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Jefferson · Johnson
Kaufman · Lubbock
McLennan · Midland
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Randall · Rockwall
Smith · Tarrant
Travis · Webb
Williamson · Wise

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Austin, TX 78701

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www.cuc.org

Policy Committee Meeting
February 12, 2024 (3:00 – 4:00 P.M.)
Austin, TX 78701
Stephen F. Austin Hotel
AGENDA

3:00 P.M. Convene

1. Welcome, Introductions
2. Policy Committee Attendance Record

		02/13/25	03/19/25	04/16/25	05/21/25	06/18/25	09/17/25	11/19/25
Policy Committee Members	County							
Judge David Blackburn	Bell County							
Commissioner Justin Rodriguez (Chair)	Bexar County							
Judge Matt Sebesta	Brazoria County							
Judge Eddie Treviño	Cameron County							
Commissioner Susan Fletcher	Collin County							
Commissioner Theresa Daniel	Dallas County							
Judge Andy Eads	Denton County							
Commissioner David Stout	El Paso County							
Commissioner Andy Meyers	Fort Bend County							
Judge Bruce Dawsey	Grayson County							
Commissioner Adrian Garcia	Harris County							
Judge Ruben Becerra	Hays County							
Judge Richard Cortez	Hidalgo County							
Commissioner Bo Alfred	Jefferson County							
Commissioner Rick Bailey	Johnson County							
Commissioner Will Jones	McLennan County							
Commissioner Dana Macalik	Rockwall County							
Commissioner Manny Ramirez	Tarrant County							
Commissioner Margaret Gomez	Travis County							
Judge Bill Gravell	Williamson County							
Commissioner Kevin Burns	Wise County							

3. Consider the minutes from the meeting on November 20, 2024.
4. Administrative Items
 - a. Next meeting: Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 10 AM at the Travis County Building, Aust
5. Policy Director's Report [Adam Haynes]
6. New Business

4:00 P.M. Adjourn

CUC Policy Committee

November 20, 2024 (10 A.M. – 12 P.M.)

700 Lavaca St, Austin TX

Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT

Bexar County Commissioner Justin Rodriguez (Chair)
Brazos County Commissioner Steve Aldrich
Brazoria County Commissioner Matt Sebesta
Collin County Susan Fletcher (Proxy, Commissioner Darrel Hale)
Dallas County Commissioner Theresa Daniel
Denton County Judge Andy Eads
El Paso County Commissioner David Stout
Fort Bend County Commissioner Andy Meyers
Grayson County Commissioner Jeff Whitmire
Harris County Commissioner Adrian Garcia
Jefferson County Commissioner Bo Alfred
McLennan County Commissioner Will Jones
Rockwall County Commissioner Dennis Bailey (Proxy, Commissioner Dana Macalik)
Travis County Commissioner Margaret Gomez

OTHERS PRESENT

Commissioner Louie Minor, Bell County
Judge Bruce Dawsey, Grayson County
Melissa Shannon, Bexar County
Russell Schaffner, Collin County
Josie Garcia, Dallas County
Elisa Tamayo, El Paso
Freddy Guerra, Harris County
Micah Rodriguez, Harris Health
Tammy Narvaez, Harris County
Francis Nugent, Harris County
Tom Stallings, Tarrant County
Julie Wheeler, Travis County
Cicely Kay, Travis County
John Dahill, Texas Conference of Urban Counties
Adam Haynes, Texas Conference of Urban Counties
Windy Johnson, Texas Conference of Urban Counties

Commissioner Rodriguez called the meeting to order at 10:14 A.M.

The Committee considered agenda **item 3**, the October 20, 2024, meeting minutes. On a motion by Commissioner Garcia and a second by Commissioner Aldrich, the minutes were approved as presented.

The Committee discussed agenda **item 4**, Administrative Items.

The Committee discussed agenda **item 5**, Policy Director's Report

On a motion by Commissioner Garcia and a second by Commissioner Daniel, the amended policy platform was approved.

The committee discussed an item presented on behalf of Fort Bend County. There was no action taken at this time.

The committee considered a support item. On a motion by Commissioner Daniel and a second by Commissioner Garcia, the following item was added to the Support Section of the Platform.

Access to Childcare: Support improving access to affordable, high-quality childcare to support working families, promote early childhood development, and increase workforce availability for economic growth.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:48 P.M.

Commissioner Justin Rodriguez
Vice-Chairperson of Policy

Date

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 forces property tax increases on local citizens when it imposes obligations on local governments without providing adequate funding.
4. Urban Counties believe State funds collected and appropriated for specific programs should be used for that purpose; allocated based upon population, number of clients, or other measurement of need and utilized for the benefit of Texans rather than being held to balance the State budget. Any diversion of funds should result in counties receiving the necessary monies to cover the state's responsibilities.
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 efficiently participate in the deliberative process is detrimental to the benefits of our constituents.

