

**SENATE INTERIM COMMITTEE CHARGES
79TH LEGISLATURE**

BUSINESS & COMMERCE

1. Monitor the implementation of SB 5, 79th Legislature, Second Called Session, with particular attention to the following issues and make recommendations for any legislation needed to complete implementation. Include an analysis of the following:
 - the impact of the state-issued certificate of franchise authority on competition in the cable and video services market as well as the impact on local governments, including an analysis of compensation paid to governmental entities, availability of products to customers, and the way in which utility relocation costs are apportioned in public right-of-ways;
 - investment in infrastructure by new video service providers and the impact on the state's economy;
 - the impact of the emergence of Broadband Over Powerlines (BPL) on the broadband and competitive electric market as well as the impact on other technologies;
 - the impact of deregulation on customer switching to competitors and on telephone rates;
 - the ongoing study of the Universal Service Fund by the Public Utility Commission;
 - the adequacy of basic telephone rates;
 - the impact of the emergence of Voice Over Internet Protocol as a means of competition;
 - the interaction at the wholesale level between ILECs and market competitors, particularly with respect to the exchange of telephone traffic and information; and
 - ongoing rulemaking projects at the PUC and the federal level, particularly with respect to the development of market tests and state-issued certificates of franchise authority for video services.

2. Review current activities in the consumer finance arena, including but not limited to home equity lending, predatory lending, mortgage fraud, credit scoring, payday lending, and pre-need funeral contracts, and make recommendations for improving services to consumers and options for financial service providers.

3. Study and make recommendations on improving the on-going implementation of SB 7, 76th Legislature, with particular emphasis on evaluation of the following:
 - adequacy and effectiveness of Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) as well as implementation of Sunset recommendations at ERCOT;
 - cost-effectiveness and fairness of congestion management mechanisms; and
 - the adequacy of generation capacity in this state.

4. Review and evaluate information regarding alternative forms of rate regulation for electric utilities, focusing on alternatives offered in other states. Make recommendations to improve cost-effectiveness, support a competitive retail market in Texas, take advantage of technological advances, and enhance customer choice and satisfaction.

5. Examine overall feasibility and capacity for alternative forms of electricity generation in Texas. Study potential funding sources and logistical issues associated with developing clean coal, biomass, and next-generation nuclear electricity generation.
6. Review and study the permissibility of rental car companies to sell used rental motor vehicles on credit union premises and other locations not continuously used for the conduct of used rental motor vehicle sales. Analyze comparative laws from other states.

Joint Charge with Senate Transportation & Homeland Security Committee:

1. Study and make recommendations relating to the relocation of utilities from state owned right-of-way, including an assessment of the costs of relocations, possible funding sources and methods to decrease delays associated with relocation.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Business & Commerce Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES

1. Review how other leading states and countries have structured their economic development programs to match the needs of businesses in an economy in which information, ideas and technology are the driving forces. Identify programs from which Texas could benefit.
2. Study how Texas can better translate its wealth of intellectual property and potential into commercialization. Review fostering better links between basic research and discovery resources of academic institutions and commercialization of existing industries, better connections between complementary discoveries and technologies, and increased funding for such activities.
3. Review Texas' economic development tools including the Texas Enterprise Fund and the Texas Emerging Technologies Fund and make recommendations for improvements including better tracking of fund uses and benefits.

Reports

The Subcommittee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Subcommittee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Business & Commerce Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Subcommittee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

