

Working with the Legislature

Texas Association of Counties

Legislative Department



TEXAS ASSOCIATION *of* COUNTIES

Presentation Overview

I. Overview of Legislative Department

II. Working with the Legislature

III. The 84th Legislative Session

Overview of Legislative Department



TEXAS ASSOCIATION *of* COUNTIES

What We Do

Legislative Support

- Review and monitor legislation and legislative activities impacting county government.
- Work with county officials to communicate county government interests on legislative matters.
- Support the affiliate county official associations in achieving their legislative goals.

What We Do

County Information Program

- Acts as a central clearinghouse for county-related information.
- Prepares fiscal notes to help explain the financial impact of proposed legislation on counties to the Legislature.
- Prepares custom analysis, reports and maps at the request of county officials, the Legislature, and state and federal agencies.

What We Do

Legislative Communications

- Electronic newsletter – information on significant policy issues and legislative actions
 - Weekly during the legislative session
 - Monthly during the legislative interim
- Electronic alerts – information on time-critical legislative issues
- Twitter Account – Follow us, we're @TexasCounties



What We Do

Legislative Meetings/Events

- Tuesday morning breakfast meetings during the Legislative Session
- Counties at the Capitol
- County Government Day
- Legislative regional meetings during the interim
- Legislative Conference



GET TO KNOW YOUR LEGISLATIVE STAFF

Legislative Staff: Paul Sugg



- Director
- Sam Houston and Texas A&M Alumnus
- Former V.G. Young Institute of County Government Staff
- Liaison to the Texas Association of County Auditors

Legislative Staff: Laura Garcia



- Deputy Director
- Rice & UT Law Grad
- Former Assistant County Attorney and Capitol Staffer
- Liaison to the Texas District & County Attorneys Association

Legislative Staff: Rick Thompson



- Legislative Liaison
- Sam Houston Grad
- Former Corrections Officer with TDCJ
- Liaison to the County Judges and Commissioners, and Justices of the Peace and Constables Association

Legislative Staff: Lori Nicholes



- Legislative Liaison
- University of Texas Grad
- Former Bexar County Community Supervision Officer
- Liaison to the Sheriffs' Association of Texas

Legislative Staff: Nanette Forbes



- Legislative Liaison
- Former Paralegal with TAC Legal Department
- Liaison to the County & District Clerks Association

Legislative Staff: Aurora Flores



- Legislative Liaison
- Northwestern Univ. and St. Edward's Grad
- Former Capitol Staffer and General Land Office Staff
- Liaison to the County Treasurers' Association of Texas

Legislative Staff: Ender Reed



- Legislative Liaison
- Occidental College and UT Law Grad
- Former Capitol Staffer
- Liaison to the Tax Assessor-Collectors Association of Texas

Legislative Staff: Tim Brown



- Senior Analyst
- University of Dallas and University of Texas Grad
- Navy Veteran
- County Information Project Staff

Legislative Staff: Paul Emerson



- State Financial Analyst
- Oregon State and Thurgood Marshall Law Grad
- Former LBB and Capitol Staffer
- County Information Project Staff

Legislative Staff: Bruce Barr



- G.I.S. Analyst
- Texas State University Grad
- Former Capital Area Planning Council Staff
- County Information Project Staff

Legislative Staff: Rhita Koches



- Core Legislative Group Coordinator
- Former Van Zandt County Judge and Capitol Staffer
- Liaison to the Core Legislative Group

Working with the Legislature



TEXAS ASSOCIATION *of* COUNTIES

Working with the Legislature

Why is it important to get involved?

- Every session, hundreds of bills are filed that impact county government and your county office.
- Legislators need to hear the county perspective.
 - ➡ *You can provide insight and information on how a particular bill will impact your county and office.*
 - ➡ *You can highlight any unintended consequences of a bill.*
- As an elected official, you have a great deal of influence.
 - ➡ *You represent the same constituents as your legislators.*

Working with the Legislature

How to get involved

- Relationships are key – Get to know your legislators.
 - Visit your legislator in his or her district office and/or at community events.
 - Volunteer to provide them with information on legislative issues impacting your office and county as they arise.
- ➡ *We can assist you in developing and providing this information, as well.*

Working with the Legislature

At the Capitol

- Make an appointment to visit with your legislator and/or staff to discuss a particular bill or issue.
 - ➡ *Get to know a legislator's staff, they often have a great deal of influence on the member.*
- Provide testimony at committee hearings.
 - ➡ *Make sure to share any concerns about a particular bill prior to a hearing.*
- If you are unable to testify, but you are at the capitol, you can also submit a witness card indicating your support or opposition on a bill.

Working with the Legislature

Outside the Capitol

- Communication is influential
 - Phone calls/e-mail messages/text messages/social media
 - ➡ Important avenues to share your concerns or support for a particular issue/bill.
 - ➡ Can help move a bill along or delay it.
- Fiscal Notes
 - ➡ Provide information on how a bill financially impacts your county's operations.
 - This is particularly important to help identify unfunded mandates to the Legislature.

Core Legislative Group

We need your help

Please consider joining our
Core Legislative Group

Submit your form today
or

Email to: rhitak@county.org
Fax: (512) 478-3573

The 84th Legislative
Session



TEXAS ASSOCIATION of COUNTIES

Issues in the 84th Session

➤ **Legislative Landscape**

➤ **County Issues**
