

Interim Committee Charges
Texas House of Representatives
81st Legislature



Speaker Joe Straus

November 2009

House Committee on Agriculture and Livestock

1. Evaluate the impact of tick-borne diseases in domestic and exotic livestock and of plant diseases and pests on the Texas agriculture industry. Examine barriers limiting the state's response and identify resources to enhance the state's ability to control, prevent, and respond to disease vectors.
2. Review efforts to manage feral hog populations and mitigate damage to agricultural and livestock operations.
3. Study the safety and efficiency of the existing agriculture-related transportation infrastructure. Consider the air, ground, and rail transportation needs of rural Texas and analyze the effect on economic development. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Transportation*
4. Survey rural economic development programs. Analyze the economic relationship between rural communities and the agriculture industry and their combined impact on the state's economy. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on County Affairs*
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Appropriations

1. Monitor the performance of state agencies and institutions, including operating budgets, plans to carry out legislative initiatives, caseload projections, performance measure attainment, implementation of all rider provisions, and any other matter affecting the fiscal condition of the agencies and the state.
2. Monitor the use of funds, adherence to state and federal reporting requirements, and ongoing development of federal rules and regulations provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Evaluate the impact of those funds on the state's economy. *Joint Interim Charge with House Select Committee on Federal Economic Stabilization Funding*
3. Examine the growth of constitutionally and statutorily dedicated accounts and their utilization in the budget.
4. Examine the Constitutional Debt Limit, the state's current bonding practices and projected bonding needs, and their impact on the state budget.
5. Monitor the Department of Information Resources' ongoing implementation of data center services consolidation and the Texas Online program.
6. Study the cost and caseload trends in the Texas Medicaid Program, including a review of cost drivers, factors affecting caseload increases, and regional variations. Evaluate the effectiveness of current Medicaid cost containment procedures and make recommendations for legislative changes to contain and control state costs and maximize federal funding without impacting services.
7. Examine the Texas Education Agency's programs and services, including the Student Success Initiative, and evaluate their impact on achieving the stated agency and statewide goals.
8. Evaluate programs designed to assist students and families in paying the costs of accessing the state's higher education system, including financial aid programs and the Texas Guaranteed Tuition Plan. Examine the impact these programs have on student achievement and the Closing the Gaps initiative.
9. Examine the state's higher education funding mechanisms, including approaches to funding capital improvement projects at public institutions of higher education. Evaluate modifications that would improve the institutions' national peer rankings and help the state to achieve its Closing the Gaps objectives, including improved community college transfer pathways and the impact of shifting the basis of the formula funding methodologies from attempted to completed hours. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Higher Education*

10. Examine annual cost increases and the factors related to the increases for Correctional Managed Health Care. Recommend policy changes that could yield savings to the state.
11. Examine implementation of the diversion pilot programs, juvenile case management system, and other policy and funding initiatives to determine whether the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and the Texas Youth Commission have adhered to legislative directive in implementing these programs, and the impact of these programs on commitments at the Texas Youth Commission. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Corrections*
12. Evaluate the method of distributing federal hurricane relief funds and recommend improvements. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Urban Affairs*
13. Monitor the progress of the capital improvement plan and use of state funds at The University of Texas at Galveston involving the renovation and upgrade of existing facilities and the construction of new facilities. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Higher Education*
14. Monitor and review the disbursement and use of border and homeland security funds. Evaluate the effectiveness in meeting the state's border and homeland security program goals and objectives. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs*
15. Identify factors influencing health care cost trends in Texas, including practices or policies that may contribute to regional variations. Investigate medical imaging utilization and its impact on the cost and quality of health care. Recommend policy changes to promote best practices, reduce costs, and improve quality within the state Medicaid program, Employees Retirement System, and Teacher Retirement System. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Public Health*

House Committee on Border and Intergovernmental Affairs

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of state operations at controlling drug-related crimes and other violence along the Texas-Mexico border. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Public Safety*
2. Identify any gaps in Texas laws that may prevent coordinated efforts, both statewide and on the border, to ensure a safe food supply. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Public Health*
3. Examine current state laws and regulations aimed at improving economic development in the state and determine their impact on communities along the Texas-Mexico border. Identify any changes that would improve economic development results along the Texas-Mexico border.
4. Analyze state laws and regulations and the efforts of the multiple state entities responsible for addressing the needs of Texas residents in colonias. Determine the effectiveness of such programs and suggest improvements.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Business and Industry

1. Examine Title 11 of the Texas Property Code to determine if the various independent statutes are sufficient to protect the interest of homeowners and homeowners associations. Consider whether Title 11 should be consolidated with other laws.
2. Study and report on third-party liability issues involving workers' compensation, including the frequency and success rates of third-party litigation, the relationship, if any, between third-party litigation and jobsite safety, the adequacy of compensation and reimbursement to workers, and the economic costs of third-party litigation and equitable and contractual subrogation in construction activities. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence*
3. Review the Unemployment Compensation Fund and its impact on business taxpayers to determine whether changes may be made to stabilize the fund in times of economic contraction without imposing an undue economic burden on businesses. Determine whether modernizations should be implemented to make the fund more efficient and effective. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Technology, Economic Development, and Workforce*
4. Examine ways to increase the creation of jobs in the Texas manufacturing industry.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Corrections

1. Examine implementation of the diversion pilot programs, juvenile case management system, and other policy and funding initiatives to determine whether the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and the Texas Youth Commission have adhered to legislative directive in implementing these programs, and the impact of these programs on commitments at the Texas Youth Commission. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
2. Study and evaluate the availability and efficiency of community-based corrections supervision and treatment programs and their impact on prison capacity and recidivism rates. Determine whether the supervision and treatment programs have been designed in accordance with evidence-based practices and whether adequate evaluation methods have been incorporated.
3. Study current re-entry programs and procedures across the juvenile and adult criminal justice continuum. Make recommendations to ensure that offenders who are released or discharged have the necessary supervision and access to employment, housing, treatment, and other support programs to allow successful entry and integration into the community. Evaluate the working relationship between state agencies facilitating re-entry and make recommendations on how to achieve greater efficiency and cost savings.
4. Examine policies and programs designed to identify, divert, and enhance the supervision and treatment of special needs offenders within local jails and state correctional facilities. Recommend changes to address appropriate alternatives to incarceration or institutionalization.
5. Review the range of services provided to females in the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems and recommend changes to ensure responsiveness to gender-specific issues. Review should include institutional and community supervision programs and utilization of correctional facilities that house non-adjudicated populations.
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on County Affairs

