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2017

Richardson Chamber influences business issues in Austin

The Richardson Chamber acts as a force to further the legislative goals of our membership and community. We aim to produce pro-business and pro-community results by advocating to our legislators and holding them accountable to their constituents. The Chamber's state legislative agenda was presented to our state delegation in early 2017.

Economic development

1 SB 1 maintained funding for pre-kindergarten programs, included reduced funding for special items at UT Dallas and Collin College, and included \$71M for Texas grant funding. The budget also allocated \$571.8M to the Skills Development Fund, mostly in grants to community colleges for customized training programs. The budget, however, significantly underfunded the Texas Research Incentive Program to build more Tier One universities. SB1 was signed by the governor.

2 SB 2 triggered automatic tax ratification elections if local property tax revenue grew by five percent or more. The increase did not depend on the property tax rates, but included increases in property appraisal values. SB 2 died in the House Calendars committee.



3 SB 6 or the **Bathroom Bill** required occupants of public buildings, including school districts, to use the bathroom and changing facilities that align with their biological sex. SB 5 was never referred to a House committee.

4 SB 1004 allowed wireless network companies to place fixed network nodes, which enable wireless communication, in public rights-of-way. The bill reimbursed cities for using of rights-of-way and installing network nodes on poles. This legislation will expedite the deployment of 5G wireless technology in Texas. SB 1004 was signed by the governor and became effective on Sept. 1.



5 The Paddie amendment, written by Republican Rep. Chris Paddie of Marshall for SB 2078, added the requirement that schools provide single-occupancy facilities to students whose biological sex is not aligned



The Chamber's Public Policy committee meets the second Monday of each month at lunch. Open to Chamber members.

with their gender. SB 2078 required the Texas Education Agency (TEA) to adopt a model multihazard emergency operations plans (MEOP). The amended version of SB 2078 died in conference committee.

6 HB 28 used surplus general revenue to phase out the franchise or margins tax incrementally, until its eventual expiration. HB 28 died in the Senate Finance committee.

7 HB 3172 established a state website for businesses considering relocation or expansion in Texas, and included an interactive tool that calculated their eligibility for state incentive programs. HB 3172 died in the Senate Economic Development committee.

8 SB 3 (special session) required occupants of public buildings, including school districts, to use only bathrooms and changing rooms that aligned with their biological sex. SB 3 died without referral to a House committee.

Workforce development

1 SB 22 provided funding for Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) programs designed to guide high school students into fields that need more qualified applicants, such as science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) industries. SB 22 was signed by the governor and became effective Sept. 1.

2 HB 108 established the Recruit Texas Program to support employers expanding operations to Texas. Businesses can coordinate with junior and technical colleges to design training programs for high-skilled careers. HB 108 was signed by the governor and became effective Sept. 1.

3 HB 136 added career and technical education to the mission of public education in Texas. HB 136 was signed by the governor and became effective immediately.



indicates a bill that successfully passed

see back page for more







Legislative agenda and scorecard

After a lengthy process, which included consulting experts, seeking feedback from members, communicating with elected officials and working diligently with our Public Policy Committee, the Chamber's Board of Directors approved an aggressive legislative agenda for the 85th Texas legislative session.


In previous years, our scorecards have graded legislators solely on about 10 bills that were voted on by both chambers. Because of the contentious nature of the 85th legislature, several impactful bills that

addressed items on our legislative agenda were only voted on by either the House or Senate.

So, we included nineteen priority bills from the regular and special legislative sessions in the areas of economic development, workforce development, higher education, public education, water and transportation, not all of whom were voted on by each member. The score for each legislator only counts the bills that were voted on in their respective chamber on third and final reading.

							
	Bill	Chamber	Sen. Van Taylor	Sen. Don Huffines	Rep. Angie Chen Button	Rep. Jeff Leach	Rep. Linda Koop
1	Appropriations bill	Y support	★	★	★	★	★
2	Property tax elections	N oppose	✗	✗			
3	Bathroom Bill	N oppose	✗	✗			
4	Public network nodes	Y support	★	★	★	★	★
5	Paddie amendment	Y support			★	★	★
6	Eliminate franchise tax	Y support			★	★	★
7	Incentives website	Y support			★	✗	★
8	Bathroom bill	N oppose	✗	✗			
1	P-TECH for STEM	Y support	★	★	★	★	★
2	Recruit Texas	Y support	★	✗	★	★	★
3	Career & tech education	Y support	★	✗	★	★	★
1	Transfer college credit	Y support	★	★			
2a	School finance House	Y support			★	★	★
2b	School finance Senate	N oppose	✗	✗			
3	School performance	Y support	★	★	★	★	★
4	Pre-K certification	Y support	✗	✗	★	✗	★
5	Public ed commision	Y support	★	★	★	★	★
1	Water rights claim	Y support	★	★			
1	Transportation	Y support			★	✗	★
	TOTAL	100%	64%	50%	100%	77%	100%

 signifies a vote in **agreement** with Chamber position

 didn't agree with Chamber position

Education

1 **SB 2086** improved the transferability of college credit between public institutions of higher education. Coordinating transfer requirements helps students complete their degrees more efficiently and with less debt. SB 2086 died in the House Higher Education committee.



2 **HB 21** was the session's major school finance legislation. The initial version approved by the House would have added \$1.6 billion to the state's public schools fund during 2018-19. This bill increased the basic allotment per student by \$210 to \$5,350 and provided additional funding for 95 percent of school districts, measures supported by our organization. Senators then made changes to the House version that erased the increase in per-student allotments. The Chamber did not support this final version approved by senators. HB 21 died in committee. In the final budget, the per-student allotment remained unchanged at \$5,140.

3 **HB 22** evaluated schools according to three criteria: student achievement; student progress; and closing the gaps. Each category emphasized standardized state exams, but also include criteria such as graduation rates and the number of students taking advanced courses. Each school district will receive a letter grade. State Education Commissioner Mike Morath will have the power to approve schools' own accountability systems, which could

account for up to half of the overall grade. HB 22 was signed by the governor and is effective immediately.

4 **HB 2039** created an optional early childhood certification for teachers specializing in pre-K through 3rd grade. The bill focuses on students aged three and older, ensuring quality early education for our region. HB 2039 was signed by the governor and became effective immediately.

5 **SB 16** (special session) established a commission to study school finance in Texas and make recommendations on financing Texas schools to the legislature. The 2018 interim commission has been appointed by the governor.

Water

1 **SB 226** streamlined the process for amending a water rights claim application. The bill would have helped water providers keep pace with the growing need for water resources in the North Texas region. SB 226 failed to receive affirmative votes in the House Natural Resources committee.



Transportation

1 **HB 2861** continued and expanded the use of Comprehensive Development Agreements (CDA) to build public-private partnerships and build transportation projects across the state. Increasing transportation investment is absolutely essential to supporting the Texas economy. HB 2861 failed to pass in the lower chamber.