1. Taxation

1. Advocate for fair and transparent property tax policies that reduce the burden on local taxpayers through government cost efficiency, full state funding for state-ordered programs, and alternative revenue sources.
2. Support reforms such as homestead exemptions and sales price disclosure while opposing unnecessary tax exemptions and penalties that weaken the tax base. Protect local authority over resource management and tax rate decisions to ensure fiscal responsibility.
3. Support equity appeals for homeowners similar to the system used by commercial and industrial property owners.
4. Oppose reducing property recapture when land that was previously appraised as agricultural or other open space property is converted to another use.
5. Support a significant increase in the flat-dollar, school homestead exemption and ensure adjustments are made in state funding to schools to account for the exemption and allow counties to offer a flat-dollar homestead exemption equal to that of the one offer by schools.
6. 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.
7. Oppose arbitrary limits on local governments to undermine fiscal resources that enable officials to meet their obligations and local priorities.
8. Support clarifying the calculation of the no new revenue rate to provide transparency and continue the no-new-revenue-tax rate calculation worksheet process.

9. Support limiting Housing Finance Corporation projects to their jurisdictional boundaries unless a project outside its jurisdiction is approved by the Commissioners Court in both the jurisdictional county and the target county by a supermajority vote.

2. Governance and Finance

1. Ensure local control over local budgeting, employment, and contracting decisions.
2. Support protecting local taxpayers from state mandated property tax increases, which increase local property taxes, result in reductions in critical services, or infringe local control.
3. 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 and duplicative manner.
4. 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.
5. Support increased federal and state funding for local communities to help cover operational costs for holding undocumented persons in the criminal justice system and the costs to house them.
6. Oppose restrictions on the ability of local governments to effectively and efficiently communicate with the legislature and other state and federal entities.
7. 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.
8. 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.
9. Support expanding authority for governments to hold public meetings and briefings remotely.
10. 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.

3. Crime and Courts

1. Support full state funding of juvenile justice, indigent defense, child and indigent representation in child protection matters, local detention costs for parole violators, and local costs resulting from delayed placements in state systems.
2. Support reforms in pre-trial release, protective orders, and court fees, while addressing shortages in court reporters and ensuring adequate legal representation for vulnerable families while reducing financial burdens on local taxpayers.
3. Oppose changes in criminal court costs that will have a negative fiscal impact to counties.
4. Support reallocating court fees between the state and counties to ensure local jurisdictions have sufficient resources to administer justice effectively without raising property taxes.

5. Support increasing the threshold for counties to require competitive bidding on procurements and contracts.

4. Transportation

1. Support local control over transportation by supporting tolling options, increased authority for the local enforcement of weights and measurements, and local option fees for road improvements.
2. Support the exemption of state-imposed fuel taxes for all county fleets.
3. Support enhanced funding for freight transportation infrastructure and multi-modal projects, including rail, ports, and highways, to address economic growth and the needs of an ever-increasing population.

5. Health and Human Services

1. Support state funding for behavioral health services, increasing capacity for state hospital beds, expanding funding for community-based healthcare, and addressing indigent healthcare costs, including managing the remains of indigent individuals while ensuring federal funds are maximized.
2. Support reimbursement of local taxpayers for funds spent to house, medicate, and monitor individuals awaiting placement in state hospital facilities.
3. Support state funding for Child Protective Services (CPS), including birth certificates, foster care, community-based programs, and regional initiatives like the Community-Based Care (CBC) model to meet local needs.

6. Environment/Disaster Relief, Recovery, and Resilience

1. Support the use of state funds for disaster mitigation and resilience projects, as well as the use of emissions reduction funds for clean air initiatives, while opposing measures that erode local control over environmental accountability.
2. Support the return of locally collected Local Initiatives Projects (LIP)/Low-Income Vehicle Repair Assistance, Retrofit, and Accelerated Retirement (LIRAP) funds held in the Clean Air Account to the county in which they were collected to be used for clean air initiatives.

7. Development and Infrastructure

1. Oppose restrictive eminent domain measures that penalize local governments.
2. Support limited county land use authority to protect public and private investments for life, health, safety, and compatibility grounds.

8. Public Safety and Emergency Management

1. Affirm county authority in public safety, including the adoption of fire codes, discretion over fireworks sales, emergency response efforts, and firearm prohibitions in court buildings.
2. Support additional funding for Department of Public Safety crime labs while protecting local crime lab funding.
3. Reaffirm the county judge's role in directing disaster response and recovery.

9. Election

1. Support state reimbursement for election-related costs and advocate for expanded online voter registration, countywide polling place programs, and retaining uniform election dates.
2. Maintain local decision-making authority over administering elections, including registrations, election locations, reporting, and operations.

10. Economic Development

1. Support retaining the ability of governmental bodies to utilize economic development tools to foster economic growth and local prosperity.

11. Support

1. **Access to Childcare** - Support improving access to affordable, high-quality childcare to support working families, promote early childhood development, and increase workforce availability for economic growth.