1. Study the resources and facilities available to offenders with mental health needs in the Texas criminal justice system. Provide an inventory of resources and facilities. Develop recommendations to better allocate existing resources and efficiently address the needs of this population.
2. Study the expenditure patterns and identify trends in the community supervision and corrections departments' use of state and local monies, known collectively as the Judicial Districts Trust Funds. Ascertain the percentages spent on direct supervision of probationers and identify notable policy decisions. Provide recommendations for improvements and methods of maximizing the use of these funds.
3. Examine the allegations of abuse and neglect within the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) facilities and the appropriateness of TYC response. Include an analysis of factors that may be affecting the safety of inmates and staff and make recommendations for Legislative actions to improve the safety of inmates and staff at these facilities.
4. Monitor the implementation of legislation relating to reducing the production and abuse of methamphetamine, including the predicted impact of methamphetamine's increased availability on state resources and criminal justice populations, and make recommendations for additional programs for further reductions in abuse and production.
5. Study and make recommendations for methods to reduce kidnapping and violence along the Texas Border, focusing on reducing drug-related crime.
6. Monitor the expenditure of funds for adult probation services dedicated to the lowering of revocations to state prisons and state jails. Examine the compliance with and effectiveness of associated budget riders and make recommendations for future funding needs.
7. Study the feasibility of the State of Texas establishing or contracting with a private prison facility in the country of Mexico in order to house non-violent Mexican Nationals currently being housed in Texas prisons.
8. Review other states' correctional health care systems and make recommendations, if necessary, for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Texas' system.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if

applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Criminal Justice Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

EDUCATION

1. Review and make recommendations on any improvements necessary for the state's accountability system, especially as it relates to closing and measuring achievement gaps. The committee should study the feasibility of establishing statutory minimum or baseline performance standards for state education policies. Such a review should include a thorough study of the current assessment structure and make any recommendations about moving to other formats such as end of course testing. The committee shall also make recommendations on how to incorporate alternative delivery methods when assessing student performance.
2. Study and make recommendations on educational reforms necessary to focus high schools and student performance on post-secondary readiness and success.
3. Review the operation of the State Board of Education, including its oversight of the Permanent School Fund, and make recommendations, if necessary, for appropriate legislative oversight and review.
4. Study the impact of pay-for-performance and differentiated pay scales on teacher recruitment and retention. Examine alternative approaches to improving teacher retention. Study value-added assessment/individual student growth measures as a factor in determining compensation for teacher effectiveness. Examine programs in other states that expand the range of teacher salaries and provide incentives for effective teachers to remain in the classroom. Make recommendations for changing teacher salary structures.
5. Review and make recommendations, if necessary, that streamline and clarify Chapter 37 of the Education Code dealing with student discipline. Include a study of state accountability measures for disciplinary alternative education programs to evaluate academic performance and effectiveness in modifying behavior. Include a study of the effects of zero tolerance practices and other changes made by the 79th Legislature. Include a review of after school prevention programs.
6. Evaluate the impact of successful school choice programs on students, parents, and teachers.

Joint Charge with Senate Finance Committee:

1. Review and make recommendations that address the state's facility infrastructure needs for public schools, including effective models for state funding as well as efficient methods to ensure responsible use of public tax dollars.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the

final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Education Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Study the impact and costs associated with distance learning on traditional higher education.
2. Study the cost of education at public institutions of higher education, specifically, tuition de-regulation and student fees. The committee should also review current tuition and fee exemptions and make recommendations for improving student access to education.
3. Study what impact any changes to the percentage requirement of the Top 10% Law could have on students currently in the educational pipeline, discuss developing a uniform transcript and a standard methodology for calculating GPAs, and make recommendations for relating to the application of the Top 10% Law, including to children of Texas residents in the military.
4. Monitor the progress of the Closing the Gaps goals and recommend any legislative action needed to ensure we stay on target to meet the goals by 2015.
5. Study the relationship of College of Education coursework on teacher effectiveness and student performance. Examine the State's role in the accountability of these teacher preparation programs in delivering the most effective instruction strategies recommended or validated by scientifically-based research, particularly in the area of reading. Examine past and current studies linking teacher preparedness with student performance and identify any barriers to conducting such research. Make recommendations for legislative changes to improve programs.

Joint Charge with Senate Finance Committee:

1. Monitor changes made during the 79th Legislature, Regular Session, to adjust higher education funding formulas by adopting a cost-based formula matrix. Make recommendations for continuing improvements.

Reports

The Subcommittee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Subcommittee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education's interim budget, as approved by the

Senate Administration Committee.

