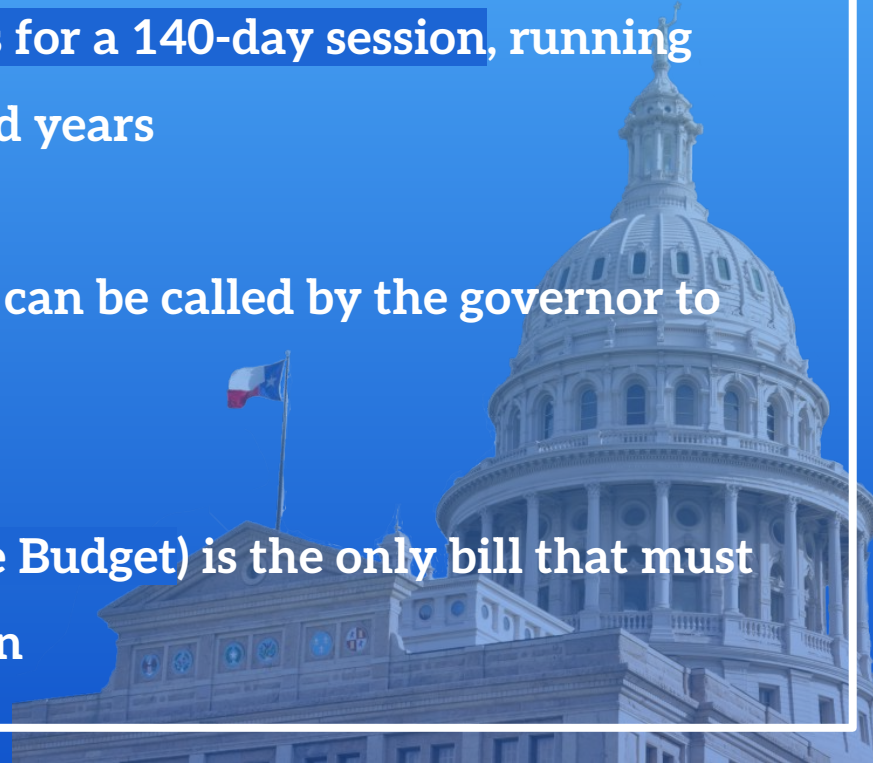


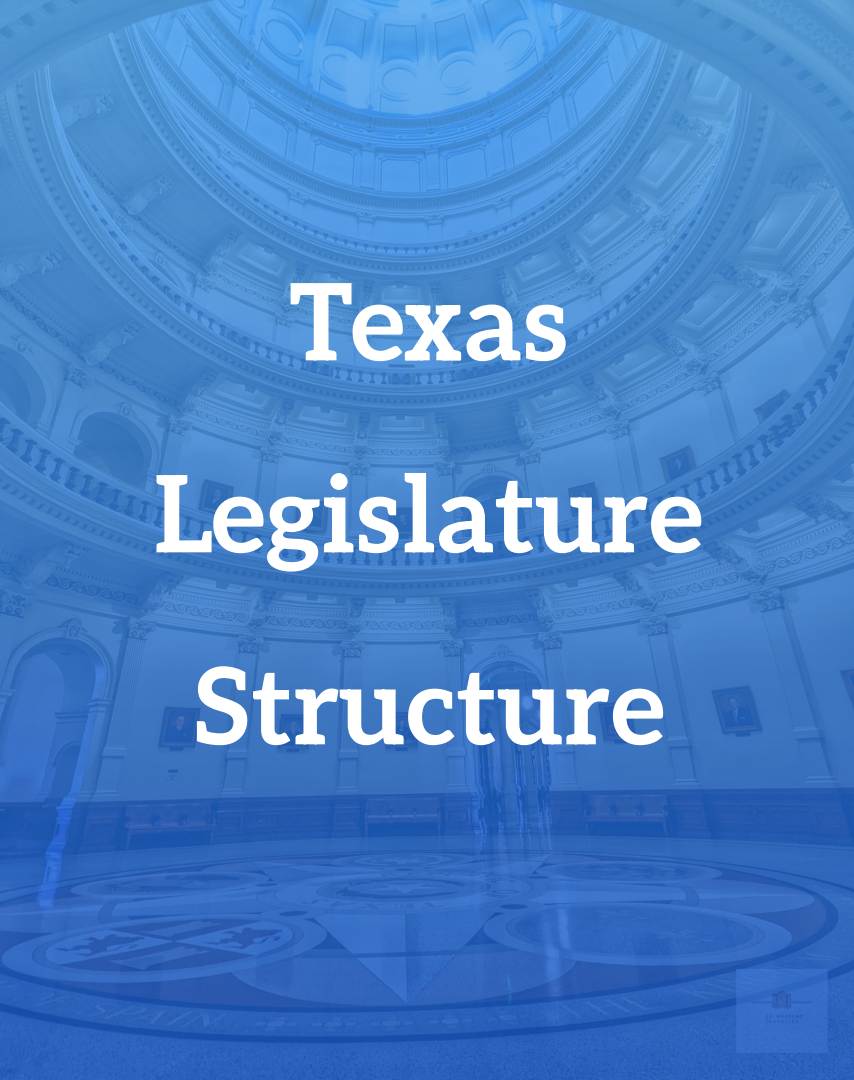
Intro to the Legislature

UDem's Guide

Texas Legislature Overview

- The Legislature meets every **two years for a 140-day session**, running from January to May in odd-numbered years
- **Special sessions**, lasting up to 30 days, can be called by the governor to address specific issues
- The General Appropriations Act (State Budget) is the only bill that must be passed as per the Texas Constitution



The background of the slide is a blue-tinted photograph of the interior of the Texas State Capitol dome. The dome is a large, ornate structure with a central skylight and multiple levels of arches and columns. The floor is highly polished and reflects the light from the dome. The overall atmosphere is grand and historical.

Texas Legislature Structure

Senate

- 31 Members
- Serve 4-Year Terms
- Represents 800,000 Texans

House of Representatives

- 150 Members
- Serve 2-Year Terms
- Represents 170,000 Texans

Party Composition

Currently, Republicans hold the majority in both chambers and statewide

offices:

Senate

Party	Jan 2025
Dems	11
Reps	20
Total	<u>31</u>

House

Party	Jan 2025
Dems	62
Reps	88
Total	<u>150</u>

Texas Governor Greg Abbott



- Elected to a four-year term during midterms (next in 2026)
- Conservative Republican
- Former Judge and Attorney General
- Can issue executive orders to enforce state laws and policies.
- Signs or vetoes bills passed by the Legislature.

Lt. Governor Dan Patrick

- Elected to a four-year term during midterms (next in 2026)
- President of the Senate
- Conservative Republican
- Former right wing talk show host
- Holds a large amount of power over the senate procedures and priorities
- Appoints senators to committees



