



# Dan Patrick

Lieutenant Governor of Texas  
President of the Senate

## 2022 Interim Legislative Charges:

Border Security Committee  
Business & Commerce Committee  
Criminal Justice Committee  
Education Committee  
Finance Committee  
Health and Human Services Committee  
Higher Education Committee  
Local Government Committee  
Natural Resources Committee  
State Affairs Committee  
Transportation Committee  
Veterans Affairs Committee  
Water, Agriculture, &  
Rural Affairs Committee

**April 4, 2022**

## **Border Security Committee**

- **Funding Impact on Safety:** Monitor the agencies receiving border security funding and report on their success in providing safety along the state's international border as well as curtailing the proliferation of transnational crime that spreads across the state.
- **Community Impact:** Study and report on the impact of Operation Lone Star on border, rural, and urban communities throughout Texas.
- **Resource Allocation:** Examine and report on the impact on members of the Texas National Guard and essential professions that have employees actively serving on state active duty. Review the availability of existing border barrier materials that remain unused by the Federal Government and report on whether Texas may make use of these materials to secure the border.

## **Business and Commerce Committee**

- **Broadband and Telecommunications:** Study broadband and other telecommunications related issues impacting Texans, including:
  - Monitoring the implementation of House Bill 5 and House Bill 1505, 87th Legislature; discuss anticipated federal infrastructure funding dedicated to broadband initiatives;
  - Reviewing the Texas Universal Service Fund and reporting what, if any, changes should be made through a review of both the fund's contributions and disbursements, as well as the impact of technology on the long-term stability of the Texas Universal Service Fund; and
  - Monitoring the implementation of House Bill 2911, 87th Legislature, relating to next generation 9-1-1 service and the establishment of a next generation 9-1-1 service fund.
- **Supply Chains:** Examine the causes and impacts of recent supply chain disruptions on the Texas economy and individual industries. Study the factors that weaken links in the supply chain and the extent the pandemic has exposed those vulnerabilities. Recommend actions to strengthen the supply chain in Texas and mitigate disruptions in the future.
- **Blockchain and Virtual Currencies:** Study current state and federal regulations surrounding blockchain and virtual currencies. Examine how these technologies impact industries such as banking, business, and electricity. Make recommendations to protect consumers while encouraging innovation. Monitor the implementation of House Bill 1576 and House Bill 4474, 87th Legislature.
- **Electricity:** Assess the electricity market in Texas. Study issues impacting the Texas electric grid, including weather preparedness, transmission planning, maintenance scheduling, and the natural gas supply chain. Study the consequences of increased electric vehicle usage and charging on the generation, transmission and distribution, and retail sectors of Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) and evaluate their potential impact on increased electric demand and reliability of the grid. Evaluate potential benefits of real-time transparency of the intrastate gas market with respect to the functions of ERCOT and the Texas Energy Reliability Council. Examine the growth of renewable energy generation in the state and evaluate its impact on grid reliability. Make recommendations to strengthen the reliability of the grid, and meet the future generation needs of ERCOT through new and existing dispatchable generation. Assess plans to expeditiously add new dispatchable generation. Monitor the implementation of Senate Bill 2 and Senate Bill 3, 87th Legislature.

- **Cybersecurity:** Review current state and federal laws regarding cybersecurity protections and requirements for local governments, state agencies, and critical industries of our state. Make recommendations for legislation to improve resilience and protection against cybersecurity attacks and ensure the privacy protection of the citizens of Texas.
- **State Workforce:** Study where state employees are located and the benefits and drawbacks of remote working. Evaluate the impact of the potential growth of remote work and proximity of employees to their place of employment on traffic studies over the next 10 years. Study and make recommendations for establishing uniform statewide standards for remote work. Study possible implications and standards for statewide recruitment and employment of remote state employees from all parts of the state.

