Reform and Transparency Act of 2019, and related legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Make recommendations for further property tax reform and relief. *Senate Local Government Reform Committee*
- Review the implementation of Senate Bill 63, House Bill 988, and other related legislation passed by 87th Legislature. Make recommendations to ensure appraisal guidelines are effective and taxpayers have enforcement mechanisms. *Senate Local Government Reform Committee*

CRIME AND COURTS

- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - HB 30, relating to educational programs provided by the Windham School District for certain inmates;
 - HB 385, relating to conditions of community supervision and procedures applicable to the reduction or termination of a defendant's period of community supervision; and
 - HB 3227 (86R), relating to the availability of and access to certain programs and services for persons in the custody of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.
- For individuals in county jails and TDCJ facilities, or on community supervision or parole, examine:
 - The availability of behavioral health services; and
 - The current treatment and recovery options available for those who are experiencing withdrawal from drug or alcohol use. *House Committee on Corrections*
- Make recommendations for best practices to address the needs of individuals requiring treatment. *(Joint charge between House Committee on Corrections and House Committee on County Affairs)*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - HB 1545, relating to the continuation and functions of the Commission on Jail Standards; and
 - HB 1906, relating to grants awarded to reimburse counties for the cost of monitoring defendants and victims in cases involving family violence. *House Committee on County Affairs*
- Study statutorily mandated services provided by sheriffs and constables and determine whether fee schedules are set at sufficient levels to allow for cost recovery without placing undue burdens on recipients of those services. *House Committee on County Affairs*
- Examine ways to increase the rate of compliance for court-ordered appearances,

including new technologies that will facilitate contact with those ordered to appear. Consider the effectiveness of virtual appearances for certain offenses. *House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence*

- Study the accessibility to counsel in cases involving an indigent defendant and make recommendations to improve access to counsel in these cases. Evaluate methods to improve the effectiveness of court-appointed counsel, caseload processing, caseload distribution, and the state's compliance with applicable appointment of counsel requirements. *House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence*
- Evaluate the use and types of guardianships in Texas and the effect of guardianship on individual rights. Study the financial costs to families related to attaining and maintaining guardianship and compare costs to those associated with guardianship alternatives, such as supported decision-making. *House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence*
- Study the operations of specialty courts. Determine whether additional specialty courts should be considered to address needs within specific populations. Review specialty court methods and best practices that have been implemented for specialty courts in other states, including their impact on judicial efficiency. *House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence*
- Study state laws and procedures relating to jury service eligibility, including a review of existing jury exemptions, and make recommendations to ensure the privilege, right, and duty of jury service is protected and promoted. *House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence*
- Explore ways to modernize the juvenile justice system for youth on probation and incarcerated youth. Review statewide resource allocation, including available staffing, and identify potential geographic limitations. Investigate the best practices of smaller specialized facilities for youth committed to the Texas Juvenile Justice Department while leveraging the Department's current facilities and staff. Analyze the current gaps in county-level services and funding and make recommendations to address those gaps. *House Committee on Juvenile Justice and Family Issues*
- Examine workforce issues at state and local juvenile correctional facilities and consider the state's incentives to recruit quality staff. Consider the geographic areas where specialty providers are concentrated and the viability of opening specialized facilities for the state's youth with the highest therapeutic need to relieve the state's current rural facilities struggling with staffing. Consider consistent investments the state can make in local probation to encourage their facilities to divert youth from the juvenile justice system. *House Committee on Juvenile Justice and Family Issues*
- Explore opportunities to strengthen and enforce laws to reduce illegal gaming and the proliferation of unlawful game rooms. Identify how cash-paying game rooms utilizing machines commonly known as "8-liners" have been allowed to proliferate and how the comptroller or other state agencies can assist law enforcement with ongoing investigations. *House Committee on Licensing and Administrative*

