



Legislative UPDATE

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House Leaders “Hate Cities” and Think Mayors Are “Dumbasses”

We’re sorry for the harsh language but that was your Texas House Speaker and a key chairman talking, in remarks that Speaker Bonnen demanded be made public.

Speaker Bonnen and State Representative Dustin Burrows said, among other things, the following:

- Speaker Bonnen: “I’m passing taxpayer funded lobbying. Let me tell you something. In this office and in the conference room on that end, any mayor, county judge that was dumbass enough to come meet with me, I told them with great clarity, my goal is for this to be the worst session in the history of the legislature for cities and counties.”
- Chairman Dustin Burrows: “I hope the next session’s even worse.” Later: “We don’t raise anything, it’s already a statewide average, it’s economic development dollars, we hate cities and counties.”

The entire remarks, lasting about an hour, can be heard [here](#). A transcript of the conversation can be accessed [here](#).

All Texans, especially the mayors and county judges who Dennis Bonnen referred to as "dumbass enough to meet" with him, now know what we are dealing with.

It is shocking to hear a state official express such animosity toward the cities and counties in his own state.

The message of city officials to Speaker Bonnen is Texans live in Texas cities and it's appalling he fails to recognize that pursuing his personal vendetta will ultimately harm Texans who live in our cities.

If he intends to make things worse for Texas cities next session, legislators should have the courage to reject being bullied and be free to do what they think is best for their districts without fear of reprisals.

Texas became a great state because we had leaders with a positive vision who wanted to build great cities, not destroy them. We need leaders who will work constructively with other elected officials instead of trying to intimidate and punish them.

Our state representatives need to understand that city officials can only support state leaders who want to partner with cities, not tear them down.

Opioid Class Action Litigation Update

As reported three weeks ago in the *Legislative Update*, Texas cities have begun receiving an “opt-out” [form](#) and additional information relating to ongoing litigation over the opioid crisis. The judge in the very complex, multi-party and multi-district litigation recently took action to certify every local government in the United States as a class member in the litigation.

The court has set up a [website](#) with additional information, including a [map](#) showing the possible allocation of settlement funds, assuming a hypothetical settlement of \$1 billion is reached. The map page allows a user to enter the Texas county in which they live. The site then shows the breakdown of how much each city could expect to receive under the hypothetical settlement amount.

Whether to remain in the class or opt-out is up to each individual city. The opt-out window is open until November 22, 2019. Any city wishing to opt-out must submit the exclusion request form (linked above) on or before November 22nd. Cities that become members of the negotiating class by not opting-out can potentially lose the ability to pursue their own legal action once any settlement is finalized. The Texas attorney general has filed litigation on behalf of the state in state court, but no Texas city has filed any individual litigation so far as League staff is aware.

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