## Criminal Justice Committee

- **Re-entry Programs for Inmates:** Review current offender re-entry programs provided by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice and county jails, and identify barriers to their success. Make recommendations to enhance successful programs to ensure adequate resources and support for released offenders.
- **Criminal Case Backlogs:** Evaluate the current backlog of criminal cases. Consider and recommend ways to reduce delays and ensure timely resolution of cases, including an examination of methods developed by district attorneys, judges, and court administrators.
- **Illegal Temporary License Plates:** Examine and report on the relationship of the unlawful sale and use of temporary paper license plates with crimes related to human trafficking, drug trafficking, theft, and homicide.
- **Automobile Parts Theft (Including Catalytic Converters):** Review the effect of House Bill 4110 (87th Legislature), relating to the registration of metal recycling, and related catalytic converter theft legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Determine what actions are needed to aid law enforcement and stop catalytic converter theft and its related violence.
- **Public Safety:** Examine the recent Harris County release from custody of hundreds of criminal defendants onto the streets without bond or review by a magistrate. Identify what caused this threat to public safety in Harris County and determine if it has occurred in any other counties in Texas. Make recommendations to ensure criminal defendants are timely brought before a magistrate for probable cause hearings and bond hearings, and that appropriate bond is set.

## Education Committee

- **Parent Empowerment:** Review Texas' existing parental rights and responsibilities in current law. Evaluate current public school practices toward parental and community engagement related to: curriculum and learning materials, campus and district management, governance, accessibility to school officials, and data usage and privacy. Make recommendations to enable parents to exert a greater influence on their child's learning environment, including enacting meaningful change at their public school campus or district, and affirm parents as primary decision-makers over their child's schooling options.
- **COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on Educator Talent Pipeline:** Examine the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the public school educator talent pipeline, staffing patterns and practices, and declining student enrollment and attendance. Review any policies and regulatory actions that prevent students from receiving instruction from a highly effective teacher. Monitor the impact of both the Teacher Incentive Allotment and non-administrator compensation increases directed under House Bill 3 (86th Legislature), as well as the teacher pay raises implemented in 2019. Explore innovative models to improve recruitment and make recommendations to maintain a strong educator workforce pipeline, while adapting resilient school strategies to meet emergent demands in public education.
- **Student Discipline:** Review and evaluate the operation of disciplinary alternative education programs (DAEP) and juvenile justice alternative education programs (JJAEP) with an emphasis on: quality of academic instruction, lengths of placements, physical conditions, administration of student discipline and law enforcement interventions, implementation of positive behavior management strategies, and the availability and delivery of mental health support services. Make recommendations to support and promote the success of these programs and enhance the ability of public schools to meet the needs of students through innovative school discipline models.
- **School Library Advisory Council Review:** Assess current standards adopted by the Texas State Library and Archives Commission, the State Board of Education, and public school policies and practices related to materials in campus libraries or servers. Assess current adoption, placement, and review structures for library materials and make recommendations to ensure: 1) materials are grade, age, and developmentally appropriate; 2) publicly searchable and accessible; and 3) parents and the public are given a prominent role in the process.

- **Vaping in Schools:** Examine the enforcement of current law, which requires school districts to prohibit the use or possession of e-cigarettes, tobacco products, or “vape pens.” Determine whether existing practices are effective at preventing vaping or use of other tobacco products on school campuses. Identify methods for schools to determine the contents within vape pens, including whether the pen contains nicotine, THC, or other chemicals. Investigate and report on the impact to student health, and determine if additional policies or laws are needed to protect students' health.
- **Bond Efficiency:** Conduct a comprehensive review of the school district bond issuance process. Specifically, review public notice and disclosure requirements, the bond election process, procurement requirements, and how unused bond proceeds may be utilized. Study the best practices implemented by school boards and make recommendations to improve bond issuance efficiencies.
- **Local Government Exclusion:** Investigate how some cities and counties are prohibiting the expansion of charter schools through local ordinances. Make recommendations to ensure the fair and equitable treatment of charter schools and independent school districts.
- **Homestead Exemption:** Study the use and effect of the optional homestead exemption available to independent school districts. Examine and report on costs to the state if school districts receive incentives to increase the optional percentage exemption.
- **Monitoring:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Education passed by the 87th Legislature, as well as relevant agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction. Specifically, make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, or complete implementation of the following:
  - Senate Bill 3 (87th Legislature, Second Called Session), Relating to civics training programs for certain public school social studies teachers and principals, parental access to certain learning management systems, and certain curriculum in public schools, including certain instructional requirements and prohibitions;
  - Senate Bill 15 (87th Legislature, Second Called Session), Relating to virtual and off-campus electronic instruction at a public school, the satisfaction of teacher certification requirements through an internship teaching certain virtual courses, and the allotment for certain special-purpose school districts under the Foundation School Program;
  - Senate Bill 1365 (87th Legislature), Relating to public school organization, accountability, and fiscal management;
  - Senate Bill 1716 (87th Legislature), Relating to a supplemental special education services and instructional materials program for certain public school students receiving special education services;