Procedures

- Evaluate the qualifications for massage establishments, including gaps and loopholes in the application, monitoring, inspection, enforcement, and complaint processes that allow unlawful activity to occur. Consider the multidisciplinary and intergovernmental collaboration required to reduce illicit massage establishments and connect victims with services. Make recommendations to protect Texans against unlawful activity and victimization such as human trafficking. *House Committee on Licensing and Administrative Procedures*
- Review current offender re-entry programs provided by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and county jails, and identify barriers to their success. Make recommendations to enhance successful programs to ensure adequate resources and support for released offenders. *Senate Criminal Justice Committee*
- Evaluate the current backlog of criminal cases. Consider and recommend ways to reduce delays and ensure timely resolution of cases, including an examination of methods developed by district attorneys, judges, and court administrators. *Senate Criminal Justice Committee*
- Examine and report on the relationship of the unlawful sale and use of temporary paper license plates with crimes related to human trafficking, drug trafficking, theft, and homicide. *Senate Criminal Justice Committee*
- Review the effect of House Bill 4110 (87th Legislature), relating to the registration of metal recycling, and related catalytic converter theft legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Determine what actions are needed to aid law enforcement and stop catalytic converter theft and its related violence. *Senate Criminal Justice Committee*
- Examine the recent Harris County release from custody of hundreds of criminal defendants onto the streets without bond or review by a magistrate. Identify what caused this threat to public safety in Harris County and determine if it has occurred in any other counties in Texas. Make recommendations to ensure criminal defendants are timely brought before a magistrate for probable cause hearings and bond hearings, and that appropriate bond is set. *Senate Criminal Justice Committee*
- Review and evaluate the operation of disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEP) and juvenile justice alternative education programs (JJAEP) with an emphasis on: quality of academic instruction, lengths of placements, physical conditions, administration of student discipline and law enforcement interventions, implementation of positive behavior management strategies, and the availability and delivery of mental health support services. Make recommendations to support and promote the success of these programs and enhance the ability of public schools to meet the needs of students through innovative school discipline models. *Senate Education Committee*
- Monitor the implementation of recent bail bond reform legislation along with its economic impact on the judicial and correctional system. Assess any barriers to

implementation, the law's effect on pretrial release and jail populations, and ways to further promote public safety and efficiency. *Senate Finance Committee*

- Examine opportunities and make recommendations to reduce the profitability of and demand for human trafficking in Texas. Determine ways to increase public awareness of the proliferation of human trafficking, as well as resources for victims and survivors. Monitor the implementation of House Bill 1540 (87th Legislature) and examine changes in arrest rates, judicial dispositions, and sentencing amongst offenders due to provisions of the legislation. Examine opportunities for attorneys to combat human trafficking in their local communities, including use of the Deceptive Trade Practices Act, to generate revenue for local law enforcement officials combatting human trafficking. Make any other recommendations to further prevent human trafficking. *Senate State Affairs Committee*
- Study the impact of how the internal policies of some district and county attorneys' offices to not prosecute certain crimes impact the further occurrence of those crimes and public safety.
 - Examine the methods by which the Texas Legislature may prohibit policies of disregarding duly passed laws and not prosecuting certain crimes.
 - Examine the authority and limits of the Office of the Attorney General to take action in place of a district or county attorney's office that has a policy to disregard the prosecution of certain crimes. Make recommendations to prevent policies of not prosecuting certain crimes to ensure that public safety is maintained.
 - Examine case loads of judges in Texas' largest three counties with a focus on courts who do not hear or seldom hear cases to ensure a fair and equitable division of workload amongst Texas judges. Review pretrial service and bonding practices in Harris and Travis counties.
 - Examine the practice of judges releasing violent and/or habitual offenders pre-trial and the correlating negative impacts on community safety.
 - Monitor the impact of Senate Bill 23 (87th Legislature), the Stop Local Police Defunding bill, to ensure that counties are not reducing the budgets of law enforcement divisions and that effective and efficient enforcement mechanisms are in place. Make recommendations to further close any loopholes in the law. *Senate State Affairs Committee*
- Review the current state laws that protect and secure individuals' biometric identifiers. Explore ways to protect against the use of biometric identifiers for unintended purposes without an individual's consent and make recommendations to the Senate. Study websites that closely resemble government websites or fraudulently represent companies that they are not, including websites that use names of state agencies or licenses. Make recommendations to ensure that Texans' are not misled, taken advantage, or defrauded, especially when they try to seek assistance from a state website. *Senate State Affairs Committee*

