

INTERIM STUDY CHARGES
TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
80th Legislature

Issued by

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Speaker of the House of Representatives

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**HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
APPROPRIATIONS**

1. As an oversight of all state agencies, assess all performance measures, operating budgets, budget transfers, and changes in full-time equivalents, major contracts, litigation, and debt financing, including assessing all rider provisions and evaluating budget structure effectiveness.
2. Examine alternative spending limit methodologies found among the various states as they impact state and local spending and recommend potential changes to the Texas budget process to bring long-term, innovative strategies to control costs of major governmental programs.
3. Evaluate the process by which costs of statutory changes are determined and formalize a process by which contingency appropriations are provided and enhance the communication between standing committees and the appropriations committee.
4. Study state employee compensation and benefit packages and recommend alternatives designed to attract and retain superior management personnel and other areas of potential professional shortages. Review executive director salaries, classification schedules, merit and bonus pay, pay ranges, and agency flexibility.
5. With regard to the state's health-related institutions, research deficiencies with disproportionate share and upper payment limit methodologies; research collaboration with general academic institutions and between health-related institutions; review funding streams for University of Texas Medical Branch (UTMB), focusing on the issue of the need for reimbursement by counties using UTMB for higher levels of indigent care; and study the methodology used to fund the state's two mission specific institutions.
6. Comprehensively review Medicaid provider reimbursement rate methodologies, including the impact of factors such as infrastructure concerns, federal minimum wage changes, and cost reports. The review should also address health care concerns such as access to care, quality of care, and value. Any recommendations should take into account current rate increases impacting the next fiscal year.
7. Research strategies to ensure that the state will meet more stringent federal work requirements to avoid the loss of critical federal funds. Include a comparison of exemptions from work requirements provided by Texas as opposed to other states.

8. Examine settlement of federal and state lawsuits against Harris County Hospital District for false claims in the state Medicaid program. Recommend any measures needed to ensure compliance of similar entities with rules and regulations of taxpayer-funded programs.
9. Assess the potential for clinical and economic benefits of the use of state funds for current and increased adult stem cell research. Report on the collection and availability of cord blood stem cells for treatments and research in Texas. Review the current state of basic and clinical research using available types of adult stem cells.
10. Review the Existing Debt Allotment and the Instructional Facilities Allotment to determine whether there is an ongoing need for two distinct programs.
11. Study the funding needs for Adult Basic Education and the Texas Education Agency's effectiveness in running this program.
12. Explore the spreading or "smoothing" of state payments to school districts throughout the year to better manage the state's cash flow.
13. Monitor and examine the implementation of funding appropriated during the 80th Legislature to the Texas Youth Commission, Juvenile Probation Commission, Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ), and Correctional Managed Health Care Committee.
14. Examine regulatory agencies and programs to consider aspects such as call center consolidation, strategies to allow access to greater revenue generated, and communication of best practice alternatives across agency lines.
15. Analyze the current financial condition of the Texas Department of Transportation including but not limited to cash in bank, encumbered funds, use of bond capacity and projected needs for various funds allocated to the Texas Department of Transportation and their appropriation for major projects over the last five years. This analysis should include a review of revenues diverted from the State Highway Fund for non-transportation applications. Examine alternative sources of revenue to sustain future transportation needs.
16. Study the state's current and long-range need for physicians, dentists, nurses, allied health and long-term care professionals. Make recommendations regarding strategies related to both geographic distribution and barriers to recruitment of high-need professions, especially for primary care providers and long-term care professionals. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committees on Border and International Affairs and Public Health)
17. Examine activities at the Texas Medical Board as they relate to the protection of public health and the practice of medicine, and the status of implementation

requirements established by HB 1973, 80th Legislature, Regular Session. The committees should consider any findings by the Texas Sunset Commission. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Public Health)

18. 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)
19. 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)

**HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
BUSINESS AND INDUSTRY**

1. 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.
2. Study Articles 2 and 2A of the Uniform Commercial Code (UCC) and consider amending Chapters 2 and 2A of the Business and Commerce Code to conform with recent amendments to the UCC.
3. Study the original purposes, development, and current need for the Subsequent Injury Fund and determine whether this fund should be continued or altered.
4. Study the problem of digital piracy and make recommendations for legislative changes to address the problem facing movie producers and distributors, retailers, book publishers, the music industry, universities, and other copyright holders of creative content. This review should include an examination of the impact on state and local government sales tax revenues.
5. Monitor the Texas workers' compensation system, and the continued implementation of the reforms of HB 7, 79th Legislature, Regular Session, by the Texas Department of Insurance and other state agencies. Specifically evaluate the recent decision by the Texas Supreme Court in *Entergy v. Summers* in terms of its impact on the system. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Insurance)
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
CULTURE, RECREATION, AND TOURISM**

