



**Texas BOMA Legislative Update**  
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The Texas Legislature meets for 140 days every odd numbered year for the regular session. The 2013 Legislature is now 4 weeks into the regular session, meaning only 16 weeks remain. As of right now, things are just starting to get moving.

**Legislative Leadership**

As expected, Speaker Joe Straus (R-San Antonio) was re-elected Speaker by the members of the House. This will be his third term. Lt. Governor David Dewhurst (R) returns for his sixth session as the leader of the State Senate. Both members are leading conservative chambers, with many observers calling the senate the most conservative Texas Senate in history.

**Bill Filings**

At this time, there have been less than 1,500 bills filed. The bill filings have been significantly slower than in past sessions, with many potential reasons. The two reasons most commonly cited are because freshmen members in the House and Senate do not have pre-existing legislative packages they have worked on in previous sessions, and because many interest groups were waiting until committee assignments come out before asking a particular member to carry their legislation.

Whatever the reason for the relatively low number of bills being filed, we fully expect the filings to accelerate. Under the rules of the House and Senate, the bill filing deadline is March 8. That leaves 5 more weeks to file legislation. To put the bill filings in context, we anticipate in excess of 7,000 bills will be filed this session, or an average of about 1,000 bills per week until the filing deadline.

**Committee Assignments**

After the legislature convenes, there is relatively little for members to do until committee assignments are made. Lt. Governor Dewhurst wasted little time, naming the Senate committees just 10 days into session. Governor Dewhurst's committee assignments contained few surprises, as he named new committee chairs in the fall of 2012.

Speaker Straus took longer to name committees, though he did name them a full week earlier than he did in the 2011 session. His job was made more difficult because of the number of 2011 committee chairs who did not return in 2013, either because of voluntary retirement or loss of elections.

Below are the members of Texas BOMA's key committees:

*Senate Business & Commerce Committee*

John Carona (R-Dallas), Chair  
Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood), Vice Chair  
Kevin Eltife (R-Tyler)  
Craig Estes (R-Wichita Falls)  
Kelly Hancock (R-North Richland Hills)  
Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville)  
Leticia Van de Putte (D-San Antonio)  
Kirk Watson (D-Austin)  
John Whitmire (D-Houston)  
*House Business & Industry Committee*

Rene Oliveira (D-Brownsville), Chair  
Dwayne Bohac (R-Houston), Vice Chair  
Rob Orr (R-Burleson)  
Eddie Rodriguez (D-Austin)  
Jason Villalba (D-Dallas)  
Armando Walle (D-Houston)  
Paul Workman (R-Austin)

### **The Coming Month**

With committee assignments made, the legislative process will begin moving more rapidly. Both the House and the Senate are now able to assign bills to committees, which are now preparing to meet and will soon consider legislation. In addition, as discussed above, we anticipate bill filings will increase over the coming weeks.

We will continue to monitor this situation and keep you updated.