TRANSPORTATION

- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee’s jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - HB 4472, relating to the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP). *House Committee on Environmental Regulations*
- Evaluate the allocation of TERP funds for effective air pollution reduction programs. Review which existing programs are over or under-subscribed and identify unrealized opportunities that would further program goals. *House Committee on Environmental Regulations*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee’s jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - HJR 99, proposing a constitutional amendment authorizing a county to finance the development or redevelopment of transportation or infrastructure in unproductive, underdeveloped, or blighted areas in the county; authorizing the issuance of bonds and notes. *House Committee on Pensions, Investments, and Financial Services*
- Study current and future transportation needs and consider improvements to ensure that Texas is adequately planning for the state's population growth forecasts. Evaluate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on transportation projects and investment decisions. *House Committee on Transportation*
- Study the impacts that increased federal funding, formula changes, and new programs authorized in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will have on state transportation projects. Evaluate strategies to ensure Texas communities can maximize receipt of federal grant funds. *House Committee on Transportation*
- Study the impact of the increasing sale and use of electric and alternatively fueled vehicles on revenue predictions for the state highway fund. Recommend a road use revenue equalization methodology to create fairness and parity between gasoline, electric and alternatively fueled vehicles. *House Committee on Transportation*
- Study policies impacting truck transportation, a key link in the supply-chain, including utilizing state property and right-of-way for natural gas fueling stations and truck parking, the potential shortage of drivers and sellers of commercial trucks, the shortage of truck parking options to accommodate hours of service regulations, and ways to reduce border crossing wait times. Examine regulatory and statutory impediments to connected vehicle and autonomous technologies

aimed at improving the safety and efficiency of trucking in Texas. *House Committee on Transportation*

- Examine the ability of the state's seaports to promote the public purposes of state economic growth, diversification, and commerce through development of port-owned properties within their boundaries. Review the investments needed for Texas ports to remain competitive in handling increased cargo volumes and ensuring a resilient supply chain. *House Committee on Transportation*
- Review the Texas Department of Transportation's plan for federal funding related to alternatively fueled vehicle infrastructure development. Examine the increase of private and public owned alternatively fueled vehicles registered in the state and make recommendations for road user fee fairness between alternatively fueled vehicles and gasoline and diesel vehicles. *Senate Transportation Committee*

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Examine programs and funding streams connected to services that improve mental health outcomes for servicemen and women suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI). *House Committee on Defense and Veteran Affairs*
- Evaluate further action needed to improve the safety and quality of the foster care system, including preventing children in foster care from being without a placement and increasing recruitment of foster families. Identify methods to strengthen Child Protective Services processes and services, focusing on efforts for family preservation and eliminating fatalities within the foster care system. This evaluation should:
 - Study the causes for children without placement;
 - Assess the safety concerns for children without placement, including the use of out-of- state and temporary emergency placement for children without placement; injuries while in the care of Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) employees; and exposure to child sex trafficking; and
 - Study how and why children without placement frequently enter the juvenile justice and adult criminal justice systems and the steps DFPS is taking to identify and prevent these instances. *House Committee on Human Services*
- Monitor federal decisions that may impact the delivery and financial stability of the state's health programs, including: the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services' rescission of its prior approval of the State's 1115 Waiver, the state and federal negotiations of the Medicaid directed payment programs (including hospital finance methods), federal changes to the Medicaid Disproportionate Share Hospital Program and the exclusion of certain costs from the uncompensated care program authorized through the 1115 Waiver. *House Committee on Human Services*

