



Special Session Recap

The Special Session of the 85th Texas Legislature came to a close on Aug. 15. At the top of the agenda was sunset legislation to keep some state agencies from shuttering. Once that was addressed, Gov. Greg Abbott added another 19 items to the agenda; including regulating bathroom use and overhauling the way public schools are funded.

Here are issues signed into law by category:

PUBLIC EDUCATION

House Bill 21 (HB 21) creates a school finance commission as well as provides immediate funding for public education, historic funding for charter school facilities and new programs for students with special needs. This bill also includes benefits for retired teachers in Texas and hardship grants for Additional State Aid for Tax Reduction (ASATR) school districts. Creating a school finance commission so that Texas can continue the process of reforming its broken school finance system, as well as improving benefits for Texas retired teachers.

LOCAL CONTROL

House Bill 7 (HB 7) restricts overaggressive fees municipalities can charge for the removal of trees on private property.

Senate Bill 6 (SB 6) will reform and restrict the municipal annexation process. Under the new law, authored by Sen. Donna Campbell and Rep. Dan Huberty, Texans will now be able to vote on whether a city can annex areas outside of its limits.

HEALTH ISSUES

House Bill 13 (HB 13) expands reporting requirements for complications resulting from abortion procedures.

Bill 214 (HB 214) limits insurance coverage for abortion procedures.

House Bill 215 (HB 215) strengthens abortion-reporting requirements, specifically relating to minors.

Senate Bill 17 (SB 17) extends the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force. The task force studies pregnancy-related deaths in Texas.

Senate Bill 11 (SB 11) to strengthen patient protections related to Do-Not-Resuscitate Orders. This bill closes a loophole in state law that permitted doctors to place Do-Not-Resuscitate Orders on patients without their consent.

GENERAL GOVERNEMENT

Senate Bill 5 (SB 5) increases penalties for mail-in ballot fraud in Texas.

Sunset Issues

Senate Bill 20 (SB 20) and Senate Bill 60 (SB 60) to extend the expiration dates for the Texas Boards of Medical Examiners, Examiners of Psychologists, Examiners of Marriage and Family Therapists, Examiners of Professional Counselors and Social Worker Examiners.

Issues not addressed in the recently concluded Special Session.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

- Administrative flexibility in teacher hiring and retention practices.
- School choice for special needs students.
- Teacher pay increase of \$1,000.

LOCAL CONTROL

- Property tax reform.
- Caps on state and local spending.
- Preventing local governments from changing rules midway through construction projects.
- Speeding up local government permitting process.
- Texting while driving preemption.
- Privacy (**Bathroom Bill**).

- Prohibition of taxpayer dollars to collect union dues.

HEALTH ISSUES

- Prohibition of taxpayer funding for abortion providers.