



Travis County Commissioners Court Agenda Request

Meeting Date: Tuesday, September 27, 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:

CONSIDER AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION ON RECOMMENDATIONS FOR INTERIM CHARGES FOR THE 83RD TEXAS LEGISLATURE.

SUMMARY AND IGR COORDINATOR RECOMMENDATION:

IGR recommends that the Court adopt the proposed recommendations for interim charges and direct IGR to communicate those to the Legislature as appropriate.

BACKGROUND:

- 1) During the interim between legislative sessions, the Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor direct the committees of each chamber to study various topics and report back to the full chamber prior to the beginning of the next legislative session with analysis and recommendations. Their directives are called interim charges.
- 2) Speaker Straus has asked the members of the House to provide suggestions to him by the first week of October. In turn, some members of the House have asked whether Travis County has any recommendations they can consider in providing input to the Speaker. Typically, the Speaker initiates the process in August and issues charges in October/November; this year the process is beginning a little later because of the three special sessions this summer.
- 3) Although the Lieutenant Governor has not publicly initiated the input process for interim charges, we anticipate that will begin soon. Typically, the Lieutenant Governor initiates the process in the fall and issues interim charges in the winter.

ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES:

Interim charges, and the studies and recommendations they produce, frequently form the basis for legislative action during ensuing sessions. Thus, they can provide an opportunity for stakeholders to shape public policy on particular topics. Our recommendations, accordingly, should have the goal of advancing the Legislature's consideration, not merely of an issue, but of a particular approach to and recommendation for that issue.

With that in mind, IGR has been working with the County Executives and elected and appointed officials to compile and evaluate recommendations for interim charges. The attached list represents their input and our recommendations.

Once the Court has adopted the list, IGR will communicate the list to appropriate legislators, including the Travis County legislative delegation, the Speaker and the Lieutenant Governor, and the chairs of the relevant committees.

Once the charges are issued, committee hearings and stakeholder meetings will begin later this year or, more likely, early next year. IGR will:

- 1) Identify and track those charges that have relevance to Travis County government; last session, we monitored 85 of the 288 interim charges;
- 2) Meet with committee members and staffers to share our perspective on important charges;
- 3) Offer to provide information and resource witnesses for committee hearings as appropriate; and,
- 4) Assist committee chairs and staff with preparing their reports and recommendations as needed.

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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Travis County, Texas
Intergovernmental Relations Office
Proposed Interim Study Topics
83rd Texas Legislature, 2013-14

Planning and Budget

Examine the effect of ad valorem tax exemptions for certain veterans and their surviving spouses and children on local and state revenue and the state's economy.

Growth Management/Land Use

Study population, housing and infrastructure trends in rapidly-growing counties and determine which tools are necessary to promote growth, protect property values, and preserve quality of life in the unincorporated areas.

Study programs in other states to mitigate wildfire hazards in the wildland-urban interface. Recommend approaches for hazard mitigation and wildfire prevention in these areas.

Expand and clarify county authority to utilize tax increment financing and transportation reinvestment zones to fund transportation projects.

Justice and Public Safety

Study current reentry programs and procedures across the adult criminal justice continuum. Make recommendations to ensure that offenders who are released or discharged have the necessary supervision and access to employment, housing, and other social services to allow successful entry and integration into the community. Examine barriers to reemployment and make recommendations for reducing them.

Examine ways to enhance and improve the training of correctional system personnel to specifically include modules regarding mental health, dual diagnosis and re-entry programs.

Review the purposes and operations of the state jail felony system, including whether state jails have lowered incarceration costs, reduced recidivism and increased public safety. Develop recommendations to improve outcomes for state jail offenders, including the use of community supervision as an alternative to incarceration.

Health and Human Services

Examine the impact upon local governments of *not* participating in Medicaid expansion under the Affordable Care Act.

Elections

Study the use of online voter registration in other states and evaluate whether it would work in Texas.

Purchasing/Contracting

Study legislation enacted in recent sessions regarding alternative construction procurement methods and determine whether requirements could be made more flexible and standardized in order to maximize the efficacy of the different approaches.