

Item 27



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: Tuesday, February 26, 2013
Prepared By/Phone Number: Deece Eckstein, 854-9754
Elected/Appointed Official/Dept. Head: Deece Eckstein, 854-9754
Commissioners Court Sponsor: Judge Biscoe

AGENDA LANGUAGE:

AT 11:00 A.M.:

CONSIDER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION ON LEGISLATIVE MATTERS, INCLUDING:

- A. UPDATE ON LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITIES;
- B. REQUEST FROM SHERIFF'S OFFICE TO EXPAND AUTHORITY TO ENFORCE COMMERCIAL MOTOR VEHICLE LAWS;
- C. HOUSE BILL 958, RELATING TO THE ANNUAL INTEREST RATE OF THE TEXAS COUNTY AND DISTRICT RETIREMENT SYSTEM;
- D. STATE PARTICIPATION IN THE EXPANSION OF THE MEDICAID PROGRAM; AND,
- E. ADDITIONS TO THE PRIORITIES, POLICY POSITIONS AND THE POSITIONS ON OTHER PROPOSALS SECTIONS OF THE TRAVIS COUNTY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA.

SUMMARY AND IGR COORDINATOR RECOMMENDATION:

IGR recommends that the Court:

1. Adopt the draft resolution in opposition to House Bill 598; and,
2. Modify the Travis County Legislative Agenda as recommended.

BACKGROUND:

1. February 26 marks the beginning of the eighth week of the legislative session. As of last Thursday, 2,353 bills and joint resolutions have been filed. Your IGR Office is tracking 636 of them and key County policy staffers have already provided 627 analyses through the ATLAS system. A spreadsheet detailing these figures is enclosed.

2. The Court's efforts to raise the visibility of the LIRAP and LIP diversions seem to be bearing fruit. In response to the letter the Court sent to Representative Drew Darby on February 12, Representative Paul Workman last Monday sent his own letter to Representative Darby. It is attached. We continue to work with our delegation, other legislators, and our colleagues in TAC and the CUC on this important issue.
3. Committee meetings have started in earnest. A schedule of the standing committee meetings times for both the Senate and the House is enclosed.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

4. The Travis County Sheriff's Office seeks permissive authority to enforce certain federal laws and regulations regarding commercial motor vehicles. This would require a change in state law. The Sheriff's Office asks the Court to support such changes and to add passage of such legislation to the County's legislative priorities. Major Phyllis Clair, Deputy Jessie Tippie, and Planner Julie Cullen will be available to answer any questions.
5. House Bill 958 (Attachment A), by Representative Rob Orr, would lower the interest crediting rate on Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) funds. IGR recommends that the Commissioners Court adopt the attached resolution in opposition to HB 958, and direct the legislative team to convey its opposition to the Legislature. Amy Bishop, TCERS Deputy Director, and Tom Harrison, TCERS General Counsel, will be available to answer questions.
6. The Legislature is considering whether Texas should participate in the expansion of Medicaid coverage included in Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010. IGR recommends that the Court encourage the State to participate in the program. Central Health, our healthcare district, and Travis County Health and Human Services and Veterans Services, join in that recommendation. Trish Young Brown, the CEO of Central Health, will be available to answer questions.
7. Last week, the Court adopted several amendments to the Legislative Agenda. An updated document integrating those changes is attached.

8. IGR recommends the following change to the Travis County Legislative Agenda:

Add the following to the Health & Human Services subsection of the Policy Positions section:

Support legislation and budgeting decisions to include Texas in the Medicaid expansion program.

FISCAL IMPACT AND SOURCE OF FUNDING: Not applicable.

REQUIRED AUTHORIZATIONS: None.

NAMES, PHONE NUMBERS AND EMAIL ADDRESSES OF PERSONS WHO MIGHT BE AFFECTED BY OR BE INVOLVED WITH THIS REQUEST:

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ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Bill Status Report, February 21, 2013.
- B. Standing Committee meeting schedules for the Texas Senate and House of Representatives, 83rd Texas Legislature.
- C. Legislative Proposal Memo on expansion of Sheriff's Office enforcement authority, February 21, 2013.
- D. Legislative Proposal Memo on House Bill 958, February 21, 2013.
- E. Legislative Proposal Memo on Medicaid program expansion in Texas, February 21, 2013.
- F. Travis County Legislative Agenda, as amended through February 12, 2013.

AS OF	WEEK	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
THURSDAY		10-Jan	17-Jan	24-Jan	31-Jan	7-Feb	14-Feb	21-Feb	28-Feb	7-Mar	14-Mar
	HBs	446	550	686	845	1,035	1,282	1,582			
	HJR s	39	43	44	51	58	63	72			
	SB s	149	162	209	268	386	528	669			
	SJR s	11	13	16	20	22	29	30			
TOTAL	BILLS	645	768	955	1,184	1,501	1,902	2,353			
TRAVIS COUNTY											
	TRACKED	167	281	305	368	474	551	636			
	ANALYSES	109	137	281	346	430	485	627			
	SUPPORT	0	0	0	0	0	0	0			
	OPPOSE	0	0	0	0	1	1	1			

AS OF	WEEK	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
THURSDAY		21-Mar	28-Mar	4-Apr	11-Apr	18-Apr	25-Apr	2-May	9-May	16-May	23-May
	HB s										
	HJR s										
	SB s										
	SJR s										
TOTAL	BILLS										
TRAVIS COUNTY											
	TRACKED										
	ANALYSES										
	SUPPORT										
	OPPOSE										

83RD LEGISLATURE SENATE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

TIME	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
8:00 A.M.	State Affairs** Senate Chamber	Government Organization Betty King Cmte. Room Business & Commerce E1.016	Economic** Development Senate Chamber Transportation** E1.016	State Affairs** Senate Chamber
8:30 A.M.		Education** E1.028		Education** E1.028
9:00 A.M.	Finance*** E1.036	HHS** Senate Chamber Natural Resources** E1.012	Higher Education** E1.012	Natural Resources** E1.012 HHS** E1.016
9:30 A.M.			IGR** - E1.028	
11:00 A.M. or upon adj.	Nominations** E1.016			Finance** E1.036
1:30 P.M. or upon adj.	Open Government Betty King Cmte. Room Agriculture & Rural Affairs E1.012	Jurisprudence Betty King Cmte. Room Criminal Justice E1.016	Veteran Affairs & Military Installations Betty King Cmte. Room	

* Administration will meet at the discretion of the Chair.

** These committees will continue meeting in the afternoon as necessary.

*** Regular bill hearing only. Thursday will serve as a back up for bill hearings, if necessary.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

83rd Legislature - Regular Session

Effective Monday, February 04, 2013

MONDAY

7:00 AM

Appropriations E1.030

2:00 PM or upon adjournment

Elections E2.028

Government Efficiency & Reform E1.026

International Trade & Intergovernmental Affairs E1.014

Investments & Financial Services E2.030

Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence E2.012

Land & Resource Management E2.016

Pensions E2.026

Technology E2.010

Ways & Means E2.014

4:00 PM or upon adjournment

Local & Consent Calendars E2.020

TUESDAY

8:00 AM

Natural Resources E2.010

Transportation E2.012

10:30 AM or upon adjournment

Criminal Jurisprudence E2.016

Environmental Regulation E1.026

Human Services E2.030

Rules & Resolutions Agricultural Museum, 1W.14

2:00 PM or upon adjournment

Business & Industry E2.014

Insurance E2.026

Licensing & Administrative Procedures E1.010

Public Education E2.036

The Select Committee on Transparency in State Agency Operations will meet at the discretion of the Co-Chairs.

