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# Spotlight on 85th Interim Charges

Normal

85th Interim - Other

HillCo Partners has spotlighted a selection of House and Senate interim charges and categorized them below in an abbreviated format. A comprehensive list of Senate Interim Charges ([1<sup>st</sup>](#) <sup>[1]</sup> and [2<sup>nd</sup>](#) <sup>[2]</sup>) and [House Interim Charges](#) <sup>[3]</sup> will be available at their respective links complete with details on charge language.

Note interim charges relating to Hurricane Harvey were also released separately. Overall the Harvey Interim Charges focused on looking at the financial impact, ways to prepare for future events, recovery and general response efforts to Harvey. Some of those charges may be included below but visit the following links for a comprehensive list of all previously released Hurricane Harvey response charges ([Senate](#) <sup>[4]</sup> & [House](#) <sup>[5]</sup> Harvey Charges.)

Interim charges are a way of highlighting issues that lawmakers will study and discuss leading up to the next legislative session, which will begin in January 2019. Hearings on these interim charges have already started and will continue throughout 2018. For the latest updates on all legislative committee hearings, visit "[Legislative News from Texas](#)" <sup>[6]</sup> frequently to confirm hearings since dates and times can and do change. Standing committee hearings held at the Capitol, live and archived, can be listened to at the following links: [House](#) <sup>[7]</sup> | [Senate](#) <sup>[8]</sup>.

## Spotlight on Interim Charges by Category

### **Budget**

- Examine the **use of federal funds** by state agencies responding to the **effects of Hurricane** and **identify the need** for state resources – *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Examine the use of **one-time funding and deferral measures** employed by the Legislature in the state budget for the 2018-19 biennium, as well as any other factors that may contribute to **a structural deficit** – *House Committee on Appropriations*

### Budget/ESF

- Continue to study strategies to use the **Economic Stabilization Fund (ESF)** – *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Examine options to **increase investment earnings of the Economic Stabilization Fund** in a manner that minimizes overall risk to the fund balance – *Senate Finance Committee*

### Budget/Trauma Fund

- Review **revenue sources** currently funding the **state's trauma system** and the **impact of declining revenues and balances in General Revenue-Dedicated Accounts** – *Senate Finance Committee*
- Review revenue **funding the state's trauma system** and impact of statutory changes, including efforts to eliminate the Driver Responsibility Program. - *Senate Committee on Business and Commerce*

## Contracts

- **Study the processes** by which state agencies **award, execute, manage, and monitor** state contracts – *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Evaluate whether, in light of recent Texas Supreme Court rulings, the provisions of the Public Information Act are adequate to **support transparency and accountability in government**, particularly as it relates to government contracting and procurement – *House Committee on Government Transparency and Operation*

## Economic Development

- Identify options to maintain our state's competitive advantage and make recommendations to remove or **reduce administrative or regulatory barriers** hindering economic growth - *Senate committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development*
- Highlight the principles that the Texas House believes are critical to **economic growth, study workforce readiness, infrastructure** and state and local **economic development tools** – *House Select Committee on Economic Competitiveness*
- Evaluate the ongoing and long-term **workforce needs** of the state's businesses and industries. Determine whether state resources are adequate to address shortages and assist with closing existing or future gaps in workforce readiness and skills – *House Committee on Economic & Small Business Development*
- Analyze current data on the **distribution of state economic development incentives** across the state - *House Committee on Economic & Small Business Development*

## Taxes

- Review the impact of **Hurricane Harvey on state and local taxes, review the property tax system** and identify improvements, and **review the franchise tax** and identify any changes that would improve the state's business climate – *House Committee on Ways and Means*
- Study and make recommendations regarding the collection and use of **hotel occupancy taxes** to increase transparency in the imposition, rate, and use of such taxes – *Senate committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development*
- Quantify the economic effect of taxing **business personal property** and determine whether the tax places Texas at a competitive disadvantage relative to other states. Evaluate the burden on taxpayers and local governments of administering the property tax on business personal property – *Finance Committee*
- Evaluate the **effective tax rate and rollback tax rate calculations** that would yield a rollback process that is meaningful for local governments and for citizens – *Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform*
- Study the feasibility of **replacing the property tax with sales tax** or other consumption tax revenue, with **emphasis on school maintenance and operations tax** – *Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform*