- Study the impact of fentanyl-related overdoses and deaths in Texas. Evaluate existing data collection, dissemination, and mitigation strategies regarding opioid abuse in Texas. Make recommendations to improve coordinated prevention, education, treatment, and data-sharing. *House Committee on Public Health*
- Review the processes for public health data collection and coordination by local and state entities as well as regional trauma centers. Identify any continuing barriers to the real-time dissemination of data concerning health care facility capacity—including data that can expedite timely care—and mortality rates, as well as other information that can assist in public policy decisions. *Senate Health and Human Services Committee*
- Evaluate state investments in the child welfare system. Examine reasons for delayed implementation of past legislative reforms and any deficient agency performance metrics. Identify ways to continue to improve the child welfare system in Texas and consider other state models to ensure the health and well-being for children in state care. *Senate Health and Human Services Committee*
- Study the impact of the global pandemic on the health care workforce in acute and long-term care. Identify health care staffing challenges and examine how staffing services and payment models changed the economics of the health care workforce. Identify and recommend ways to increase the health care workforce pipeline. *Senate Health and Human Services Committee*
- Examine the impact of state and federal pandemic policies—including agency guidance, licensing and regulatory actions, and health care industry policies—on patient care and treatment delivery. Examine how regulatory guidance impacts the patient-doctor relationship. Recommend any changes needed to ensure Texas can develop its own data-driven guidance during public health emergencies. *Senate Health and Human Services Committee*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation. *Senate Health and Human Services Committee*
- Review financial aid and scholarship opportunities in Texas related to teaching, health care, and law enforcement, and examine methods to increase participation in these and other high-demand fields. In particular, study the participation rates of the Math and Science Scholars Loan Repayment Program, the Peace Officer Loan Repayment Program, and the Nursing Corps Loan Repayment Program, and make recommendations on ways to increase participation rates in each area. *Senate Higher Education Committee*
- Review the currently accepted forms of treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and consider the creation of a program which would require completion of a multi-modality treatment plan including traditional talk therapy,

limbic system therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and emotionally focused individual therapy (EFIT). *Senate Veteran Affairs Committee*

- Identify the training and resources available to urban and rural first responders when assisting veterans experiencing a mental health crisis. Make recommendations for how to best support first responders in these crisis situations. *Senate Veteran Affairs Committee*

ENVIRONMENT/DISASTER RELIEF, RECOVERY, AND RESILIENCE

- Explore ways in which the state can further support the construction of a coastal barrier system. *Committee on Natural Resources*
- Examine the condition of Texas' water and flood mitigation infrastructure capabilities and consider future infrastructure needs. Evaluate sustainable funding sources to provide for water project development and infrastructure repair and replacement. Examine and make recommendations for cost-effective improvements that enhance the state's available water supply and improve the state's ability to desalinate seawater. *House Committee on Natural Resources*
- Evaluate the state's water infrastructure. Study and make recommendations on options to upgrade and update water infrastructure to address deferred maintenance, disasters, and water loss. *Senate Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee*
- Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs passed by the 87th 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 8 (86th Legislature), Relating to state and regional flood planning. *Senate Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee*

DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

- Study the effect of governmental land-use regulations and controls on the availability and affordability of residential housing in Texas, including land use and zoning restrictions and related factors that slow or hinder housing development and improvement. Identify viable, free market solutions in lieu of governmental regulation to help Texas meet the current and future housing demands of a growing statewide population. *House Committee on Land and Resource Management*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all

legislation, including the following:

- HB 5, relating to the expansion of broadband services to rural areas.
House Committee on State Affairs
- Study broadband and other telecommunications related issues impacting Texans including:
 - Monitor implementation of House Bill 5 and House Bill 1505, discuss anticipated federal funding dedicated to broadband initiatives;
 - Monitor the implementation of HB 2911, relating to next generation 9-1-1 service and the establishment of a next generation 9-1-1 service fund; and
 - Review current state and federal laws regarding cybersecurity protections and requirements for local government, state agencies and critical industries of our state. Make recommendations for legislation to improve resilience and protection. *Senate Business and Commerce Committee*
- Perform a comprehensive study on the powers and purposes of various special purpose districts and their associated legislative templates. Make recommendations to improve public transparency in operations of special purpose districts and associated legislative templates. *Senate Local Government Committee*
- Study issues related to affordable housing, homelessness, and methods of providing and financing affordable housing. Make recommendations to improve transparency and accountability, as well as to better utilize existing federal, state, and local programs. *Senate Local Government Committee*
- Study issues related to municipal extraterritorial jurisdictions and annexation powers, including examining possible disannexation authority. Determine whether extraterritorial jurisdictions continue to provide value to their residents and make recommendations on equitable methods for disannexation. *Senate Local Government Committee*