HOUSE COMMITTEE SCHEDULE

83rd Legislature - Regular Session

Effective Monday, February 04, 2013

WEDNESDAY

8:00 AM

Agriculture & Livestock	E1.010
Public Health	E2.012
Special Purpose Districts	E2.014

10:30 AM or upon adjournment

State Affairs	JHR 140
Urban Affairs	E2.016

2:00 PM or upon adjournment

Corrections	E2.010
Culture, Recreation & Tourism	E2.026
Energy Resources	JHR 120
Federalism & Fiscal Responsibility, Select	E2.036
Higher Education	E1.014

THURSDAY

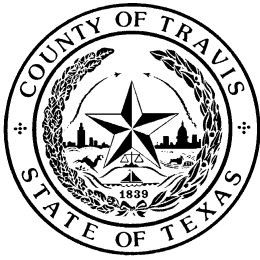
8:00 AM

Defense & Veterans' Affairs	E2.012
Economic & Small Business Development	E2.014
General Investigating & Ethics	E1.010
Homeland Security & Public Safety	E2.010

10:30 AM or upon adjournment

County Affairs	E2.016
Criminal Procedure Reform, Select	E2.028
Redistricting	E2.026

The Select Committee on Transparency in State Agency Operations will meet at the discretion of the Co-Chairs.



Intergovernmental Relations

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TO: Travis County Commissioners Court
THROUGH: Deece Eckstein, Coordinator, Intergovernmental Relations
DATE: Thursday, February 21, 2013 for Tuesday, February 26, 2013
RE: Expansion of Sheriff's Office authority to regulate commercial motor vehicles

SUGGESTED MOTION

Summary and IGR Coordinator Recommendation

The Travis County Sheriff's Office seeks permissive authority to enforce certain federal laws and regulations regarding commercial motor vehicles. This would require a change in state law. The Sheriff's Office asks the Court to support such changes and to add passage of such legislation to the County's legislative priorities.

Background

Commercial motor vehicles include 18-wheelers, buses, and other large, heavy vehicles operate in the stream of commerce. Commercial motor vehicles, or CMVs, are regulated by both federal and state laws and regulations.

The Texas Transportation Code¹ authorizes certain local law enforcement agencies to enforce federal rules and regulations, provided that the law enforcement officers have been trained and certified in those rules and regulations. Most of the enforcement authority has been granted to police departments, although sheriffs and deputy sheriffs in counties on the Mexican border or with populations greater than 2.2 million people (Harris and Dallas) also have such authority.²

¹ TEXAS TRANS. CODE, [Chapter 644](#).

² TEXAS TRANS. CODE, [SECTION 644.101\(C\)](#).

The Travis County Sheriff's Office believes having such authority within the County would enhance traffic safety and increase the efficiency of the Sheriff's Office operations. Federal law enforcement grants are available to support enforcement activities, subject to limitations in state law.³

Issues and Opportunities

An explanation of the Sheriff's Office rationale for seeking this authority is attached.

Budgetary and Fiscal Impact

The Sheriff's Office has assured PBO that the expansion of authority contemplated by this change in law could be accomplished within existing resources.

ATTACHMENTS

A. Travis County Sheriff's Office, "Information Data," February 21, 2013.

CC: The Honorable Greg Hamilton, Travis County Sheriff
Jim Sylvester, Chief Deputy Sheriff, Travis County Sheriff's Office
Major Phyllis Clair, Travis County Sheriff's Office
Julie Cullen, Travis County Sheriff's Office

³ TEX. TRANS. CODE, [Section 644.102](#).

Information Data

The Travis County Sheriff's Office (TCSO) is requesting modification to the wording of the Texas Transportation Code Section 644.101 (c). This section establishes the criteria for the eligibility of a County to enforce the regulations for Commercial Motor Vehicles (CMV) set forth by the US Department of Transportation (USOT) - Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA).

- Current: Section 644.101 (c) a sheriff or deputy sheriff of a county bordering the United Mexican States or of a county with a population of 2.2 million or more is eligible to apply for certification under this section.
- Proposed Changes: Section 644.101 (c) a sheriff or deputy sheriff of a county bordering the United Mexican States or of a county with a population of **2-2(1) million** or more is eligible to apply for certification under this section.

The requested change will lower the population requirement from 2.2 to 1 million. This will allow Travis County, and 2 additional counties, to become eligible for certification.

Why does TCSO want this change?

It has been noted that there were over 945,000 vehicles registered in Travis County in 2012, coupled with an estimated 659 active trucking/commercial motor vehicle companies and pass-thru traffic, roadways throughout Travis County have become extremely congested. Because of this high concentration of cars mixed with CMV within our jurisdiction, TCSO would like to expand its capabilities in enforcing both the state and federal CMV regulations, in order to protect the safety and lives of its citizens, protect the conditions of the roadway infrastructure, as well as becoming self-sufficient in the enforcement of all CMV regulations.

What will the changes do?

TCSO is currently only able to ticket for state CMV violations, which only allows a deputy to cite a vehicle on size, weight, markings, limited equipment and registration violations. By expanding TCSO's enforcement capabilities, deputies would not only be able to ticket an unsafe CMV, but they would have the ability to render a vehicle out-of-service pending repair or correction, if the deputy deems the vehicle to be a hazard to public safety or the roadways.

TCSO deputies are dependent upon calling other certified law enforcement agencies for the enforcement or removal of unsafe CMV. The primary certified agencies that TCSO utilizes for assistance are: Austin Police Department (APD), Pflugerville Police Department (PPD), and Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS). However, these agencies are not always available for assistance or able to assist in a timely manner. This dependency is an inefficient use of both time and taxpayer funds in a situation that should be able to be handled by a single deputy. This change would allow TCSO to become self-sufficient in the enforcement of CMV regulations.

Who would this change affect/benefit?

By lowering the population criteria, three additional county sheriff's offices would be eligible to obtain certification to enforce federal CMV regulations. These counties are Tarrant, Bexar and Travis Counties. This change will affect the law enforcement agencies assigned to enforcing the regulations governing commercial motor vehicles within these three counties, as well as benefit the safety of the general

driving public and the trucking industry. TCSO is already actively enforcing the state CMV regulations, but is dependent upon DPS, APD or PPD in order to enforce the more stringent federal regulations and guidelines. A direct benefit for TCSO would be the cost savings associated with a more efficient use of the deputies time, versus incurring the costs associated with down/wait times. There will also be uniformed inspections procedures, violation reporting and reporting systems which allow for officer efficiency. Outside agencies assisting TCSO would see similar benefits by not having to send an officer to assist with a violation that could be handled by one deputy, as well as the uniformed reporting.

DATA SHEET

Travis County - Commercial Vehicle Crash Data

	Fatalities		Serious Injuries		Other Injuries		Non-Injuries	Unknown Severity	Total Crashes
	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Crashes	
2011	6	7	108	154	113	210	266	3	496
2010	5	5	118	168	105	200	309	4	541
2009	5	5	94	135	112	190	332	11	554

Travis County – All Vehicle Crash Data

	Fatalities		Serious Injuries		Other Injuries		Non-Injuries	Unknown Severity	Total Crashes
	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Crashes	
2011	73	84	3695	4985	3277	5519	6599	469	14113
2010	75	82	3577	4921	3078	5457	6906	460	14096
2009	92	95	3206	4250	3823	6173	6173	7381	15241

Trucking Companies (within Travis County)

Number	Status
659	Active
16	Active – No Insurance
2	Dismissed
299	Expired
596	Revoked
65	Transitional
22	Incomplete

DATA SHEET
Comparisons

Fatalities

	CMV		All		Percentage	
	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual
2011	6	7	73	84	8.22%	8.33%
2010	5	5	75	82	6.67%	6.10%
2009	5	5	92	95	5.43%	5.26%

* In 2011, 8.33% of the motor vehicles fatalities involved a commercial motor vehicle.

