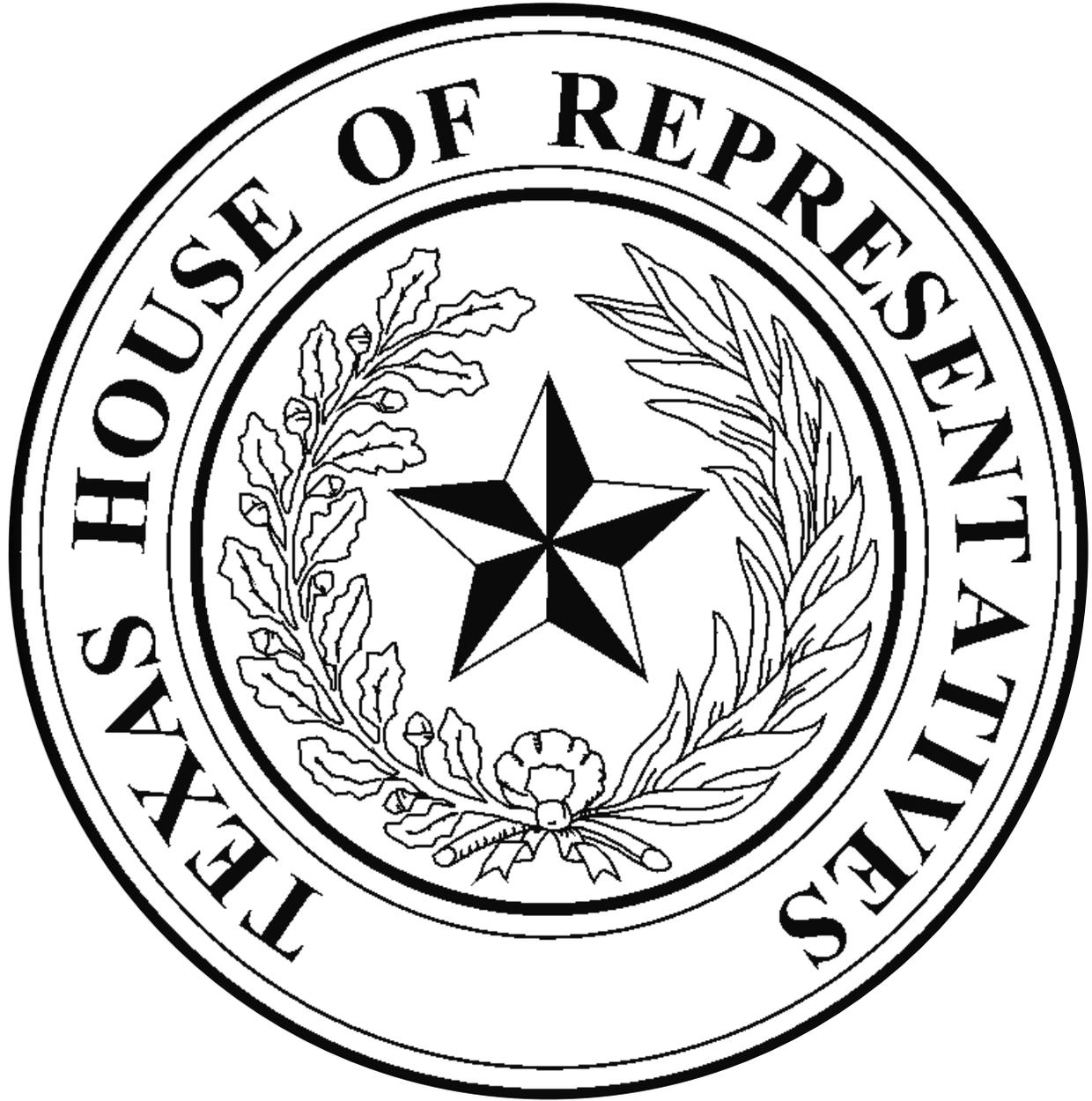


82nd Legislature Interim Charges





HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
JOE STRAUS
SPEAKER

October 20, 2011

Dear Members:

Today, I am releasing the 82nd Legislature interim committee charges for the Texas House of Representatives. These charges, and the subsequent recommendations you and your committees will make, will provide a blueprint for the legislation we will consider during the 83rd Regular Session.

There are many important priorities that I am asking you to address in these charges including finding ways to strengthen our state's economy, review our transportation infrastructure, address our water challenges, improve wildfire response and find innovative ways to improve public and higher education. I am confident that your commitment to thoroughly studying these issues and seeking input from our citizens in public hearings will enable the House to develop long-term, workable solutions and work towards a stronger, more prosperous future for all Texans.

