

First Take - State Chamber View of the 86th Legislative Session

By: The TAB Government Affairs Team

TAB has strongly supported Pre-K education since the very beginning. We believe ensuring young children have full-day Pre-K will provide a strong educational foundation that will support development in the years to come. Young children are the future of Texas businesses, and we want them to have the best advantages possible. The passage of HB 3 is a win for Texas business. Property tax reform passing was also a highlight of this session because it will ease the tax burden on businesses.

One notable loss to Texas business during this session was the failure of legislation to preempt city regulation of employment benefits. TAB strongly believes that private employer policies, like paid sick leave, are best left to negotiations of private employers and their employees.

Overall though we were pleased to see the preservation of several economic development tools move forward. We're also happy with the passage of bills that (1) reduce taxes for telecommunications providers and (2) improve regulations and lower costs for Texas industries.

Here is a quick look at the wins from the 86th legislative session:

- Chapter 312 is the most significant tool in the economic development toolbox. We are pleased that lawmakers recognized the importance, and the value, by renewing the tax agreements. The Chapter 312 extension in HB 3143 is a win for the Texas economy.
- The passage of SB 1152 reduces taxes of telecom providers by eliminating double taxation of a right-of-way line. Stopping double taxation of telecommunications companies will improve technology infrastructure in Texas - a win for Texas.
- We are pleased lawmakers authorized a constitutional amendment allowing Texans to vote whether to approve an additional \$3 billion bond to fund the Cancer Prevention Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT). TAB is supportive of the ongoing funding and taxpayer support of the innovative research to keep Texas as a leader in cancer research.
- The passage of SB 1264 creates consumer protections against health care billing by prohibiting out-of-network providers balance billing when consumers have no choice over who provides their care, including out-of-network lab work and imaging. TAB has been supportive of this bill to protect consumers from surprise billing in Texas.

We were also successful in defeating a large number of bills that would have increased regulatory and litigation costs to many industries.