* There has been a steady increase in the percentage of fatalities involving CMV over the last 3 years.

Serious Injuries

	CMV		All		Percentage	
	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual
2011	108	154	3695	4985	2.92%	3.09%
2010	118	168	3577	4921	3.30%	3.41%
2009	94	135	3206	4250	2.93%	3.18%

Other Injuries

	CMV		All		Percentage	
	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual
2011	113	210	3277	5519	3.45%	3.81%
2010	105	200	3078	5457	3.41%	3.67%
2009	112	190	3823	6173	2.93%	3.08%

* There has been a steady increase in the percentage of other injuries involving CMV over the last 3 years.

All Crashes within Travis County

	CMV		All		Percentage	
	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual	Crashes	Actual
	Crashes within Travis County					
2011	496		14113		3.51%	
2010	541		14096		3.84%	
2009	554		15241		3.63%	

Exhibit A



Travis County Sheriff's Office could only ticket for:

State Violation

- Over width without permit
- Defective safety chains
- No Operating Authority

Federal Violations:

- No Hazardous Material Placards (Out of Service) C.F.R. [385.13(a)(1)]
- No Hazmat Endorsement (Out of Service) [383.23(a)(2)/391.11(b)(5)]
- No Operating Authority (Out of Service) [392.9(a)]
- Tire/Wheel Clearance (Out of Service)[396.3(a)(1)]
- Oil/Grease Leaks/Engine (Out of Service) [393.209(e)]
- Defective or No Stop/Signal Lights (Out of Service) [393.9]
- TCSO called for DPS assistance & the vehicle was cited or placed out of service

Exhibit B



Travis County Sheriff's Office could only ticket for:

State Violation:

- Unsafe Speed
- Expired CMV Inspection-Truck

Federal Violations:

- Defective Brakes (Out of Service) C.F.R. [396.3(a)(1)]
- Mis-Matched Slack Adjusters (Brake Violation) [393.47]
- Fail to Repair/Maintain Any CMV Subject to Driver's Control
- Power Steering Fluid Leak [393.209(e)]
- Frame Accessories Not Bolted/Riveted Securely [393.201(d)]
- Damaged/Discolored Windshield [393.60(c)]
- Defective Windshield Washing System [393.78]

Exhibit C

Examples of Other Violations

TCSO can cite but cannot put a vehicle out of service

- 1)  Cracked/Broken frame member/axle spring assembly [393.207(a)]
- 2)  Cracked lower spring clip/spring assembly [393.207(c)]
- 3)  Broken rear spring bracket [393.207(c)]
- 4)  Worn tires/defective tire – visible belt material [393.75 (a)]
- 5)  Hole in air bag/deflated air suspension (i.e. system failure, leak, etc.)
[393.207 (f)]

Critical Vehicle Inspection Items

- Brake Systems
- Coupling Devices
- Exhaust Systems
- Frames
- Fuel Systems
- Lighting Devices (Headlamps, Tail Lamps, Stop Lamps, Turn Signals and Lamps/Flags on Projecting Loads)
- Securement of Cargo
- Steering Mechanisms
- Suspensions
- Tires
- Van and Open-Top Trailer Bodies
- Wheels, Rims and Hubs
- Windshield Wipers
- Emergency Exits and/or Electrical Cables and Systems in Engine and Battery Compartments (Buses)

Definitions and Regulations

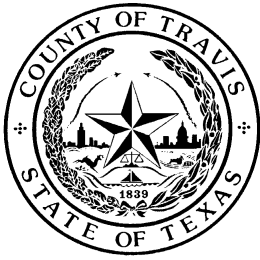
CMV – Commercial motor vehicle (CMV) means a motor vehicle or combination of motor vehicles used in commerce to transport passengers or property if the motor vehicle—

- (1) Has a gross combination weight rating or gross combination weight of 11,794 kilograms or more (26,001 pounds or more), whichever is greater, inclusive of a towed unit(s) with a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of more than 4,536 kilograms (10,000 pounds), whichever is greater; or
- (2) Has a gross vehicle weight rating or gross vehicle weight of 11,794 or more kilograms (26,001 pounds or more), whichever is greater; or
- (3) Is designed to transport 16 or more passengers, including the driver; or
- (4) Is of any size and is used in the transportation of hazardous materials as defined in this section.

** Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration – All Regulations Part 383.5

FMCSA – Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

TCSO – Travis County Sheriff's Office



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TO: Travis County Commissioners Court

THROUGH: Deece Eckstein, Coordinator, Intergovernmental Relations

DATE: (Thursday, February 21 for) Tuesday, February 26, 2013

RE: H.B. 958 -- Relating to the annual interest rate of the Texas County and District Retirement System

SUGGESTED MOTION

That the Travis County Commissioners Court adopt the attached resolution in opposition to House Bill 958, and direct its legislative team to convey that opposition to the Legislature.

Summary and IGR Coordinator Recommendation

House Bill 958 (Attachment A), by Representative Rob Orr, would lower the interest crediting rate on Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) funds, including the annuity reserve fund, which is used to pay monthly benefits to current retirees. Over time, this would deplete the fund, forcing TCERS to either reduce benefits for retirees, increase costs for counties, or both.

IGR recommends that the Commissioners Court adopt the attached resolution (Attachment B) in opposition to HB 958, and direct the legislative team to convey its opposition to the Legislature.

Background

The Texas Legislature created TCERS in 1967. TCERS serves 252 of Texas's 254 counties and also serves 389 diverse districts – for example, water districts, hospital districts, appraisal districts, and emergency services districts. Currently, TCERS provides retirement, disability and survivor benefits for more than 228,000 Texans. In 2012, TCERS paid an estimated \$871 million in benefits to retirees and former members.

HB 958 would lower the interest crediting rate on TCERS funds from seven percent (7%) to five percent (5%). This would have an immediate impact on TCERS operations

and, over time, affect the level of benefits to current and future retirees. An analysis of HB 958 prepared by TCDRS is included as Attachment C.

This particularly affects Travis County retirees because our employees already contribute at the highest contribution rate (7%), and the County already matches at two and a quarter to one, which is close to the maximum rates statutorily allowed. This means that Travis County would have no mechanism to adjust employee contributions or employer match to compensate for the reduction in benefits imposed by HB 958. A county that was at the lower end of the employee contribution and employer match rates, for example 4% employee contribution and one to one employer match, could adjust their employee contribution rate and employer match rate upward in order to keep retiree benefits about the same – an option that would not be available to Travis County.

Issues and Opportunities

TCDRS argues that it is unlike other retirement systems in important ways:

- 1) TCDRS benefits are savings based. Members – and their employer counties and districts – contribute to their retirement over the length of their careers. Benefits at retirement are based on each employee's account balance and employer matching, not on a final salary and length of service algorithm.
- 2) TCDRS receives no money from the State, although there is significant State oversight of its operations. Its independent, nine-member board is comprised of system members and retirees appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Texas Senate.
- 3) Participating employers must pay 100% of their required contributions every year. This ensures that the necessary funds will be there when needed. In comparison, less than two-thirds of other public pension plans receive 90% or more of their employer contributions every year.
- 4) Counties and other participating employers have flexibility and local control over benefits. Employers can choose benefit levels to meet their needs and budgets. This level of flexibility is not standard in most traditional retirement plans, making it difficult or impossible for employers to lower costs when needed.

During the legislative interim, there was considerable discussion of the need for pension reform. In December, however, the Comptroller issued a [report](#) finding that TCDRS had a system-wide funded ratio of 89 percent, which was very healthy. A news article about that report is included as Attachment D.

Already, several commissioners courts around the state have adopted resolutions or orders opposing HB 958. An example from Comal County is included as Attachment E.