## Education

- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 85th Legislature specifically the impact of the Texas Education Agency's **reinterpretation of regulations related to the local option homestead exemption** - *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Evaluate the ongoing and long-term **workforce needs** of the state's businesses and industries. Determine whether state resources are adequate to address shortages and assist with closing existing or future gaps in workforce readiness and skills – *House Committee on Economic & Small Business Development*
- Examine the rapid growth of **dual credit course offerings** across the state – *House Committee on Higher Education*
- Review current data available to the public about **Educator Preparation Programs (EPPs)** and make recommendations, review the accountability system, and determine ways to measure the effectiveness of teachers prepared by individual programs – *House Committee on Higher Education*
- Examine **research-based options for evaluating student achievement** beyond standardized test scores, examine the scope of the current Texas essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS), examine programs in public schools that have proven results meeting the needs of and improving student achievement for students with disabilities, with an emphasis on programs specializing in autism, dysgraphia, and dyslexia, and review the charter school system in Texas – *House Committee on Public Education*
- Study current local, state, and/or national **compensation strategies for classroom teachers** and make recommendations to **elevate the teaching profession** as well as comprehensive policies to attract, retain, and reward teachers – *Senate Committee on Education*
- **Review, modify, or abolish chapters of the education code.** Specifically, study cost-drivers, unnecessary mandates, reduction/elimination of inefficiencies, focus on policies or opportunities targeted to improving student outcomes, and better utilization of taxpayer resources - *Senate Committee on Education*
- Examine **high-quality campus/programs in Texas** and other states and make recommendations on incentives to expand high-performing campuses and programs - *Senate Committee on Education*
- Review **dual credit opportunities** throughout the state - *Senate Committee on Education*
- Examine progress in achieving goals within the **60x30TX plan** – *Senate Committee on Higher Education*
- Examine **different models of student-focused funding** for general academic institutions, including competency-based and performance funding models, and make recommendations - *Senate Committee on Higher Education*
- Monitor HB 2205 (84th) relating to the State Board for Educator Certification, **educator preparation programs, educator certification**, issuance of certain teaching permits, and certain procedures for investigating educator misconduct - *Senate Committee on Higher Education*
- Monitor SB 810 (85th) relating to **open educational resources** - *Senate Committee on Higher Education*

## Health

- Monitor Congressional action on **federal healthcare reform and CHIP reauthorization** and benefits and challenges related to converting Texas Medicaid funding to a **block grant or per capita cap** methodology - *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Study the **sustainability of TRS-Care** and consider options for funding retired teacher health care in Texas - *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 85th Legislature specifically the

implementation of **therapy rate increases and policy changes at HHSC** - *House Committee on Appropriations*

- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 85th Legislature specifically the **Medicaid cost-containment** efforts - *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 85th Legislature specifically the Implementation of a **capitated correctional managed healthcare rate** - *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Monitor the status of the **Texas workers' compensation system**, including existing policies on **compounded pharmaceuticals and designated doctor assessments** - *House Committee on Business & Industry*
- Review the state's oversight of pension systems and study the effectiveness of corrective mechanisms...and **review and evaluate the health incentive programs** within the group benefit programs at ERS and TRS. Identify best practices among similar programs and barriers to implementation – *House Committee on Pensions*
- Study the factors affecting health insurance markets in Texas – *Senate Committee on Business and Commerce*
- Study the **health insurance markets** in Texas, including federal and state law. Make recommendations to increase stability in the markets and examine what needs to be done to allow **out-of-state health insurance sales**. - *Senate Committee on Business and Commerce*
- Review the **efficacy and quality of family protection services** offered at the DFPS. Make recommendations to better track quality of services and link payments to providers. - *Senate Committee Health and Human Services*
- Review **substance use prevention, intervention, and recovery programs** operated or funded by the state and make recommendations to enhance services. Examine and make recommendations to improve services for **pregnant and postpartum women** enrolled in Medicaid or Healthy Texas Women. - *Senate Committee Health and Human Services*
- Review the Health and Human Services Commission's efforts to improve **quality and efficiency in the Medicaid program**, including pay-for-quality initiatives in Medicaid managed care. - *Senate Committee Health and Human Services*
- Study efforts by state agencies to increase **health care cost transparency**. Recommend ways to make provider and facility fees more accessible to consumers. - *Senate Committee Health and Human Services*
- Study the processes by which state agencies **award, execute, manage, and monitor state contracts**. Determine if **HHSC has adequate data, staff, and processes** to provide appropriately rigorous contract oversight and **whether HHSC properly enforces sanctions** when managed care organizations are out of compliance. - *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Review the history and any future **roll-out of Medicaid Managed Care in Texas**, including a review of managed care organization initiatives, whether current access and adequacy requirements are sufficient, and whether they have improved coordination of care. - *House Committee on Human Services*
- Monitor Implementation of HHSC budget rider 219 directing a review of **prescription drug benefit administration** in Medicaid. - *House Committee on Human Services*
- Evaluate efforts to **minimize instances of surprise medical billing** and to ensure the **adequacy of health insurance networks**. - *House Committee on Insurance*
- Review state programs that provide **women's health services** and recommend solutions to increase access to effective and timely care. - *House Committee on Public health*
- Review opportunities to **improve care for rural areas and underserved populations**, including the role of **telemedicine**. - *House Committee on Public Health*
- Analyze children's involvement with CPS due to **mental illness and/or substance abuse disorders**. - *House Committee on Human Services & House Committee on Public Health*