In addition to these charges, I ask that each substantive committee : (1) study and make recommendations for significantly improving the state's manufacturing capability; and (2) find ways to increase transparency, accountability and efficiency in state government. I believe that these critical issues are best addressed by leveraging the work of every committee, rather than limiting input to just a few.

From our growing population to the severe drought that is plaguing our state, Texas is in a period of significant change. We are responsible for handling these changes in a way that makes our state government more efficient and responsive to the evolving needs of our changing communities. In the coming weeks, I will make additional assignments for consideration by your committees in the interim. Each committee's report should be submitted no later than December 1, 2012.

Thank you for the many suggestions that you have made thus far, and for the hard work you will do over the course of the next year to prepare for the next Session.

Sincerely,

Joe Straus
Speaker

Charges to be studied by all Substantive House Committees

- Study and make recommendations for significantly improving the state's manufacturing capability.
- Find ways to increase transparency, accountability and efficiency in state government.

House Committee on Agriculture & Livestock

- Evaluate the role of community gardens and urban farming efforts that increase access to healthy foods and examine the possible impact that state and local policies have on the success of programs of this type. Determine the feasibility of policies to support these efforts, especially in high-population areas. (*Joint with the House Committee on Urban Affairs*)
- Study the wildfire response performed by the Texas Forest Service and cooperating state agencies. Examine specifically how state laws and regulations could be enhanced to improve response effectiveness across the state. Study both the available causes of wildfires and mitigation and make recommendations as needed.
- Study the adequacy of access to veterinarian care in rural areas of the state. Determine the impact that a lack of access may have on the agriculture business in Texas.
- Examine the current enforcement system for performance-enhancing drug testing show horses, performance horses, and race horses in Texas. Specifically, review currently prohibited drugs and quantities to determine if any changes should be made to existing law. Compare the state's current regulations to other systems around the country and make specific recommendations on how the state's system could be improved.
- Study the viability of cedar eradication as a means to enhance resource conservation.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature. Specifically, monitor the consolidation of the Texas Department of Rural Affairs into the Texas Department of Agriculture's Rural Economic Division, ensuring that rural communities are not negatively affected by the consolidation.

House Committee on Appropriations

- Analyze increases in Texas' overall state debt burden and the role debt plays in the state's fiscal management. Recommend strategies to reduce the state's debt, as well as the calculation of the constitutional debt limit. (*Joint with the House Committee on Ways & Means*)
- Examine the immediate and long-term impact to the Texas budget of the Budget Control Act of 2011 and other efforts to reduce the federal deficit.
- Examine the investment and management of funds held outside the treasury, including whether the funds are being utilized for their statutory or constitutional purposes, and whether opportunities exist to utilize these funds in the state budget to reduce the demand on General Revenue.
- Examine the growth of constitutionally and statutorily dedicated accounts and their utilization in the budget. Recommend methods to reduce the reliance on dedicated accounts for budget certification purposes, and examine ways to maximize the use of such accounts.
- Examine ways to minimize the timing imbalance of the state's revenues and expenditures, and recommend policies that will minimize the annual short-term borrowing need.
- Monitor the implementation of cost-savings initiatives in health and human services programs directed by HB 1 (82R) and SB 7 (82S1), including the expansion of Medicaid managed care. Study the impact of changes in hospital reimbursement methodology, including implementation of a statewide Standard Dollar Amount and the Texas Healthcare Transformation and Quality Improvement Program Medicaid 1115 waiver.
- Study existing financing mechanisms and delivery methods for long-term services and supports in the Texas Medicaid program. Consider best practices, expansion of consumer-directed models, and successful programs in other states. Make recommendations to simplify and streamline existing programs and to provide services in a more cost-effective manner to a greater number of eligible individuals while ensuring an appropriate level of services for those with significant needs.
- Assess the current infrastructure and funding mechanisms for mental health services in both rural and urban areas throughout the state. Study innovative local programs that could be expanded, as well as successful delivery and financial models in other states. Make recommendations to expand access and improve services through increased efficiency, competition, and transparency.

