



# Legislative UPDATE

October 16, 2020  
Number 41

## **TML Presents Speaker Joe Straus with Hall of Honor Award**

The Texas Municipal League held its annual conference this week and honored former Speaker of the Texas House Joe Straus with induction into the TML Hall of Honor. Under the leadership of Speaker Straus, the Texas House of Representatives focused on improving public schools, funding the state's water plan, directing billions of additional dollars to transportation improvements, and balancing the biennial budget in both times of surplus and in times of need. Speaker Straus was a strong proponent of state and local officials partnering together to solve common problems for a common constituency.

Speaker Straus joins five other state officials who, over the last couple of decades, have exemplified extraordinary leadership and a vision for Texas for all Texans. Former Hall of Honor inductees include Rob Junell (former state representative and current U.S. District Judge), Mark Stiles (former state representative), Bill Ratliff (former lieutenant governor), Fred Hill (former state representative), and Kay Bailey Hutchison (former U.S. Senator and current U.S. Ambassador to NATO).

## **Key Coronavirus Relief Fund Deadline is Today**

For those cities that are receiving federal Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) revenue through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM) (complete list [here](#)), the deadline for submitting a completed Terms and Conditions document is **today** - Friday, October 16, 2020. In order for eligible cities to receive CRF funding through TDEM, they must complete and submit the [Terms and Conditions document](#) tomorrow, if they have not done so already.

TDEM recently sent [this letter](#) to eligible cities letting them know of the deadline. The letter also mentions two additional deadlines. First, cities that haven't exhausted their allocation must submit a plan (see form attached to letter) detailing the remaining proposed expenditures by November 13, 2020. Secondly, all reimbursement documentation must be submitted to TDEM by December 15, 2020.

## **Legislative Committees Request Information on Interim Charges**

Due to the ongoing pandemic and the uncertainty as to scheduling interim hearings, several legislative committees have issued notices of formal “requests for information” (“RFIs”) to which the public, including cities, may respond. The following is a non-exhaustive list of RFIs on city-relevant interim charges, sorted by the deadline for submitting comments. Interested city officials may follow the links associated with each committee for more details about the procedure to submit comments:

### **October 16, 2020 – [House Mass Violence and Community Safety Select Committee](#)**

- Duty 1: examine options for strengthening enforcement measures for current laws that prevent the transfer of firearms to felons and other persons prohibited by current law from possessing firearms;
- Duty 2: examine impediments and challenges to the timely reporting of relevant criminal history information and other threat indicators to state and federal databases;
- Duty 3: examine the role of digital media and technology in threat detection, assessment, reporting, and prevention, including the collaboration between digital media and law enforcement;
- Duty 4: evaluate the ongoing and long-term workforce needs of the state related to cybersecurity, mental health, law enforcement, and related professionals; and
- Duty 5: evaluate current protocols and extreme risk indicators used to identify potential threats and consider options for improving the dissemination of information between federal, state, and local entities and timely and appropriate intervention of mental health professionals.

### **October 30, 2020 – [House Licensing and Administrative Procedures Committee](#)**

- **Interim Charge 1:** Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature.

Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:

- HB 892, which relates to county regulation of game rooms. Monitor the status of counties statewide who have chosen to regulate game rooms and implement their own regulatory structure to combat illegal gambling activity via registration and permitting requirements, fees, disclosure of ownership, inspection schemes, and civil and criminal penalties.
- HB 1545, which is the sunset legislation for the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. Monitor the implementation of the legislation and the agency's progress in the consolidation, repeal, and creation of certain licenses and permits and the adoption of new fees.

**November 13, 2020 – [House Ways and Means Committee](#)**

- **Interim Charge 1.1:** Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
  - S.B. 2, which is the Texas Property Tax Reform and Transparency Act of 2019. Monitor the implementation of the legislation, including a review of the tax rates adopted by taxing units in 2019 and 2020, the appraisal review board survey system, and progress in onboarding the tax rate notices and websites. Make recommendations for modifications as necessary and appropriate.

## **Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates**

The Texas Municipal League is open for business. The building is closed to all but essential personnel and most staff is working remotely, but the League remains open for business and is fully ready to serve. Cities are encouraged to call or email for legal assistance, help with ordinances, or for general advice or assistance. Let us know how we can assist you and your city.

Call TML staff at 512-231-7400, or email Bill Longley for legal assistance at [bill@tml.org](mailto:bill@tml.org); Rachael Pitts for membership support at [RPitts@tml.org](mailto:RPitts@tml.org); and the training team for questions about conferences and workshops at [training@tml.org](mailto:training@tml.org).

The League has prepared a coronavirus clearinghouse [web page](#) to keep cities updated. In addition, everyone who receives the *Legislative Update* should receive a daily email update each afternoon with information on new developments. The daily email updates will be our primary means of communication during the pandemic. Those emails are being archived [chronologically](#) as well as by [subject matter](#).

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