Speaker of the House: Dustin Burrows



- Is a representative themselves
- Chosen from the Texas House of Representatives by colleagues at the beginning of the legislative session
- Presiding officer of the Texas House
- Appoints committees & committee chairs
- Process is a bit more democratic but speaker still holds immense power

What is a Bill?

- Legislative documents used to create or amend laws
- Can only contain one subject within the bill. (Sec 35. Art. III, TX Constitution)
- Aims to amend, create, or repeal a specific statute or section in the Texas Constitution.

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to creating a fine arts allotment under the public school finance system.

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

SECTION 1. Subchapter C, Chapter 48, Education Code, is amended by adding Section 48.116 to read as follows:

Sec. 48.116. FINE ARTS ALLOTMENT. (a) For each student in average daily attendance enrolled in a fine arts education course approved by the agency under Subsection (b) in grades 6 through 12, a school district is entitled to an annual allotment equal to the basic allotment, or, if applicable, the sum of the basic allotment and the allotment under Section 48.101 to which the district is entitled, multiplied by .008.

(b) The agency shall approve fine arts education courses that qualify for the allotment provided under this section. The approved courses must include fine arts education courses that:

(1) are authorized by the State Board of Education, including music, art, theater, and dance;

(2) provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary for success in the fine arts; and

(3) require a student in full-time attendance to receive not less than 225 minutes of fine arts instruction per week.