House Committee on Appropriations

- Evaluate the funding, performance, and administration of the state's adult basic education programs. *(Joint with the House Committee on Higher Education)*
- Review the current practices for funding capital construction projects at institutions of higher education and make recommendations for alternative approaches, including prioritizing funding projects aimed at strategic statewide goals.
- Monitor the administration of the Correctional Managed Health Care system. Examine the implementation of reforms passed during the 82nd Legislative Session, including the contracts between the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and participating entities under Rider 55 to ensure the expenses incurred match the appropriated amounts.
- Review the status of the sexually oriented business fee and collections to date, as well as funding demands for programs for which the fee is intended.
- Monitor the Texas Department of Public Safety's implementation of the driver's license improvement plan and the use of the funds appropriated to the department for such purposes by the 82nd Legislature. Evaluate the feasibility of privatization with the intent to minimize wait times for Texans. *(Joint with the House Committee on Homeland Security & Public Safety)*
- Review and make recommendations for improving the level of funding of the Crime Victims Compensation Fund. *(Joint with the House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence)*
- Examine the effectiveness of the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) since its inception in 2001. Determine whether the emissions reduced justify the amounts that have been appropriated since 2001. *(Joint with the House Committee on Environmental Regulation)*
- Study transportation funding reforms and develop long-term state funding recommendations, with an eye on any federal reforms that become law. Explore options to eliminate "diversions" from Fund 6 to non-transportation-related programs. *(Joint with the House Committee on Transportation)*
- Examine strategies to maximize state funding for programs designed to prevent and end homelessness, with an emphasis on programs that have demonstrated a successful coordination of state and local resources. *(Joint with the House Committee on Urban Affairs)*

House Committee on Appropriations

- Monitor the performance of state agencies and institutions, including operating budgets, plans to carry out legislative initiatives and planned budget reductions, caseload projections, performance measure attainment, implementation of all rider provisions, and any other matter affecting the fiscal condition of the agencies and the state.

House Committee on Border & Intergovernmental Affairs

- Identify significant health disparities in counties along the Texas-Mexico border and their impact on the region's health care system. Consider strategies to reduce demand for health-related services, including better use of preventive medicine and promotoras, or community health workers.
- Examine state and federal law to determine whether existing provisions adequately address security and efficiency concerns for steamship agencies and land ports of entry along the Texas-Mexico border. Evaluate whether the state and the federal government have provided sufficient manpower, infrastructure, and technology to personnel in the border region. *(Joint with the House Committee on Homeland Security & Public Safety)*
- Examine the extent of interstate coordination concerning border security and intelligence sharing and determine whether any changes to state law are needed to enhance such coordination and cooperation. *(Joint with the House Committee on Homeland Security & Public Safety)*
- Examine the impact of the state's various economic development programs and evaluate their impact on communities along the Texas-Mexico border. Identify any changes to these programs that would improve economic development activity in those communities.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Business & Industry

- Review existing lien laws in Texas and make recommendations for improvement.
- Review the current statutory requirements to obtain real property by adverse possession in Texas. Recommend any changes to existing law that may be needed to ensure equitable real estate transfers in the state.
- Examine current deed restriction laws and make recommendations to encourage efficiency in homeownership and conveyance.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature, including the amendments to the Texas Property Code regarding homeowners associations.

House Committee on Corrections

- Monitor the implementation of SB 653 (82R), which created the Texas Juvenile Justice Department. Make any recommendations needed to enhance the integration of the Texas Youth Commission and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission.
- Study ways to reduce the number of youth referred to the juvenile justice system. Consider the availability of mental health services, diversion and early intervention programs, and other prevention methods.
- Study and make recommendations about issues related to the certification of juveniles as adults.
- Review current parole supervision strategies to ensure that resources are being used efficiently to maximize the state's need for public safety and rehabilitation.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on County Affairs

- Study county-related issues arising from population growth in unincorporated areas with regard to existing and new developments and the provision of services, including garbage disposal, fire protection, road maintenance, electricity, and water and wastewater service. Make necessary legislative recommendations for improving problems in these areas of the state.
- Study opportunities for cost savings through the abolishment of certain elected offices or the consolidation of county services.
- Conduct a general study of issues facing county jails. The study should include innovative ways to address overcrowding, the impact homelessness has on the county jail population, and recommendations for handling inmates undergoing detoxification and withdrawal from drugs and alcohol.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence

- Study and make recommendations for criminal penalties for the failure of a parent or guardian to report a missing child or the death of a child.
- Review and make recommendations for improving the level of funding for the Crime Victims Compensation Fund. (*Joint with the House Committee on Appropriations*)
- Study and make recommendations regarding the current procedures used in the testing of DNA evidence in Texas. Include a review of the feasibility of certifying additional DNA testing centers.
- Review the current sentencing practices for defendants with mental illnesses and make recommendations. Study practices in other states. Compare recent incarceration trends between those who have mental illnesses and those who do not.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Culture, Recreation & Tourism

