

**Senator Judith Zaffirini**  
**Summary of Legislation Passed**

**2007 (80th Legislature)**

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## BORDER AFFAIRS/COLONIAS

- SB 99**      **Colonias Classification System:** Modifies the semi-annual colonias classification report by adding additional state agencies to the list of those required to submit data regarding projects that serve colonias; directing agencies to report the exact dollar amount by colonia spent on projects; and requiring when funds are received to improve a colonia, the local government must include the most recent demographic data about the colonia. (House sponsor: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.
- SB 893**      **Railroad Toll Bridge:** Authorizes counties along the Rio Grande to construct a railroad toll bridge. (House sponsor: Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Laredo); Effective immediately.
- HB 2212**      **Consolidation of Small Towns:** Authorizes two or more noncontiguous municipalities in the same county that are separated by not more than 2.5 miles and are located within one mile of an international boundary to consolidate under one government. (House sponsor: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.
- HB 2931**      **Cars Liens for Damage to a Fence:** Authorizes a property owner to obtain a lien against a motor vehicle that damages the property owner's fence. (House author: Rep. Tracy King, D-Batesville); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 3594**      **Border Inspection Facilities:** Allows certain border cities to choose the location of an inspection facility within the municipality or the municipality's extraterritorial jurisdiction. (House author: Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Laredo); Effective immediately.

## CHILDREN

- HB 1045**      **Child Safety Month:** Designates April as Child Safety Month. (House author: Rep. Vicki Truitt, R-Southlake); Effective immediately.

## ECONOMIC AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

- HB 48**      **Distributions from Employment and Training Investment Holding Fund:** Retains the annual allotments from the Employment and Training Investment Assessment (ETIA) holding fund at the current percentages—67 percent for the Enterprise Fund and 33 percent for the skills development program. (House author: Rep. Norma Chávez, D-El Paso); Effective immediately.
- HB 374**      **Use of State Grounds by Film or Television Production Companies:** Requires the Texas Building Procurement Commission to allow film production companies to use state buildings if the filming will not interfere with state business. (House author: Rep. Joe Pickett, D-El Paso); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 550**      **Unemployment Insurance for Victims of Family Violence:** Authorizes employees to use a protective order, a police record, or medical documentation as evidence of family violence for purposes of unemployment benefits. (House author: Rep. Dawnna Dukes, D-Austin); Effective immediately.
- HB 1524**      **Sports Venue Taxation:** Allows a governing body of a municipality or county to call an election regarding the use of revenue from approved methods for financing a venue project. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.
- HB 2235**      **Rural Technology Grant:** Establishes a grant program under the Office of Rural Community Affairs to fund the construction of and equipment for rural technology centers that will prepare area students for careers in applied technology and other highly skilled industries. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.

## EDUCATION

### K-12 Education

- SB 673**       **Scooter's Law:** Allows a student in an individualized education program (IEP) who has completed the fourth year of high school to participate in graduation ceremonies. (House sponsor: Rep. Rob Eisler, R-The Woodlands); Effective immediately.

- SB 1871**      **Data Regarding Early Childhood Education and Bilingual Education**  
**Strategies:** Direct school districts to use the School Readiness Certification System to report reading assessment data to TEA for determining whether or not an early childhood program truly is preparing children to be "school ready." Evaluates the effectiveness of different bilingual education and special language program models by improving data collection and analysis. (House sponsor: Rep. Scott Hochberg, D-Houston); Effective immediately.
- HB 426**      **Discipline Alternative Education Program (DAEP) Curriculum:** Provides more specific minimum standards for DAEPs in order to ensure a quality education for students enrolled in such programs. (House author: Rep. Jerry Madden, R-Plano); Effective immediately.
- HB 1137**      **Dropout Prevention:** Authorizes diploma-seeking students who are at least 21 years of age but younger than 26 years of age to be admitted to public schools; allows districts to receive state-funding for such students; and lowers the attendance requirements necessary to obtain class credit, provided that the instructional requirements of the class are met. (House author: Rep. Scott Hochberg, D-Houston); Effective immediately.
- HB 3457**      **School Bus Idling:** Prohibits school buses with diesel engines from idling at schools or school events. (House author: Rep. Scott Hochberg, D-Houston); Effective immediately.

