



MEMORANDUM

TO: Intergovernmental Relations Committee
FROM: Melissa Shannon, Governmental Affairs Director
DATE: December 1, 2020
RE: 87th Texas Legislature

A handwritten signature in green ink, reading "Melissa Shannon", is written over the "FROM:" line.

At the December 9, 2020 Intergovernmental Relations Committee meeting, I will provide an update on the county's Legislative Program for the 87th Texas Legislature, to include a discussion on bills filed to-date that may affect the county's elections activities.

The county's program is divided into two categories: initiatives and policies. Initiatives are priority items that are derived from submissions by county officials and departments. These initiatives have a direct impact on county operations and will be actively supported through drafting legislation, finding bill sponsors, providing testimony, and collaborating with legislative members to promote passage of bills. Policies establish positions on bills filed, which are of particular interest to the county as they may impact operations, and provide guidance as to the general position of the commissioners court.



Each biennium the Commissioners Court of Bexar County adopts a program to communicate its position on state legislation. The following document is intended to be a guide for the county's governmental affairs efforts during the 87th Texas Legislature.

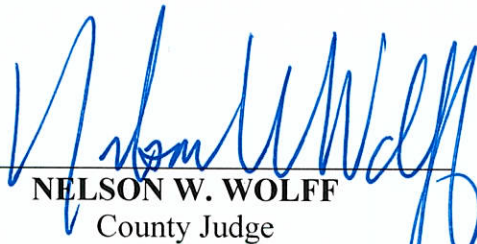
The program is divided into two categories:

- ★ Initiatives: priority items that will be actively pursued to promote passage of a bill; and,
- ★ Policies: provide guidance as to the general position of the commissioners court.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT THE COUNTY OF BEXAR COMMISSIONERS COURT ADOPTED ITS:

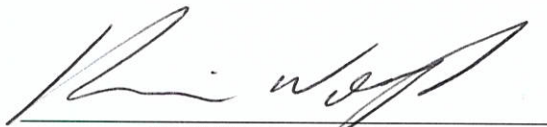
LEGISLATIVE PROGRAM FOR THE 87TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE

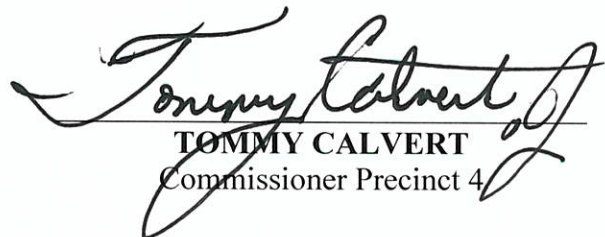
PASSED AND APPROVED by the Commissioners Court of the County of Bexar, Texas on this the 10TH day of NOVEMBER, 2020.


NELSON W. WOLFF
County Judge


SERGIO "CHICO" RODRIGUEZ
Commissioner Precinct 1


JUSTIN RODRIGUEZ
Commissioner Precinct 2


KEVIN A. WOLFF
Commissioner Precinct 3


TOMMY CALVERT
Commissioner Precinct 4

INITIATIVES**★ Cite & Release**

Amend the *Texas Code of Criminal Procedure* to include additional low-level, non-violent criminal offenses where law enforcement may issue citations in lieu of making an arrest; allowing local law enforcement agencies to keep officers on the streets to respond to more serious crimes, all while reducing those who are placed in county detention facilities, which is an enormous savings to taxpayers.

★ Open Court

Amend the *Texas Estates Code* to clarify that open court shall include hearings via remote technology, which will maintain public access to these county-level courts for some of the most vulnerable in our community.

★ Parole Revocation Hearings

Amend the *Texas Government Code* to clarify what constitutes a new offense charge for paroled individuals. The Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles must dispose of a parole revocation warrant (blue warrant) within 41 days of its execution; however, the 41-day period does not apply when a parolee has been charged with a new offense. Additionally, the Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Department of Criminal Justice, and the Court of Criminal Appeals disagree on what it means to be charged with a new offense when an individual is on parole.