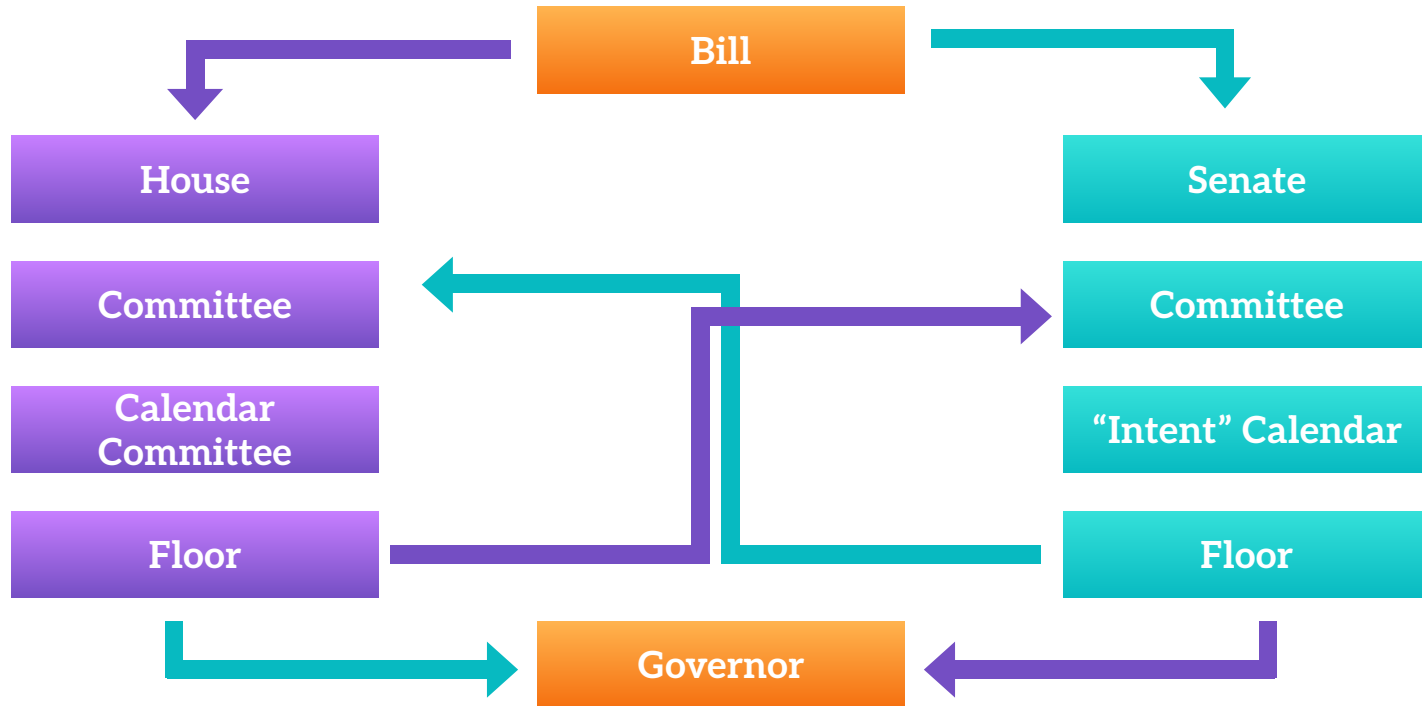
(c) The agency shall annually publish a list of fine arts courses approved under Subsection (b).

SECTION 2. This Act takes effect September 1, 2025.

Step-By-Step Passing of a Bill

- 1.** Bill is introduced in either the house or senate
- 2.** Bill is assigned to a committee for review
- 3.** A public hearing is held, allowing public testimony
- 4.** The committee votes to approve, amend, or reject the bill
- 5.** Bill is added to House or Senate calendar
- 6.** If both chambers pass the bill, goes to governor to veto or sign

How a Bill Becomes a Law



Important Dates



Nov 12, 2024

**First Day of
Bill Filing**



Jan 14, 2025

**First Day of
89th Session**



March 14, 2025

**Bill Filing
Deadline**



Jun 2, 2025

**Last day of
session (Sine
Die)**

What is a Committee?

