

## Legislative Workgroups and Relevant Interim Charges

Workgroup Topic Area	Legislative Committee	Relevant Interim Charge
Appellate Courts and Judicial Compensation	Senate State Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of phasing in a defined-contribution pension for future employees versus the existing defined-benefit pension plan. Study options for transition or implementation issues and how the phase-in could be structured. Evaluate the possibility of requiring the state employee contribution rate to meet the annually required contribution for the statewide retirement funds each biennium in order to prevent unfunded liabilities.</li> </ul>
Emergency Preparedness	Senate Business and Commerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Study ... a building code specific to coastal properties to mitigate hurricane damage. . . .</li> <li>➤ Examine statutory changes needed to maintain affordable and available homeowner's insurance and industry reinsurance following a natural disaster in Texas.</li> </ul>
	Senate Health and Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Study and address the ethical issues surrounding the impact of a pandemic influenza in this state, particularly focusing on the following:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the availability of human and material resources</li> <li>• the benefits and burdens of mass evacuation plans</li> <li>• the involvement of private sector professional organizations and businesses in the state's pandemic influenza preparedness and response plans; and</li> <li>• development and implementation of communication plans that will inform and prepare the public on risk reduction behaviors and local/state preparedness and response.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	Senate Subcommittee on Flooding and Evacuations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monitor the implementation of priority legislation addressed by the Subcommittee on Flooding and Evacuations, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve or enhance and complete implementation.</li> <li>➤ Report on the implementation of SB 1436, which transferred the National Flood Insurance Program from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to the Texas Water Development Board. Make recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.</li> </ul>
	Senate Jurisprudence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Study the management and storage of adoption records, including the costs and benefits</li> </ul>

	<p>Senate Transportation and Homeland Security</p> <p>House Defense Affairs and State-Federal Relations</p> <p>House Committee on Public Health</p>	<p>of converting records into digital format. Study ways to increase access by adopted persons and their children and spouses to important family medical history information and ensure that medical history information is updated, while maintaining privacy and anonymity of records.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Examine the roles and best practices among individuals, state and local governments, hospitals and other health care providers, and the insurance industry for disaster planning and first response efforts. Explore what changes are needed to better prepare for natural disasters to mitigate claims and losses. Include an assessment of the state's implementation of recent recommendations for evacuations, including movement of medically fragile populations. Study the level of preparedness among critical infrastructure entities in both the public and private sector, the effectiveness of state disaster relief policies relating to this infrastructure and the sufficiency of personnel needed to restore this infrastructure. Assess the state's preparedness to handle a public health emergency. Examine the challenges of interoperability of communications technologies to improve coordination of different plans across jurisdictions.</li> <li>➤ Study and make recommendations to address the need to identify essential personnel necessary to enter a disaster area to restore critical infrastructure.</li> <li>➤ Examine Chapter 431, Government Code, Chapter 431, to determine the feasibility of the Texas State Guard and Texas National Guard, while designated on state active duty, to assist in interagency planning and operational coordination under the Governor's Division of Emergency Management and the Texas Secretary of State.</li> <li>➤ Examine the State of Texas' preparedness level to handle a public health emergency. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Public Health)</li> <li>➤ Examine the State of Texas' preparedness level to handle a public health emergency. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Defense Affairs and State-Federal Relations)</li> </ul>
<p>Civil and Family Law</p>	<p>Senate Criminal Justice</p> <p>Senate Health and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Study and recommend best practices for reducing re-victimization of child abuse victims associated with delay in resolution of criminal cases. Recommend options for reducing the time lapse between child victimization and criminal hearings.</li> <li>➤ Monitor the implementation of the Department of Family and Protective Services'</li> </ul>