1. Study the current practices and tools available to counties to manage growth and development. Consider incompatible land uses and county rulemaking authority, including rulemaking authority bracketed to counties of a certain population.
2. Study county-level health care delivery models for indigent health care that emphasize community-based care to improve the continuity and quality of care. Compare urban and rural health care delivery models and make necessary legislative recommendations.
3. Study county oversight related to pretrial release on bond in criminal cases.
4. Examine how local governments can better inform the public about local government debts.
5. Survey rural economic development programs. Analyze the economic relationship between rural communities and the agriculture industry and their combined impact on the state's economy. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Agriculture and Livestock*
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence

1. Examine the deferred adjudication system in Texas and recommend legislative changes.
2. Study how the state presently supports the establishment and maintenance of public defender offices.
3. Study the human and sex trafficking problem in Texas. Make recommendations on best practices in the areas of investigation, prosecution, and tracking of the victims of these crimes. Study whether victims of these crimes are allowed to adequately recover from their attackers in a civil cause of action. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence*
4. Monitor the implementation of SB 1940 (81R), which established veterans court programs in Texas, and examine the link between combat stress disorders of war veterans, including post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, and the onset of criminal behavior. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs*
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Culture, Recreation, and Tourism

1. Explore ways to promote and improve economic development through heritage, cultural, recreational, and historical programs. Consider the long-term economic impact of state parks in promoting tourism and recreation.
2. Examine Texas Parks and Wildlife's current licensing and permitting process, including available exemptions, occupational licensing, potential for reducing the number of permits for a single permit holder, and assessment of fees.
3. Review the Texas Wildlife Action Plan and make recommendations on ways to further support aquatic and nongame programs.
4. Study ways to improve economic development in Texas through the film and music industries.
5. Monitor the long-term plans to improve state parks. Consider the feasibility of acquiring additional park land.
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs

1. Investigate strategies to address incompatible land use surrounding Texas military installations. Study approaches that minimize conflict with neighboring landowners.
2. Evaluate the advantages, including potential cost savings, of centralizing call center activities for referral to benefits providers for veterans.
3. Monitor and review the disbursement and use of border and homeland security funds. Evaluate the effectiveness in meeting the state's border and homeland security program goals and objectives. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
4. Study ways the state can enhance military and overseas voters' ability to obtain and return balloting materials and reduce burdens on those voters' exercise of their right to vote. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Elections*
5. Monitor the implementation of SB 1940 (81R), which established veterans court programs in Texas, and examine the link between combat stress disorders of war veterans, including post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, and the onset of criminal behavior. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence*
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Elections

1. Study ways the state can enhance military and overseas voters' ability to obtain and return balloting materials and reduce burdens on those voters' exercise of their right to vote. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs*
2. Examine the use of central polling places and compare voter turnout and the number of rejected provisional ballots in counties that use central polling places with similar counties that do not.
3. Examine the prevalence of fraud in Texas elections. Study new laws in other states regarding voter identification and recommend statutory changes necessary to ensure that only eligible voters can vote in Texas elections.
4. Review the Texas campaign finance law in judicial races in light of the recent United States Supreme Court decision *Caperton v. Massey*. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence*
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Energy Resources

1. Survey current local ordinances governing surface use of property in oil and gas development. Recommend changes, if any, to the authority of the Railroad Commission to regulate the operation of oil and gas industries in urban areas of the state, particularly the Barnett Shale.
2. Monitor the implementation of recent legislation dealing with carbon capture and storage and make recommendations as to whether further action is required to resolve outstanding issues. Examine proposed legislation from other states and review federal initiatives.
3. Examine the state's portfolio of electric generation resources, including traditional sources, emerging renewable technologies, and energy efficiency. Determine whether the existing state regulatory programs and incentives are adequate to meet the energy needs of the future. Consider factors relating to reliability, requirements for additional transmission, or auxiliary services. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on State Affairs*
4. Consider the establishment of uniform statutes and codes relating to liquid petroleum gas permitting and operations as a means to resolve conflicts of interpretation between state and local jurisdictions.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Environmental Regulation

1. Examine the regulation of air quality in the areas of permitting new and modified sources, public participation, and enforcement. Consider data and proposed federal standards and rules as they relate to the State Implementation Plan.
2. Survey existing recycling programs and suggest needed improvements.
3. Monitor federal legislative and regulatory initiatives as they pertain to climate change. Consider Texas' responses to proposals and make recommendations as to any further preparations.
4. Study the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's use of supplemental environmental projects in its enforcement process.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on General Investigating and Ethics

1. Review state law in light of the effects of Texas Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 484 relating to acceptance of benefits provided to officeholders. Recommend any necessary legislative changes.
2. Review the definition of "political advertising" and determine whether the definition should be expanded to include content contained in blogs and other types of Internet communications.
3. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Higher Education

1. Evaluate the state's continuing effort to close achievement gaps in success, participation, excellence, and research by 2015. Study how state public education institutions compare to peer institutions around the country.
2. Study current financial aid programs, tuition and fee exemption programs, loan repayment programs, and professional incentive programs. Evaluate the impact of need-based versus merit-based assistance. Recommend changes where appropriate to improve the alignment of these programs to meet state needs.
3. Review the structure and operation of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Evaluate the board's data collection systems, including costs to higher education institutions, and make recommendations for improvements.
4. Study and recommend strategies for improving community college participation and success. Examine the role of community colleges within the state higher education system. Include a review of programs, practices, and incentives to improve efficiency and productivity, such as expanding dual credit options, encouraging credit by examination, and improving student preparation in high school.
5. Study and recommend strategies for reducing the costs of instructional materials in higher education institutions, including electronic textbooks, open source materials, and other web-based resources.
6. Examine the state's higher education funding mechanisms, including approaches to funding capital improvement projects at public institutions of higher education. Evaluate modifications that would improve the institutions' national peer rankings and help the state to achieve its Closing the Gaps objectives, including improved community college transfer pathways and the impact of shifting the basis of the formula funding methodologies from attempted to completed hours. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
7. Monitor the progress of the capital improvement plan and use of state funds at The University of Texas at Galveston involving the renovation and upgrade of existing facilities and the construction of new facilities. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
8. Study the feasibility of offering an optional curriculum that emphasizes ethics, Western civilization, and American traditions to satisfy portions of the Texas Core Curriculum.
9. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Human Services

