



Public Policy Priorities 82nd Legislative Session

The Commissioners of the CLC have reviewed and approved the following public policy priorities for the 82nd session of the Texas Legislature. These priorities, in a number of different issue areas, will serve as a guide for the work of the CLC public policy staff.

This session, Texas faces the prospect of a large budget deficit estimated to be a minimum of \$18 billion. The CLC is concerned with both where and how the state seeks to generate revenue and where and how the state will cut spending. We encourage the state to seek equitable means of revenue generation that will grow with demand and not burden those who can least afford it. In addition, we ask that the state refrain from drastic cuts to state services that aid our most vulnerable citizens.

This list of issues and priorities is by no means exhaustive or fully inclusive of all the advocacy work the CLC will do. Each legislative session is unique and poses its own challenges and opportunities for a positive impact at the capitol and in the state. Many bills will be filed in each of our issue areas. The CLC will be monitoring their progress and taking appropriate action in support and opposition as the session develops. In addition, the staff will be monitoring bills pertaining to religious liberty, family life and health and long term care.

Throughout the session the CLC will be sending regular updates on the status of a variety of issues and will periodically send more time-sensitive alerts to let people know when their voice can have the greatest impact with lawmakers.

Gambling Expansion

- Oppose the introduction and expansion of predatory gambling enterprises including casinos in order to fund state revenue
- Maintain and protect our family-friendly tourism industry and other family-friendly businesses in Texas
- Support enhanced regulation, prosecution and penalties for 8-liner

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Christian Life Commission



machine operators

- Oppose electronic bingo machines, VLTs, the legalization of poker tournaments, and continued attempts to expand Texas Lottery games in ways not contemplated by voters when approved in 1992

Predatory Lending

- Support legislation that will close the loophole in Texas law allowing payday and auto title lenders in Texas to charge borrowers unlimited rates and fees on small loans

Hunger, Nutrition and Poverty

- Improve access to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (formerly known as Food Stamps) to help Texas families afford a nutritious diet
- Increase participation in the Summer Food Service Program so that more children in Texas will continue to receive nutritious meals when school is out
- Promote policy solutions that help increase nutrition and reduce obesity
- Create a local, sustainable, and accessible food system for all Texans

Environment

- Support renewable energy in Texas as one source for rising energy needs including increasing the amount of clean energy available by raising the Renewable Portfolio Standard
- Support programs that facilitate the recycling of electronic waste including televisions.
- Create and promote incentive programs for churches and other nonprofit organizations that make investments in solar energy and energy efficiency measures more affordable

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BAPTIST GENERAL CONVENTION OF TEXAS



Human Trafficking and Immigration

- Support efforts to pass comprehensive immigration reform on the national level
- Support border security and law enforcement policies consistent with humanitarian values
- Support efforts to protect and care for victims of human trafficking
- Support law enforcement to pursue those who trade in and profit from human trafficking.

Alcohol and Addiction

- Promote regulatory programs targeted at sellers, parents and adults, including keg registration
- Support efforts to pass smoke free ordinances in public locations including the workplace.
- Support raising the excise tax on beer and alcohol in order to raise revenue and reduce under-age drinking

Criminal Justice

- Adopt safeguards to detect and protect innocence throughout the Texas criminal justice proceedings
- Advocate for continued improvements in the juvenile justice system including measures that promote rehabilitation and community-based treatment
- Support special drug treatment prisons, substance-abuse treatment centers, treatment diversion programs, and halfway houses for minor offenders
- Support the development and expansion of re-entry programs including access to basic safety-net services for those who have completed their sentence.

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Education

- Promote the expansion of adult literacy and learning through workforce development, postsecondary access and expansion of ESL
- Support teacher training and family incentives to expand dropout prevention and drop out recovery programs
- Support parental choice within public school systems, standards of excellence and accountability for Texas charter schools and oppose providing public money for private sectarian use including vouchers

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