The Subcommittee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

FINANCE

1. Review the state's business tax structure and make recommendations for the development of a broad-based business tax that meets the following policy goals: (1) treats business uniformly regardless of organizational form, (2) impose a tax burden that relates to the benefits provided by the state, (3) encourages job growth, (4) provides a revenue stream that grows with the economy, and (5) does not shift the burden of current business taxes to consumers.
2. Study the impact of the state and local tax structure on the competitiveness of Texas businesses relative to their counterparts in neighboring states.
3. Review findings of the State Auditor's Office and evaluate actions taken by agencies and those remaining unresolved.
4. Review health care funding, focusing on the Medicaid program, Medicare Part D, hospital reimbursements and trauma and indigent care.
5. Complete a comprehensive review and evaluation of the state budget, including projected revenues and costs and long term implications of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita on health care, public and higher education, an criminal justice. Examine the entire budget process, including the establishment of spending limits, performance and accountability measures, and other measures to control spending.
6. Study the method through which fees are collected under the Driver's Responsibility Program in order in maximize the amount of money for trauma funding and transportation. Look specifically at collection rates and develop means to enhance them.
7. Monitor the implementation of Jail Standards Rider # 2 (S.B. 1, 79th Legislature), and Department of State Health Services Rider # 80 (S.B. 1, 79th Legislature) to ensure effectiveness of mental health screenings, cost savings, and effects on capacity at state and local criminal justice and mental health institutions. Also, monitor the implementation of S.B. 679, 79th Legislature, Regular Session, to determine whether videoconferencing is being used between the state and local criminal justice and the mental health agencies, as well as the courts, and whether cost savings and efficiencies are being realized.
8. Study and make recommendations relating to the feasibility and options for capping property appraisal taxes at the state or local level. Review current appraisal practices focusing on standardizing procedures for appraising property located in more than one jurisdiction.
9. Determine the number of commercial and consumer transactions, including wire transfers, that occur in Texas. Determine the amount of monies that are sent internationally from Texas. Study the feasibility of creating a pilot program in Harris County that captures a percentage of revenues from such transactions, and request an Opinion from the Attorney General's Office to pursue these revenues as a potential source for health care funding.

Joint Charge with Senate Education Committee:

1. Review and make recommendations that address the state's facility infrastructure needs for public schools, including effective models for state funding as well as efficient methods to ensure responsible use of public tax dollars.

Joint Charge with Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education:

1. Monitor changes made during the 79th Legislature, Regular Session, to adjust higher education funding formulas by adopting a cost-based formula matrix. Make recommendations for continuing improvements.

Joint Charges with Senate Transportation & Homeland Security Committee:

1. Review the process by which the Texas Department of Transportation Commission allocates funds to the districts through the Allocation Program. Include a description of all scoring mechanisms used in making allocations of resources and make recommendations for maximizing the use of these funds to meet Legislative objectives.

2. Review the process by which the Texas Department of Transportation Commission determines which federal funding sources should be implemented to comply with funding reductions mandated by Congress. Assess the Commission's options for determining how projects that were to be funded out of these reduced revenue sources will be funded this biennium.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Finance Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies

where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON CAPITAL FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

1. Study capital funding for institutions of higher education, including tuition revenue bonds (looking at construction, renovation, and technology projects), PUF, and HEAF funding issues. Review the state's current process of authorizing tuition revenue bonds. Make recommendations to streamline and objectify the process to ensure the authorizations of tuition revenue bonds meet the state's goals for higher education.

Reports

The Subcommittee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Subcommittee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Subcommittee on Capital Funding for Higher Education's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Subcommittee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION

1. Study and make recommendations for the creation of a comprehensive catalogue of facilities of historical significance managed by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and the Texas Historical Commission (THC). Include recommendations for efficient management and promotion of such sites, including a review of the merits of consolidation of those sites under one of the existing agencies or a new agency, and identify potential funding mechanisms to ensure that facilities are adequately funded.