1. Review the rules, regulations, operations, programs, management, and statutes that govern the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, the Texas Commission on the Arts, and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission.
2. Review the transfer of historical sites to the Texas Historical Commission from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.
3. Examine the process and procedures for directional signs as they relate to tourism.
4. Review the process and procedures related to use of open space land owned by the state as they relate to hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation.
5. Research and explore new ways to promote and improve economic development related tourism in the state.
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

1. Study the performance of the Texas Enterprise Fund, the Texas Emerging Technology Fund, the Texas Economic Development Act, the Texas Enterprise Zone Program, and other economic development tools in promoting economic development in Texas, and recommend any needed statutory changes.
2. Review the overall history, goals, and implementation of the various funds established by Article 5190.14, Vernon's Texas Civil Statutes. Identify and recommend any changes necessary to clarify or improve the statute.
3. Study the use of the Texas Economic Development Act since its enactment as HB 1200, 77th Legislature, Regular Session. Determine how the act may be enhanced to better attract significant capital investments by science and technology industries developing alternative energy sources. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Energy Resources)
4. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS**

1. Monitor federal rules and regulations on lending and determine the state's role in regulating issues that relate to the mortgage foreclosure process, disclosures for loan terms, home equity, mortgage brokers, mortgage bankers, consumer protections, and counseling for mortgage products.
2. Monitor the implementation of HB 716, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, to determine if there is a need to further legislate the protection of homebuyers in mortgage fraud schemes, emphasizing the impact in the foreclosure process.
3. Study the adequacy and effectiveness of existing regulation of prepaid funeral benefits that are funded by insurance or annuity products and make recommendations for statutory changes necessary to further strengthen the regulatory system for protecting consumers.
4. Study practices involved in the sale and financing of a motor vehicle, including conditional delivery, negative equity, and retirement of existing debt on vehicle trade-in.
5. Study whether the state financial regulatory agencies should assist consumers in the investigation and correction of credit card billing errors.
6. Assess the extent of consumer protections in state regulations of short-selling of commodities, with a particular emphasis on the state's enforcement authority and ways to ensure reliability in the short-selling market.
7. Examine the practice of marketing variable annuities and determine whether certain sales practices constitute fraud.
8. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
GOVERNMENT REFORM**

1. Research, investigate, and make recommendations on how electronic documents can be created, maintained, exchanged, and preserved by the state in a manner that encourages 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.
2. Research, investigate, and make recommendations regarding litigation brought by school districts receiving state funds under Chapter 46, Education Code, for defective construction of instructional facilities and the state's interest in ensuring the use of such funds for the repair or reconstruction of defective facilities or the return of state funds.
3. Review authorized offices of inspector generals and assess the benefit of having a statewide office of inspector general for all executive branch agencies.
4. 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.
5. Review a wide variety of state agencies with an eye to streamlining state government. Recommend the amendment or repeal of unnecessary statutory requirements, the deregulation of certain industries if in the public interest, and ways to implement agency efficiency recommendations identified by the Legislative Budget Board, the State Auditor's Office, and the Sunset Advisory Commission.
6. Evaluate and make recommendations, if necessary, regarding state contracts with pharmacy benefit managers. Assess the feasibility of combining prescription drug programs of state health insurance programs. All recommendations should take into consideration any budgetary impacts. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Pensions and Investments)
7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
INSURANCE**

1. Examine states that have made the transition from heavily regulated health insurance markets to less regulated markets in order to assess the impact on market competitiveness, prices, consumer satisfaction, and regulatory costs in those states. Specifically, identify current barriers and possible enhancements to flexibility in purchasing health insurance, including the purchase of health insurance plans offered in other states. Review and evaluate state law and agency rules related to the use of health savings accounts and health reimbursement arrangements, particularly by small businesses. Review possible tax incentives for purchasing private insurance.
2. Study the practice of balanced billing by medical providers and determine which portions of the cost out-of-network care patients, insurers and providers should ultimately be responsible for paying.
3. Research state and federal law to determine whether Texas may enact legislation that mandates proof of financial responsibility for vehicles entering the United States through Texas, as Texas citizens are required to provide when they enter Mexico. Study the possible benefits and costs of such legislation.
4. Study and make recommendations on increasing the portability of health insurance in an increasingly fluid Texas labor market.
5. Make recommendations on potential alternatives to the Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool for providing private health insurance to otherwise uninsurable individuals.
6. Study and make recommendations regarding the feasibility of establishing a "health insurance exchange" in Texas.
7. Study the need for a state catastrophe fund to protect the Texas economy against major disasters. Examine the structure and performance of such funds in other states and assess the potential of such a fund to reduce the reinsurance costs and premiums borne by Texas homeowners.
8. Research and evaluate the potential costs and benefits to the State of Texas of providing coverage for bariatric surgical procedures for state employees who have a specified minimum years of service with the state.
9. Monitor the continued implementation of the Texas Financial Responsibility Verification Program authorized by SB 1670, 79th Legislature, Regular Session, and determine whether any further statutory enhancements are needed to reduce

