

Richardson Chamber of Commerce 2023 Legislative Agenda

Below is a recap of how well the Texas 88th Legislature did regarding priorities of the Richardson Chamber of Commerce.

Business Competitiveness

- Support initiatives that maintain Texas' reputation as a business-friendly state.
 - ✓ *House Bill 5 provides an economic development incentive tool to attract businesses and create jobs in Texas by offering tax abatements on capital projects.*
- Support reliable and sustainable infrastructure development, including the electric grid, domestic energy production, mobility, water resources and broadband.
 - ✓ *House Bill 9 allocates \$1.5 billion to the Texas Broadband Infrastructure Fund, that is meant to expand internet availability in a state where 7 million people lack access to the service.*
 - ✓ *House Bill 1500 funds and shores up the infrastructure in Texas.*
 - ✓ *Senate Bill 28 earmarks \$1 billion to upgrade Texas' water infrastructure and jumpstart massive water supply projects.*
- Support the continuation of economic development tools, such as a reimagined Chapter 313, to ensure Texas leads the nation in competing for major, capital-intensive projects.
 - n *Senate Bill 2627 was rolled into House Bill 5 mentioned above, which somewhat addresses Chapter 313.*

Local Government

- Support preserving local governments' responsibility to establish appropriate means to adequately fund services and govern including establishing and maintain charters and ordinance making authority.
 - * *House Bill 2127, referred to as the super pre-emption bill, passed and will curtail local government's decision-making ability in a variety of state codes, most likely will be challenged as unconstitutional.*
- Support legislation that provides for enhanced local decision-making of local government including increasing the 3.5% revenue caps imposed on cities and counties.
 - * *No direct bill was passed on revenue caps but HB 2127 degrades local control.*
- Support legislation that blocks any attempt to limit or prohibit the authority of city, county, and school district officials to use public funds to communicate with legislators and state agencies, as well as pay membership dues to organizations that hire lobbyists.
 - ✓ *Senate Bill 175 that would have prohibited local governments and other political subdivisions from using taxpayer funds to hire lobbyists failed to receive a hearing.*

Higher Education

- Support funding enrollment growth and inflation through the academic formulas at Texas' higher education institutions.
 - ✓ *The Legislature appropriated significant new funding to the formulas contingent on institutions freezing tuition and academic fees for the next two years.*
- Support increased investment in academic research initiatives such as the Texas Research Incentive Program and the National Research University Fund to develop more top research institutions in the state.
 - * *Legislators did not provide significant new funding for TRIP and chose to eliminate NRUF and repurpose the funds for research institutions that are not part of the UT System.*
- Establish an effective and sustainable system of investing in community colleges that builds off the work of the Texas Community College Finance Commission.
 - ✓ *The legislature adopted House Bill 8 that provides increased appropriations to our community college districts, creates financial incentives based on outcomes rather than enrollment, enhances further dual credit and continuing education programs, and offers additional grants and financial support to students.*
- Continue investments in Small Business Development Centers and their professional business advising and training programs for small business owners, which are proven resources that strengthen the Texas economy and create/retain jobs.
 - ✓ *The appropriation for the Small Business Development Centers was funded at the same level as 2022-23.*

Public Education

- Support legislation that enhances school safety and security, particularly for mental health and trauma-informed counseling.
 - n* *Senate Bill 838 passed that requires school districts to have a silent panic button in all classrooms but did not provide funding.*
 - n* *House Bill 3 passed and requires school districts to have an armed security officer on every campus. The bill increases the safety allotment from \$9.72 to \$10.00 per student; provides \$15,000 per campus for safety expenditures; requires most staff to complete mental health training; requires education service centers to serve as school safety resources for districts and assigns TEA to monitor the implementation and operation of requirements related to school safety. The bill will have a negative fiscal impact on school districts by not providing enough to meet the requirements of the legislation, thereby creating an under-funded mandate.*
- Support legislation that provides incentives to recruit and retain teachers.
 - ✓ *HB 4363 creates a new scholarship program providing \$12,000 per year for a student pursuing a degree at a higher education institution and educator preparation program.*
- Support legislation that provides increases in public school funding that correlates with inflation and maintains funding levels established by HB3.
 - ✗ *No bill was passed to provide school districts with funding to meet increased expenses and provide salary increases for teachers and school personnel. Districts will budget based on 2019 funding levels.*
- Support maintaining funding for P-Tech and other early college and workforce readiness programs.
 - ✓ *House Bill 8 provides grant programs to address more efficient use of financial aid, expanding workforce partnerships, and other components of postsecondary success.*

Healthcare

- Support healthcare initiatives that provide access to quality services and adequate funding to meet the various needs of residents.
 - ✓ *House Bill 12 provides care for the first 12 months post-partum through Medicaid.*
- Support increased funding and support for Texans with a behavioral or mental health diagnosis.
 - ✓ *Senate Bill 26 establishes a grant program for community based mental and behavioral health systems to increase access for mental health patients across the state.*
 - ✓ *Lawmakers set aside \$4B earmarked for behavioral health services, with about a quarter of the funds going to renovate existing or construct new mental health facilities.*
- Support legislation to enhance/increase the base Medicaid rates for hospitals.
 - ✗ *No bill was passed.*
- Support legislation to increase the funding and education of chronic condition awareness prevention and treatment to decrease the overall burden placed upon taxpayers across the state.
 - ✗ *No bill was passed.*

Key

- ✓ Positive
- ✗ Negative
- n* Neutral

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