2. Review recent efforts to improve the use of resources by state agencies through conservation, energy audits, and energy efficiency.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Government Organization Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

1. Study and make recommendations for improving delivery of Texas' mental health services; consider local and regional delivery systems including access to care, cost effectiveness, choice and competition, and quality of care.
2. Monitor state and federal Medicaid reform proposals, including their impact on the Medicaid program in Texas, as well as cost-containment measures in other states, and make recommendations for legislative action, as appropriate.
3. Study and make recommendations relating to filling shortages in the health care workforce and improving medical educational services. Evaluate the state's use of the National Health Service Corps and Federally Qualified Health Centers (FQHCs) to address the needs of the Medicaid/Medicare and underinsured populations.
4. Examine the strategies used by other states that have had success with FQHCs and make recommendations for increasing the number of FQHCs in Texas.
5. Study and make recommendations relating to policy issues surrounding the use of emerging skin cell research, and other technologies.
6. Study and make recommendations for improving vaccination rates and ensuring an adequate vaccination supply in the state. Include an analysis of vaccine manufacturing and purchasing policies.
7. Evaluate and make recommendations relating to the creation of a comprehensive and statewide nutrition and physical activity plan to address obesity and chronic diseases. Examine options for funding components of such a plan.
8. Monitor the implementation of S.B. 6, 79th Legislature, Regular Session, relating to Child and Adult Protective Services. Study and make recommendations for development and enhancements to protocols for joint investigations by child protective service workers and law enforcement and for interviews with children for disclosure of abuse.
9. Study the current use of the 2-1-1 network to provide access to information on federal, state, and local resources. Examine and make recommendations on strategies that improve the coordination of service information and expand the availability of information on services currently provided by community and faith-based organizations.
10. Monitor the implementation of H.B. 2292, 78th Legislature, Regular Session, relating to health and human services. Focus on implementation of service coordination and consolidation efforts to assess the impact on service quality, while reducing costs.

Joint Charge with State Affairs Committee:

1. Examine and make recommendations, if necessary, regarding the state's role in regulating pharmacy benefit managers in the interest of consumer protection. Examine alternative methods of dispensing maintenance drugs, including mail service and retail pharmacies, and provide an analysis of the state's role in protecting consumers.
2. Study how to reduce dependence on Medicaid for the provision of long term care by increasing use of long-term care insurance and health savings accounts. Include a study of options for increasing the use of advance planning tools, such as health care power of attorney and living wills, to ensure more effective decision-making regarding critical end-of-life and other health care decisions. Finally, study the feasibility of implementing innovative models of nursing facility services that encourage autonomy, choice and dignity of residents.
3. Study the current laws/policies relating to forensic patients in our State Hospitals and Community Mental Health Organizations. Include analysis of and recommendations relating to pre- and post-trial forensic patients, competency laws and procedures, current treatment policies and guidelines, cost and placement considerations for creating specialty units for forensic patients, judicial discretion and medical best practices.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Health and Human Services Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership

of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

1. Study and make recommendations regarding the regulatory authority of counties in relation to development in unincorporated areas, including public safety and public health regulations, and the authority of counties to prevent new colonias development without sufficient water, wastewater, and other infrastructure.
2. Study and make recommendations relating to the use of funds collected from red light camera citations.
3. Study and make recommendations regarding the relationship between cities and special utility districts, including the formation of special utility districts in the extraterritorial jurisdiction of cities, and the ability of those districts to meet the future service needs of residents; the number of special utility districts currently existing and their effect on the overall property tax burden; as well as the significant growth/creation of special utility districts and their effect on the provision of services to residents.
4. Study and make recommendations relating to counties' ability to apply for and receive state and federal grants. Focus on assessing the impact and use of grant funds, on streamlining the process, and upon the impact and options available for counties without incorporated cities and towns.
5. Examine and make recommendations relating to the appropriateness and advisability of adopting the "Texas Uniform Planned Community Act," as published by the State Bar of Texas Subcommittee on Property Owners Associations, as the enabling statute to establish a comprehensive and uniform framework for the creation and operation of residential planned communities
6. Study the implementation and impact of legislation passed by the 79th Legislature to increase the economic impact of the Texas Wine Industry on the state's economy and make recommendations, as appropriate.
7. Study the status of floodplain mapping in Texas communities and the scope of local governments' floodplain development management authority and make recommendations, as necessary, to enable communities to provide accurate floodplain data and management plans that will facilitate more favorable insurance rates and better protect the lives and property of Texas residents in the event of a natural disaster.
8. Study the home ownership rate for low-income Texans. Make recommendations for increasing home ownership. Analyze options for enhancing Low Income Housing Tax Credits and include costs and benefits to the state.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Intergovernmental Relations Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & TRADE

