



**July 15, 2021**

**MEMO TO: TWGGA Membership**

**From: Kyle Frazier, Lobbyist for TWGGA**

**RE: Legislative Session Update**

As of this July 13, 2021, [385 bills](#) and resolutions have been filed by members of the House and Senate. The majority of these bills deal with state and local elections in some fashion. The remainder deal with a host of other issues, most of which are on Governor Abbott's Special Session call, but not all. Property tax, bail bond reform, transgender athlete issues, abortion, banning critical race theory curriculum, and addressing possible censorship by social media companies, among several other issues comprise the majority of the rest of the filed legislation, all of which are within the call of the Special Session. If a bill is brought up on either the House or Senate floor for discussion that is not contained within the Governor's order it is subject to a point of order. Typically, these bills do not make it that far.

But there is no rule that bills outside the call cannot be filed.

Over the weekend there were hearings on election bills in both the House and Senate committees with jurisdiction over elections. Several hundred people attended, and many waited until early in the morning to testify on these proposed bills. HB 3 was voted out of committee along party lines on Sunday, July 11<sup>th</sup>, , SB 1 was voted out of committee on Monday, July 12<sup>th</sup>, also along party lines.

On Monday afternoon, at least 51 Democratic members of the Texas House left Texas and flew to Washington. This exodus effectively breaks the quorum needed to convene the Texas House of Representatives.

According to House rules adopted at the beginning of the regular session, two-thirds of the 150-member chamber must be present to conduct business. When the House is in session, legislators can vote to lock chamber doors to prevent colleagues from leaving and can order law enforcement to track down lawmakers who have already fled.

While much hay has been baled regarding "arresting" the House members who left, they of course would have to be in Texas to be arrested by Texas law enforcement, AND if they returned, law enforcement would have to find them. Texas is a big state, lots of places to hide.

Expect lots of political activity for the foreseeable future. Both sides will use this situation to attempt to raise money. As to what happens next...

Since the House cannot meet (or conduct any type of business) no actions can be taken. The Senate may continue to meet, hold hearings and even pass legislation. Until the House convenes that is where it will end, at the Senate door.

This Special Session ends at midnight on August 7<sup>th</sup>. The Governor has the ability to immediately call another Special Session beginning at 12:01 August 8<sup>th</sup> if he so chooses. He can include all of the same issues and anything else he wants to add.



This issue will probably come to a head around mid-August during the 2<sup>nd</sup> called Special Session, someone will have to blink. The Governor already has two primary opponents, and this is all about getting reelected (on all sides). As you will recall, the Governor used his line-item veto authority to veto the portion of the state budget that pays legislators, but also pays all legislative and many other capitol and research staff. This is several thousand working folks who may or may not be particularly political. They will begin working for free September 1<sup>st</sup>. The current quote from a House Democrat spokesman was that the Governor vetoed the funding that's his problem.

While the rest of the Special Session issues are not time sensitive, certainly people getting paychecks is and will be at some point.

Also, don't forget, sometime this fall the Legislature will have to redraw the district lines that each of them and all Congressional candidates must run in. They will have to meet to do that. I'm sure there will be more to come.

If you have additional comments or concerns, you are encouraged to reach out to your Legislative Committee Representative in your Region.

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[Monty Dixon](#)  
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