1. Monitor the implementation of the Department of Justice settlement agreement, SB 643 (81R), and other reforms to services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
2. Monitor the implementation of provisions in SB 2080 (81R) relating to the creation of a permanency assistance program. Evaluate and make recommendations about the foster care licensing process for relatives, the payment structure for a relative who becomes a child's permanent managing conservator, and any factors that should be considered in evaluating program performance and sustainability in the future.
3. Determine the feasibility of instituting a comprehensive, single point of entry system to simplify and expedite the process of accessing long-term care services for the elderly and individuals with physical disabilities.
4. Monitor the Health and Human Services Commission's progress toward improving the timeliness of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program eligibility determinations. Evaluate the impact of corrective measures already taken by the commission.
5. Analyze the practice of using informal or voluntary caregivers ("parental child safety placements") during a Child Protective Services investigation. Study and make recommendations regarding:
 - a) efforts to track data related to parental child safety placements;
 - b) incorporation of the power of attorney process authorized by SB 1598 (81R);
 - c) appropriateness of voluntary placement;
 - d) review of caregiver qualifications; and
 - e) potential improvements to the voluntary placement process.
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Insurance

1. Study title insurance rates and whether changes to the current ratemaking process would be beneficial to consumers.
2. Examine the Texas Department of Insurance's (TDI) recently adopted Procedural Rule P-5.1, allowing a title insurance company to issue a policy containing a general exception from coverage for minerals. Determine whether Procedural Rule P-50.1, governing the use of the Minerals and Surface Damage Endorsements Forms (T-19.2 and T-19.3), should result in a different rate schedule for policies. Study the appropriateness, feasibility, and sustainability of title insurance companies writing the type of policy now required by P-50.1.
3. Study whether a new system or process should be employed to expedite appeals by insurers against TDI in homeowner's rate cases.
4. Monitor implementation of the Healthy Texas insurance program established by SB 78 (81R).
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence

1. Study current barratry laws in Texas and make recommendations as to their adequacy in protecting citizens from unscrupulous behavior.
2. Study and make recommendations regarding the use of arbitration in Texas and the effect such practices have on state jurisprudence.
3. Review the burden of proof and damage calculation models for certain causes of action to determine appropriate applicability in Texas law.
4. Study and report on third-party liability issues involving workers' compensation, including the frequency and success rates of third-party litigation, the relationship, if any, between third-party litigation and jobsite safety, the adequacy of compensation and reimbursement to workers, and the economic costs of third-party litigation and equitable and contractual subrogation in construction activities. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Business and Industry*
5. Study the human and sex trafficking problem in Texas. Make recommendations on best practices in the areas of investigation, prosecution, and tracking of the victims of these crimes. Study whether victims of these crimes are allowed to adequately recover from their attackers in a civil cause of action. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence*
6. Review the Texas campaign finance law in judicial races in light of the recent United States Supreme Court decision *Caperton v. Massey*. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Elections*
7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Land and Resource Management

1. Evaluate the appropriateness of creating pedestrian-only areas on the public beaches of the state.
2. Examine unresolved issues relating to eminent domain legislation introduced during the 81st Legislative Session. Monitor any pending litigation.
3. Examine the granting of easements on state-owned lands, including lands managed by institutions of higher education and the General Land Office.
4. Study the causes of coastal erosion along the Texas coast. Evaluate current and alternate funding sources. Review federal programs and their relationship to the state program.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Licensing and Administrative Procedures

1. Review the current training standards used for emergency telecommunications personnel, particularly evaluating their effectiveness in adequately training 911 operators.
2. Examine the licensing and procedures involved with the regulation of motor vehicle manufacturers and distributors under the Occupations Code and the need for statutory revisions resulting from recent developments in the marketplace, motor vehicle manufacturer bankruptcies, and manufacturer practices and policies.
3. Study all existing occupational licensing programs and determine their impact on consumers, competition, and the cost of services. Review and explore the extent to which new licensing programs are necessary.
4. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Natural Resources

1. Evaluate groundwater regulations and permitting processes throughout the state, including the role of state agencies in groundwater management, the development of desired future conditions, and the adoption of groundwater management plans in relation to regional and state water planning.
2. Monitor the effects of current and proposed federal initiatives that could impact the implementation of the State Water Plan. Evaluate the policies and investments developed by other states dealing with water issues similar to the State of Texas.
3. Monitor ongoing drought conditions and initiatives to promote water conservation through the review of the following: state requirements for the submittal of water conservation plans and annual reporting; the "trigger" for use of drought contingency plans; recommendations by state agencies and the Water Conservation Advisory Council; and progress toward the development of recycled water resources and desalination projects.
4. Evaluate the regulatory model for investor-owned water and sewer utilities, including rate case process and timing, consultant fee recovery, overall cost reductions, and more effective consumer participation.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Pensions, Investments, and Financial Services

1. Study the impact of the debt relief industry, including debt management and debt settlement organizations, and the implications of regulating that industry.
2. Examine Texas school districts' administration of their employees' optional retirement investments.
3. Review and study the overall history, goals, and performances of the state's economic development program, Certified Capital Company. Identify and recommend changes as necessary.
4. Examine the performance and accountability of the Texas public pension funds and make recommendations as needed.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Public Education

1. Monitor the implementation of the public school accountability, college readiness, and other reforms enacted by HB 3 (81R) and recommend adjustments as needed.
2. Study the role of public schools in promoting student health, providing health related information, and responding to infectious diseases, including the H1N1 virus.
3. Study the best leadership and management practices of campus administrators for improving student achievement, with particular focus on effective leadership models for improving low-performing campuses. Make recommendations on how to implement successful strategies at scale. Review the current administrator certification process and make suggestions for improvements.
4. Review policies to ensure the availability of quality science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) curriculum to all students in primary and secondary education. Examine strategies to increase the supply and improve retention rates of teachers in STEM fields.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Public Health