- House Bill 1525 (87th Legislature), Relating to the public school finance system and public education;
- House Bill 4545 (87th Legislature), Relating to the assessment of public school students, the establishment of a strong foundations grant program, and providing accelerated instruction for students who fail to achieve satisfactory performance on certain assessment instruments;
- House Bill 3 (86th Legislature), relating to public school finance and public education; and
- House Bill 3906 (86th Legislature), relating to the assessment of public school students, including the development and administration of assessment instruments, and technology permitted for use by students.



## **Finance Committee**

- **Federal Funds:** Report on the state use of federal COVID-19 relief funds provided under the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act, the American Rescue Plan Act, Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Acts, and similar federal legislation. Examine local use of federal relief funding, including funding provided to school districts through the Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) Fund. Evaluate the overall fiscal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on state agencies, including costs incurred due to federal mandates. Identify barriers to the effective utilization of funds and make recommendations on the expenditure of unappropriated funds. In addition, evaluate and report on the spending by state agencies that have been utilizing "one-time" federal funding (temporary enhancements, e.g. FMAP and ESSER) sources, where federal funding will likely be significantly reduced in future biennia.
- **Property Tax Relief:** Examine and recommend ways to reduce Texans' property tax burden. Review and report on proposals to use or dedicate state revenues in excess of the state spending limit to eliminate the school district maintenance and operations property tax.
- **Inflation:** Review and report on the effect inflation is having on the business community and state government, including state salaries, retiree benefits, the state economy, and cost of state services.
- **Inflation:** Review and report on the impact of inflation on units of local governments' revenue collections and property taxpayers' tax bills, including the homestead exemption.
- **Tax Exemptions:** Examine Texans' current tax exemptions and report on whether adjustments are merited because of inflation or any other factors.
- **Russia Divestiture:** Examine and report on options for state asset owners to divest their positions in companies that invest in the Russian Federation.
- **State Pension Reforms:** Monitor the implementation of recent statewide pension reforms to the Employees Retirement System of Texas and the Teacher Retirement System of Texas.
- **Bail Bond Reform:** Monitor the implementation of recent bail bond reform legislation along with its economic impact on the judicial and correctional system. Assess any barriers to implementation, the law's effect on pretrial release and jail populations, and ways to further promote public safety and efficiency.

- **Operation Lone Star:** Monitor appropriations and spending supporting Operation Lone Star. Evaluate and report on the effectiveness of spending to secure the southern border. Identify and report on resources needed to ensure support for the State National Guard, as well as overall resources necessary for border security for future legislative consideration.
- **Long-term Care Funding:** Examine state investments in the long-term care system. Study nursing facility funding issues and the impact of the pandemic on capacity and delivery of care. Explore nursing facility quality metrics and recommend strategies to improve the sustainability of the long-term care workforce.
- **Medicaid:** Monitor the financial impact of federal decision-making affecting supplemental Medicaid funding for Texas hospitals and health care systems, including negotiations between the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Texas Medicaid agency regarding the state's 1115 Medicaid waiver and other federal proposals reducing supplemental funding streams for Texas.
- **Mental Health Delivery:** Examine the state mental health service delivery system. Study the state's Comprehensive Plan for State-Funded Inpatient Mental Health Services and the Statewide Behavioral Health Strategic Plan and evaluate the existing state investments in mental health services and state hospital capacity. Review current forensic and civil mental health service waitlists, and recommend ways to improve coordination and outcomes to reduce waitlists. Explore and report on options for additional mental health service capacity, including building state hospitals in the Panhandle and Rio Grande Valley areas.