- Evaluate strategies to control known existing invasive aquatic species, including species commonly referred to as giant salvinia (*Salvinia molesta*), water hyacinths (family Pontederiaceae), and zebra mussels (family Dreissenidae).
- Study and make recommendations for improving deer breeder compliance with existing laws and regulations.
- Recommend approaches to improve long-term funding for state park acquisition, development, and maintenance.
- Study the effects the drought and wildfires have had on tourism and recreation in Texas. Make recommendations for ways to prevent future losses.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature, including the General Land Office's implementation of HB 3726 (82R), regarding the administration of the Alamo.

House Committee on Defense & Veterans' Affairs

- Study the current role of all Texas state military forces. Identify changes that would enhance the accountability and effectiveness of the state guard, air guard, and national guard and all other components of our state military forces.
- Monitor the implementation and impact of the MOVE Act on the state and on municipalities. Make legislative recommendations, as needed, to ensure a smooth implementation of the law. (*Joint with the House Committee on Elections*)
- Study and make recommendations on how the state and local governments can work together to protect our federal military installations from unnecessary encroachment while still allowing appropriate use of land near bases to be used for nonmilitary purposes.
- Determine any challenges to the training and operations of Texas' 15 military installations in light of recent reductions in federal defense spending. Additionally, review the current structure and mission of the Texas Military Preparedness Commission as a result of HB 2546 (81R). Recommend any legislative actions needed to sustain and improve the state's military preparedness.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Economic & Small Business Development

- Examine previous Emerging Technology Fund (ETF) grants awarded for cancer-related research. Determine whether future awards for similar projects are appropriate for the ETF program or whether they should be considered by the Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas.
- Examine the impact of research at state universities on the state economy. Identify ways to increase the partnership opportunities between private business and research institutions to enhance the commercialization of newly discovered technology. (*Joint with the House Committee on Higher Education*)
- Examine the state's efforts to encourage new business growth and retain existing businesses in order to strengthen our state's economy. Determine whether a consolidated approach to statewide economic development would be more effective.
- Examine the economic impact of the automobile industry in Texas and the state's ability to compete with other states for future automotive manufacturing facilities. Identify policies, regulations, and current statutes that either hinder or facilitate job growth and investment by the automotive industry. Review opportunities available to partner manufacturers' research and development with Texas colleges and universities, including technology enhancements in safety or alternative fuel systems.
- Examine Texas' industry cluster initiatives in an effort to remain competitive in today's economic development arena. Review the implementation of recommendations made by the Governor's Competitiveness Council and consider new recommendations for Texas to remain an economic development leader.
- Examine current economic development programs available in urban areas in Texas and other states. Report on successful programs and make legislative recommendations for innovative economic development programs. (*Joint with the House Committee on Urban Affairs*)
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature, with specific attention to the implementation of HB 2457 (82R), regarding the oversight of the Emerging Technology Fund.

House Committee on Elections

- Examine the benefits and risks of using mobile voting stations in Texas.
- Examine ways to more clearly define a residence address for voter registration purposes, giving special consideration to college-age students.
- Monitor the implementation and impact of the MOVE Act on the state and on municipalities. Make legislative recommendations, as needed, to ensure a smooth implementation of the law. (*Joint with the House Committee on Defense & Veterans' Affairs*)
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Energy Resources

- Review current state and federal laws and regulations and make recommendations to encourage additional energy production in Texas. Focus on the impact energy production has on our state's economy.
- Examine state regulations governing oil and gas well construction and integrity and pipeline safety and construction and determine what changes should be made, if any, to ensure that the regulations are adequate to protect the people of Texas and its natural resources.
- Study and make recommendations on the current process for the submission of well logs to the state by oil and gas operators. Specifically, identify changes that could be made in statute or agency administrative rules that would result in increased production through a more efficient system of collecting well logs.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature. Specifically, monitor the Railroad Commission of Texas' implementation of HB 3328 (82R) to ensure that the required rulemaking is completed efficiently and in a timely manner.