1. Monitor implementation of legislation intended to curb rising obesity rates in Texas. Study and make recommendations regarding better coordination of prevention efforts and evidence-based strategies to reduce the impact of obesity on health care costs. Include recommendations related to the use of federal stimulus funds targeted toward obesity prevention.
2. Study the state's ability to respond to the H1N1 virus. Examine issues related to vaccine and antiviral distribution and capacity, disease surveillance, communication with providers and the public, intergovernmental cooperation, and medical surge capability.
3. Determine how the state can best coordinate efforts to streamline health care delivery with health information technology (HIT). Identify areas in state law that affect the adoption and use of HIT. Recommend statutory changes as necessary.
4. Identify factors influencing health care cost trends in Texas, including practices or policies that may contribute to regional variations. Investigate medical imaging utilization and its impact on the cost and quality of health care. Recommend policy changes to promote best practices, reduce costs, and improve quality within the state Medicaid program, Employees Retirement System, and Teacher Retirement System. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
5. Examine the need for and barriers to implementing routine HIV screenings as recommended in 2006 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Assess the impact of implementation on HIV transmission, health outcomes, clinical progression, and mortality.
6. Pursuant to HB 1672 (81R), Section 4, study the policies and procedures related to the disclosure required by Chapter 33, Health and Safety Code, to the parent, managing conservator, or guardian of a newborn child.
7. Identify any gaps in Texas laws that may prevent coordinated efforts, both statewide and on the border, to ensure a safe food supply. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Border and Intergovernmental Affairs*
8. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Public Safety

1. Study the recruitment and retention practices that the Department of Public Safety currently employs and make recommendations on how to make improvements. Specifically, examine the current officer shortage in Texas and the effect it is having on the state's public safety.
2. Investigate best practices to process concealed handgun licenses in order to alleviate backlog and make recommendations for implementation, if appropriate.
3. Monitor the Driver Responsibility Program and consider methods for overall improvement of the program.
4. Study the statutory definition, duties, and authority of a Texas peace officer.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of state operations at controlling drug-related crimes and other violence along the Texas-Mexico border. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Border and Intergovernmental Affairs*
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Redistricting

1. Conduct public hearings in appropriate locations to obtain public input on all issues relating to the redistricting of legislative, congressional, and State Board of Education districts following the release of the federal census in 2011.
2. Gather information regarding the existence and location of communities of interest to be considered in the creation of legislative, congressional, and State Board of Education districts.
3. Monitor related federal developments, including those affecting the conduct of the 2010 federal census.
4. Monitor the Texas Legislative Council and other state agencies to ensure that software applications and other support services relating to redistricting are available to the 82nd Legislature.

House Select Committee on Federal Economic Stabilization Funding

1. Monitor the use of funds, adherence to state and federal reporting requirements, and ongoing development of federal rules and regulations provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Evaluate the impact of those funds on the state's economy. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
2. Review the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' Weatherization Assistance Program and increased funding from ARRA. Examine the methodology used to distribute funds and the program's effectiveness at reducing residential energy costs. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Urban Affairs*
3. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on State Affairs

1. Review state compliance with federal law regarding undocumented immigrants. Evaluate the costs of services and benefits provided to undocumented immigrants by state agencies and local governments.
2. Examine state policy on "green" technologies for all state buildings and costs associated with such implementation.
3. Monitor federal legislation and regulatory initiatives pertaining to climate change and its effects on utilities and consumers. Consider Texas' response to proposals and make recommendations as to any further preparations.
4. Examine the state's portfolio of electric generation resources, including traditional sources, emerging renewable technologies, and energy efficiency. Determine whether the existing state regulatory programs and incentives are adequate to meet the energy needs of the future. Consider factors relating to reliability, requirements for additional transmission, or auxiliary services. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Energy Resources*
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Technology, Economic Development, and Workforce

1. Identify promising technologies being developed that could establish Texas as a leader in emerging industries. Examine the adequacy and focus of research in these areas and the state's efforts to commercialize proven technologies.
2. Examine ways to keep Texas' workforce and economy competitive. Determine how Texas can enhance its competitiveness in a strategic manner, including bringing new jobs to Texas.
3. Review ways in which communities can meet increasing demand for child-care services while preparing children to succeed in school, including the implementation of the Texas Workforce Commission's Child Care and Development Fund Plan for Texas.
4. Study opportunities to expand broadband access in underserved communities through innovative new technologies and identify whether federal funding sources may be utilized.
5. Analyze the awards that have been granted under the Texas Enterprise Fund and Emerging Technology Fund and determine how these awards have impacted job creation, capital investment, and economic development in the state.
6. Review the Unemployment Compensation Fund and its impact on business taxpayers to determine whether changes may be made to stabilize the fund in times of economic contraction without imposing an undue economic burden on businesses. Determine whether modernizations should be implemented to make the fund more efficient and effective. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Business and Industry*
7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Transportation

1. Monitor the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to ensure the agency is implementing recommended legislative, sunset, and Grant Thornton management audit changes.
2. Review the organization and operation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Consider the relationship between MPOs and TxDOT regarding transportation planning and programming.
3. Study the practices and procedures used in the development of toll roads and make recommendations as necessary.
4. Review federal, state, and local programs to promote traffic light signalization, improve traffic flow, and reduce congestion.
5. Study methods for improving safety on Texas roadways. Study the funding levels of crash prevention programs directed toward pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, and other vulnerable road users. Explore ways to improve safety for roadside workers.
6. Study the safety and efficiency of the existing agriculture-related transportation infrastructure. Consider the air, ground, and rail transportation needs of rural Texas and analyze the effect on economic development. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Agriculture and Livestock.*
7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Urban Affairs

1. Examine the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' (TDHCA) regional allocation formula policies and determine methodologies that could enhance equitable distribution.
2. Review the TDCHA's Weatherization Assistance Program and increased funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Examine the methodology used to distribute funds and the program's effectiveness at reducing residential energy costs. *Joint Interim Charge with House Select Committee on Federal Economic Stabilization Funding*
3. Evaluate the method of distributing federal hurricane relief funds and recommend improvements. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
4. Make recommendations regarding the feasibility of a housing initiative that promotes independence and prevents unnecessary institutionalization of eligible populations.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Ways and Means

1. Monitor the revised franchise tax and identify changes to simplify the tax and improve compliance and fairness.
2. Examine the state's major tax exemptions to determine how the current costs and benefits compare with the original legislative objectives. Make recommendations for adjustments as needed.
3. Study methods for improving the quality and uniformity of, and communications to taxpayers about, property tax appraisals.
4. Evaluate the impact of the transfer of administrative law judges from the Comptroller's Office to the State Office of Administrative Hearings on the dispute resolution process.
5. Study the tax structure as applied to cable versus satellite service to determine if any unfair competition results from state tax policies.
6. Monitor the implementation of property tax appraisal and alternative valuation appeal reforms enacted by the 81st Legislature.
7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

