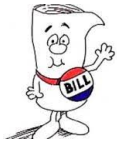

TEXAS LEGISLATIVE REVIEW

86th Legislative Session - Bill Pre-filing Begins

Monday, November 12th marked the first day of bill filing for the 86th legislative session. By the end of the day, more than 400 bills were filed by legislators giving Texans a sneak peek at what may be considered in 2019. Many of the bills filed were “refiles” of legislation that did not pass in 2017 while others were new proposals. Some of the notables included



a proposal to exempt Texas from daylight savings time, legislation to reduce and eventually end the state franchise tax on businesses, preemption of local ordinances mandating paid sick leave for employees and multiple proposals related to decriminalizing possession of marijuana under certain amounts.

Dennis Bonnen Emerges as the New House Speaker

Angleton Republican Dennis Bonnen announced Monday that he had gathered the pledges of 109 House members to secure his election as the new Speaker of the Texas House when the legislature convenes January 8th. Chairman Bonnen was flanked by a bipartisan coalition of House members during his press conference at the State Capitol when he said, “We’re here to let you know that the speaker’s race is over and the House is ready to go to work.” He currently serves as chairman of the powerful Ways and Means committee having been first elected to the House in 1996 at the age of 24. Bonnen wasted no time in making announcements to key positions on his internal and external team. Former member and current Texas State University System Chancellor Brian McCall was named to lead his transition team. The following day, longtime Capitol staffer and lobbyist, Gavin Massingill was announced as his chief of staff. Another lobbyist, Gardner Pate, was tapped to serve as the Director of Policy and General Counsel. Bonnen also named a ten member search committee comprised of current House members to identify candidates to serve as the House Parliamentarian. Additional staff announcements are anticipated in the coming days as the House prepares for its 140 day regular session.



Election Update



State Senator Sylvia Garcia made history along with El Paso County Judge Veronica Escobar as the first Latinas elected to Congress from Texas earlier this month. Senator Garcia promptly resigned her senate seat Friday, November 9th so a special election would be triggered. Governor Abbott immediately called a special election to take place December 11th to fill the vacancy. This all but guarantees the Senate will have 31 senators when session begins January 8th and the Harris County senate district will not go without representation. State representatives Carol Alvarado and Ana Hernandez intend to vie for the position. If either of them are successful December 11th, a special election for their respective house seat will be triggered.

Meanwhile, absentee and provisional ballots from some close election night races further resolved some election night outcomes while others continue and may trigger recounts. In Harris County, Republican State Representative Dwayne Bohac leads by 47 votes over challenger Adam Milasincic while his Republican colleague, Mike Schofield, trails election night winner Gina Calanni by 113 votes following a tally of all ballots. In Dallas, Democrat Joanna Cattanaach announced she intends to request a recount in her race against State Representative Morgan Meyer after overseas and provisionals ballots are accounted for. She trailed by less than 400 votes on election night. A recount may be requested after results are made official if the difference in votes is less than ten percent of the total number of votes received by the leading candidate. Each of these three races fall within that margin.

Dates of Interest

- January 8th** 86th Texas Legislature Convenes at noon
- January 14th** Legislative Budget Board delivers budget estimates
- January 15th** Inauguration of Governor Abbott and Lt. Governor Patrick
- March 8th** Bill filing deadline for most legislation
- May 27th** Last day of 86th Texas Legislature
- June 16th** Last day Governor Abbott can sign or veto bills passed during session