- Several additional charges related to the study of **opioid abuse** in Texas, including **prescription opioid abuse** and the implementation of the **Prescription Monitoring Program**. - *House Select Committee on Opioids and Substance Abuse*

## Elections

- Study the efficiency and security of the state's existing election protocols and systems, including but not limited to **registration and early voting procedures, ballot styles, and the rules regarding time and location of polls** – *House Committee on Elections*
- Study and recommend ways to **enhance voter engagement in local government decisions** around budgets and property tax rates – *Senate Select Committee on Property Tax Reform*

## Environment

- Review the appropriations made to the Texas Emissions Reduction Program (**TERP**) as well as the TERP fund balance and **review the revenue sources** that determines if the funds collected support the funding entities and consider if the sources should be modified- *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Review the Texas Emission Reduction Plan (**TERP**) and its **economic benefits** to the state – *Senate Finance Committee*
- Study the allocation of the **municipal solid waste disposal fee** - *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Study the permitting and compliance processes for **waste disposal and processing** - *Senate committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development*
- Study the **Gas Reliability Infrastructure Program** and its effect on gas utility ratemaking and ratepayers – *House Committee on Energy Resources*
- Evaluate the **evolution of frac sand mining** in the Permian Basin and how it may impact county infrastructure and oil and gas development - *House Committee on Energy Resources*
- Examine the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's (TCEQ) **response and clean-up efforts related to Hurricane Harvey**. Study whether current rules and regulations adequately protect the public – *House Committee on Environmental Regulation*
- Study the additional issues related to **Hurricane Harvey and flooding in general** – *House Committee on Natural Resources*

## Environment/Energy

- Examine how commercial **wind energy facilities are decommissioned** - *House Committee on Energy Resources*
- Evaluate the impact **energy exploration** and production have **on state and county roads** - *House Committee on Energy Resources*
- Examine the competitive nature of the **Texas retail electric system** and what government competitive intrusions in the free energy markets may have in distorting those markets – *Senate Committee on Business and Commerce*

## Environment/Air

- Study the economic impact of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (**NAAQS**) and determine **if new technologies can be utilized to meet attainment** or make an attainment demonstration for all current standards - *House Committee on Environmental Regulation*
- Review the TCEQ's **expedited air permitting program** and examine whether the program is achieving the desired results - *House Committee on Environmental Regulation*

## Environment/Water

- Evaluate the status of **groundwater policy** in Texas – *House Committee on Natural Resources*
- Examine the **status of water markets** in Texas and the potential benefits of and challenges to expanded markets for water – *House Committee on Natural Resources*
- Analyze the need to update **Water Availability Models** for the river basins in the state – *House Committee on Natural Resources*
- Study and recommend changes that promote **streamlining of water right permit** issuance and the amendment process by the TCEQ for **surface water**, and that promote uniform and streamline permitting by **groundwater conservation districts for groundwater**– *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs*
- Evaluate more transparent **process needs and proper valuation of water** - *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs*
- Study and make recommendations on the regulatory framework for managing **groundwater** in Texas to **ensure that private property rights are being sufficiently protected**. Study the role of **river authorities** and **groundwater conservation districts** including the state's oversight role of their operations and fees imposed - *Senate Committee on Agriculture, Water and Rural Affairs*
- Evaluate the status of **groundwater policy** in Texas – *House Committee on Natural Resources*
- Examine the status of **water markets in Texas** and the potential benefits of and challenges to expanded markets for water – *House Committee on Natural Resources*

## City & Property

- Review **local and state zoning and land use regulations**. Determine if current rules provide an adequate balance of disaster preparedness and deference to private property rights – *House Committee on Land and Resource Management*
- Examine Texas' **eminent domain statutes** to ensure a balance between necessary infrastructure growth and fair compensation for landowners – *House Committee on Land and Resource Management*
- Study the additional issues related to **Hurricane Harvey and flooding in general** – *House Committee on Natural Resources*
- Study the state agency review of **tax exempt bonds issued by special purpose districts and public improvement districts used to finance water and sewer infrastructure** in new residential and commercial developments – *Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations*