ATTACHMENTS

- A. 83rd Texas Legislature, House Bill 958, filed February 5, 2013.
- B. DRAFT resolution in opposition to House Bill 958
- C. Texas County and District Retirement System, "TCDRS bill analysis of HB 958," February 2013.
- D. *Austin American-Statesman*, "Combs calls for 'tweaks' to improve pension oversight, transparency," December 5, 2012.
- E. Comal County Commissioners Court, "Res 2013-06 Strongly Opposing the Passage of HB 958 TCDRS Interest Credit Reduction 7 to 5%," February 14, 2013.

CC: Leslie Browder, County Executive for Planning and Budget
Leroy Nellis, Budget Director Emeritus
Tom Harrison, Deputy Director and General Counsel, TCDRS
Ann McGeehan, Assistant General Counsel, TCDRS

83R1120 DDT-D

By: Orr

H.B. No. 958

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to the annual interest rate of the Texas County and District Retirement System.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1. Section 845.314, Government Code, is amended to read as follows:

Sec. 845.314. INTEREST RATES. Unless this subtitle expressly states another specified rate of interest, for periods beginning after December 31, 2013 [~~1996~~], the annual rate of interest is five [~~seven~~] percent.

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect immediately if it receives a vote of two-thirds of all the members elected to each house, as provided by Section 39, Article III, Texas Constitution. If this Act does not receive the vote necessary for immediate effect, this Act takes effect September 1, 2013.

WHEREAS, Travis County is a member of the Texas County and District Retirement System, through which it funds the pension program for over 4,700 employees and living retirees; and,

WHEREAS, the TCDRS is a well-managed, financially and actuarially sound system that, at nearly 90% funded, is in the top 20% of public retirement systems in the country; and,

WHEREAS, employee and employer contributions to TCDRS are made on a pre-funded basis each year, virtually eliminating the risk of unfunded liabilities; and,

WHEREAS, retiree benefits in TCDRS are based on the retiree's final savings balance and employer matching, rather than the traditional "last three years" calculation, thus eliminating unanticipated increases; and,

WHEREAS, counties participating in the TCDRS system are able to adjust benefit levels to meet their needs and budget requirements, a level of flexibility not found in most traditional plans; and,

WHEREAS, HB 958, which would reduce the interest crediting rate on all TCDRS funds from 7% to 5%, has been filed during the 83rd Texas Legislative Session; and,

WHEREAS, TCDRS is the only statewide plan in which reducing the interest rate significantly impacts retiree benefits; and,

WHEREAS, TCDRS counties and districts currently have local control to select benefits and costs based on their workforce needs and budget, and,

WHEREAS, the passage of HB 958 would significantly reduce TCDRS retiree benefits; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Travis County Commissioners Court urges the Texas Legislature to oppose legislation that would endanger the actuarial soundness, solvency or sustainability of the TCDRS; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Travis County Commissioners Court expresses its opposition to House Bill 958, and wishes to communicate that opposition to members of the Travis County delegation and to the entire Legislature.

SAMUEL T. BISCOE
COUNTY JUDGE

RON DAVIS
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 1

SARAH ECKHARDT
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 2

GERALD DAUGHERTY
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 3

MARGARET J. GÓMEZ
COMMISSIONER, PCT. 4



TCDRS bill analysis of HB 958

Filed by Rep. Rob Orr (R-Burleson), HB 958 reduces the interest crediting rate on all TCDRS funds from 7% to 5%, which would significantly reduce benefits and employer costs for all TCDRS plans.

Specifically, this bill lowers the interest crediting on the system's annuity reserve fund, which is used to pay monthly benefits to current retirees. This fund needs to be credited with 7% annual interest to be sufficiently funded. HB 958 reduces this crediting to 5%. As a result, HB 958 would cause the annuity reserve fund to eventually run out of money. To get things back in balance there would need to be an across-the-board reduction in benefits to retirees, an extra charge to employers to fund the shortfall or a combination of both.

In addition, the bill lowers the interest crediting on employee accounts from 7% to 5%. TCDRS is a savings-based or cash-balance plan. This means members are saving for their own retirement over the length of their careers. Benefits are based on the total final employee savings balance (deposits and interest) and employer matching. In contrast, benefits in traditional pension plans are based on a final average salary calculation and length of career.

TCDRS is the only statewide plan in which reducing the interest rate on employee accounts significantly impacts retiree benefits. Teacher Retirement System (TRS) and Employees Retirement System (ERS) benefits are based on final salary before retirement. For most plans at Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS), there is a component of the benefit based on the final salary in addition to the cash-balance component. Thus, for these other statewide systems, changes to the interest rate do not impact retiree benefits (or may not impact retiree benefits, in the case of TMRS).

For an example of how the interest rate reduction might affect an individual, consider a new employee enrolled in a TCDRS plan with a 200% employer match and a 7% employee deposit rate. The interest rate on the employee's deposits is 5%. This employee works 20 years and then retires.

- The benefit for this employee would be reduced by approximately 17% compared to the benefit this employee would receive with a 7% interest rate.
- The cost for the employer to provide this benefit would also be reduced by 17%.

Keep in mind, this is an average example. The impact on actual individuals would vary based on their circumstances. For example, an employee who is close to retirement may not be impacted as much as an employee who has many years before retirement. Similarly, the impact on employers' total plan costs would vary based on plan experience and demographics.

Employers currently have local control to select benefits and costs based on their workforce needs and budget. Employers may reduce benefits and costs by reducing the amount employees are saving toward retirement (the employee deposit rate) or by reducing the employer matching rate. In order to achieve the same result without adjusting the interest rate, the employer in the example above could reduce the

employer matching rate from 200% match to 150% match. This would ultimately result in the same 17% reduction in the benefit and cost.

We continue to analyze the impact of this bill on system funds and to look at the complexity of such a change. We will keep you updated as we have more information.

Austin American-Statesman

Updated: 5:10 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2012 | Posted: 4:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 4, 2012

PUBLIC PENSIONS

Combs calls for ‘tweaks’ to improve pension oversight, transparency

No sign that public pension overhaul in the offing at Legislature.



Jay Janner

Texas Comptroller Susan Combs on Tuesday released a pension report, the fourth in a series on government debt and taxes.

By [Kate Alexander](#)

American-Statesman Staff

A conservative push to overhaul Texas' public pensions appears to have fizzled, if comments from state Comptroller Susan Combs on Tuesday are any indication.

"Stability-wise, we're actually in pretty doggone good shape," Combs said of Texas' major statewide public pension plans as she released a report that called for "tweaks" to improve transparency and oversight.

Combs, a Republican who is eyeing a run for lieutenant governor in 2014, said she would remain "agnostic" on whether the public pensions should be converted to retirement plans akin to the 401(k) most common in the private sector.

Conservative groups such as the Texas Public Policy Foundation have been advocating for such a change. They have pointed to troubles in other states, such as Illinois and California, as an indication that pension funds in general aren't sustainable.

Talmadge Heflin, director of the foundation's Center for Fiscal Policy, said Combs' recommendations for greater transparency and more oversight authority for the Pension Review Board could be a "precursor to an overhaul."

"The public would get a look at what is inside the pension systems that are out there," Heflin said. "That then would help the public and the legislators to have a greater understanding of the potential problems that are out there."

But Heflin acknowledged that an overhaul is a long-term goal and isn't likely to happen when legislators return in January.

"You have to be realistic," Heflin said. "We still believe that reform needs to take place. ... You take it a step at a time."

Texas' major plans — the Teacher Retirement System of Texas and the Employees Retirement System of Texas — don't have enough assets to cover their future obligations, largely because of their investment returns during the economic collapse. But the funds' assets do exceed the 80 percent threshold experts say is needed for a plan to be healthy.