		<p>cases, including child sexual abuse cases. Develop and implement tools for children’s advocacy centers (CACs) and prosecutors to successfully investigate and prosecute child abusers. Include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Explore changes to the rules of evidence that could facilitate the presentation of child testimony in court;</li> <li>○ Explore making prior extraneous sex offenses admissible during determination of guilt, as has been adopted in the federal court system; and</li> <li>○ Explore possible expansion of the rules regarding how cases are consolidated and punishments are stacked in a single trial involving a crime committed against a child.</li> </ul> <p>➤ Senate State Affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Study the economic impact of recent civil justice reform legislation in Texas.</li> <li>➤ Study whether Texas should adopt the Restatement 2nd of Torts Sec. 674 (Wrongful use of Civil Proceedings) and whether a person should be allowed to recover court and attorneys fees when he has been forced to defend a lawsuit filed without probable cause or for intimidation purposes.</li> </ul> <p>➤ House Civil Practices</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Study the cumulative effects of Texas civil justice reforms enacted since 2003, with particular attention toward effects on Texas job creation, judicial efficiency, medical access, and medical malpractice insurance rates.</li> <li>➤ Examine the effect on our tort system of meritless litigation filed in Texas, especially meritless litigation designed to harass Texans or intimidate Texans from exercising their rights. Consider the law in other states and consider whether Texas law should be amended to allow greater recourse, such as recovery of costs and other financial penalties, to reduce such litigation.</li> <li>➤ Monitor the effect of multiple plaintiff trials in tort cases, other than those concerning asbestos and silica, and recommend any statutory changes needed to increase judicial efficiency and ensure access to the courts for all plaintiffs.</li> </ul> <p>➤ House Human Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Research strategies to promote permanency and stability for children and families involved with Child Protective Services. Identify any priorities that would approve the adoption process.</li> <li>➤ Evaluate Prevention and Early Intervention programs at the Department of Family and Protective Services that have been funded by the Texas Legislature for the prevention of</li> </ul>
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	Senate Transportation and Homeland Security	<p>for reducing costs and streamlining the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Evaluate the state's homeland security efforts and the state's recent \$140 million investment in law enforcement to help secure the border and study and make recommendations to deter transnational and drug-related gang violence and crime, including the use of injunctions and any possible improvements to Chapter 125 of the Civil Practices and Remedies Code, relating to membership in street gangs.</li> <li>➤ Monitor urban crime laboratories and their compliance with state laws regulating their functions and make recommendations to restore public trust in their functions and to ensure full compliance with federal Homeland Security reporting requirements. Specifically, review the report issued by the Independent Investigator for the Houston Police Department Crime Laboratory and Property Room, the independent panel review of certain criminal convictions prompted by the conclusions of this report, and the implementation by the City of Houston of any reforms recommended in this report.</li> </ul>
	House Appropriations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Monitor and examine the implementation of funding appropriated during the 80<sup>th</sup> Legislature to the Texas Youth Commission, Juvenile Probation Commission, Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), and Correctional Managed Health Care Committee.</li> <li>➤ Review and research the availability, coordination, efficiency, and allocation of substance abuse treatment resources for probationers, pretrial defendants, people in the custody of the TDCJ, and parolees. This review should include methods to reduce and improve current assessments, training, and referring protocols and the identification of any barriers that may be impeding all of the above. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Corrections)</li> </ul>
	House Corrections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consider new strategies for meeting prisoner reentry challenges in Texas, including the evaluation of programs with documented success. This review should include the availability of housing and occupational barriers.</li> <li>➤ Study the organizational structure of the Texas Youth Commission and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission to determine if the current system is effectively and efficiently addressing the needs of the juvenile justice system in conjunction with the sunset review of these agencies. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Juvenile Justice and Family Issues)</li> </ul>

	<p>House Criminal Jurisprudence</p> <p>House Juvenile Justice and Family Issues</p> <p>House Urban Affairs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Examine problems associated with the current system of deferred adjudication in Texas.</li> <li>➤ Study the need to add salvia divinorum to the list of controlled substances regulated under the Texas Controlled Substance Act.</li> <li>➤ Examine the criminal trespass statute in the Penal Code and propose needed amendments or reorganization.</li> <li>➤ Study the prosecution and effectiveness of current drunk driving laws in Texas and recommend any legislative changes needed to further combat the problem.</li> <li>➤ Research the problems associated with human trafficking and determine the need for additional penalties.</li> <li>➤ Examine the current Texas law allowing dual trials for capital murder defendants.</li> <li>➤ Study the use of police diversion under Chapter 52 of the Family Code for youth who are referred to the juvenile justice system, including those there as a result of incidents in school.</li> <li>➤ Study victim-offender mediation and neighborhood restorative justice panels.</li> <li>➤ Monitor the report issued by the Independent Investigator for the Houston Police Department Crime Laboratory and Property Room, the independent panel review of certain criminal convictions prompted by the conclusions of this report, and the implementation by the City of Houston of any reforms recommended in this report. Also monitor other urban crime laboratories and their compliance with state laws regulating their functions. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Law Enforcement)</li> </ul>
Justice and Municipal Courts		
Judicial Administration/OCA		
Information Technology		

