An Overview of the 87th Regular Session of the Texas Legislature
OVERVIEW

- How the Texas Legislature Works
- Understanding the Legislative Process
- How to Track Legislation Using Texas Legislature Online
- Helpful Information
HOW THE TEXAS LEGISLATURE WORKS
Part-time Legislature: Constitutionally required to meet once every odd year

The budget is the only bill Constitutionally required to pass

Salary: $600/month stipend
THE TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

- Presiding Officer: Speaker of the House (elected by the House)
- 150 members serve two-year terms
- Average district: 167,000 residents
- Committee system determines which bills are heard on the House floor
- Speaker determines committee appointments by both seniority and preference

Who Represents Me?
THE TEXAS SENATE

- Presiding Officer: Lieutenant Governor (elected statewide)
- 31 members serve staggered terms
- Average District: 811,000 residents
- Lt. Gov. determines which bills are heard on the Senate floor. Takes 3/5 majority to bring a bill up for a vote.
- Lt. Gov. determines committee membership
UNDERSTANDING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS
BILL TYPES

• Bills (SB or HB)
  • Primary means to create and change laws
  • Requires passage by both chambers and action by the governor

• Resolutions
  • Joint Resolutions (SJR or HJR)
  • Concurrent Resolutions (SCR or HCR)
  • Simple Resolutions (SR or HR)
  • Member Resolutions
BILL VERSIONS

**Filed**
- Original language

**Committee Report**
- Can be identical to the filed version or modified (known as a committee substitute)
- Can occur in one or both chambers

**Engrossed**
- As passed by one chamber

**Conference Committee Report**
- Agreed-to version after both chambers pass different versions

**Enrolled**
- As passed by both chambers
Bill Analysis
- A document prepared for all bills and joint resolutions reported out of committee. A bill analysis may include background information on the measure, a statement of purpose or intent, and an analysis of the content of the measure.

Fiscal Note
- An estimate prepared by the Legislative Budget Board of the probable costs or savings or the probable revenue gains or losses that will be incurred as an effect of a bill or joint resolution.
# Bill Versions Example

**Bill: HB 1576**  
*Legislative Session: 86(R)*  
*Author: Phelan*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Bill</th>
<th>Fiscal Note</th>
<th>Analysis</th>
<th>Witness List</th>
<th>Summary of Cmte Action</th>
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**Additional Documents:**  
- [HBQ Bill Analysis](#)  
- [Enrolled Bill Summary](#)
HOW A BILL BECOMES A LAW

**House**
- A bill is filed (+4,000 HBs)
- The bill is referred to committee
- The bill has a hearing and is voted out (50% of bills will die)
- The bill goes to the Calendars Committee and may be put on the House calendar
- The bill is voted on the first time.
- The bill is voted on the second time.
- House bills go to the Senate (engrossed); Senate bills go to the Governor (enrolled)
- Governor signs or vetoes the bill

**Senate**
- A bill is filed (+2,000 SBs)
- The bill is referred to committee
- The bill has a hearing and is voted out (40% of bills will die)
- The bill is placed on the Calendar (if you have the votes and the Lt. Gov agrees)
- If 3/5ths of the Senators agree, the bill is voted on the first time.
- If 3/5ths of the Senators agree, the bill is voted on the second time.
- Senate bills go to the House (engrossed); House bills go to the Governor (enrolled)
# BY THE NUMBERS (86R)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
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<td>186</td>
<td>147</td>
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<td>969</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>7</td>
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- Process designed to kill bills, not pass them
- Bills have a 20% chance of becoming law
- Bills voted out of committee have a 50% passage rate
- Bills that pass out of committees of both chambers have a 75% passage rate
## SESSION TIMELINE

### January
- Elect the Speaker
- File bills

### February
- Committee assignments
- Committee hearings
- Budget hearings

### March
- Bill filing deadline
- Bills can be voted on the floor

### April
- Negotiations

### May
- Budget
- House deadlines
- Sine Die (last day of session)
HOW TO TRACK LEGISLATION
CREATING A LOG IN

The MyTLO section of the Texas Legislature Online website offers personalized viewing of legislative content.

- **Bill List:** A custom list of bills created by:
  - Manually entering the bill number
  - Adding the bill number from the bill history page or bill or text search results page
  - Adding all the bills from a bill search result set
- **Bill Alert:** Receive e-mail notification when bills on this custom list have selected significant actions added. Bills are added by:
  - Manually entering the bill number
  - Adding the bill number from the bill history page
  - Adding the bill number from a text or bill search results page
- **Bill Subject:** Receive alerts when bills are assigned a specific subject.
- **Other alerts:** Receive e-mail notification when selected calendars, committee hearing notices, committee minutes are posted, or the house/senate adjourn.
- **Access RSS feeds for legislative content through your favorite newsreader software.**
- **Access legislative content on your wireless mobile device.**
- **Save your bill, amendment, and text searches to use later.**

Usage of the bill list, alert list, and saved search features requires registration. Service is FREE of charge (privacy policy).

**NOTE:** Alerts are removed at the beginning of each regular session. All accounts will remain intact without the need to re-register.
Create your bill list (name and description)

Add bills you want to track

Don’t forget to save!
Hit run to see the details of each bill you saved.
TRACKING A BILL, CONT’D.

...takes you here (view votes, see bill text/fiscal note/witness list, look for companion bills, etc.)
ADDING ALERTS

In My TLO, receive e-mail alerts for:

- Action on bills (set for a hearing, placed on a calendar, etc.)
- Daily House and Senate floor calendars
- Committee hearings (with links to the agenda)
- Daily adjournment of the House and Senate
IMPORTANT DATES

• January 12: First Day of Session
• March 8-11: TPA Virtual Advocacy Week
• March 12: Last Day of Bill Filing
• May 31: Sine Die
• June 20: Last Day of Veto Period
HELPFUL LINKS

TPA’s Advocacy Page
(New page launching Jan. 12 and will be updated regularly)

Texas Legislature Online
(Look up bills, find hearings, view calendars)

Legislative Process and Procedures
(Watch for updates)

Legislative Reference Library
(Read articles, view summaries and statistics)

Texas Senate
Texas House of Representatives
Texas Statutes
GET INVOLVED

- TPA’s Legislative Committee directs advocacy efforts
- TPA’s Grassroots Committee serves as the faces-on-the-Zoom-calls
- TPA’s PAC, PSY-PAC, supports candidates and state elected officials
- Legislators WANT to hear from mental health providers
- Watch for Voter Voice updates and TPA Action Alerts