## **Health and Human Services Committee**

- **Public Health Data:** Review the processes for public health data collection and coordination by local and state entities as well as regional trauma centers. Identify any continuing barriers to the real-time dissemination of data concerning health care facility capacity—including data that can expedite timely care— and mortality rates, as well as other information that can assist in public policy decisions.
- **Foster Care:** Evaluate state investments in the child welfare system. Examine reasons for delayed implementation of past legislative reforms and any deficient agency performance metrics. Identify ways to continue to improve the child welfare system in Texas and consider other state models to ensure the health and well-being for children in state care.
- **Health Care Workforce:** Study the impact of the global pandemic on the health care workforce in acute and long-term care. Identify health care staffing challenges and examine how staffing services and payment models changed the economics of the health care workforce. Identify and recommend ways to increase the health care workforce pipeline.
- **Pandemic Response:** Examine the impact of state and federal pandemic policies—including agency guidance, licensing and regulatory actions, and health care industry policies—on patient care and treatment delivery. Examine how regulatory guidance impacts the patient-doctor relationship. Recommend any changes needed to ensure Texas can develop its own data-driven guidance during public health emergencies.
- **Monitoring:** Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation.

## **Higher Education Committee**

- **Faculty Tenure:** Review the history of and current statutes and policies of academic tenure in Texas public higher education institutions. Review tenure dismissal policies at higher education institutions in Texas and investigate state policies or proposals that have eliminated tenure. Examine the role of faculty senates in representing faculty interests to the institution administration. Make recommendations to revise current tenure policies, and provide boards of regents with additional authority to review and address issues with tenured faculty. In addition, make recommendations on establishing guidelines for the role and representation of faculty senates at higher education institutions in Texas.
- **Workforce Education:** Evaluate state efforts to support access to work-based learning and microcredential opportunities, including apprenticeships, industry-based certificates and certifications, as well as competency-based education. Assess the potential benefits of expanding access to work-based learning, apprenticeships, microcredentials, and industry-based certifications that are aligned to workforce needs and provide in-demand workforce skills and competencies. Evaluate existing resources and programs at institutions, the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, the Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Workforce Commission to support these opportunities and ultimately reach Tri-Agency goals. Consider recommendations to standardize these programs in order increase postsecondary degree completions.
- **Enrollment Trends:** Study the postsecondary enrollment trends across all sectors and levels of higher education in Texas, with a review on specific challenges to enrollment. Consider the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on direct high school-to-college enrollment, first-time college enrollment, transferability, and retention rates, as well as the overall impact on community college enrollment. Make recommendations on specific methods to address disparities and pandemic impacts relating to enrollment trends in order to achieve Texas' higher education goals in building a Talent Strong Texas.
- **Strengthening United States History Requirements:** Examine current course requirements for students in United States History, and ensure elements of Critical Race Theory are not currently included in course curriculum. Consider and recommend methods to ensure students receive accurate historical information related to the founding and establishment of the United States. Examine the current role of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in the development and oversight of the core curriculum requirements and recommend any necessary changes. Examine current authority of boards of regents over teaching faculty and make recommendations on changes to law to ensure boards of regents have appropriate approval authority related to course content and instruction.

- **Funding Permanent University Fund:** Review the history and use of the Permanent University Fund for the University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M University, and explore the creation of a new legacy fund to address the needs of all other higher education institutions in Texas. Make recommendations on methods to streamline other existing research funds and finance research academic institutions in Texas.
  
- **Teaching and Health Care Workforce Participation:** Review financial aid and scholarship opportunities in Texas related to teaching, health care, and law enforcement, and examine methods to increase participation in these and other high-demand fields. In particular, study the participation rates of the Math and Science Scholars Loan Repayment Program, the Peace Officer Loan Repayment Program, and the Nursing Corps Loan Repayment Program, and make recommendations on ways to increase participation rates in each area.
  