House Committee on Environmental Regulation

- Examine the federal eight-hour ozone standard under the National Ambient Air Quality Standards program and its impact on the State Implementation Plan. Identify counties expected to be in nonattainment, the state's proposed designations of those counties, the timelines for meeting the applicable standard, and the status of the state's ability to attain the standard.
- Examine the effectiveness of the Texas Emissions Reduction Plan (TERP) since its inception in 2001. Determine whether the emissions reduced justify the amounts that have been appropriated since 2001. *(Joint with the House Committee on Appropriations)*
- Examine the impact on dam safety of provisions passed in HB 2694 (82R) and develop recommendations, if any, regarding risk to downstream property and life.
- Examine new and proposed Environmental Protection Agency rules that may impact permits for Texas facilities. Make recommendations, if needed, for changes in state regulatory programs or potential incentives to comply with federal mandates.
- Study the environmental review process for transportation projects and monitor the implementation of reforms newly passed by the 82nd Legislature. Continue to work with all stakeholders to develop any necessary changes. *(Joint with the House Committee on Transportation)*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on General Investigating & Ethics

- Review the Texas Ethics Commission's sworn complaint process and civil and criminal penalty provisions. Determine whether changes should be made aligned with the mission and purpose of the commission.
- Study and determine whether all appointees to state entities should be required to sign additional governance documents prior to serving in an official state capacity.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Government Efficiency & Reform

- Examine and make recommendations on purchasing cooperatives created under Chapter 791 of the Texas Government Code, including the bid process and the role of inter-local contracts. Clarify for consistency the following terms: purchasing cooperatives, inter-local contracts, and inter-local agreements.
- Examine the utilization of alternative project delivery methods, such as design-build and construction-manager-at-risk, by municipalities, water districts, and authorities, and other local governmental entities since the passage of HB 1886, 80th Legislature.
- Examine interagency agreements and charges for providing information or personal identification documents at the request of a state agency to fulfill day-to-day operations at the expense of the requesting state agency.
- Examine areas of potential privatization of state services in an effort to achieve a higher level of service and greater efficiency for Texas taxpayers. *(Joint with the House Committee on State Affairs)*
- Examine state agency rulemaking and consider ways to improve procedural efficiencies and public transparency, and to better inform policymakers as to their use, purpose, and cost-effectiveness, including an examination of the financial and other impacts such regulations have on both the license holder and the public. *(Joint with the House Committee on State Affairs)*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Higher Education

- Review the various research funding programs available to institutions of higher education. Analyze the effectiveness of each program and recommend whether state funding should be continued. Consider whether the investments made in these programs are attracting research projects to Texas and whether more emphasis should be placed on policies that attract outside research funding to Texas. Consider whether maintaining multiple programs dilutes the state's efforts to attract groundbreaking research to Texas.
- Review potential improvements to transfer pathways within the state's higher education system. Examine the impact of transferability on timely degree completion. Study and recommend strategies to improve the "2+2" model as a low-cost degree option.
- Evaluate proposals for the state's next master plan for higher education beyond 2015, including a review of various metrics to measure successful outcomes in higher education.
- Evaluate the funding, performance, and administration of the state's adult basic education programs. (*Joint with the House Committee on Appropriations*)
- Examine the impact of research at state universities on the state economy. Identify ways to increase the partnership opportunities between private business and research institutions to enhance the commercialization of newly discovered technology. (*Joint with the House Committee on Economic & Small Business Development*)
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Homeland Security & Public Safety

- Examine the extent of interstate coordination concerning border security and intelligence sharing and determine whether any changes to state law are needed to enhance that coordination and cooperation. (*Joint with the House Committee on Border & Intergovernmental Affairs*)
- Monitor the Texas Department of Public Safety's implementation of the driver's license improvement plan and the use of the funds appropriated to the department for such purposes by the 82nd Legislature. Evaluate the feasibility of privatization with the intent to minimize wait times for Texans. (*Joint with the House Committee on Appropriations*)
- Determine the feasibility and need for a digital emergency public service messaging network to be developed on established evacuation routes.
- Examine the role of law enforcement personnel assigned to school district campuses and postsecondary education campuses and determine whether any changes to laws concerning the enforcement of safety and discipline are necessary. Determine whether additional training of law enforcement personnel assigned to school district and secondary education campuses is necessary.
- Examine state and federal law to determine whether existing provisions adequately address security and efficiency concerns for steamship agencies and land ports of entry along the Texas-Mexico border. Evaluate whether the state and the federal government have provided sufficient manpower, infrastructure, and technology to personnel in the border region. (*Joint with the House Committee on Border & Intergovernmental Affairs*)
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Human Services

