

# **88th Texas Legislative Session Report, 2023**

The 88th Texas Legislative Session ended May 29, followed by two Special Legislative Sessions. Nearly 12 thousand bills were introduced. Of those, 1040 bills passed and were signed into law by Governor Greg Abbott.

**Our legislators passed several important laws to successfully tackle the WOKE CULTURE we live in and deal with on a daily basis:**

- 1. They criminalized performers who conduct sexually explicit drag shows i n the presence of children as well as any businesses that host them.**
- 2. They banned puberty blockers, hormone treatments, gender mutilation, and chemical castration for children up to 18 years of age.**
- 3. They stopped biological men from competing in women's sports.**
- 4. They prohibited sexually explicit books from Texas public school libraries , despite pushback from Democrats and librarians.**
- 5. They eliminated DEI in Texas public colleges .** DEI, an acronym for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, is thought by many to push left wing ideology and prioritize social justice over merit. Equity is understood to mean outcomes must be equal regardless of hard work and talent.

DEI affected college students as they went through orientation and endured hours of training on aggressions and micro-aggressions. DEI training was required of all college employees and affected professor hiring within the university system.

DEI departments with untold employees were set up on colleges campuses. Twenty six out of thirty one Texas state colleges had DEI infrastructure and the financial cost was high. The University of Texas spent 30 to 40 million dollars per year on DEI while Texas A&M and Texas Tech followed closely behind.

The legislation banning DEI says university leaders cannot spend any state money until they have declared they are in compliance with the new law, and they must adopt policies to discipline employees who violate these rules. Universities have six months to comply.

**Texas is the second state after Florida to eliminate DEI.**

## **ELECTION INTEGRITY**

The Texas legislature passed the Alan Vera Memorial Bill which eliminated the Electronic Voter Registration Center called ERIC. For several years, Texas was part of this Cross-check program that was intended to clean up voter rolls across the states that participated. However, this past year several red states withdrew from ERIC when it was decided the program had problems with voter security and couldn't be trusted. Texas will now set up its own voter data center that will clean up voter rolls.

## **Lawmakers increased punishment for illegal voting from a high misdemeanor to a felony .**

The Secretary of State is authorized to conduct random election audits in smaller counties with recurring problems.

## **PROPERTY TAX RELIEF**

**The legislature set aside 18 billion dollars over the next two years for tax relief.** This bill was passed after the regular session because the Governor and Speaker Phelan disagreed with Lt. Governor Dan Patrick on the best way to provide relief. It was finally decided tax relief of 12 billion dollars will go to homeowners and commercial property owners across the state with a focus on small business owners.

**Another five billion dollars will go toward raising homestead exemptions from \$40,000 to \$100,000.** It has been predicted that an owner of a \$330,000 home will save \$1200 per year on property tax relief, depending on the school district. Texans will vote on this November 7 as an amendment to the Texas Constitution.

## **MISCELLANEOUS BILLS**

**1. Retired teachers 75 and over will receive a 13th check of \$7500 this year while retired teachers ages 70-74 will receive \$2400.** It is estimated nearly 300,000 retired teachers will benefit from this. A cost of living increase (COLA) for retired teachers in tiers of 2%, 4%, and 6% will be put to the voters on November 7.

**2. Lamar University obtained landmark funding from the state** , receiving the biggest percentage increase of funds among all 38 Texas universities. The President of Lamar gave credit to House Speaker Dade Phelan for securing this money.

**3. The Gulf State Barriers received half a billion dollars** from the state and will be used for the Ike Dike projects and Sabine Pass.

**4. Pertaining to school safety, an armed person will be stationed at every public school** campus and every school classroom is required to have a silent alarm.

**5. Gun rights:** Banks and other financial institutions are banned from coding and reporting firearms and ammunition purchases unless it's part of a criminal investigation or prosecution

**6. Drugs: Drug dealers/makers can be charged with murder if they sell clients fentanyl-laced opioids and a death occurs.** Overdoses from fentanyl can be classified as "poisonings" and fentanyl toxicity can be used as a "cause of death" on a death certificate. There will be increased funding for law enforcement in this battle and increased additional funding for DPS troopers and border security efforts.

As to the future, **Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton will go on trial September 5** in the Texas Senate. He has already been impeached in the Texas House. Two thirds of the Texas Senators will be needed to convict and remove from office.

After the Ken Paxton matter is settled, the Texas legislature will meet for a third special session to discuss EDUCATION (school choice, vouchers) which is one of Governor Abbott's top priorities that has yet to be resolved. ESG might also be debated.

Finally, I would like to give a heavenly nod to Mr. Alan Vera who fought long and hard for election integrity and died on the floor of the Texas Capitol while doing so. Another nod goes

to Christen Bentley, a State Republican Executive Committee member and a mom, who started the Filthy Books Project. While the legislators were in session, she sent 1-3 Filthy Books per week to all of the lawmakers so they could see for themselves why it was necessary to pass legislation prohibiting sexually explicit books from Texas public school libraries. Her project helped to pass this very important bill.

Alan Vera and Christen Bentley are perfect examples that **ONE** person can make a difference.

**Louise Williams**

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