Process Servers	House Government Reform	➤ Study and review current laws regarding licensing and regulation of professionals, as well as current laws regarding practice acts, and make recommendations on creating limitations and streamlining of licensure requirements, such as the public policy implications of decriminalization of license-related violations.
Court Reporters	House Government Reform	➤ Study and review current laws regarding licensing and regulation of professionals, as well as current laws regarding practice acts, and make recommendations on creating limitations and streamlining of licensure requirements, such as the public policy implications of decriminalization of license-related violations.
Guardians	House Government Reform	➤ Study and review current laws regarding licensing and regulation of professionals, as well as current laws regarding practice acts, and make recommendations on creating limitations and streamlining of licensure requirements, such as the public policy implications of decriminalization of license-related violations.
Judicial Conduct		
Mental Health & Probate	Senate Criminal Justice  Senate Health and Human Services	<p>➤ Study the relationship between the public mental health system and the criminal justice and civil courts systems, including the identification and sharing of information regarding mentally ill offenders, including minors, among criminal justice and mental health agencies, the courts, state hospitals, and the Veterans Administration. Study how current confidentiality laws impact the exchange of information among groups described above. Study the sentencing of mentally ill offenders compared to non-mentally ill offenders, including minors, and the affect that has on statewide prison capacity and on the health care provided to mentally ill offenders. (Joint Charge with Senate State Affairs Committee)</p> <p>➤ Monitor the Department of Aging and Disability Services' improvement plan for the system of care for individuals with developmental disabilities, focusing on efforts to improve state schools and provide more community care options...</p> <p>➤ Study the effectiveness of the Resiliency and Disease Management (RDM) program in the mental health service delivery system, implementation of changes to the crisis care program, and recommendations for appropriate use of the mental health transformation grant. Identify strategies to increase access to services and meet future demand for services. Examine resource allocation and opportunities to maximize funding. Policy</p>



	<p>Senate Jurisprudence</p> <p>House Appropriations</p> <p>House Juvenile Justice and Family Issues</p>	<p>recommendations should maximize the number of inpatient psychiatric acute care beds, enhance access to outpatient services, promote the use of recovery-based services, and enhance access to community-based services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Examine the role of heir finders in Texas and make recommendations regarding professional standards and fees for heir finders.</li> <li>➤ Study and make recommendations relating to the jurisdiction, authority, power and discretion of probate judges in Texas, including the authority of a probate judge to intervene in a non-probate case.</li> <li>➤ Assess the relationship between mental illness and criminal behavior and offer reforms needed to address the proliferation of mental illness in the adult and juvenile criminal justice systems. This review should include an examination of data sharing between criminal justice and health and human services agencies, proper screening, assessments, treatment, discharge planning, post-release supervision, and community services. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Corrections)</li> <li>➤ Determine whether current mental health practices followed by the Texas Youth Commission are adequate or appropriate, and make recommendations for any needed changes.</li> </ul>
Court Cost Collections/Fees		
Associate Judges/Specialty Courts		
New Courts/Weighted Caseload Study		

<p>Judicial Administration/Court Clerks/ Juries/Access to Justice/SBOT Court Administration Task Force/Court Security</p>	<p>Senate Government Organization</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Study the economic and security costs and benefits, both short-term and long-term, of adoption of an open document format for state-created documents.</li> <li>➤ Study options for developing a new master-planned campus to serve the needs of state government and provide for future growth. Consider locations accessible to the government center, as well as relative property values and lease rates. Consider divestiture of certain real estate assets within Travis County to take advantage of favorable market conditions and the cost and benefits of reducing reliance on leased facilities. Coordinate activities with the Texas Facility Commission and the General Land Office.</li> </ul>
	<p>Senate Jurisprudence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Study the management and storage of adoption records, including the costs and benefits of converting records into digital format. Study ways to increase access by adopted persons and their children and spouses to important family medical history information and ensure that medical history information is updated, while maintaining privacy and anonymity of records.</li> <li>➤ Study practices intended to enhance the jury experience and increase jury participation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ allowing jurors to ask questions of witnesses by submitting them to the judge in writing;</li> <li>○ allowing lawyers to periodically summarize testimony for the jury;</li> <li>○ allowing jurors to take notes during trial; and</li> <li>○ allowing jurors to discuss evidence among themselves during trial.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
	<p>House Business and Industry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Study the problem of identity theft and the impact of identity theft legislation enacted in recent legislative sessions. Examine the problem of electronic data breaches, as well as the feasibility of requiring periodic destruction of records for businesses and state entities to limit exposure to identity theft. Examine the issue of personal information contained in publicly available government records. Recommend any legislative changes needed to combat the problem.</li> </ul>
	<p>House Elections</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Consider the need for modifications to judicial districts in Texas.</li> </ul>
	<p>House Government Reform</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Research, investigate, and make recommendations on how electronic documents can be created, maintained, exchanged, and preserved by the state in a manner that encourages</li> </ul>

	House Judiciary	<p>appropriate government control, access, choice, interoperability, and vendor neutrality. The committee shall consider, but not be limited to, public access to information, expected storage life of electronic documents, costs of implementation, and savings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ Examine the current Texas jury system. Consider possible changes to enhance the jury experience and increase citizen participation on juries.</li><li>➤ Examine the current Texas court system, including its complex layers of trial courts with overlapping and varying jurisdiction. Consider whether the system needs modernization to improve judicial efficiency.</li></ul>