



October 1, 2021 Legislative Update

Third Called Special Session

The Third Called Special Session is underway. Governor Abbott has included multiple issues on the agenda including: redistricting; appropriating federal funding from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021; limiting student transgender athletes from participating in sports; vaccine mandates; enhancement of penalties related to the unlawful restraint of a dog; legislation providing additional property-tax relief for Texans; and legislation proposing a constitutional amendment related to accused criminals who may be released on bail.

Governor Abbott recently added another item to the third special session: legislation to increase the penalties for illegal voting.

The Senate has been working quickly to pass many of the priorities that have been placed on the call. SB 1, which would guarantee \$2 billion in property tax relief, passed the Senate and was referred to the Texas House. The bill was heard in the House Ways and Means Committee on Thursday, September 30th but was left pending in committee.

As a reminder, SB 1 would provide additional school maintenance and operation (M&O) tax rate compression for the 2022-2023 school year of at least \$2 billion. State dollars will replace local dollars, and each billion dollars of compression lowers school M&O tax rates by 3.3 pennies. Property owners would see a reduction of their ISD tax rate, and the owner of a home with a taxable value of \$300,000 would save around \$200 on their tax bill.

The Texas House has held multiple hearings related to the immigration issues that have been impacting the Texas-Mexico border. We expect the House to start having more hearings related to the items placed on the Governor's special session call.

Redistricting

The main focus for many legislators for the third special session is redistricting. The Senate previously released a draft proposal of the Texas Senate and State Board of Education maps. This week the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting approved the draft maps for the Texas Senate and State Board of Education. There were a couple of changes to the initial draft of the Senate map, most notably in Senate District 10, which previously was contained within Tarrant County but will now include more conservative counties to make the district lean more Republican. The State Board of Education map was approved by the committee without any amendments to the initial proposal.

The Senate also released a draft proposal of the congressional map. Due to the state's growth, largely due to an increase in Black and Latino voters, Texas received an additional two congressional seats, increasing our 36-seat congressional delegation to 38. The proposed map would add seats in Austin (CD-37) and Houston (CD-38). The Senate committee is expected to vote on the congressional map next week.

The House released the Texas House map. The proposed House map mainly focused on protecting incumbent members while also pitting some members against each other, including Lina Ortega – (D) El



Paso and Claudia Ordaz Perez – (D) El Paso; Jacey Jetton (R) – Richmond and Phil Stephenson (R) – Wharton; and Kyle Biedermann (R) – Fredericksburg and Terry Wilson (R) – Marble Falls. This is just the initial draft and we expect the map to be amended with additional changes. The House Committee on Redistricting will hold a hearing on October 4, 2021 to discuss the proposed House map.

As a reminder, we are still waiting on a court ruling that is challenging the Legislature’s ability to begin the redistricting process during the special session.

Special Election Update

House District 118

State Representative Leo Pacheco announced earlier this summer that he would be resigning from the Texas House to teach at San Antonio College. Representative Pacheco represented House District 118 which includes the southern and eastern part of Bexar County. Governor Abbott called for a special election to fill this seat. There were 5 candidates that filed to run for this seat. After the special election on Tuesday, September 28th two candidates will advance to the runoff election: former state Representative John Lujan (R) and Frank Ramirez (D). The Governor has yet to set the date for the runoff election.

House District 10 – Runoff

This past Tuesday was also the date for the runoff election for House District 10, located in North Texas. The election was between Brian Harrison and former State Representative John Wray, who previously held the seat in the Texas House. Mr. Harrison defeated Wray and will soon be sworn in as the new State Representative for House District 10.

Retirement Announcements

State Representative Phil King has announced that he plans to run for Senate District 10. This seat is currently held by Senator Beverly Powell (D), however, the seat has been redrawn to be more favorable to a Republican candidate. The complete list of current retirements includes:

House (13)

Not seeking reelection (11)

- Chris Paddie - HD 9 (R)
- Ben Leman - HD 13 (R)
- James White - HD 19 (R)
- Cecilia Israel - HD 59 (D)
- Phil King – HD 61 (R)
- Tan Parker - HD 63 (R)
- Michelle Beckley - HD 65 (D)
- Scott Sanford - HD 70 (R)
- Matt Krause - HD 93 (R)
- John Turner - HD 114 (D)

Resigned (2)

- Jake Ellzey - HD 10 (R)
- Leo Pacheco - HD 118 (D)

Senate (2)

Not seeking reelection (2)

- Jane Nelson - SD 12 (R)
- Dawn Buckingham - SD 24 (R)



- Jim Murphy - HD 133 (R)

Looking Ahead

The House and Senate will return on Monday, October 4, 2021. A special session can only last for up to 30 days.