

Policy Areas Announced for Texas Senate Committees

October 30, 2019

(Austin, TX) On Wednesday, October 30, Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick released 116 policy areas that Texas Senate Committees will study over the next year before the 2021 Legislative Session. Among the unveiled "interim charges" were policy directives given to the influential **Senate Intergovernmental Relations (IGR) Committee** chaired by **Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville)** and the greatly important **Senate Education Committee**.

Sen. Lucio's Committees to Create Greater Housing Opportunities, Stronger Infrastructure Resiliency, and Strengthen Texas' Teacher Workforce

"With these policy charges, Lt. Gov. Patrick built on the strength of my IGR Committee and asked us to hold public hearings on issues important to the quality of life of our constituents, critical to the development of our communities, and vital to our state's economy," said Chairman Lucio. "I look forward to tackling Texas' multi-million dollar Housing Tax Credit Program and to also develop stronger infrastructure resiliency. By working with key financial institutions, the development community, and construction industry, as well as our locally elected officials, we will develop the right reforms to create greater affordable housing opportunities and stronger infrastructure for our communities!"

Commenting on the significance of these policy areas Chair Lucio went on to say, "The availability of housing and strong infrastructure are critical to the growth of our communities, especially when we are trying to attract new business ventures into our region. That is why I am so thankful for the trust Lt. Gov. Patrick has shown to my Committee by giving us the right charges that will prove to be essential to the economic vitality of our communities, especially to our fast-growing South Texas region."

Additionally, Sen. Lucio also serves as **Vice-Chair of the Senate Education Committee** which was directed to review Texas' Teacher workforce, an issue of great importance to Vice-Chair Lucio. The Committee will review best practices to better recruit, prepare and retain highly effective teachers.

"As an educator by profession, I personally know the importance our classroom teachers have on the academic success of our children. That is why, as Vice-Chair of the Senate Education Committee, I am deeply committed to ensuring that we develop the right legislative recommendations that build on the best practices from across the nation. By working with our teachers and using their valuable input, I will make sure that we develop and implement stronger, more effective reforms and incentives during the 2021 Legislative Session to better retain, recruit, and prepare our classroom teachers,"

said Vice-Chair Lucio. "Our teachers and children deserve nothing less than this level of commitment. I will use my leadership position in the Senate Education Committee and seniority in the Texas Senate to make this goal a reality during the 2021 Legislature."

The interim charges received by the various committees build on critical reforms passed earlier this year during the 2019 Legislative Session. The IGR Committee will oversee the implementation of the historic Private Activity Bond Modernization Reforms authored and passed by Chairman Lucio (Senate Bill 1474), while the Senate Education Committee will have oversight of the momentous Public Education Reform passed through House Bill 3.

"As Chairman of IGR, I was honored to author one of the most important economic development reforms of the 86th Legislature, the Private Activity Bond Omnibus Bill. With SB 1474, Texas will see greater and more efficient private capital investments which will engender increased economic activity and yield stronger job creation throughout our state," said Lucio. "Lt. Gov. Patrick directing my committee to oversee the implementation of this historic rewrite of our state's most critical financial tool, and asking us to develop any additional legislative recommendations to enhance the implementation of this Texas-sized reform is testament to the importance of our IGR Committee," added Chairman Lucio.

The following are the interim charges received by the Senate IGR Committee:

- **Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program:** Review existing regulations governing the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit Program and the Qualified Allocation Plan to determine whether regulations exist that unnecessarily increase the cost of developing and maintaining affordable housing. Make recommendations to provide regulatory relief and provide greater development of affordable housing in Texas.
- **Federal Housing Review:** Study all federal housing programs accessible to Texas. Make recommendations that ensure the state maximizes the use of those programs.
- **Infrastructure Resiliency:** Examine the authority special purpose districts have to generate natural disaster resilient infrastructure. Determine ways state government can work with special purpose districts to mitigate future flooding and promote more resilient infrastructure. Make recommendations on how special purpose districts may use their statutory authority to assist in mitigating damage from future natural disasters.
- **Monitoring:** Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Senate Committee on Intergovernmental Relations passed by the 86th Legislature, as well as relevant agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction. Specifically, make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, or complete implementation of the following:

- **Senate Bill 1303**, relating to landowner rights in a city's extraterritorial jurisdiction;
- **Senate Bill 1474**, relating to private activity bonds; and
- **House Bill 2330**, relating to simplifying disaster assistance.

Members of the **Senate IGR Committee** include: Chair, Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr., D-Brownsville; Vice-Chair Sen. Charles Schwertner, R-Georgetown; Sen. Carol Alvarado, D-Houston; Sen. Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels; Sen. Pat Fallon, R-Prosper; Sen. Jose Menendez, D-San Antonio; and Sen. Robert Nichols, R-Jacksonville.

Members of the **Senate Education Committee** include: Chair, Sen. Larry Taylor, R-Friendswood; Vice-Chair Sen. Eddie Lucio, Jr., D-Brownsville; Sen. Paul Bettencourt, R-Houston; Sen. Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels; Sen. Pat Fallon, R-Prosper; Sen. Bob Hall, R-Edgewood; Sen. Bryan Hughes, R-Mineola; Sen. Angela Paxton, R-McKinney; Sen. Beverly Powell, D-Burleson; Sen. Kirk Watson, D-Austin; and Sen. Royce West, D-Dallas.

Note: The 116 interim charges can be found in through this link:

<https://www.ltgov.state.tx.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/2019-Interim-Legislative-Charges.pdf>