- Monitor the implementation of Foster Care Redesign. Evaluate the mechanisms for monitoring and oversight, including rates, contracts, and client outcomes.
- Identify policies to alleviate food insecurity, increase access to healthy foods, and incent good nutrition within existing food assistance programs. Consider initiatives in Texas and other states to eliminate food deserts and grocery gaps, encourage urban agriculture and farmers' markets, and increase participation in the Summer Food Program. Evaluate the desirability and feasibility of incorporating nutritional standards in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Monitor congressional activity on the 2012 Farm Bill and consider its impact on Texas. (*Joint with the House Committee on Public Health*)
- Explore strategies, including those in other states, to support the needs of aging Texans, including best practices in nursing home diversion, expedited access to community services, and programs to assist seniors and their families in navigating the long-term care system, with the goal of helping seniors remain in the community. Assess the feasibility of leveraging volunteer-supported initiatives using existing infrastructure to enhance the ability of seniors to remain active and involved.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature, including the implementation of managed care in South Texas.

House Committee on Insurance

- Study whether Texas would benefit from allowing purchases of health insurance coverage across state lines. Examine the options available to facilitate such purchases, and include consideration of how to guarantee appropriate consumer protections.
- Examine the handling of third-party claims by automobile insurers. Consider whether any systemic claims-handling issues would be better addressed through new dispute resolution processes, case-by-case action by the Texas Department of Insurance, or a combination of both. Include in the review an analysis of practice in other states.
- Monitor implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, including any changes that may result from ongoing litigation or legislative modification or repeal. (*Joint with the House Committee on Public Health*)
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction, including the implementation of HB 3 (82-1) regarding the Texas Windstorm Insurance Association.

House Committee on Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence

- Study the potential effects on victims of family and domestic violence in the judicial process if courts are allowed to issue agreed protective orders without a finding of violence.
- Study and make recommendations regarding the discrepancies in guardianship and child custody statutes. Review potential solutions to the problems surrounding "arbitrary and capricious" findings by trial court judges.
- Study the rules of statutory construction and establish a method of determining legislative intent.
- Study the degree of transparency in asbestos bankruptcy trusts and how it affects litigation of asbestos exposure claims in Texas courts.
- Study the public policy implications of lawsuit lending and its effects on the civil justice system.
- Study whether the asbestos and silica multidistrict litigation courts should be allowed to dismiss, without prejudice, claims on the courts' inactive dockets for want of prosecution under certain circumstances.
- Study best practices regarding corporate governance. Make recommendations on the confidentiality of communications to ombudsmen in order to provide more protections to complaining parties.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Land & Resource Management

- Examine the Cabin Program managed by the General Land Office. Review the history of the program, the current fee structure, and the renewal process and whether the program is achieving the goals for which it was created. Make appropriate legislative recommendations.
- Monitor and examine the ongoing litigation of *Severance v. Patterson* and its impact on the Texas Open Beaches Act.
- Examine the effectiveness of the Texas Private Real Property Rights Preservation Act (Chapter 2007, Government Code).
- Examine current regulatory authority available to municipalities in their extraterritorial jurisdiction. Make necessary legislative recommendations to ensure a proper balance between development activities and municipal regulations.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Licensing & Administrative Procedures

- Review the alcoholic beverage licensing and permitting process. Explore possible reforms with interested stakeholders to streamline and improve the process.
- Study the feasibility of streamlining the process to obtain an occupational license. Consider consolidating all occupational licenses under one state agency and whether such a move would increase efficiency and effectiveness. Analyze the process being used in other states.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Natural Resources

- Monitor the ongoing statewide drought and the performance of state, regional, and local entities in addressing it. Examine the impact of the drought on the state water plan, including an evaluation of how well the state's existing water resources can meet demand, the need for additional funding sources to implement the plan, and the effectiveness of current drought planning and drought management policies. Identify short-term and long-term strategies to help the state better cope with drought and assess any obstacles, including state and federal regulations, to implementation of these strategies.
- Examine the interplay of water and energy resources and needs in the state. Study the economic, environmental, and social impacts of water use in energy production and exploration, including the impacts of this use on regional and state water planning. Determine the current and likely future water needs of power generation and energy production, and evaluate options to develop new or alternative supplies. Include an evaluation of current issues involving water use for oil and gas production and related water quality issues.
- Evaluate the status of desalination projects in Texas. Include an evaluation of the regulation of brackish groundwater and whether opportunities exist to facilitate better utilization of this groundwater to meet future needs.
- Study ways to enhance incentives for water conservation in agricultural irrigation.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Pensions, Investments & Financial Services

- Review local retirement systems that are not a part of statewide systems, the administration of these retirement systems, and current liabilities. Study and make recommendations aimed at curbing rising pension costs to local governments.
- Review the Texas County and District Retirement System and the Texas Municipal Retirement System and examine plan provisions offered to individual participating counties and cities.
- Monitor the implementation of HB 2592 (82R) and HB 2594 (82R), regarding pay day lending.
- Review the impact of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act on Texas industries, with particular attention to any federal preemption issues that exist. Make appropriate legislative recommendations.
- Monitor all agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction. Specifically, monitor the study by the Employees Retirement System of Texas and the Teacher Retirement System of Texas of the viability of the current defined benefit plans as well as the implications and feasibility of creating a defined contribution or hybrid plan.