## Higher Education

- SB 1050**      **Work Study Mentorship:** Creates additional work-study opportunities by developing a program through which students can serve as peer mentors and tutors as part of their work-study financial aid. (House sponsor: Rep. Diane Patrick, R-Arlington); Effective immediately.
- SB 1051**      **Core Curriculum:** Provide waivers to the core curriculum to foreign students enrolled in international institutions in a joint-degree program with Texas colleges and universities. (House sponsor: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.
- SB 1053**      **Academic Advisor Accountability:** Requires the Higher Education Coordinating Board, advising professionals, and higher education representatives to develop an assessment of advisors at institutions of higher education to improve the quality of advising. (House sponsor: Rep. Jimmie Don Aycok, R-Killeen); Effective immediately.
- SB 1231**      **Refund of Tuition and Fees:** Updates regulations regarding the refund of tuition and fees in order to better reflect current business practices in refunding tuition at

general academic, medical, or dental schools. (House sponsor: Rep. Geanie Morrison, R-Victoria); Effective immediately.

**SB 1232**      **Repayment of College Emergency Loans:** Updates the process for the payment of tuition to provide institutions more flexibility in their payment plan; clarifies that emergency loans can be made via written or electronic agreement; and authorizes fees to be assessed for emergency loans. (House sponsor: Rep. Geanie Morrison, R-Victoria); Effective immediately.

**SB 1233**      **General Deposits by Higher Education Institutions:** Authorizes property deposits to be used towards tuition balances and allows a window of time before issuing tuition refunds in order to ensure that students have fully withdrawn from classes. (House sponsor: Rep. Geanie Morrison, R-Victoria); Effective immediately.

**SB 1234**      **Higher Education Master Plan:** Requires the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board's master plan to establish more effective methods for funding higher education; establish a coherent long-term financial aid strategy that takes into account both needs and merit; strengthen collaboration between two-year and four-year institutions; and develop and institutionalize long-term collaboration between primary, secondary, and higher education. (House sponsor: Rep. Patrick Rose, D-Dripping Springs); Effective immediately.

**SB 1495**      **A&M System Fees:** Modifies multiple students fees within in the Texas A&M University System. (House sponsor: Rep. David Swinford, R-Dumas); Effective immediately.

**HB 741**      **Tuition Benefits for Children of Volunteer Peace Officers:** Expands eligibility for the exemption of tuition and fees at public institutions of higher education to the dependents of volunteer law enforcement officers who have been killed or disabled in the line of duty. (House author: Rep. Tracy King, D-Batesville); Effective immediately.

**HB 1427**      **Optometry Career Program at the University of Houston:** Provides a mechanism for recruiting economically disadvantaged students to the profession of optometry. (House Author: Rep. Roberto Alonzo, D-Dallas); Effective immediately.

**HB 1775**      **School of Nursing Facilities at Stephen F. Austin State University:** Authorizes the issuance of tuition revenue bonds in the amount of \$13 million to fund an expansion of the SFA School of Nursing. (House author: Rep. Wayne Christian, R-Nacogdoches); Effective immediately.

- HB 2371**      **Career School Cease and Desist Orders:** Allows the Texas Workforce Commission to issue a cease and desist order against a career school that operates without authority unless that school fails to respond to more than one written notice of noncompliance. (House sponsor: Rep. Geanie Morrison, R-Victoria); Effective immediately.
- HB 3826**      **Uniform Admissions Requirement for Higher Education:** Creates a uniform admissions code for all institutions of higher education; and requires the recommended high school program for admissions if that program was available to a student in high school. (House author: Rep. Geanie Morrison, R-Victoria); Effective immediately.
- HB 3827**      **Conference Calls by Community College Boards:** Authorizes the governing board of a junior college district to meet by telephone conference call. (House author: Rep. Geanie Morrison, R-Victoria); Effective immediately.

## GENERAL GOVERNMENT

- SB 66:**      **Cattle Guards on County Roads:** Authorizes counties with more than 60,000 persons to construct cattle guards on county roads. (House sponsor: Rep. Sid Miller, R-Stephenville); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 967**      **Reappraisal after Tick Infestation:** Entitles an owner of land for which the Texas Animal Health Commission has established a temporary quarantine for eradicating ticks or exposure to ticks, to reappraisal of the owner's land. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.
- HB 2095**      **Funding for Rural Counties:** Authorizes counties with no incorporated areas, but that have ordinance making authority, to be eligible for any federal grant or funding program for which cities are eligible. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 2498**      **Hazardous Pay for State Employees:** Increases the amount of hazardous duty pay that a full-time correctional officer may receive from \$10 to \$12 for each 12-month period of lifetime service credit accrued by the employee, unless the amount exceeds \$300. (House author: Rep. Yvonne González Tourielles, D-Alice); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 2618**      **County Leasing Authority:** Authorizes counties to lease directly to a governmental entity without complying with certain competitive bidding procedures. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective 9/1/07.