the number of uninsured motorists in Texas. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Transportation)

10. Monitor the Texas workers' compensation system and the continued implementation of the reforms of HB 7, 79th Legislature, Regular Session, by the Texas Department of Insurance and other state agencies. Specifically, evaluate the recent decision by the Texas Supreme Court in *Entergy v. Summers* in terms of its impact on the system. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Business and Industry)
11. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
PENSIONS AND INVESTMENTS**

1. Evaluate the possibility of requiring the state and employee contribution rate to meet the annually required contribution for the statewide retirement funds each biennium in order to prevent unfunded liabilities.
2. Explore options for funding other post-employment benefits, and examine strategies employed by other governmental entities in addressing these obligations.
3. Study the impact of actuaries on public pension plans, and evaluate the need for legislation to ensure appropriate actuarial assumptions, actuarial audits or regulation of actuaries contracting with state pension plans.
4. Analyze the impact of allowing a retiree to return to work in the Texas Municipal Retirement System.
5. Assess the representational proportion of each of the stakeholder groups, eligibility requirements, qualifications, and selection and election procedures of the boards of trustees of the retirement systems.
6. Examine eligibility criteria for membership and possible inclusion of additional employees in the Law Enforcement and Custodial Officers Supplemental Retirement Fund (LECOSRF). Evaluate the effect of diversion of funds from the auto registration fee on the unfunded liability of the LECOSRF, and explore the possibility of creating a similar supplemental retirement program as part of the Teacher Retirement System of Texas for those members performing law enforcement duties.
7. Evaluate and make recommendations, if necessary, regarding state contracts with pharmacy benefit managers. Assess the feasibility of combining prescription drug programs of state health insurance programs. All recommendations should take into consideration any budgetary impacts. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Government Reform)
8. Examine the operation of the Houston Municipal Employees Pension System, its Board of Trustees and staff. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Urban Affairs)
9. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
URBAN AFFAIRS**

1. Assess the current senior housing market and available options for affordable senior housing.
2. Research and update legislation that permits residential neighborhoods whose deed restrictions have lapsed to reinstate those deed restrictions or create needed deed restrictions through a petition committee by expanding them to more areas.
3. Study and evaluate the levels, methods and alternatives by which the state funds all affordable housing programs, focusing on administrative cost-effectiveness to determine greater returns on investment, savings and efficiency. Examine the current procedures and applications of the annual, integrated Low Income Housing Plan prepared by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, and prepare recommendations for the development of a comprehensive, long-range, statewide plan or model to address growing needs throughout the state.
4. Monitor current methodology involving departmental rules, procedures and policies governing state and federal compliance in the evaluation and ranking of all multifamily affordable housing applications for the allocation of funds during the annual awards cycles.
5. Examine the development and implementation of a physical standards (asset oversight) rating system for multifamily residential rental facilities, to be used by all local and state issuers of tax-exempt bonds and tax credits, to determine eligibility for future financing and for compliance enforcement purposes.
6. Examine the policies and procedures by which local tax appraisers value rent-restricted affordable housing properties, and authorize legislatively established tax exemptions. Evaluate application and interpretation of existing statutes by local appraisal districts to affordable housing properties throughout the life cycle of developments. Make recommendations for statutory changes. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Local Government Ways and Means)
7. Examine the operation of the Houston Municipal Employees Pension System, its Board of Trustees and staff. (Joint Interim Charge with the House Committee on Pensions and Investments)
8. 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)

9. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

**HOUSE COMMITTEE
ON
WAYS AND MEANS**

1. Monitor the receipts of the franchise tax.
2. Examine fiscal implications of the list of items eligible for the sales tax holiday.
3. Study the policy and benefits of current sales tax treatment for information technology services, including research and development.
4. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.