House Committee on Public Education

- Conduct a review of the University Interscholastic League (UIL) and make recommendations as needed.
- Monitor state and local implementation of the new state assessment system (STAAR), specifically the impact on students, instruction, teachers, and graduation or promotion rates. Review how districts are implementing the requirement that the end-of-course assessment count for 15 percent of the student's course grade. Recommend any changes to graduation or testing requirements that promote instructional rigor and support postsecondary readiness while appropriately limiting an overreliance on standardized testing.
- Evaluate the charter schools system in Texas. Examine success and failure stories in Texas and other states. Review the educational outcomes of students in charter schools compared to those in traditional schools. Identify any best practices and how those practices may be applied statewide. The study should include recommendations.
- Review and make recommendations on the effectiveness of Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs) and Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Programs (JJAEPs) in reducing students' involvement in further disciplinary infractions. Determine the appropriate role of disciplinary alternative placements in promoting education achievement and how technology could be used to supplement education services. Consider appropriate placements in DAEPs or JJAEPs and consistent funding models for those programs. Consider options for counties without a JJAEP or inefficiently few placements in a JJAEP. Identify positive behavioral models that promote a learning environment for teachers to appropriately instruct while addressing any behavioral issues and enforcing student discipline.
- Review methods and best practices in Texas and other states to encourage more parental and community involvement in the education of Texas children.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Public Health

- Examine the adequacy of the primary care workforce in Texas and assess the impact of an aging population, the passage of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, and state and federal funding reductions to graduate medical education and physician loan repayment programs. Study the potential impact of medical school innovations, new practice models, alternative reimbursement strategies, expanded roles for physician extenders, and greater utilization of telemedicine. Make recommendations to increase patient access to primary care and address geographic disparities.
- Study the various health registries maintained by the state, including the similarities and differences in reporting, consent, security, and portability of data. Assess registry compliance with standards for the protection and transmission of registry data and identify any additional steps necessary to ensure security, efficiency, and utilization.
- Monitor implementation of the federal Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, including any changes that may result from ongoing litigation or legislative modification or repeal. *(Joint with the House Committee on Insurance)*
- Identify policies to alleviate food insecurity, increase access to healthy foods, and incent good nutrition within existing food assistance programs. Consider initiatives in Texas and other states to eliminate food deserts and grocery gaps, encourage urban agriculture and farmers' markets, and increase participation in the Summer Food Program. Evaluate the desirability and feasibility of incorporating nutritional standards in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Monitor congressional activity on the 2012 Farm Bill and consider its impact on Texas. *(Joint with the House Committee on Human Services)*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Redistricting

- Study State Board of Education districts to determine whether the size of the districts inhibits the ability of board members to provide representation to their constituents and whether a change to the number of districts or the makeup of the board would enhance the ability of the board to perform its duties.
- Gather information regarding the commissions used by other states in redistricting. Study the differences in the results between states that use commissions versus legislatures during the 2011 redistricting cycle.
- Monitor the pending redistricting litigation and determine any follow-up that may be necessary.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Select Committee on State Sovereignty

- Study and evaluate constitutional methods by which states may encourage the proper balance of power between the federal and state governments. Include an evaluation of interstate compacts as well as the effects on state sovereignty of conditional federal grants, commandeering of state officials, and federal laws requiring coordination with local governments.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on State Affairs

- Examine the issue of resource adequacy in the Texas electricity market, federal and state interventions in the marketplace that may be negatively impacting future adequacy, and the best way to maintain resource adequacy.
- Examine whether current law ensures broadband provider access to an electric cooperative's utility poles and facilities pursuant to reasonable, cost-based, and nondiscriminatory rates, terms, and conditions. Study methods for improving access to electric cooperative utility poles to reduce unnecessary costs and delays for the delivery of broadband service to Texas consumers.
- Examine areas of potential privatization of state services in an effort to achieve a higher level of service and greater efficiency for Texas taxpayers. (*Joint with the House Committee on Government Efficiency & Reform*)
- Identify inefficiencies in the regulation of public utilities in order to minimize the cost of regulation to consumers.
- Examine methods of cloud computing technology to streamline agency operations and generate greater efficiencies for more cost-effective operations. (*Joint with the House Committee on Technology*)
- Examine state agency rulemaking and consider ways to improve procedural efficiencies and public transparency, and to better inform policymakers as to their use, purpose, and cost-effectiveness, including an examination of the financial and other impacts such regulations have on both the license holder and the public. (*Joint with the House Committee on Government Efficiency & Reform*)
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction, including the implementation of SB 1048 regarding public-private partnerships on state-owned property.