Interim Committee Charges
Texas House of Representatives
81st Legislature



Speaker Joe Straus

November 2009

House Committee on Agriculture and Livestock

1. Evaluate the impact of tick-borne diseases in domestic and exotic livestock and of plant diseases and pests on the Texas agriculture industry. Examine barriers limiting the state's response and identify resources to enhance the state's ability to control, prevent, and respond to disease vectors.
2. Review efforts to manage feral hog populations and mitigate damage to agricultural and livestock operations.
3. Study the safety and efficiency of the existing agriculture-related transportation infrastructure. Consider the air, ground, and rail transportation needs of rural Texas and analyze the effect on economic development. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Transportation*
4. Survey rural economic development programs. Analyze the economic relationship between rural communities and the agriculture industry and their combined impact on the state's economy. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on County Affairs*
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Appropriations

1. Monitor the performance of state agencies and institutions, including operating budgets, plans to carry out legislative initiatives, caseload projections, performance measure attainment, implementation of all rider provisions, and any other matter affecting the fiscal condition of the agencies and the state.
2. Monitor the use of funds, adherence to state and federal reporting requirements, and ongoing development of federal rules and regulations provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Evaluate the impact of those funds on the state's economy. *Joint Interim Charge with House Select Committee on Federal Economic Stabilization Funding*
3. Examine the growth of constitutionally and statutorily dedicated accounts and their utilization in the budget.
4. Examine the Constitutional Debt Limit, the state's current bonding practices and projected bonding needs, and their impact on the state budget.
5. Monitor the Department of Information Resources' ongoing implementation of data center services consolidation and the Texas Online program.
6. Study the cost and caseload trends in the Texas Medicaid Program, including a review of cost drivers, factors affecting caseload increases, and regional variations. Evaluate the effectiveness of current Medicaid cost containment procedures and make recommendations for legislative changes to contain and control state costs and maximize federal funding without impacting services.
7. Examine the Texas Education Agency's programs and services, including the Student Success Initiative, and evaluate their impact on achieving the stated agency and statewide goals.
8. Evaluate programs designed to assist students and families in paying the costs of accessing the state's higher education system, including financial aid programs and the Texas Guaranteed Tuition Plan. Examine the impact these programs have on student achievement and the Closing the Gaps initiative.
9. Examine the state's higher education funding mechanisms, including approaches to funding capital improvement projects at public institutions of higher education. Evaluate modifications that would improve the institutions' national peer rankings and help the state to achieve its Closing the Gaps objectives, including improved community college transfer pathways and the impact of shifting the basis of the formula funding methodologies from attempted to completed hours. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Higher Education*

10. Examine annual cost increases and the factors related to the increases for Correctional Managed Health Care. Recommend policy changes that could yield savings to the state.
11. Examine implementation of the diversion pilot programs, juvenile case management system, and other policy and funding initiatives to determine whether the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and the Texas Youth Commission have adhered to legislative directive in implementing these programs, and the impact of these programs on commitments at the Texas Youth Commission. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Corrections*
12. Evaluate the method of distributing federal hurricane relief funds and recommend improvements. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Urban Affairs*
13. Monitor the progress of the capital improvement plan and use of state funds at The University of Texas at Galveston involving the renovation and upgrade of existing facilities and the construction of new facilities. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Higher Education*
14. Monitor and review the disbursement and use of border and homeland security funds. Evaluate the effectiveness in meeting the state's border and homeland security program goals and objectives. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs*
15. Identify factors influencing health care cost trends in Texas, including practices or policies that may contribute to regional variations. Investigate medical imaging utilization and its impact on the cost and quality of health care. Recommend policy changes to promote best practices, reduce costs, and improve quality within the state Medicaid program, Employees Retirement System, and Teacher Retirement System. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Public Health*

House Committee on Border and Intergovernmental Affairs

1. Evaluate the effectiveness of state operations at controlling drug-related crimes and other violence along the Texas-Mexico border. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Public Safety*
2. Identify any gaps in Texas laws that may prevent coordinated efforts, both statewide and on the border, to ensure a safe food supply. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Public Health*
3. Examine current state laws and regulations aimed at improving economic development in the state and determine their impact on communities along the Texas-Mexico border. Identify any changes that would improve economic development results along the Texas-Mexico border.
4. Analyze state laws and regulations and the efforts of the multiple state entities responsible for addressing the needs of Texas residents in colonias. Determine the effectiveness of such programs and suggest improvements.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Business and Industry

1. Examine Title 11 of the Texas Property Code to determine if the various independent statutes are sufficient to protect the interest of homeowners and homeowners associations. Consider whether Title 11 should be consolidated with other laws.
2. Study and report on third-party liability issues involving workers' compensation, including the frequency and success rates of third-party litigation, the relationship, if any, between third-party litigation and jobsite safety, the adequacy of compensation and reimbursement to workers, and the economic costs of third-party litigation and equitable and contractual subrogation in construction activities. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence*
3. Review the Unemployment Compensation Fund and its impact on business taxpayers to determine whether changes may be made to stabilize the fund in times of economic contraction without imposing an undue economic burden on businesses. Determine whether modernizations should be implemented to make the fund more efficient and effective. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Technology, Economic Development, and Workforce*
4. Examine ways to increase the creation of jobs in the Texas manufacturing industry.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Corrections

1. Examine implementation of the diversion pilot programs, juvenile case management system, and other policy and funding initiatives to determine whether the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission and the Texas Youth Commission have adhered to legislative directive in implementing these programs, and the impact of these programs on commitments at the Texas Youth Commission. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
2. Study and evaluate the availability and efficiency of community-based corrections supervision and treatment programs and their impact on prison capacity and recidivism rates. Determine whether the supervision and treatment programs have been designed in accordance with evidence-based practices and whether adequate evaluation methods have been incorporated.
3. Study current re-entry programs and procedures across the juvenile and adult criminal justice continuum. Make recommendations to ensure that offenders who are released or discharged have the necessary supervision and access to employment, housing, treatment, and other support programs to allow successful entry and integration into the community. Evaluate the working relationship between state agencies facilitating re-entry and make recommendations on how to achieve greater efficiency and cost savings.
4. Examine policies and programs designed to identify, divert, and enhance the supervision and treatment of special needs offenders within local jails and state correctional facilities. Recommend changes to address appropriate alternatives to incarceration or institutionalization.
5. Review the range of services provided to females in the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems and recommend changes to ensure responsiveness to gender-specific issues. Review should include institutional and community supervision programs and utilization of correctional facilities that house non-adjudicated populations.
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on County Affairs