1. Study state and federal programs aimed at assisting cities and businesses to compete in national and international markets. Develop recommendations to increase the competitiveness of Texas communities and entities in trade and commerce.
2. Study and develop recommendations to address the infrastructure and economic development needs of border and coastal communities in rural and non-urban areas of Texas.
3. Study and report on the availability of housing in distressed areas of the state, especially along the Border colonias and rural Texas. Review state, federal and private initiatives aimed at providing housing assistance. Work with private and non-profit entities to address the growing housing needs. Develop recommendations for the cost-effective use of existing housing monies, leveraging of funds and initiatives for new funding sources.
4. Review state and local policies impacting the water/wastewater services, transportation and health infrastructure needs of Texas colonias. Work with the Texas Water Development Board, the Office of the Attorney General and the Colonia Coordinator to develop recommendations aimed at improving and strengthening the available resources and policies affecting economically distressed areas.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate International Relations & Trade Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

JURISPRUDENCE

1. Examine and make recommendations relating to the jurisdiction of statutory county courts, including the development of standardized language for Chapter 25, Government Code, to confer specific types of jurisdiction on statutory county courts and to ensure the statutes are clear and concise.
2. Examine and make recommendations to improve court oversight of fiduciaries appointed to make financial and personal decisions for wards as well as those appointed to administer an estate or trust.
3. Study and make recommendations relating to the use and cost benefits of electronic recording as an alternative method of preserving records of official court proceedings.
4. Monitor the implementation of SB 1863, 79th Legislature, Regular Session, specifically the Collection Improvement Program, which seeks to improve the collection of criminal court fees, fines and costs. Make recommendations to increase the effectiveness of the Collection Improvement Program and determine if any statutory changes are necessary.
5. Study and make recommendations relating to the possible uses and need for statutory directives regarding the use of collaborative law procedures.
6. Review statutes, regulations, guidelines, and formulas relating to child support and make recommendations, if necessary, to ensure adequate support, including educational expenses, for children.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Jurisprudence Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Monitor ongoing efforts to improve air quality in Texas and review development and implementation of the State Implementation Plan. Examine the effectiveness of the Low Income Vehicle Repair and Assistance Program and the Texas Emissions Reduction Program.
2. Study and assess all issues related to ground and surface water law, policy and management, including, but not limited to:
 - the role of federal, state, regional and local governments, including river authorities and other water management entities, and their jurisdiction, authority, and coordination in setting consistent, nondiscriminatory water policies;
 - the statutory, regulatory, and/or economic impediments to implementing key water management strategies recommended in the Regional and State Water Plans;
 - the role of groundwater conservation districts;
 - conjunctive use of both ground and surface water resources;
 - rule of capture;
 - historic use standards;
 - water infrastructure and financing, including financing sources for new water resources;
 - interbasin transfers;
 - water rights, including environmental flows, junior water rights;
 - the transition of water rights from agricultural to municipal and industrial uses and coordination among transitioning water management authorities;
 - conservation;
 - drought preparedness;
 - and water marketing.
3. Identify areas of the state where surface or groundwater was contaminated by petroleum operations. Determine the appropriate regulatory and technical requirements to remediate the contamination and prevent future contamination, and recommend appropriate agency jurisdiction for preventing, responding and remediating such incidents.
4. Study the increasing use of liquefied natural gas (LNG), compressed natural gas (CNG) and propane. Examine the way those products fit into a diverse fuel mix. Review the current status of LNG terminals on the Texas coast. Study mineral owners and surface owners rights and obligations for the manner in which they enter and use property. Make recommendations on ways in which surface and mineral owners could communicate more effectively. Monitor the Railroad Commission study of competition in the Texas natural gas pipeline industry.
5. Review current regulations regarding landfills and sewer plants. Study areas of the state to determine where and why there may be significant concentration of these facilities in a particular area/region of the state. Examine siting procedures, notice requirements, and the implementation of TCEQ rules.
6. Study and make recommendations relating to investment needs and economic barriers to