House Committee on Technology

- Examine ways to create incentives for technology companies to come to Texas, including the feasibility of public-private partnerships. The study should include the economic impact of the high-tech industry in Texas and the state's ability to compete with other states for high-tech jobs. Examine the state's current areas of differentiated technology research and development and recommend strategies to capitalize on that intellectual property and commercialization. Include strategies to attract Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) funding to Texas.
- Examine the benefits and financial costs associated with modernizing 911 call centers with the newest technology to connect dispatchers with callers using mobile means of communication in the fastest and most accurate manner possible during a time of emergency.
- Study the impact of federal broadband expansion programs on rural areas. Coordinate this review with the Public Utility Commission's evaluation of the state Texas Universal Service Fund and the Federal Communications Commission's national broadband plan.
- Examine methods of cloud computing technology to streamline agency operations and generate greater efficiencies for more cost-effective operations. *(Joint with the House Committee on State Affairs)*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Transportation

- Review the state of our current transportation infrastructure, including studying roadway, bridge, and waterway quality and long-range plans by the Texas Department of Transportation for maintaining these assets. Explore future needs of our infrastructure for the next decade and make recommendations to ensure long-range sufficiency.
- Study the state's preparedness for the expansion of the Panama Canal and determine whether the state's infrastructure is ready for the increase in commerce.
- Conduct a thorough review of the operations of transit organizations in Texas. Explore possible reforms to streamline and improve services to Texans.
- Study the environmental review process for transportation projects and monitor the implementation of reforms newly passed by the 82nd Legislature. Continue to work with all stakeholders to develop any necessary changes. *(Joint with the House Committee on Environmental Regulation)*
- Study transportation funding reforms and develop long-term state funding recommendations, with an eye on any federal reforms that become law. Explore options to eliminate "diversions" from Fund 6 to non-transportation-related programs. *(Joint with the House Committee on Appropriations)*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Urban Affairs

- Evaluate the role of community gardens and urban farming efforts that increase access to healthy foods and examine the possible impact that state and local policies have on the success of programs of this type. Determine the feasibility of policies to support these efforts, especially in high-population areas. *(Joint with the House Committee on Agriculture & Livestock)*
- Examine current economic development programs available in urban areas in Texas and other states. Report on successful programs and make legislative recommendations for innovative economic development programs. *(Joint with the House Committee on Economic & Small Business Development)*
- Examine strategies to maximize state funding for programs designed to prevent and end homelessness, with an emphasis on programs that have demonstrated a successful coordination of state and local resources. *(Joint with the House Committee on Appropriations)*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.

House Committee on Ways & Means

- Evaluate the state's tax structure and determine its impact on the competitiveness of the Texas business climate. Specifically, determine the impact of the state's major taxes, including the sales tax and franchise tax, as well as tax exemptions, exclusions, and credits on economic growth, capital investment, and job creation in Texas. As part of this review, evaluate the franchise (margins) tax and determine whether the tax structure should continue to exist in its current form or in a revised form, or whether the existing tax structure should be repealed and replaced with a different business tax.
- Analyze the results of the reviews of appraisal district operations as conducted through the comptroller's Methods Assistance Program (MAP) and determine whether appraisal districts are applying uniform standards and procedures for the appraisal of property for ad valorem tax purposes as required by the Texas Constitution.
- Evaluate whether current property tax notice requirements effectively serve the intended "truth-in-taxation" purpose of informing taxpayers about the property taxes they pay and who is responsible for deciding how much they pay.
- Analyze increases in Texas' overall state debt burden and the role debt plays in the state's fiscal management. Recommend strategies to reduce the state's debt, as well as the calculation of the constitutional debt limit. (*Joint with the House Committee on Appropriations*)
- Examine revenue derived from tobacco manufacturers, including differences between manufacturers that have and have not participated in the state's Comprehensive Settlement Agreement, and evaluate whether changes are needed to maximize revenue to the state.
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction and the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 82nd Legislature.