## Information Technology

- Study trends in **cloud computing and IT delivery services**, and identify whether additional cost efficiencies, economies of scale, or IT modernization could be achieved - *House Committee on Appropriations*
- **Study the impact of data breaches** or theft on Texas consumers and businesses - *House Committee on Business & Industry*

## Pension

- Monitor the implementation of **Employee Retirement System (ERS) Rider 18** of the General Appropriations Act - *House Committee on Appropriations*
- Review the state's **oversight of pension systems and study the effectiveness of corrective mechanisms**, including the Funding Soundness Restoration Plan and Pension Review Board Funding Guidelines. Make Recommendations to enhance state oversight and

to maintain or achieve soundness among local pension systems, **evaluate the governance structures**, including investment oversight of the Retirement system, and **review and evaluate the health incentive programs** within the group benefit programs at ERS and TRS. Identify best practices among similar programs and barriers to implementation – *House Committee on Pensions*

- Examine and assess **public pension systems** in Texas – *Senate Committee on State Affairs*
- Monitor the implementation of Senate Bill 2190 <sup>[9]</sup> – *Senate Committee on State Affairs*
- Monitor the implementation of House Bill 3158 <sup>[10]</sup> – *Senate Committee on State Affairs*
- Monitor implementation of House Bill 3976 <sup>[11]</sup> – *Senate Committee on State Affairs*
- Study the sustainability of **TRS-Care** and consider options for funding retired teacher health care in Texas – *House Committee on Appropriations*

## Spirits

- Study the recent advancements in **technology-based alcohol and industry services** – *House Committee on Licensing and Administrative Procedures*

## Transportation

- Study the ability of the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to deliver highway construction projects that **reduce congestion and improve mobility** including the Department's options and limitations related to contracting, study the **efficacy of existing transportation finance mechanisms from state**, regional, and local perspectives, and study Texas' various **toll authorities and evaluate their transparency and stakeholder responsiveness** – *House Committee on Transportation*
- Review penalty practices employed by **toll authorities** throughout the state and make recommendations to improve customer service and eliminate unjustified penalties – *Transportation Committee*

## Other

- Review the increased use of **third party data gathering**, particularly individual background information and history, by Texas employers and businesses – *House Committee on Business & Industry*
- Explore whether businesses that enter into contracts with a state agency should participate in the **E-verify program** as part of the awards process of a state contract – *Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs and Border Security*
- Review Texas' **open meeting laws** and related government decision-making policies – *House Committee on Government Transparency and Operation*
- Review local and state **occupational licensing and regulations for redundancies**. Determine the most effective balance of promoting the economic growth and development of Texas – *House Committee on Licensing and Administrative Procedures*
- Review the statutes and procedures related to state approval and oversight of **water district bonds that finance utility, infrastructure, and other projects, investigate the feasibility of dissolving special purpose districts** and determine if there are criteria that would make dissolution acceptable, and identify the best practices in the creation of municipal management districts – *House Committee on Special Purpose Districts*
- Review the state's appropriations for **Texas' ports and the Ship Channel** Improvement Revolving Fund and make recommendations for increased investment to meet future needs – *Senate Transportation Committee*
- Review the current state of infrastructure at Texas' **international shipping ports and border ports** of entry in Texas. Identify transportation-related impediments – *House Committee on*

*International Trade and Intergovernmental Affairs*

- Monitor the implementation of legislation that **protects citizens' religious freedoms** – *Senate Committee on State Affairs*
- Monitor the implementation of Senate Bill 16 <sup>[12]</sup> - *Senate Committee on State Affairs*

Other <sup>[13]</sup>

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[3] [http://www.house.state.tx.us/\\_media/pdf/interim-charges-85th.pdf](http://www.house.state.tx.us/_media/pdf/interim-charges-85th.pdf)

[4] <https://www.ltgov.state.tx.us/2017/09/28/lt-governor-dan-patrick-releases-interim-charges-targeting-hurricane-harvey-recovery-rebuilding/>

[5] <http://www.house.state.tx.us/news/press-releases/?id=6373>

[6] <http://hillcopartners.com/news#feeds>

[7] <http://www.house.state.tx.us/video-audio/>

[8] <http://www.senate.texas.gov/av-live.php>

[9] <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=85R&Bill=SB2190>

[10] <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=85R&Bill=HB3158>

[11] <http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=85R&Bill=HB3976>

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