★ Student Expulsion

Amend the *Texas Education Code* to reclassify mandatory or discretionary conduct to category one and category two, respectively. The current conduct designations originally followed a zero tolerance policy of requiring schools to expel students for egregious conduct regardless of mitigating or extenuating circumstances. In a concerted effort to disrupt the school to prison pipeline, the legislature has since eliminated the zero tolerance approach, and the law now requires that school districts consider various factors for all expulsions, regardless of category. Reclassifying the conduct codes will alleviate the confusion and make it clear that zero tolerance expulsions are no longer authorized.

★ Vehicle Registration Fee Election

Amend the *Texas Transportation Code* to allow certain populous counties to seek voter approval to increase the additional vehicle registration fee in an amount not to exceed \$20.

POLICIES**★ Appraisal Caps**

Oppose the reduction of the residential homestead appraisal cap, which will shift the tax burden from high-growth areas to others who will assume the responsibility for the few who benefit.

★ **Appraisal Reform**

Support legislation that improves the state's property tax system to ensure transparency for the property tax appraisal and valuation process.

★ **Bexar County Hospital District (dba University Health)**

Support University Health's mission and legislation that ensures it's continued ability to meet the healthcare needs of the county and south Texas, including: trauma care, emergency preparedness and response, the health and safety of vulnerable and underserved populations, and expanded access to health care resources.

★ **Clean Slate**

Support record-clearing legislation to automate the sealing of low-level, non-violent criminal records to allow individuals to more fully participate in the workforce and society.

★ **Court Proceedings**

Support legislation that removes barriers to conducting online court proceedings, and encourages innovations developed as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

★ **Digital Inclusion**

Support legislation that ensures all individuals and communities, especially the most disadvantaged, have access to and use of information and communication technologies.

★ **Domestic Violence**

Support legislation that addresses and prevents domestic violence by better addressing the root causes of intimate partner and family violence.

★ **Elections**

Support legislation and funding to further innovate the election process, while providing an accessible and secure voting process for all.

★ **Food Security**

Support legislation that improves access to public benefits and decreases demand for food distribution.

★ **Fireworks**

Support fireworks regulations that ensure public safety and quality of life for all involved.

★ **Homestead & Disabled Veterans Exemption Refunds**

Support legislation that limits the fee that business may charge for assisting property owners with a residential and/or disabled veterans homestead exemption application.

★ **Law Enforcement Reform**

Support legislation that transforms law enforcement practices to address racial and economic inequities, ensures officers have the tools needed to safely perform their jobs, and provides safeguards for noncompliant officers.

★ **Marriage Ceremonies**

Support legislation that allows County Clerks to preside over marriage ceremonies and collect a fee to be distributed to charitable organizations.

★ **Medicaid Expansion**

Support legislation that leverages federal matching funds and expands healthcare coverage to the uninsured and underinsured, while providing a boost to the economy and local taxpayer relief by alleviating some of the burden from the Bexar County Hospital District (dba University Health).

★ **Mental Health**

Support legislation that provides telehealth services and expands assisted living.

★ **Pretrial Justice Reform**

Support reforms that encourage pretrial release, assesses individuals via a validated risk assessment tool prior to magistration, and ensures a judge's discretion to utilize all forms of bail.

★ **Pro Tem Attorney Appointment**

Support legislation that will allow any attorney to serve as a pro tem attorney when the current district attorney is disqualified to act.

★ **Sales Price Disclosure**

Support legislation that requires property sales price disclosures to assist appraisal districts in establishing true market property values.

★ **Special Needs Population**

Support legislation that changes reimbursement requirements and enhances flexibility in service delivery.

★ **Vehicle Registration**

Support legislation that allows tax assessor-collectors to process electronic vehicle registration submissions.

★ **Workforce Development**

Support legislation that enhances financial assistance for job training and wraparound services, which are critical for successful entry into the workforce and/or completion of workforce training.