- Group of legislators that review, debate, and recommend proposed laws
- Types include standing (permanent), select (temporary), and conference (resolve difference)
- Committees hold public hearings and analyze bills
- They manage the large volume of legislation each sessions
- Only bills approved by committees proceed to full chamber votes

In the 2023 Texas legislative session, over 8,000 bills were filed, but only about 20% made it through committee to become law! Committees are where most of the real decision-making happens.

Committee Hearings

- Bills are referred to Committees after a First Reading based on subject
- To move forward in the process every bill must be heard before a committee and testimony in committee is a critical part of an advocacy plan
- There's also a lot of behind the scenes work that happens to ensure a successful committee hearing
 - Develop trusted relationships with the committee members
 - Ahead of hearing check in with legislative members to make sure they have talking points and facts (questions for testifiers or other members)

Senate Calendar

- A calendar that lists the bills and resolutions that are eligible for consideration to the full Senate floor
- The Lt. Governor is in charge of what gets put on the senate calendar.
- Bills listed on the senate intent calendar don't have to be heard in the order they appear on the calendar
- Dan Patrick keeps changing the rules based on the R's in the Senate

- House Local and Consent Calendar - the calendar that lists all of the non controversial bills, resolutions, ect.
- House Calendar - The regular order of business of the house. Powerful committee that decides this.
- The bills on the calendar in the House go in order of appearance
- **HOWEVER**, they may not get to everything on that day's calendar. These will go the supplemental calendar the next day

House Committee on Calendars (C050)

Legislature: 88(R) - 2023

Appointment Date: 2/8/2023

Position

Member

Chair:

[Rep. Dustin Burrows](#)

Vice Chair:

[Rep. Toni Rose](#)

Members:

[Rep. David Cook](#)

[Rep. Charlie Geren](#)

[Rep. Cole Hefner](#)

[Rep. Ana Hernandez](#)

[Rep. Ann Johnson](#)

[Rep. Jared Patterson](#)

[Rep. Shelby Slawson](#)

[Rep. James Talarico](#)

[Rep. Ed Thompson](#)

Floor Questions

- Legitimate clarification on a bill
- Clarifications on a bill that can be used in future legal battles
- Debating the author of a bad bill
- Friendly questions on a good bill
- Delay, delay, delay
 - Ex. There's a bad bill that you don't want heard that day so you delay earlier bills by asking questions on them to push yours to the next day. Especially if there's a key deadline.
 - Ex. The People's Filibuster: questions were used as a tactic to get to midnight which would have been the end of the special session

Points of Order aka POO's

- A motion calling attention to a possible breach of the procedural rules of the house or the senate
- The Speaker or Lt. Gov., with the help of the parliamentarian, get to decide if the POO sticks
- If the POO is valid, it can completely kill a bill
- Usually requires lawyers and serious combing through bills

Ex. The Chick Fil A Bill. First version, HB 3172, killed on a POO. The Senate then had to rush through their version of the bill, SB 1978, to get it passed

Description	Comment
H Returned to committee	
H Point of order sustained	Rule 4, Section 32(c)(5)
H Point of order overruled	Rule 4, Section 40, and Rule 11, Section 2
H Read 2nd time	
H Placed on General State Calendar	
H Considered in Calendars	
H Committee report sent to Calendars	
H Committee report distributed	
H Comte report filed with Committee Coordinator	
H Reported favorably as substituted	
H Committee substitute considered in committee	
H Considered in formal meeting	
H Left pending in committee	
H Testimony taken/registration(s) recorded in committee	
H Considered in public hearing	
H Scheduled for public hearing on . . .	
H Referred to State Affairs	
H Read first time	
H Filed	

Amendments

- Legitimate attempts to make the bill better
- Get language into a bill to make it easier to challenge legally
- Get a bad vote on record
- Delay, Delay, Delay
- Work with friendly offices or caucuses to get amendments placed with certain members

Why Do They Vote So Much?