- HB 2641**      **County Deposit Accounts:** Requires the commissioners court of a county to consider applications before the existing depository contract expires. (House author: Rep. Burt Solomons, R-Carrollton); Effective immediately.
- HB 3392**      **Resumption of Texas Municipal Retirement System (TMRS) Benefits:** Allows a retired employee to return to work for the same city without a suspension of TMRS benefits if the city department was privatized. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.
- HB 3619**      **Change of General Election Date:** Authorizes the governing body, not later than December 31, 2008, to change the date on which it holds its general elections to another authorized uniform election date. (House author: Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Laredo); Effective immediately.

## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- SB 1500**      **Rep. Glenda Dawson Organ Donation Registry:** Renames the state organ registry as the Glenda Dawson Donate Life-Texas registry, enabling it to become an affiliate of the national Donate Life America alliance and campaign. (House sponsor: Rep. Jody Laubenberg, R-Parker); Effective immediately.
- HB 246**      **Increased Reporting Regarding Persons Infected with AIDS and HIV:** Requires a health authority to report to the Department of State Health Services all cases of diagnosed HIV/AIDS infections on a weekly basis; and requires an infected person's city and county of residence, age, gender, race, ethnicity, and national origin, and the method of transmission to be included in the report. (House author: Roberto Alonzo, D-Dallas); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 1230**      **Transitions for Youth with Disabilities:** Requires the executive commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission to monitor programs and services to study trends and to promote positive outcomes for transitional youth with disabilities. (House author: Rep. Elliott Naishat, D-Austin); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 1370**      **Integrated Coordinating Council on HIV and Hepatitis:** Recreates the Interagency Coordinating Council on HIV and Hepatitis to coordinate care and prevention services in Texas. (House author: Rep. Garnet Coleman, D-Houston); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 1373**      **Chronic Kidney Disease Task Force:** Creates a task force to study and make recommendations regarding a comprehensive screening, diagnosis, and treatment plan for Texans with chronic kidney disease. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.

**HB 1396**      **Health Disparities Task Force:** Transfers the office of health disparities from the Department of State Health Services to the executive commissioner of Health and Human Services. (House author: Rep. Garnet Coleman, D-Houston); Effective 9/1/07.

**HB 3618**      **Border Health Programs to Combat Diabetes:** Creates a bilingual coordinated health program in certain school districts along the border. (House author: Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Laredo); Effective immediately.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

**SB 57:**      **Prioritize Property Tax Disputes:** Provides appraisal districts and school districts with a clearer picture of their expected tax revenues by giving ad valorem tax disputes priority and expedited status in local district courts of counties with fewer than 675,000 persons. (House sponsor: Rep. Veronica Gonzales, D-McAllen); Effective 9/1/07.

**SB 63:**      **Jim Hogg County Ordinance Authority:** Helps Jim Hogg County offer more efficient county services and prevent the proliferation of colonias by providing the county with the same authority as general-law municipalities. (House sponsor: Rep. Juan Escobar, D-Kingsville); Effective immediately.

**SB 404:**      **Bee County Groundwater Conservation District:** Codifies the statutory authority of the Bee County Groundwater Conservation District. (House sponsor: Rep. Yvonne González Touriellas, D-Alice); Effective immediately.

**SB 1236**      **Starr County Hospital District:** Update the Starr County Hospital District's enabling legislation to revise voting and election procedures, and to change the monitoring and control of the district's finances. (House sponsor: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.

**SB 1867**      **Fast Track Subdivision Plat Amendments:** Authorizes counties to amend plats to correct certain errors or omissions without public notices, publications, and hearings prescribed by plat revisions. (House sponsor: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective 9/1/07.

**SB 2029**      **San Patricio County Groundwater Conservation District:** Requires one director of the district to be elected by the voters of the entire county; requires that one director is to be elected from voters in each justice of the peace precinct; and requires eligible candidates for director to be a registered voter in the district. (House sponsor: Rep. Juan Garcia, D-Corpus Cristi); Effective immediately.