- **Monitoring:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Higher Education passed by the 87th Legislature, as well as relevant agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction. Specifically, make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, or complete implementation of the following:
  - Senate Bill 1102, relating to the establishment of the Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE) Program to support workforce education;
  - Senate Bill 1230, relating to establishing the Texas Commission on Community College Finance;
  - Senate Bill 1385, relating to the compensation and professional representation of student athletes participating in intercollegiate athletic programs at certain institutions of higher education; and
  - House Bill 3767, relating to measures to support the alignment of education and workforce development in the state with state workforce needs, including the establishment of the Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative.

## Local Government Committee

- **Property Tax Reform:** Review the effect of Senate Bill 2 (86th Legislature), the Texas Property Tax Reform and Transparency Act of 2019, and related legislation passed by the 87th Legislature. Make recommendations for further property tax reform and relief.
- **Appraisal Reform:** Review the implementation of Senate Bill 63, House Bill 988, and other related legislation passed by 87th Legislature. Make recommendations to ensure appraisal guidelines are effective and taxpayers have enforcement mechanisms.
- **Special Purpose Districts:** Perform a comprehensive study on the powers and purposes of various special purpose districts and their associated legislative templates. Make recommendations to improve public transparency in operations of special purpose districts and associated legislative templates.
- **Affordable Housing:** Study issues related to affordable housing, homelessness, and methods of providing and financing affordable housing. Make recommendations to improve transparency and accountability, as well as to better utilize existing federal, state, and local programs.
- **Bond Elections:** Review and report on voter participation and bond election result differences between November and May elections. Make recommendations for improved voter turnout, increased election efficiencies, and better accountability of local debt.
- **Taxpayer Funded Lobbying:** Study how governmental entities use public funds for political lobbying purposes. Examine what types of governmental entities use public funds for lobbying purposes and what level of transparency is available to the public. Make recommendations to protect taxpayers from paying for lobbyists who may not represent the taxpayers' interests.
- **Efficiency Audits:** Study the concept of efficiency audits for cities, counties and special purpose districts and under what circumstances they should be performed. Evaluate whether efficiency audits provide Texans tools to combat wasteful government spending and report whether they are needed before local government tax ratification elections.
- **Extraterritorial Jurisdictions:** Study issues related to municipal extraterritorial jurisdictions and annexation powers, including examining possible disannexation authority. Determine whether extraterritorial jurisdictions continue to provide value to their residents and make recommendations on equitable methods for disannexation.

- **Ballot Language:** Study the development of the language used for constitutional amendment and local ballot propositions. Recommend changes to make ballot propositions more easily understood by voters.

## **Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee**

- **Economic Development Programs:** Review the programs in Chapters 380 and 381 of the Local Government Code. Consider the benefits of each program in generating economic development. Make recommendations for improvements to Chapters 380 and 381 to increase transparency and accountability and the effectiveness of the programs.
- **Hotel Occupancy Taxes:** Study the collection and use of hotel occupancy taxes. Evaluate and make recommendations related to the effectiveness, costs of rebates, incentives, and other taxes applied to qualified hotel and convention center projects. Investigate and determine whether the creation of a standard Hotel Occupancy Tax legislative template is feasible, and whether it would enable the legislature to more efficiently evaluate proposed Hotel Occupancy Tax bills during the legislative session.
- **Natural Gas Storage:** Study the economic benefits of expanding the state's underground natural gas storage capacity and infrastructure. Investigate and make recommendations for additional natural gas transportation opportunities.
- **Wildfires and Prescribed Burns:** Examine ways to reduce the risk of and destructive impact of wildfires. Monitor the role the Prescribed Burning Board plays in controlled burns. Recommend practices and improvements that public and private landowners may use to reduce fire risks.
- **Monitoring:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Natural Resources and Economic Development passed by the 87th Legislature, as well as relevant agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction. Specifically, make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, or complete implementation of the following:
  - Senate Bill 13, Relating to state contracts with and investments in certain companies that boycott energy companies;
  - House Bill 1247, Relating to the development of and report on a tri-agency work-based learning strategic framework by the Texas Workforce Commission, the Texas Education Agency, and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board;
  - House Bill 1284, Relating to the regulation of the injection and geologic storage of carbon dioxide in this state;
  - House Bill 3973, Relating to a study on abandoned oil and gas wells in this state and the use of the oil and gas regulation and cleanup fund; and
  - House Bill 4110, Relating to the registration of metal recycling.