developing bio-diesel, bio-fuels, ethanol, and other renewable products in Texas. Compare agriculturally-developed renewable fuel initiatives in other states.

7. Study the permitting exemptions and water well regulations in Sec. 36.117, Water Code. Review the jurisdiction over the regulation of groundwater pumping in conjunction with drilling and production of oil and gas.

8. Review mineral owners and surface owners rights and obligations for the manner in which they enter and use property. Make recommendations on ways in which surface and mineral owners could communicate more effectively.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Natural Resources Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, RURAL AFFAIRS & COASTAL RESOURCES

1. Study and determine the effectiveness of federal and state government efforts to combat intentional and unintentional harm against livestock and agricultural interests in order to protect public health. Study what is being done in other states to prevent the spread of plant and animal disease and prevent the use of terrorism to disrupt the food supply and economic activity associated with the production and delivery of food and fiber.
2. Study the effectiveness of the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Program (CEPRA) and make recommendations to improve the program, identify funding sources, and determine the roles of federal and local governments in erosion response.

Reports

The Subcommittee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Agriculture & Coastal Resources Subcommittee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Subcommittee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

STATE AFFAIRS

1. Study the Employees Retirement System of Texas (“ERS”) including the actuarial soundness of the ERS pension fund; the implementation of cost-saving measures in the ERS group health insurance plan; the suggestion of further cost-saving measures such as the implementation of a 3-tiered provider network; the effectiveness of the third party administrator of the ERS group health insurance plan in managing inflation; and the feasibility of consolidating the administration of all state group health plans under a single state agency.
2. Study the Teachers Retirement System of Texas (“TRS”) including the actuarial soundness of the TRS pension fund; the implementation of cost-saving measures in the TRS group health insurance plan; the suggestion of further cost-saving measures such as the implementation of a 3-tiered provider network; the implementation of S.B. 1370, 79th Legislature; the effectiveness of the third party administrator of the TRS group health insurance plan in managing inflation; and the feasibility of consolidating the administration of all state group health plans under a single state agency.
3. Study and make recommendations on how election officials could verify the identity of a voter without hindering a person’s right to vote. Include an analysis of the extent to which individuals are casting multiple votes because of any lack of voter identification verification. Make recommendations on how the state could improve its vote-by-mail system to ensure the authenticity of those ballots.
4. Monitor the implementation of HB 7, 79th Legislature, Regular Session, relating to the workers compensation system of this state.
5. Study the regulation and management of health care plans, including the following:
 - Study the reimbursement methodology of health care plans for out-of-network claims, the adequacy of health plan networks to provide appropriate coverage, the impact of out-of-network balance billing by physicians and health care providers and the accurate disclosure of patients' out-of-pocket costs.
 - Study the discounting and/or waiving of co-pays, deductibles and co-insurance by physicians and health care providers. Specifically, how this practice can impact the cost to private and public health plans and the impact to acute, multi-service hospitals, including safety net hospitals.
 - Evaluate health care cost transparency by health care providers and access to that information by patients.
 - Review data reported to the Texas Department of Insurance by health care plans, investigate possible expansion of health plans' reportable data, including, but not limited to, administrative costs, and what, if any, is the appropriate release and publication of that information.
6. Study and review current law on the doctrine of eminent domain, including the U.S. Supreme Court case in *Kelo v. City of New London*. Monitor the implementation of S.B. 7 (79th Legislature,

2nd Called Session) and make any necessary recommendations as to the use of eminent domain for economic development purposes and the issue of what constitutes adequate compensation for property taken through the use of eminent domain.