Combs said there are some indications that some local plans, particularly in Houston, have funding troubles.

"A California-style problem could one day be in the cards for some cities, which has the effect of exerting downward pressure on other parts of your local budget, which, of course, ultimately affects you, the taxpayers," Combs said at a news conference.

Max Patterson, executive director of the Texas Association of Public Employees Retirement Systems, said he has been hearing from elected officials that they have confidence in the pension systems across the state and they aren't inclined to push for a wholesale conversion to the 401(k)-type system.

"I think that push has come from ... a handful of isolated, individual groups that have their own cause and their own belief," Patterson said.

The pension report released Tuesday was the fourth and final installment in a series called "Texas, It's Your Money," in which Combs' office has looked at local government debt and taxes. She has called for legislation that would require local governments to provide more information to voters during bond elections as well as other transparency measures.

She noted that some local governments were resistant or weren't responsive to releasing details about their finances.

"If it's hard for us to find out, it's really hard for the average citizen," Combs said.

RESOLUTION #2013-06



STATE OF TEXAS § IN THE COMMISSIONERS COURT
COUNTY OF COMAL §

STRONGLY OPPOSING THE PASSAGE OF HB 958 WHICH PROPOSES TO REDUCE THE INTEREST CREDITING RATE ON ALL TCDRS FUNDS FROM 7% TO 5%

WHEREAS, the Texas Legislature created the Texas County and District Retirement System ("TCDRS") in 1967; and

WHEREAS, TCDRS partners with Texas counties and districts to provide retirement, disability and survivor benefits to more than 225,000 Texas county and district employees; and

WHEREAS, TCDRS is governed by the Texas Legislature and overseen by an independent board of trustees; and

WHEREAS, TCDRS receives no state funding as each plan is funded independently by each county or district; and

WHEREAS, HB 958, which would reduce the interest crediting rate on all TCDRS funds from 7% to 5%, has been filed during the 83rd Texas Legislative Session; and

WHEREAS, TCDRS is the only statewide plan in which reducing the interest rate significantly impacts retiree benefits; and

WHEREAS, TCDRS counties and districts currently have local control to select benefits and costs based on their workforce needs and budget, and

WHEREAS, the passage of HB 958 would have an adverse effect on TCDRS retiree benefits.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Commissioners Court of Comal County, Texas, does hereby declare its strong opposition to any effort of the Texas Legislature to pass legislation that reduces the interest crediting rate on TCDRS funds.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Commissioners Court of Comal County, Texas, urges the Texas Legislature to reject HB 958 in its entirety.

RESOLVED THIS 14TH DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2013.

ABSENT
SHERMAN KRAUSE, COUNTY JUDGE

Donna Eccleston
DONNA ECCLESTON
COUNTY COMMISSIONER, PCT. #1

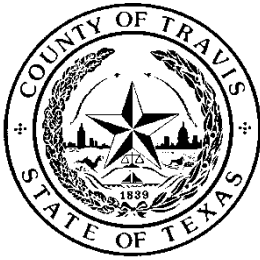
ABSENT
SCOTT HAAG
COUNTY COMMISSIONER, PCT. #2

Kevin Webb
KEVIN WEBB
COUNTY COMMISSIONER, PCT. #3

Jan Kennedy
JAN KENNADY
COUNTY COMMISSIONER, PCT. #4

ATTEST: *Joy Streater*
JOY STREATER, COUNTY CLERK





Intergovernmental Relations

Deece Eckstein, Coordinator

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Austin, TX 78701

(512) 854-9754

deece.eckstein@co.travis.tx.us

Twitter: [@TravCo_IGR](https://twitter.com/TravCo_IGR)

TO: Travis County Commissioners Court
THROUGH: Deece Eckstein, Coordinator, Intergovernmental Relations
DATE: Thursday, February 21, 2013
RE: Medicaid Expansion in Travis County

SUGGESTED MOTION

That the Travis County Commissioners Court add the following to the Health & Human Services subsection of the Policy Positions section:

- a. Support legislation and budgeting decisions to include Texas in the Medicaid expansion program.

BACKGROUND

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, 6,143,5000 Texans are uninsured; at 23.7%, Texas has the highest uninsured rate in the nation. In Travis County, 233,067 residents are uninsured, which at 22.7% of the population is just below the state average.

The Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) will expand health insurance coverage and access to health care for all Americans. Provisions and reforms to the private health insurance industry established by PPACA are expected to lower the uninsured rate in Texas to 17.3% and in Travis County to 17.1%.¹

¹ *Estimates of the Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Counties in Texas*, April 2012, conducted for Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas by Michael E. Cline, Ph.D., and Steve H. Murdock, Ph.D., Hobby Center for the Study of Texas at Rice University.

In addition to private health insurance reform, PPACA allows states to participate in the expansion of Medicaid to adults up to 138% of the federal poverty level (FPL). Childless adults between ages 19 – 64 will see the biggest gains in insurance coverage under Medicaid expansion; unless pregnant or fully disabled, they currently do not qualify for coverage.

Low-Income Health Care in Travis County

State law mandates that local governmental entities must provide basic healthcare services to indigent residents who are at or below 21% FPL. The Central Health Medical Access Program (MAP) offers a health care program to eligible residents up to 100% FPL and offers access to primary care clinics for eligible residents on a sliding fee scale up to 200% FPL.

The cost burden of providing this care falls to Central Health and in turn to Travis County taxpayers. Despite multiple funding streams and an influx of 1115 Waiver Funds, there is still a higher demand for services than can be provided. There remains a shortfall in recouping uncompensated care costs as well. Medicaid expansion would substantially reduce uncompensated care, allowing for Central Health's funds to be used towards other health care services.

Impact of Medicaid Expansion on Travis County

Travis County will see an annual gain of Medicaid funds, projected at \$224,135,916.² These gains will help offset the current strains of healthcare services and increase coverage to needy populations. However there will be an increased need for additional delivery system expansion to serve the newly covered population.

Medicaid expansion will further reduce the uninsured rate in Travis County. The Center for Public Policy Priorities estimates that the rate in

² Presentation to the Senate Health & Human Services and Senate State Affairs Committees on the Affordable Care Act, August 1, 2012

Travis County will drop an additional 5.4% points, lowering its uninsured rate to 11.7%. In total, between PPACA reforms and Medicaid expansion, Travis County will nearly halve its uninsured population, going from 233,067 down to 119,442.

Over the next decade, Texas could see a reduction of \$1.7 billion in uncompensated care costs. As one of six counties carrying the bulk of Texas' uninsured, Travis County will definitely see some relief from this burden.

The Cost of Medicaid Expansion in Texas

The federal government will cover 100% of the costs for the first three years of expansion to adults. In 2017 the reimbursement rate is reduced to 95% and decreases by 1% each year through 2019, and 90% in 2020 and beyond. Accordingly, the state will never have to cover more than 10% of the costs of Medicaid expansion to adults.

No local tax money will be required of county residents to pay for the Medicaid expansion; instead it will be paid with state and federal tax revenue. Should Texas elect not to participate in Medicaid expansion, the federal tax dollars from Texans will be diverted to other states that are participating in the expansion.

Texas will see a large return on investment for every dollar spent towards Medicaid expansion. For every \$1 the state contributes the federal government will match it with \$9 – the current match for Texas Medicaid is only \$1.45 in federal match for every \$1 from the state. Over the course of the next ten years, Texas will receive \$100 billion in federal funds for the \$15 billion it will spend on Medicaid expansion.³

³ *Expanding Medicaid in Texas: Smart, Affordable and Fair*, January 2013, prepared for Methodist Healthcare Ministries of South Texas by Billy Hamilton Consulting.