## State Affairs Committee

- **Elections Enforcement:** Evaluate the impact that the Court of Criminal Appeals' ruling in *Stephens v. State* will have on criminal prosecution in Texas. Additionally, study ways in which the Secretary of State's office can respond promptly to reports of Election Code violations. Review the process by which the Secretary of State receives and reports election results, including any internal processes to verify the results reported by county elections administrators. Make recommendations to improve the accuracy and timeliness of election results reported by the Secretary of State on the day of an election. Make recommendations that will allow consistent enforcement of election laws across the state.
- **Elections Administration:** Study how the allocation of polling locations are determined for early voting and election day for counties with and without county-wide voting and report whether current law provides for an equitable distribution. Study the protocols and scheduling of proper maintenance and calibration of election equipment and recommend what is required for maximum efficiency, accuracy, and security. Study the history of a holiday falling within the early voting period and recommend methods to ensure that early voting always has the required number of days and every qualified voter has the opportunity to vote. Study and recommend whether the state should shorten the primary election runoff period in Texas in order to allow voters to know who their candidate is sooner—while remaining in compliance with the federal MOVE Act. Make recommendations to ensure it is easy to vote and hard to cheat.
- **Protecting the Unborn:** Monitor the impact of Senate Bill 8, The Texas Heartbeat Act, and the expanded funding for alternatives to abortion programs passed by the 87th Legislature. Study alternatives to abortion programs' effectiveness in meeting the needs of pregnant and post-partum women and recommend how the Legislature should strengthen the program. Recommend ways to provide additional alternatives to abortion and comprehensive informed consent resources to mothers who are expecting.

- **Human Trafficking:** Examine opportunities and make recommendations to reduce the profitability of and demand for human trafficking in Texas. Determine ways to increase public awareness of the proliferation of human trafficking, as well as resources for victims and survivors. Monitor the implementation of House Bill 1540 (87th Legislature) and examine changes in arrest rates, judicial dispositions, and sentencing amongst offenders due to provisions of the legislation. Examine opportunities for attorneys to combat human trafficking in their local communities, including use of the Deceptive Trade Practices Act, to generate revenue for local law enforcement officials combatting human trafficking. Make any other recommendations to further prevent human trafficking.
- **Public Safety:** Study the impact of how the internal policies of some district and county attorneys' offices to not prosecute certain crimes impact the further occurrence of those crimes and public safety. Examine the methods by which the Texas Legislature may prohibit policies of disregarding duly passed laws and not prosecuting certain crimes. Examine the authority and limits of the Office of the Attorney General to take action in place of a district or county attorney's office that has a policy to disregard the prosecution of certain crimes. Make recommendations to prevent policies of not prosecuting certain crimes to ensure that public safety is maintained. Examine case loads of judges in Texas' largest three counties with a focus on courts who do not hear or seldom hear cases to ensure a fair and equitable division of workload amongst Texas judges. Review pretrial service and bonding practices in Harris and Travis counties. Examine the practice of judges releasing violent and/or habitual offenders pre-trial and the correlating negative impacts on community safety. Monitor the impact of Senate Bill 23 (87th Legislature), the Stop Local Police Defunding bill, to ensure that counties are not reducing the budgets of law enforcement divisions and that effective and efficient enforcement mechanisms are in place. Make recommendations to further close any loopholes in the law.
- **Privacy and Transparency:** Review the current state laws that protect and secure individuals' biometric identifiers. Explore ways to protect against the use of biometric identifiers for unintended purposes without an individual's consent and make recommendations to the Senate. Study websites that closely resemble government websites or fraudulently represent companies that they are not, including websites that use names of state agencies or licenses. Make recommendations to ensure that Texans' are not misled, taken advantage, or defrauded, especially when they try to seek assistance from a state website.
- **Investment Practices:** Study the investment practices of financial services firms and how those practices affect the state's public pensions. Make recommendations to ensure the state's public pension funds are not being invested to further political or social causes.