- Determine whether a constitutional amendment is prudent and/or necessary to protect private property owners from condemnations for economic development purposes.
- Determine which state, regional, and local governmental entities have eminent domain powers and how those powers may be used. Make recommendations regarding their necessity, fairness, and effectiveness.
- Study the public policy implications relating to Chapter 2007, Government Code, Private Real Property Rights Preservation Act, its effectiveness in protecting private property rights, and the current impact of regulatory takings on private property owners.

7. Study the costs associated with mandates to insurance companies for increased coverage for specific illnesses, medical conditions, or diseases, including obesity. Provide a cost assessment of the impact of such mandates to the state and local units of government. Include data and analysis of the costs and medical impact associated with insurance mandates which have been enacted in other states, as well as any short- and long-term cost-savings. Develop recommendations on how to provide increased cost-effective coverage, especially to populations with impairments and diseases, as well as the underinsured/uninsured.

8. Study the prevalence, legality and ethics of entities that actively lobby the Legislature to impact the lawmaking process while that entity is in any way a recipient of state funds.

9. Study and make recommendations regarding the cost drivers of emergency medical services. Make recommendations on how to improve and sustain EMS services for Texas, as well as reduce costs to health care plans, businesses, and individuals.

10. Study and review current Texas law on the doctrine of statutory employer, including the 2004 First District Court of Appeals' decision in *Etie v. Walsh & Albert Co.* and make recommendations of changes in state laws, if necessary, regarding the doctrine of statutory employer and indemnification in construction contracts. Study the current use of Consolidated Insurance Programs and make legislative recommendations, if appropriate.

11. Assess the benefit of limiting the civil liability for noneconomic damages against non-profit organizations involved in the privatization of child welfare services.

Joint Charge with Health and Human Services Committee:

1. Examine and make recommendations, if necessary, regarding the state's role in regulating pharmacy benefit managers in the interest of consumer protection. Examine alternative methods of dispensing maintenance drugs, including mail service and retail pharmacies, and provide an analysis of the state's role in protecting consumers.

2. Study how to reduce dependence on Medicaid for the provision of long term care by increasing

use of long-term care insurance and health savings accounts. Include a study of options for increasing the use of advance planning tools, such as health care power of attorney and living wills, to ensure more effective decision-making regarding critical end-of-life and other health care decisions. Finally, study the feasibility of implementing innovative models of nursing facility services that encourage autonomy, choice and dignity of residents.

3. Study the current laws/policies relating to forensic patients in our State Hospitals and Community Mental Health Organizations. Include analysis of and recommendations relating to pre- and post-trial forensic patients, competency laws and procedures, current treatment policies and guidelines, cost and placement considerations for creating specialty units for forensic patients, judicial discretion and medical best practices.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate State Affairs Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

TRANSPORTATION & HOMELAND SECURITY

1. Study and make recommendations for updating the state's overweight truck fees. Include an analysis and recommendations relating to the distribution of fees collected.
2. Monitor the impact of federal actions regarding the Patriot Act on homeland security activities in Texas. Make recommendations for statutory changes required to implement federal legislation and improve the efficiency of the process.
3. Study the implementation of Senate Bill 9, 79th Legislature, Regular Session, relating to homeland security, and make recommendations to enhance its effectiveness. Focus on implementation of provisions relating to mutual aid, including the need for a statewide compact, agricultural inspection stations, the health alert network, radio and computer interoperability and the protection of drinking water and of vital infrastructure. Assess the feasibility of establishing and operating a statewide public building mapping information system for state-owned buildings.
4. Study and make recommendations relating to the Texas Department of Transportation's ability to build, maintain, and relocate rail facilities. Monitor and report on the Department's ability to efficiently contract and provide funding for rail facility construction.
5. Evaluate and make recommendations relating to the naming of state highways and the criteria which should be followed in order to name a highway after a natural person. Include an analysis of criteria used in other states.
6. Study and make recommendations relating to the Texas Department of Transportation's programs designed to increase safety on all state transportation facilities.
7. Monitor ongoing federal, state and local efforts along the Texas Mexico border to combat criminal activity and prevent illegal border crossings. Study other border state activities in regard to the safety, efficiency and security of border crossings. Include an assessment of the impact of security measures on trade and vehicular and pedestrian commerce.