Attachments:

- A. Travis County Intergovernmental Relations, "Who Has Medicaid & CHIP Coverage in Travis County," February 20, 2013
- B. Center for Public Policy Priorities, "Texas Uninsured: Without Medicaid Expansion, Only Half as Many Gain Coverage," Presentation to the Conference of Urban Counties Membership Luncheon, February 6, 2013
- C. Texas Health and Human Services Commission, "Medicaid Expansion Population," Presentation to the Senate Health & Human Services and Senate State Affairs Committees on the Affordable Care Act, August 1, 2012
- D. Texas Health and Human Services Commission, "Texas Health Care Coverage – Post ACA Implementation," Presentation to the Senate Health & Human Services and Senate State Affairs Committees on the Affordable Care Act, August 1, 2012

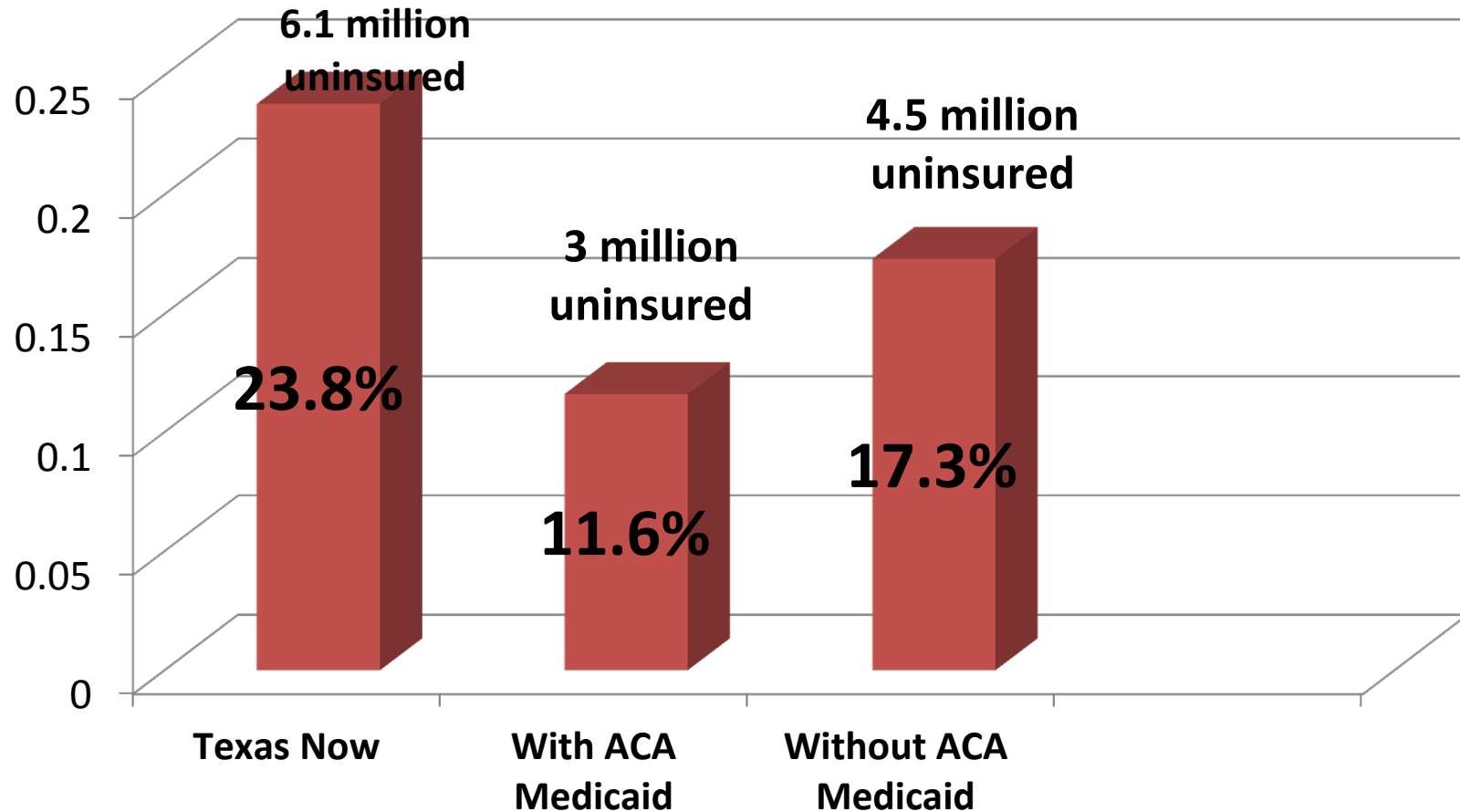
Who Has Medicaid & CHIP Coverage in Travis County

Approximately 12.8% of the Travis County population receives health insurance coverage under Medicaid and CHIP. Under the current system the following populations are covered by Medicaid in both Texas and Travis County:

MEDICAID AND CHIP COVERAGE IN TEXAS & TRAVIS COUNTY				
Eligible Populations	FPL % (Federal Poverty Level)	FPL \$/Year	Texas	Travis County
Children Under 19 in Medicaid			2,538,577	81,995
Newborns	185%	\$35,317		
Ages 1 – 5	133%	\$25,390		
Ages 6 - 18	100%	\$19,090		
Children in CHIP	200%	\$38,180	583,151	17,694
Pregnant Women	185%	\$35,317	93,496	2,535
Low-income Families*			225,933	8,671
TANF Parent of 2/No Income	12%	\$2,256		
Working Parent of 2	19%	\$3,696		
Seniors & Adults w/ Disabilities			737,051	20,699
SSI (aged or disabled)	75%	\$8,376		
Long Term Care	225%	\$25,128		
		Total Enrolled	4,178,208	131,594

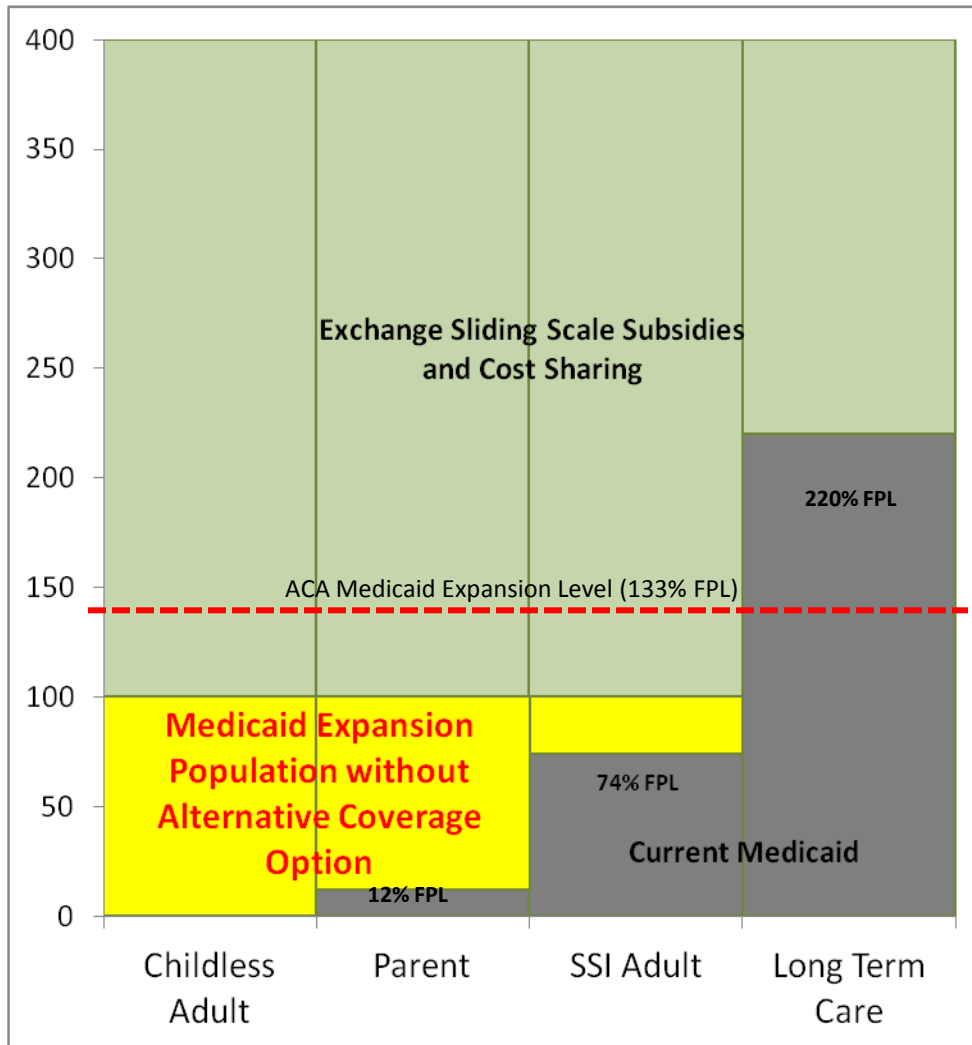
**The financial eligibility thresholds for benefits for adults are so low that only the poorest of the poor qualify for any kind of assistance if they do not fall into one of the other covered categories.*