- HB 831**      **Webb County Civil Service:** Lowers from 200,000 to 190,000 the population of counties authorized to create a civil service system, thereby allowing Webb County to create a county civil service system for its employees. (House author: Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Laredo); Effective immediately.
- HB 2070:**    **Duval County Groundwater District:** Extends the deadline for the district's confirmation election and authorizes Duval County to pay for a portion of the election. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.
- HB 2072:**    **Starr County Groundwater District:** Requires the temporary directors of the district to be appointed and charges those directors with holding an election to confirm the creation of the district. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.
- HB 2322**      **Zapata County Hotel Tax:** Exempts Zapata County from the four percent limit on its hotel occupancy tax, allowing the rate to be up to the statutory seven percent limit. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.
- HB 2617**      **Laredo Court of Record:** Creates and establishes rules for the municipal courts of record in the City of Laredo. Provides the municipal court judges are to be elected to four-year terms with a limit of two terms, consistent with the city's charter. (House author: Rep. Ryan Guillen, D-Rio Grande City); Effective immediately.
- HB 4037**      **Jury Terms of 49th and 341st District Courts:** Closes the gap for jury terms of the 49th and 341st district courts to allow the courts to secure bond forfeiture for absent defendants. (House author: Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Laredo); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 4067**      **Boundaries for Zavala-Dimmit County Water Improvement District No. 1:** Allows the district to annex all the areas that are within the Bermuda Reservoir into the district, but does not impact any pre-existing water rights. (House author: Rep. Tracy King, D-Batesville); Effective immediately.

## **PREVENTION OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL ABUSE**

- SB 155**      **Licensed Chemical Dependency Counselors:** Improves the quality and retention of licensed chemical dependency counselors by modifying work experience requirements and providing additional supporting programs. (House sponsor: Rep. Jerry Madden, R-Richardson); Effective 9/1/07.

- SB 6:**       **Protecting Children from Internet Predators:** Requires Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to comply with court orders within 48 hours; raises penalties for the on-line solicitation and communication with minors; and targets rewards for the identification of unregistered sex offenders. (House sponsor: Rep. Aaron Peña, D-Edinburg); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 76**       **Collection of Sexual Assault Information:** Improves the collection and analysis of information relating to sexual offenses through the use of improved reporting by law enforcement agencies. (House author: Rep. Elliott Naishtat, D-Austin); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 401**       **Solicitation Using Text Messaging:** Adds the use of text messages or other electronic message services to the list of ways in which the offense of online solicitation of a minor may be committed; expands the offense of improper relationship between educator and student to include online solicitation of a minor, regardless of the age of the victim. (House author: Rep. Betty Brown, R-Athens); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 1889**       **Bailiffs Carrying Weapons:** Provides that certain laws regarding the unlawful carrying of a weapon and the locations in which weapons are prohibited do not apply to a bailiff escorting a judge. (House author: Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Laredo); Effective immediately.
- HB 2115**       **Deferred adjudication of certain intoxication offenses:** Prohibits a defendant from receiving deferred adjudication for committing the offenses of Driving While Intoxicated with a Child Passenger or Assembling or Operating an Amusement Ride While Intoxicated. (House author: Rep. Stephen Frost, D-Atlanta); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 3593**       **Family Violence Counseling:** Requires a family violence offender to file a completion affidavit with the court within 30 days of the expiration of the protective order or not later than the 30th day before the first anniversary of its issuance, whichever date is earlier. (House author: Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Laredo); Effective 9/1/07.

## STATE AFFAIRS

- SB 61**       **County Emergency Authority:** Allows counties to adopt an internal plan for delegation of administrative authorities, chain of succession to cover essential county functions, and meeting procedures during a catastrophic event or declared disaster. (House sponsor: Rep. Ruth Jones McClendon, D-San Antonio); Effective immediately.

- SB 64**      **Political Action Committee Contribution Reform:** Closes a loophole in the Election Code by requiring PACs to disclose contributions of more than \$5,000 during the last nine days of a campaign, which is an identical requirement of candidates and their committees. (House sponsor: Rep. Mark Strama, D-Austin); Effective 9/1/07.
- SB 1499**    **Posting for Local Governments:** Allows the suspension of Open Meeting posting requirements for governing bodies of communities that are expecting to receive large numbers of evacuees displaced by a catastrophic disaster. (House sponsor: Rep. Frank Corte, R-San Antonio); Effective immediately.
- SB 1502**    **Emergency Services District Rate Tax Increases:** Encourages the provision of emergency services by allowing an emergency services district (ESD) governing board to increase the sales tax in a part of its service area that has not reached the two percent statutory cap. (Rep. Valinda Bolton, D-Austin); Effective immediately.
- HB 590**      **Conflicts of Interest:** Clarifies and strengthens ethical standards that apply to state officials and employees by promoting consistent ethical policies among state agencies. (House author: Rep. Dianne Delisi, R-Temple); Effective 9/1/07.
- HB 842**      **Financial Statements of Judicial Officers:** Requires the Texas Ethics Commission to remove the address of a judge or justice from a financial statement before permitting a member of the public to view the statement. (House author: Rep. Richard Raymond, D-Laredo); Effective immediately.