1. Study the current practices and tools available to counties to manage growth and development. Consider incompatible land uses and county rulemaking authority, including rulemaking authority bracketed to counties of a certain population.
2. Study county-level health care delivery models for indigent health care that emphasize community-based care to improve the continuity and quality of care. Compare urban and rural health care delivery models and make necessary legislative recommendations.
3. Study county oversight related to pretrial release on bond in criminal cases.
4. Examine how local governments can better inform the public about local government debts.
5. Survey rural economic development programs. Analyze the economic relationship between rural communities and the agriculture industry and their combined impact on the state's economy. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Agriculture and Livestock*
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence

1. Examine the deferred adjudication system in Texas and recommend legislative changes.
2. Study how the state presently supports the establishment and maintenance of public defender offices.
3. Study the human and sex trafficking problem in Texas. Make recommendations on best practices in the areas of investigation, prosecution, and tracking of the victims of these crimes. Study whether victims of these crimes are allowed to adequately recover from their attackers in a civil cause of action. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence*
4. Monitor the implementation of SB 1940 (81R), which established veterans court programs in Texas, and examine the link between combat stress disorders of war veterans, including post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, and the onset of criminal behavior. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs*
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Culture, Recreation, and Tourism

1. Explore ways to promote and improve economic development through heritage, cultural, recreational, and historical programs. Consider the long-term economic impact of state parks in promoting tourism and recreation.
2. Examine Texas Parks and Wildlife's current licensing and permitting process, including available exemptions, occupational licensing, potential for reducing the number of permits for a single permit holder, and assessment of fees.
3. Review the Texas Wildlife Action Plan and make recommendations on ways to further support aquatic and nongame programs.
4. Study ways to improve economic development in Texas through the film and music industries.
5. Monitor the long-term plans to improve state parks. Consider the feasibility of acquiring additional park land.
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs

1. Investigate strategies to address incompatible land use surrounding Texas military installations. Study approaches that minimize conflict with neighboring landowners.
2. Evaluate the advantages, including potential cost savings, of centralizing call center activities for referral to benefits providers for veterans.
3. Monitor and review the disbursement and use of border and homeland security funds. Evaluate the effectiveness in meeting the state's border and homeland security program goals and objectives. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
4. Study ways the state can enhance military and overseas voters' ability to obtain and return balloting materials and reduce burdens on those voters' exercise of their right to vote. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Elections*
5. Monitor the implementation of SB 1940 (81R), which established veterans court programs in Texas, and examine the link between combat stress disorders of war veterans, including post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, and the onset of criminal behavior. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence*
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Elections

1. Study ways the state can enhance military and overseas voters' ability to obtain and return balloting materials and reduce burdens on those voters' exercise of their right to vote. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Defense and Veterans' Affairs*
2. Examine the use of central polling places and compare voter turnout and the number of rejected provisional ballots in counties that use central polling places with similar counties that do not.
3. Examine the prevalence of fraud in Texas elections. Study new laws in other states regarding voter identification and recommend statutory changes necessary to ensure that only eligible voters can vote in Texas elections.
4. Review the Texas campaign finance law in judicial races in light of the recent United States Supreme Court decision *Caperton v. Massey*. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence*
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Energy Resources

1. Survey current local ordinances governing surface use of property in oil and gas development. Recommend changes, if any, to the authority of the Railroad Commission to regulate the operation of oil and gas industries in urban areas of the state, particularly the Barnett Shale.
2. Monitor the implementation of recent legislation dealing with carbon capture and storage and make recommendations as to whether further action is required to resolve outstanding issues. Examine proposed legislation from other states and review federal initiatives.
3. Examine the state's portfolio of electric generation resources, including traditional sources, emerging renewable technologies, and energy efficiency. Determine whether the existing state regulatory programs and incentives are adequate to meet the energy needs of the future. Consider factors relating to reliability, requirements for additional transmission, or auxiliary services. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on State Affairs*
4. Consider the establishment of uniform statutes and codes relating to liquid petroleum gas permitting and operations as a means to resolve conflicts of interpretation between state and local jurisdictions.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Environmental Regulation

1. Examine the regulation of air quality in the areas of permitting new and modified sources, public participation, and enforcement. Consider data and proposed federal standards and rules as they relate to the State Implementation Plan.
2. Survey existing recycling programs and suggest needed improvements.
3. Monitor federal legislative and regulatory initiatives as they pertain to climate change. Consider Texas' responses to proposals and make recommendations as to any further preparations.
4. Study the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality's use of supplemental environmental projects in its enforcement process.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on General Investigating and Ethics

1. Review state law in light of the effects of Texas Ethics Commission Advisory Opinion No. 484 relating to acceptance of benefits provided to officeholders. Recommend any necessary legislative changes.
2. Review the definition of "political advertising" and determine whether the definition should be expanded to include content contained in blogs and other types of Internet communications.
3. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Higher Education

1. Evaluate the state's continuing effort to close achievement gaps in success, participation, excellence, and research by 2015. Study how state public education institutions compare to peer institutions around the country.
2. Study current financial aid programs, tuition and fee exemption programs, loan repayment programs, and professional incentive programs. Evaluate the impact of need-based versus merit-based assistance. Recommend changes where appropriate to improve the alignment of these programs to meet state needs.
3. Review the structure and operation of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board. Evaluate the board's data collection systems, including costs to higher education institutions, and make recommendations for improvements.
4. Study and recommend strategies for improving community college participation and success. Examine the role of community colleges within the state higher education system. Include a review of programs, practices, and incentives to improve efficiency and productivity, such as expanding dual credit options, encouraging credit by examination, and improving student preparation in high school.
5. Study and recommend strategies for reducing the costs of instructional materials in higher education institutions, including electronic textbooks, open source materials, and other web-based resources.
6. Examine the state's higher education funding mechanisms, including approaches to funding capital improvement projects at public institutions of higher education. Evaluate modifications that would improve the institutions' national peer rankings and help the state to achieve its Closing the Gaps objectives, including improved community college transfer pathways and the impact of shifting the basis of the formula funding methodologies from attempted to completed hours. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
7. Monitor the progress of the capital improvement plan and use of state funds at The University of Texas at Galveston involving the renovation and upgrade of existing facilities and the construction of new facilities. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
8. Study the feasibility of offering an optional curriculum that emphasizes ethics, Western civilization, and American traditions to satisfy portions of the Texas Core Curriculum.
9. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Human Services