Texas Uninsured: Without Medicaid Expansion, Only half as many gain coverage



Michael E. Cline, Ph.D., and Steve H. Murdock, Ph.D. , Rice University, *Estimates of the Impact of the Affordable Care Act on Counties in Texas*, April 2012.

Medicaid Expansion Population



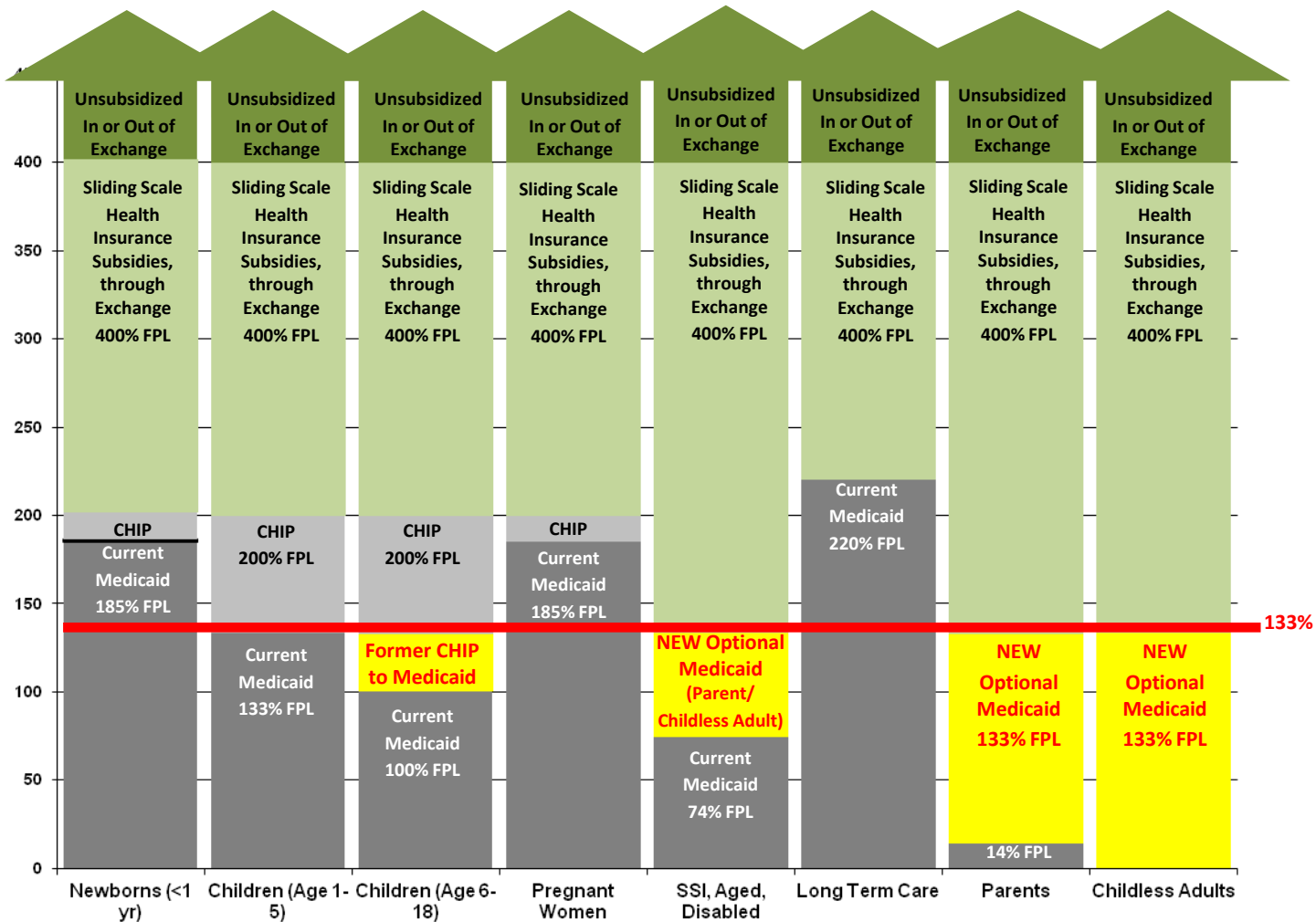
The chart to the left shows the group of uninsured low-income adults that would have no other coverage option in absence of the ACA Medicaid Expansion.

Note: The ACA expands Medicaid coverage for adults under age 65 (up to 133% FPL). However, subsidies are available to adults through the Exchange beginning at 100% FPL.

Annual Income Levels

FPL Level	Individual	Family of 3
12%	\$1,340	\$2,291
74%	\$8,266	\$14,126
100%	\$11,170	\$19,090
133%	\$14,856	\$25,390
400%	\$44,680	\$76,360

Texas Health Care Coverage – Post ACA Implementation



TRAVIS COUNTY LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

83RD TEXAS LEGISLATURE

Travis County is the fifth-largest county in Texas, with a population of over one million people. Travis County is known for its natural beauty, thriving economy and civic spirit. Home to the state capital and The University of Texas at Austin, Travis County is enriched by its diverse and well-educated population.

As a political subdivision of state government, Travis County requires legislative authority to enhance and improve the services it delivers. The Travis County Commissioners Court desires to enhance the quality of life of all Travis County residents and to provide the maximum return on investment for all revenues entrusted to the County.

Principles for Legislative Action

The Commissioners Court has adopted the following principles for the 83rd Texas Legislature:

- ★ Travis County is a unique place, and Travis County government should preserve and enhance the human, economic, cultural and natural resources of the area.
- ★ Travis County government acts as a steward of the public trust and of public resources entrusted to its care.
- ★ The Travis County Commissioners Court is committed to providing the maximum value and return on investment for all revenues entrusted to the County.
- ★ The Travis County Commissioners Court believes that local government best understands and responds to the needs of its constituents. Therefore, it seeks maximum flexibility in implementing the policies and programs mandated by the Legislature.
- ★ In a time of dramatic budget shortfalls at the state level, the Travis County Commissioners Court opposes legislation or budgeting decisions that would shift the cost of state-funded programs to local governments.
- ★ The Travis County Commissioners Court believes counties need greater authority and tools to deal with the challenges of a rapidly-urbanizing area in rapidly-changing times.

Priorities

(Items in this list are the legislative priorities for the IGR staff and the legislative consultants, i.e., “blue sheet.” The list will be modified throughout the session as the Commissioners Court assigns and reviews those priorities.)