Joint Charge with Senate Business & Commerce Committee:

1. Study and make recommendations relating to the relocation of utilities from state owned right-of-way, including an assessment of the costs of relocations, possible funding sources and methods to decrease delays associated with relocation.

Joint Charges with Senate Finance Committee:

1. Review the process by which the Texas Department of Transportation Commission allocates funds to the districts through the Allocation Program. Include a description of all scoring mechanisms used in making allocations of resources and make recommendations for maximizing the use of these funds to meet Legislative objectives.

2. Review the process by which the Texas Department of Transportation Commission determines which federal funding sources should be implemented to comply with funding reductions mandated by Congress. Assess the Commission's options for determining how projects that were to be funded out of these reduced revenue sources will be funded this biennium.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

VETERAN AFFAIRS & MILITARY INSTALLATIONS

1. Examine issues and problems with overseas military voting and explore the possibility of establishing a single point of contact for Texas military voters. Consider requirements of the federal Uniformed and Overseas Citizen Absentee Voting Act and review systems established in other states.
2. Compile an inventory of state veterans' benefits, including health care facilities and nursing homes across the state, the state veteran cemetery system, job training programs, educational benefits, and re-employment rights issues, and the Texas Veterans Land Board Loan Programs, and make recommendations for improving efficiency and effectiveness.
3. Monitor the implementation legislation transferring the veteran employment programs under the Texas Workforce Commission to the Texas Veterans Commission. Monitor the implementation of legislation establishing a database in the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board that tracks veterans' usage of the Hazlewood higher education tuition exemption.

Reports

The Committee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Committee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Veteran Affairs & Military Installations Committee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Committee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.

SUBCOMMITTEE ON BASE REALIGNMENT & CLOSURE

1. Analyze the implementation of SB 252, SB 1481 and HB 2340, 79th Texas Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations about how the State can create more financial flexibility for defense dependent communities working to redevelop closed or realigned Department of Defense installations and property.
2. Monitor national Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) developments, overseas BRAC developments, and Department of Defense redevelopment efforts; and communicate regularly to Texas' various defense dependent communities, their elected officials and to the Lt. Governor, and Governor on the redevelopment timeline and efforts. Activities should include:
 - Analyze the federally-mandated closure process for the following installations and communicate regularly with the district Senator and other elected officials on the specific economic development and property redevelopment needs of the community: Naval Station Ingleside; Brooks City-Base, San Antonio; and Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant
 - Analyze the realignment of the various installations across the state including but not limited to Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Fort Bliss in El Paso and Red River Army Depot in Texarkana and help coordinate state and local efforts to ensure adequate infrastructure and support.

Reports

The Subcommittee shall submit copies of its final report no later than December 1, 2006. The printing of reports should be coordinated through the Secretary of the Senate. Copies of the final report should be sent to the Lieutenant Governor (5 copies), Secretary of the Senate, Senate Research, Legislative Budget Board, Legislative Council, and Legislative Reference Library.

The final report should include recommended statutory or agency rulemaking changes, if applicable. Such recommendations must be approved by a majority of the voting members of the Subcommittee. Recommendations should also include state and local fiscal cost estimates, where feasible. The Legislative Budget Board is available to assist in this regard.

Budget and Staff

Travel costs shall be paid from the operating budgets of Senate members. All other costs shall be borne by the Senate Base Realignment and Closure Subcommittee's interim budget, as approved by the Senate Administration Committee.

The Subcommittee should also seek the assistance of legislative and executive branch agencies where appropriate.

Interim Appointments

Pursuant to Section 301.041, Government Code, it may be necessary to change the membership of a committee if a member is not returning to the Legislature in 2007. This will ensure that the work of interim committees is carried forward into the 80th Legislative Session.