1. Monitor the implementation of the Department of Justice settlement agreement, SB 643 (81R), and other reforms to services for persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
2. Monitor the implementation of provisions in SB 2080 (81R) relating to the creation of a permanency assistance program. Evaluate and make recommendations about the foster care licensing process for relatives, the payment structure for a relative who becomes a child's permanent managing conservator, and any factors that should be considered in evaluating program performance and sustainability in the future.
3. Determine the feasibility of instituting a comprehensive, single point of entry system to simplify and expedite the process of accessing long-term care services for the elderly and individuals with physical disabilities.
4. Monitor the Health and Human Services Commission's progress toward improving the timeliness of Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program eligibility determinations. Evaluate the impact of corrective measures already taken by the commission.
5. Analyze the practice of using informal or voluntary caregivers ("parental child safety placements") during a Child Protective Services investigation. Study and make recommendations regarding:
 - a) efforts to track data related to parental child safety placements;
 - b) incorporation of the power of attorney process authorized by SB 1598 (81R);
 - c) appropriateness of voluntary placement;
 - d) review of caregiver qualifications; and
 - e) potential improvements to the voluntary placement process.
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Insurance

1. Study title insurance rates and whether changes to the current ratemaking process would be beneficial to consumers.
2. Examine the Texas Department of Insurance's (TDI) recently adopted Procedural Rule P-5.1, allowing a title insurance company to issue a policy containing a general exception from coverage for minerals. Determine whether Procedural Rule P-50.1, governing the use of the Minerals and Surface Damage Endorsements Forms (T-19.2 and T-19.3), should result in a different rate schedule for policies. Study the appropriateness, feasibility, and sustainability of title insurance companies writing the type of policy now required by P-50.1.
3. Study whether a new system or process should be employed to expedite appeals by insurers against TDI in homeowner's rate cases.
4. Monitor implementation of the Healthy Texas insurance program established by SB 78 (81R).
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence

1. Study current barratry laws in Texas and make recommendations as to their adequacy in protecting citizens from unscrupulous behavior.
2. Study and make recommendations regarding the use of arbitration in Texas and the effect such practices have on state jurisprudence.
3. Review the burden of proof and damage calculation models for certain causes of action to determine appropriate applicability in Texas law.
4. Study and report on third-party liability issues involving workers' compensation, including the frequency and success rates of third-party litigation, the relationship, if any, between third-party litigation and jobsite safety, the adequacy of compensation and reimbursement to workers, and the economic costs of third-party litigation and equitable and contractual subrogation in construction activities. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Business and Industry*
5. Study the human and sex trafficking problem in Texas. Make recommendations on best practices in the areas of investigation, prosecution, and tracking of the victims of these crimes. Study whether victims of these crimes are allowed to adequately recover from their attackers in a civil cause of action. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence*
6. Review the Texas campaign finance law in judicial races in light of the recent United States Supreme Court decision *Caperton v. Massey*. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Elections*
7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Land and Resource Management

1. Evaluate the appropriateness of creating pedestrian-only areas on the public beaches of the state.
2. Examine unresolved issues relating to eminent domain legislation introduced during the 81st Legislative Session. Monitor any pending litigation.
3. Examine the granting of easements on state-owned lands, including lands managed by institutions of higher education and the General Land Office.
4. Study the causes of coastal erosion along the Texas coast. Evaluate current and alternate funding sources. Review federal programs and their relationship to the state program.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Licensing and Administrative Procedures

1. Review the current training standards used for emergency telecommunications personnel, particularly evaluating their effectiveness in adequately training 911 operators.
2. Examine the licensing and procedures involved with the regulation of motor vehicle manufacturers and distributors under the Occupations Code and the need for statutory revisions resulting from recent developments in the marketplace, motor vehicle manufacturer bankruptcies, and manufacturer practices and policies.
3. Study all existing occupational licensing programs and determine their impact on consumers, competition, and the cost of services. Review and explore the extent to which new licensing programs are necessary.
4. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Natural Resources

1. Evaluate groundwater regulations and permitting processes throughout the state, including the role of state agencies in groundwater management, the development of desired future conditions, and the adoption of groundwater management plans in relation to regional and state water planning.
2. Monitor the effects of current and proposed federal initiatives that could impact the implementation of the State Water Plan. Evaluate the policies and investments developed by other states dealing with water issues similar to the State of Texas.
3. Monitor ongoing drought conditions and initiatives to promote water conservation through the review of the following: state requirements for the submittal of water conservation plans and annual reporting; the "trigger" for use of drought contingency plans; recommendations by state agencies and the Water Conservation Advisory Council; and progress toward the development of recycled water resources and desalination projects.
4. Evaluate the regulatory model for investor-owned water and sewer utilities, including rate case process and timing, consultant fee recovery, overall cost reductions, and more effective consumer participation.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Pensions, Investments, and Financial Services

1. Study the impact of the debt relief industry, including debt management and debt settlement organizations, and the implications of regulating that industry.
2. Examine Texas school districts' administration of their employees' optional retirement investments.
3. Review and study the overall history, goals, and performances of the state's economic development program, Certified Capital Company. Identify and recommend changes as necessary.
4. Examine the performance and accountability of the Texas public pension funds and make recommendations as needed.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Public Education

1. Monitor the implementation of the public school accountability, college readiness, and other reforms enacted by HB 3 (81R) and recommend adjustments as needed.
2. Study the role of public schools in promoting student health, providing health related information, and responding to infectious diseases, including the H1N1 virus.
3. Study the best leadership and management practices of campus administrators for improving student achievement, with particular focus on effective leadership models for improving low-performing campuses. Make recommendations on how to implement successful strategies at scale. Review the current administrator certification process and make suggestions for improvements.
4. Review policies to ensure the availability of quality science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) curriculum to all students in primary and secondary education. Examine strategies to increase the supply and improve retention rates of teachers in STEM fields.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Public Health