1. Oppose legislation or budget decisions that would create unfunded mandates or divert county revenues. (TRBA-1)
2. Oppose legislation that would restrict the ability of counties to raise the revenues necessary to provide an adequate level of services to their citizens. Travis County opposes appraisal caps and revenue caps. (TRBA-5)
3. Support additional funding for programs that provide necessary benefits and services to Travis County residents. (HHS-1)
4. Support legislation that would provide funding and infrastructure to improve the availability and continuity of mental and physical health care between county jails and the community. (JCJ-MH-1)
5. Support legislation that respects and promotes local control over billboards, including digital electronic billboards. (ENV-4,-5)
6. Support legislation giving counties the necessary tools to manage growth, protect property values, and preserve quality of life in the unincorporated areas. (GMLU-1)
7. Support equitable additional funding for transportation infrastructure, including rail and mass transit. (MTF-2)
8. Support legislation to effectively plan and manage groundwater and surface water as a single resource. (ENV-9,-10,-12,-13)
9. Support legislation to amend the Open Meetings Act to update references to “tape” recordings of public meetings and conform them to modern technology. (TRBA-9)
10. Support legislation that would amend the Government Code to allow political subdivisions to implement the same loan, Roth and automatic enrollment provisions as state agencies, if in compliance with the Internal Revenue Code. (TRBA-10)
11. Support legislation to clarify the geographic extent of ad valorem tax liens on business personal property. (TRBA-11)
12. Support legislation to create two new criminal courts – one district court and one county court – in Travis County effective September 1, 2015. (JCJ-AJ-1)

Policy Positions

(Items in this list are the legislative policy positions of Travis County.)

Emergency Services

1. Support legislation to amend the medical examiners' statutes to promote best practices throughout the State while preserving local control and flexibility.
2. Support legislation to preserve county regulatory authority over fire sprinklers in residential housing larger than three units.
3. Support legislation or budgeting decisions that would tie Medicaid reimbursement rates for air ambulance services to federally established Medicare reimbursement rates.

Environment and Natural Resources

1. Oppose legislation eliminating or diluting Travis County's authority to "...take any necessary and proper action to comply with the requirements of the storm water permitting program under the national pollutant discharge elimination system."
2. Support legislation to increase funding for the Texas Recreation and Parks Account Local Park Grant Program and the Texas State Park System.
3. Support legislation to give Travis County authority to regulate off-premises signs along scenic portions of state and county roads.
4. Oppose legislation that would reduce or eliminate local control over the placement and usage of digital electronic billboards.
5. Support legislation to increase ratepayer protection in water supply corporation and water utility proceedings before the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.
6. Support allowing counties to recover costs and attorney's fees from a utility if they intervene on behalf of rate payers in unincorporated areas in water supply rate cases.
7. Support legislation that would reconcile the incompatibility in the legal treatment of groundwater and surface water, recognizing that they are one and the same.
8. Support modification of the State water planning process to include ground water modeling, which should include a regional component.
9. Support funding of the State water plan through a fair and equitable mechanism.
10. Support establishment by a State agency of a consistent set of water conservation standards for the state.
11. Support measures to improve the effectiveness of ground water management by Ground Water Conservation Districts.
12. Support full funding for the Low Income Repair Assistance, Retrofit and Accelerated Vehicle Retirement Program and the Local Initiative Projects.
13. Support legislation that would improve the ability of the County to enforce clean air, water and other environmental laws.

Growth Management/Land Use

1. Support legislation giving counties the necessary tools to manage growth, protect property values, and preserve quality of life in the unincorporated areas.
2. Support legislation allowing counties to adopt a long-range comprehensive plan for land development within the unincorporated areas of the county.
3. Support legislation allowing counties to adopt regulations that would buffer sensitive areas like schools, churches and residences from incompatible industrial uses.
4. Support legislation that would restrict the ability of a homeowners' association to prohibit the use of qualifying sustainable technologies on homes or property within their jurisdiction.

Health and Human Services

Changes to the MHMR, DSHS, DFPS

1. Support additional funding for health and human services programs that provide necessary benefits and services to Travis County residents.
2. Support legislation and budgeting decisions that will fully fund necessary mental health services provided by county MHMR departments.
3. Oppose expansion of mandatory participation in private mental health managed care programs, leaving counties the option to participate.

Juvenile and Criminal Justice

Mental Health

1. Support legislation that would provide funding and infrastructure to improve the availability and continuity of mental and physical health care between county jails and the community.
2. Support additional funding for both state-run mental health facilities and for counties to provide mental health services in their facilities.

Re-Entry Programs

1. Support legislation to enhance employment readiness and job opportunities for people with criminal histories.
2. Support legislation that would provide people with felony drug convictions the same access to food stamps as afforded other ex-offenders.
3. Support legislation that would promote kinship care for children whose parents are incarcerated to reduce the impact on the foster care system.

Jail Population Management

1. Support legislation to reduce or eliminate the financial and operational burdens of state-supervised offenders in county correctional facilities.
2. Support legislation to reimburse counties for all expenses incurred in housing state-supervised offenders such as parole violators.
3. Support legislation to allow for the release of technical parole violators on bond.
4. Support legislation to increase opportunities for the use of technology (e.g., GPS monitoring, SCRAM devices) in jail diversion strategies.

Pretrial Release on Personal Bonds

1. Oppose legislation that would eliminate or reduce local courts' discretion with respect to the use of personal bonds.

Administration of Justice

1. Support legislation to create two new criminal courts – one district court and one county court – in Travis County effective September 1, 2015.

Mobility and Transportation Funding

1. Support increased funding for the Texas Department of Transportation for transportation and other mobility needs, including rail and mass transit.
2. Support equitable additional funding for transportation infrastructure, including rail and mass transit.
3. Support legislation enabling counties, on a local option basis, to levy taxes or fees to support mobility infrastructure.
4. Support legislation to enable Travis County to levy a Transportation Project (Mobility) Fee to construct new and widen existing arterial roadways within the unincorporated areas.
5. Support legislation to enable Travis County to levy an impact fee upon new land development within the unincorporated area to pay for arterial roadway improvements serving the development.

Taxation, Revenues, Budget and Administration

1. Oppose legislation or budget decisions that would create unfunded mandates or divert county revenues.
2. Oppose legislation that would limit the County's ability to meet the needs of its citizens by artificially capping appraisal values or county revenues.
3. Support legislation that would allow counties to offer specialized retirement packages to early retirees.
4. Support constitutionally-based unfunded mandate protection for local governments that allows counties to opt out of a mandate until funding is provided.
5. Oppose legislation that would restrict the ability of counties to raise the revenues necessary to provide an adequate level of services to their citizens. Travis County opposes appraisal caps and revenue caps.
6. Support legislation giving counties greater freedom and flexibility in providing procurement notices to their residents.
7. Support legislation that encourages economic development while preserving the authority and discretion of the commissioner's court in negotiating economic development incentives.
8. Support TCDRS as a prudently and conservatively structured defined contribution pension plan with hybrid components appropriate for counties.
9. Support legislation to amend the Open Meetings Act to update references to "tape" recordings of public meetings and conform them to modern technology.

10. Support legislation that would amend the Government Code to allow political subdivisions to implement the same loan, Roth and automatic enrollment provisions as state agencies, if in compliance with the Internal Revenue Code.
11. Support legislation to clarify the geographic extent of ad valorem tax liens on business personal property.
12. Oppose legislation that would diminish the authority or discretion of a commissioner's court and would not serve a court-approved public purpose.

Positions on Other Proposals Before the 83rd Texas Legislature

(Items in this list are legislative positions regarding initiatives of other Travis County elected officials or other groups or organizations.)