ELECTIONS

- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - HB 1382, relating to the availability of certain information regarding early voting;
 - HB 1622, relating to reporting of early voting rosters; and

- HB 3107, relating to election practices and procedures. *House Committee on Elections*
- Study the laws related to local ballot initiatives and propositions to assess whether reforms are needed to ensure that ballot language is clear and unambiguous and that the process is fair and consistent. *House Committee on Elections*
- Study the effectiveness of new poll watcher training required by SB 1 (87S2). *House Committee on Elections*
- Examine the reporting of election results following an election to determine the reasons for any delays and inaccuracies in the initial reporting of elections results. Make recommendations to ensure that election results are reported in a timely and accurate manner following the closing of the polls. *House Committee on Elections*
- Review and report on voter participation and bond election result differences between November and May elections. Make recommendations for improved voter turnout, increased election efficiencies, and better accountability of local debt. *Senate Local Government Committee*
- Study the development of the language used for constitutional amendment and local ballot propositions. Recommend changes to make ballot propositions more easily understood by voters. *Senate Local Government Committee*
- Evaluate the impact that the Court of Criminal Appeals' ruling in *Stephens v. State* will have on criminal prosecution in Texas. Additionally, study ways in which the Secretary of State's office can respond promptly to reports of Election Code violations. Review the process by which the Secretary of State receives and reports election results, including any internal processes to verify the results reported by county elections administrators. Make recommendations to improve the accuracy and timeliness of election results reported by the Secretary of State on the day of an election. Make recommendations that will allow consistent enforcement of election laws across the state. *Senate State Affairs Committee*
- Study how the allocation of polling locations are determined for early voting and election day for counties with and without county-wide voting and report whether current law provides for an equitable distribution. Study the protocols and scheduling of proper maintenance and calibration of election equipment and recommend what is required for maximum efficiency, accuracy, and security. Study the history of a holiday falling within the early voting period and recommend methods to ensure that early voting always has the required number of days and every qualified voter has the opportunity to vote. Study and recommend whether the state should shorten the primary election runoff period in Texas in order to allow voters to know who their candidate is sooner—while remaining in compliance with the federal MOVE Act. Make recommendations to ensure it is easy to vote and hard to cheat. *Senate State Affairs Committee*

GOVERNANCE AND FINANCE

- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee’s jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - SB 22, relating to certain claims for benefits, compensation, or assistance by certain public safety employees and survivors of certain public safety employees. *House Committee on Business and Industry*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee’s jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - HB 2073, relating to quarantine leave for fire fighters, peace officers, detention officers, and emergency medical technicians employed by, appointed by, or elected for a political subdivision. *House Committee on County Affairs*
- Review the impact of investments by public retirement systems of their endowment and other trust funds in businesses and funds owned or controlled by the Russian government or Russian nationals, and determine the need for investment restrictions. Consider the impact of any proposed investment restrictions on fund performance. *House Committee on Pensions, Investments, and Financial Services*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee’s jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure the intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - HB 2404, relating to creating and maintaining a database of information regarding certain local economic development agreements. *House Committee on Ways and Means*
- Investigate how some cities and counties are prohibiting the expansion of charter schools through local ordinances. Make recommendations to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of charter schools and independent school districts. *Senate Education Committee*
- Study how governmental entities use public funds for political lobbying purposes. Examine what types of governmental entities use public funds for lobbying purposes and what level of transparency is available to the public. Make recommendations to protect taxpayers from paying for lobbyists who may not represent the taxpayers' interests. *Senate Local Government Committee*