1. Monitor implementation of legislation intended to curb rising obesity rates in Texas. Study and make recommendations regarding better coordination of prevention efforts and evidence-based strategies to reduce the impact of obesity on health care costs. Include recommendations related to the use of federal stimulus funds targeted toward obesity prevention.
2. Study the state's ability to respond to the H1N1 virus. Examine issues related to vaccine and antiviral distribution and capacity, disease surveillance, communication with providers and the public, intergovernmental cooperation, and medical surge capability.
3. Determine how the state can best coordinate efforts to streamline health care delivery with health information technology (HIT). Identify areas in state law that affect the adoption and use of HIT. Recommend statutory changes as necessary.
4. Identify factors influencing health care cost trends in Texas, including practices or policies that may contribute to regional variations. Investigate medical imaging utilization and its impact on the cost and quality of health care. Recommend policy changes to promote best practices, reduce costs, and improve quality within the state Medicaid program, Employees Retirement System, and Teacher Retirement System. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
5. Examine the need for and barriers to implementing routine HIV screenings as recommended in 2006 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Assess the impact of implementation on HIV transmission, health outcomes, clinical progression, and mortality.
6. Pursuant to HB 1672 (81R), Section 4, study the policies and procedures related to the disclosure required by Chapter 33, Health and Safety Code, to the parent, managing conservator, or guardian of a newborn child.
7. Identify any gaps in Texas laws that may prevent coordinated efforts, both statewide and on the border, to ensure a safe food supply. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Border and Intergovernmental Affairs*
8. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Public Safety

1. Study the recruitment and retention practices that the Department of Public Safety currently employs and make recommendations on how to make improvements. Specifically, examine the current officer shortage in Texas and the effect it is having on the state's public safety.
2. Investigate best practices to process concealed hand gun licenses in order to alleviate backlog and make recommendations for implementation, if appropriate.
3. Monitor the Driver Responsibility Program and consider methods for overall improvement of the program.
4. Study the statutory definition, duties, and authority of a Texas peace officer.
5. Evaluate the effectiveness of state operations at controlling drug-related crimes and other violence along the Texas-Mexico border. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Border and Intergovernmental Affairs*
6. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Redistricting

1. Conduct public hearings in appropriate locations to obtain public input on all issues relating to the redistricting of legislative, congressional, and State Board of Education districts following the release of the federal census in 2011.
2. Gather information regarding the existence and location of communities of interest to be considered in the creation of legislative, congressional, and State Board of Education districts.
3. Monitor related federal developments, including those affecting the conduct of the 2010 federal census.
4. Monitor the Texas Legislative Council and other state agencies to ensure that software applications and other support services relating to redistricting are available to the 82nd Legislature.

House Select Committee on Federal Economic Stabilization Funding

1. Monitor the use of funds, adherence to state and federal reporting requirements, and ongoing development of federal rules and regulations provided under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Evaluate the impact of those funds on the state's economy. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
2. Review the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' Weatherization Assistance Program and increased funding from ARRA. Examine the methodology used to distribute funds and the program's effectiveness at reducing residential energy costs. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Urban Affairs*
3. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on State Affairs

1. Review state compliance with federal law regarding undocumented immigrants. Evaluate the costs of services and benefits provided to undocumented immigrants by state agencies and local governments.
2. Examine state policy on "green" technologies for all state buildings and costs associated with such implementation.
3. Monitor federal legislation and regulatory initiatives pertaining to climate change and its effects on utilities and consumers. Consider Texas' response to proposals and make recommendations as to any further preparations.
4. Examine the state's portfolio of electric generation resources, including traditional sources, emerging renewable technologies, and energy efficiency. Determine whether the existing state regulatory programs and incentives are adequate to meet the energy needs of the future. Consider factors relating to reliability, requirements for additional transmission, or auxiliary services. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Energy Resources*
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Technology, Economic Development, and Workforce

1. Identify promising technologies being developed that could establish Texas as a leader in emerging industries. Examine the adequacy and focus of research in these areas and the state's efforts to commercialize proven technologies.
2. Examine ways to keep Texas' workforce and economy competitive. Determine how Texas can enhance its competitiveness in a strategic manner, including bringing new jobs to Texas.
3. Review ways in which communities can meet increasing demand for child-care services while preparing children to succeed in school, including the implementation of the Texas Workforce Commission's Child Care and Development Fund Plan for Texas.
4. Study opportunities to expand broadband access in underserved communities through innovative new technologies and identify whether federal funding sources may be utilized.
5. Analyze the awards that have been granted under the Texas Enterprise Fund and Emerging Technology Fund and determine how these awards have impacted job creation, capital investment, and economic development in the state.
6. Review the Unemployment Compensation Fund and its impact on business taxpayers to determine whether changes may be made to stabilize the fund in times of economic contraction without imposing an undue economic burden on businesses. Determine whether modernizations should be implemented to make the fund more efficient and effective. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Business and Industry*
7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Transportation

1. Monitor the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) to ensure the agency is implementing recommended legislative, sunset, and Grant Thornton management audit changes.
2. Review the organization and operation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Consider the relationship between MPOs and TxDOT regarding transportation planning and programming.
3. Study the practices and procedures used in the development of toll roads and make recommendations as necessary.
4. Review federal, state, and local programs to promote traffic light signalization, improve traffic flow, and reduce congestion.
5. Study methods for improving safety on Texas roadways. Study the funding levels of crash prevention programs directed toward pedestrians, bicyclists, motorcyclists, and other vulnerable road users. Explore ways to improve safety for roadside workers.
6. Study the safety and efficiency of the existing agriculture-related transportation infrastructure. Consider the air, ground, and rail transportation needs of rural Texas and analyze the effect on economic development. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Agriculture and Livestock.*
7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Urban Affairs

1. Examine the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' (TDHCA) regional allocation formula policies and determine methodologies that could enhance equitable distribution.
2. Review the TDCHA's Weatherization Assistance Program and increased funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Examine the methodology used to distribute funds and the program's effectiveness at reducing residential energy costs. *Joint Interim Charge with House Select Committee on Federal Economic Stabilization Funding*
3. Evaluate the method of distributing federal hurricane relief funds and recommend improvements. *Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Appropriations*
4. Make recommendations regarding the feasibility of a housing initiative that promotes independence and prevents unnecessary institutionalization of eligible populations.
5. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

House Committee on Ways and Means

1. Monitor the revised franchise tax and identify changes to simplify the tax and improve compliance and fairness.
2. Examine the state's major tax exemptions to determine how the current costs and benefits compare with the original legislative objectives. Make recommendations for adjustments as needed.
3. Study methods for improving the quality and uniformity of, and communications to taxpayers about, property tax appraisals.
4. Evaluate the impact of the transfer of administrative law judges from the Comptroller's Office to the State Office of Administrative Hearings on the dispute resolution process.
5. Study the tax structure as applied to cable versus satellite service to determine if any unfair competition results from state tax policies.
6. Monitor the implementation of property tax appraisal and alternative valuation appeal reforms enacted by the 81st Legislature.
7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.