Description	Comment	Date	Time	Journal Page
Effective on 9/1/19		06/14/2019		
Signed by the Governor		06/14/2019		6449
Sent to the Governor		05/29/2019		6446
Signed in the Senate		05/27/2019		3979
Signed in the House		05/26/2019		6407
Reported enrolled		05/25/2019	05:10 PM	6413
House concurs in Senate amendment(s)-reported		05/24/2019		3312
Text of Senate Amendment(s)		05/24/2019		5493
Statement(s) of vote recorded in Journal		05/24/2019		5493
Record vote	RV#1885	05/24/2019		5493
House concurs in Senate amendment(s)		05/24/2019		5493
Senate Amendments Analysis distributed		05/23/2019	03:26 PM	
Senate Amendments distributed		05/23/2019	03:24 PM	
Senate passage as amended reported		05/23/2019		4849
Record vote		05/22/2019		2641
Passed		05/22/2019		2641
Read 3rd time		05/22/2019		2641
Record vote		05/22/2019		2641
Three day rule suspended		05/22/2019		2641
Vote recorded in Journal		05/22/2019		2641
Read 2nd time & passed to 3rd reading		05/22/2019		2641
Laid before the Senate		05/22/2019		2641
Placed on local & uncontested calendar		05/22/2019		
Committee report printed and distributed		05/19/2019	10:47 PM	
Recommended for local & uncontested calendar		05/19/2019		
Reported favorably as substituted		05/19/2019		2098
Testimony taken in committee		05/17/2019		
Considered in public hearing		05/17/2019		
Scheduled for public hearing on . . .		05/17/2019		
Posting rule suspended		05/16/2019		2005
Referred to State Affairs		05/14/2019		1906
Read first time		05/14/2019		1906
Received from the House		05/13/2019		1853
Reported engrossed		05/10/2019	05:50 PM	3667
Nonrecord vote recorded in Journal		05/10/2019		3502
Record vote	RV#1258	05/10/2019		3502

- All bills go through three readings in each chamber:
 1. **First reading:** The bill is introduced and referred to a committee for review.
 2. **Second reading:** The full chamber debates and may amend the bill, requiring a majority vote.
 3. **Third reading:** Final opportunity for debate and amendments before the bill is voted on and sent to the other chamber or the governor.
- Record votes are taken during the second reading, third reading, and on amendments.

How to Advocate!

- Virtual/In-person meetings with legislators
- Social media pressure
- Student recruitment
- Calls into offices
- Press and written media
- Flooding them with as many written comments as possible
- Testifying at important committee hearings
- Registering our stances on bills





Priorities/What We Are Watching For:

- **Voting Rights**

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion programs are essential for creating an environment where all students feel valued and important. The recent attacks on DEI in higher education hurt marginalized communities the most. We're fighting to bring these initiatives back.

- **Reinstating DEI policies/programs**

Our democracy works best when everyone participates. Voting should be accessible to everyone, especially students, who are often targeted by voter suppression tactics. We're supporting legislation that protects and expands access to the ballot box for all Texans.

- **Stopping Vouchers**

Education is essential, and Texas students deserve fully funded public schools. From K-12, we're advocating for resources that give every student a fair shot at success. Education is a right, not a privilege.

SB2 (Vouchers) Hearing

Resources were put together to help people prepare for this late notice committee hearing, including talking points, example testimony, and letters to representatives. If testifying feels intimidating, support is available to help you with what to say. Two members spoke at the hearing, with many more submitting written testimony and dropping cards.

Our goal is to make testifying an easy and accessible process for everyone!

<https://senate.texas.gov/av-live.php>

Our Members at the Hearing!



SB2 (Vouchers) Info Doc

<https://capitol.texas.gov/billlookup/text.aspx?LegSess=87R&Bill=SB2>



Scan Here!



Join Our Lege Commision!

Use this form to let
us know if you'd like
to testify



No need to be an
expert we will tell
you what to say!