- Study the concept of efficiency audits for cities, counties and special purpose districts and under what circumstances they should be performed. Evaluate whether efficiency audits provide Texans tools to combat wasteful government spending and report whether they are needed before local government tax ratification elections. *Senate Local Government Committee*
- Review the programs in Chapters 380 and 381 of the Local Government Code. Consider the benefits of each program in generating economic development. Make recommendations for improvements to Chapters 380 and 381 to increase transparency and accountability and the effectiveness of the programs. *Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee*
- Study the collection and use of hotel occupancy taxes. Evaluate and make recommendations related to the effectiveness, costs of rebates, incentives, and other taxes applied to qualified hotel and convention center projects. Investigate and determine whether the creation of a standard Hotel Occupancy Tax legislative template is feasible, and whether it would enable the legislature to more efficiently evaluate proposed Hotel Occupancy Tax bills during the legislative session. *Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee*
- Examine ways to reduce the risk of and destructive impact of wildfires. Monitor the role the Prescribed Burning Board plays in controlled burns. Recommend practices and improvements that public and private landowners may use to reduce fire risks. *Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee*

Principles of the Urban Counties Policy Platform

1. Urban Counties believe local government is more responsive and accountable to the citizens, advocates for the best interests of our constituents 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 used for that purpose; allocated based upon population, number of clients, or other appropriate measure of the need for that program or service; and utilized for the benefit of Texans rather than being held to balance the State budget.
5. Urban Counties believe promoting the best interests of our communities involves advocating for legislation important to our local interests and limiting our ability to participate in the deliberative process is detrimental to the benefits of our constituents.

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 the 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 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.
14. Support clarifying the calculation of the no new revenue rate to provide transparency.

2 Crime and Courts

1. Support full state funding for all mandatory Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program 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.
10. Support expanded testing opportunities for court interpreter certification.
11. Support authorizing the issuance of temporary restraining orders in nuisance abatement cases.
12. Support the following revisions to the protective order process:
 - a. Permit any adult to file for a protective order on behalf of a minor or intellectually disabled victim of crime;

- b. Permit civil and criminal enforcement of agreed protective orders notwithstanding absence of a finding of family violence; and
- c. Permit default judgments in protective order cases upon 48 hours' notice of the application.

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.
5. Support the development of real-time scofflaw database maintained by DMV.

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 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.
3. Support efforts to increase digital access, adoption, and readiness.

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.
7. Support reaffirming the authority of a county judge to direct response, mitigation, and recovery efforts during potential and actual emergencies and disasters.

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 cases²⁵.

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.
14. Support using federal and state funds for financing disaster and emergency mitigation, prevention, recovery, and resilience projects provided local decision makers direct funds to meet community priorities.
15. Allow a commissioners court to delegate the authority to select and remove a county chief public defender.
16. Allow county commissioners to complete continuing education online.
17. Allow the county clerk to generate a randomized list of public names, compiled of people who served on a grand jury in the last year, to serve on a salary grievance committee.
18. Expand authority for governments to hold public meetings and briefings remotely.
19. Clarify the Alcoholic Beverage Code to prevent illegal after-hours bars.
20. Oppose granting whistleblower status to employees unless they report illegal conduct to a person designated by the employing governmental entity to receive such reports, the attorney general, or an appropriate law enforcement authority.

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.
3. **County Property** - Support granting Bell County’s commissioners court the discretion to order a nonbinding referendum in the county on any matter affecting county property.
4. **Sick Leave** - Support lowering the population bracket on the authority to permit county employees to donate their vacation leave to a sick leave pool.
5. **Signatory Authority** - Support the authority of a county judge to delegate to another county officer or employee the ability to sign orders or other official documents associated with the Judge’s office.
6. **Spaceport Trust Fund** - Support reducing the local match requirement for the Spaceport Trust Fund.
7. **Drainage Compliance** -Support requiring compliance with drainage requirements before issuance of a certificate of plat compliance.
8. **Platting Requirements** - Support prohibiting a central appraisal district from recording land subdivisions not in compliance with platting requirements.