## **Transportation Committee**

- **Safety:** Study the contributing factors leading to fatal crashes and make recommendations to prevent and reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries.
- **Driver's License Efficiency:** Study the Department of Public Safety's driver's license program operations and make recommendations to improve the efficiency of services while maintaining individual privacy and security for Texans.
- **Alternatively Fueled Vehicles:** Review the Texas Department of Transportation's plan for federal funding related to alternatively fueled vehicle infrastructure development. Examine the increase of private and public owned alternatively fueled vehicles registered in the state and make recommendations for road user fee fairness between alternatively fueled vehicles and gasoline and diesel vehicles.

## **Veteran Affairs Committee**

- **State Veteran Cemeteries:** Evaluate the current oversight of the Texas State Veteran Cemeteries to ensure that these sacred and essential grounds are being maintained, repaired, and treated with respect. Ensure that the needs of our veterans are being met by reviewing the number, location, and funding of the cemeteries. Examine and make recommendations for the financing mechanism for the Texas State Veterans Cemeteries to ensure sustainability.
- **Veteran Benefits:** Explore and report on options to remove barriers for companies offering veteran benefits and consider policies that could leverage additional public-private-partnerships. Identify opportunities to connect veterans to existing business resources and available state services. Recommend ways to increase matching federal funding for veteran benefits. Review current law for consistency in eligibility for state veteran benefits and recommend any necessary changes.
- **Veteran Mental Health:** Review the currently accepted forms of treatment for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and consider the creation of a program which would require completion of a multi-modality treatment plan including traditional talk therapy, limbic system therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and emotionally focused individual therapy (EFIT).
- **Veteran Mental Health:** Identify the training and resources available to urban and rural first responders when assisting veterans experiencing a mental health crisis. Make recommendations for how to best support first responders in these crisis situations.

## Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs Committee

- **Water Utility Infrastructure:** Evaluate the state's water infrastructure. Study and make recommendations on options to upgrade and update water infrastructure to address deferred maintenance, disasters, and water loss.
- **Water Supply:** Review and make recommendations to complete specific projects identified in the 2022 State Water Plan. In light of recent changes to the global economy, consider the current regulatory process regarding innovative technology solutions to water supply needs, such as marine desalination, and make recommendations for their improvement.
- **Groundwater Management and Protection:** Evaluate the status and effectiveness of the State's groundwater management process, including data used to support regional water planning and conservation goals. Report on the effectiveness of the State's groundwater protection efforts and whether statutory changes are needed to protect groundwater quality.
- **Rural Employment:** Study and make recommendations on rural small business development and workforce needs. Consider and recommend innovative methods for business development in rural parts of the state.
- **Daylight Savings Time:** Examine and report on how permanently maintaining daylight savings time impacts the agricultural community.
- **Rural Immigration:** Consider the Federal government's open border policies and practices of releasing illegal immigrants in rural areas of the state. Report on the impact to rural Texas, and their local ability to address social, health, and law enforcement needs.
- **Meat Packing Facilities:** Study the need for additional meat packing facilities in Texas. Evaluate and report on the increased cost to Texas ranchers and revenue lost in the Texas economy when meatpacking facilities are utilized outside of Texas.
- **Agricultural Theft:** Study the impact of cattle theft on farming and ranching operations throughout Texas and recommend cost-effective measures to mitigate loss and increase security.

- **Monitoring:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs passed by the 87th Legislature, as well as relevant agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction. Specifically, make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, or complete implementation of the following:
  - Senate Bill 8 (86th Legislature), Relating to state and regional flood planning;
  - Senate Bill 601 (87th Legislature), Relating to the creation and activities of the Texas Produced Water Consortium;
  - Senate Bill 905 (87th Legislature), Relating to guidance on the regulations applicable to the potable reuse of wastewater; and
  - House Bill 3516 (87th Legislature), Relating to the regulation of the recycling of fluid oil and gas waste.