



El Paso County Updates: 89th Legislative Session & 119th U.S. Congress

February 10th, 2025

*Elisa M. Tamayo
Governmental Affairs Manager*

89th Legislative Session Updates

- Governor's emergency items
 - School vouchers
 - Additional "property tax relief"
 - A "generational investment" in water
 - Bail reform (require judges to deny bail for violent offenders, capital murder or sexual offenses)
 - Career training
 - Creating Texas Cyber Command
- Senate Finance continues its hearings on the budget
- Education Savings Account (SB 2)
 - Voted out of the Senate on Feb. 5th

County's Legislative Priorities

1. Setting a residency requirement for candidates to MUDs in Far East El Paso
 - [HB 1930](#) / [SB 1028](#)
2. Provision for lots within 750 ft from an existing water line, where the owner must disclaim the cost of water installation before selling the property
 - Bill drafted, not finalized yet
3. Amend Local Government Code 232.025 to require park land dedication through our subdivision order
 - Bill drafted, not finalized yet
4. Extend application deadline for the Comptroller's payment to local governments disproportionately affected by the disabled veteran's property tax exemption
 - [SB 899](#)

County's Legislative Priorities

5. Reform scofflaw online vehicle registration procedure
 - Bill drafted, not finalized yet
6. Voter-approved optional vehicle registration fee to fund transportation projects in El Paso County
 - Bill draft approved
7. Reimbursement to cover the increased costs of pauper body disposal by counties
 - Bill drafted, not finalized yet
8. County employee family leave pool program
 - HB 334 / SB 1002

County's Legislative Priorities

9. Juvenile Probation Department's Drug Court inclusion of certain offenses
 - [HB 1831](#)
10. Allow the County Attorney to enforce the requirement for human trafficking and awareness training in lodging establishments
 - Bill draft approved
11. Modernizing Family Violence Protective Orders
 - [HB 1863](#) / [SB 1077](#)
12. Regulation of junkyards, automotive wrecking and salvage yards, and recycling businesses
 - [HB 1462](#)

119th U.S. Congress – House Updates

- U.S. House Speaker: **Mike Johnson**
- House **rules** adopted in early January
 - Written solely by Republicans, they dictate how the House will be run over the next two years
 - Prioritize 12 partisan bills, most of which are already law (immigration, sexuality, etc.)
- Congresswoman Escobar
 - appointed to House Appropriations Committee
 - reintroduced legislation to rename Post Office after Segundo Barrio Hero
 - reintroduced legislation to protect healthcare providers
- Congressman Gonzales
 - introduced his first bill: the Security First Act, on Friday, Jan. 17, 2025
 - designates cartels as Foreign Terrorist Organizations

119th U.S. Congress – Senate Updates

- U.S. Senate President: **Vice President JD Vance**
- U.S. Senate President Pro Tempore: **Chuck Grassley (R-IA)**
- U.S. Senate Majority Leader: **John Thune (R-SD)**
- U.S. Senate Democratic Leader: **Chuck Schumer (D-NY)**
- The Senate prepared text for two budget bills:
 - the first would deal with border security, defense spending, and energy
 - tax bill to follow
 - SML Thune still plans to pass both bills using reconciliation which requires only a simple majority
 - this process requires an identical budget resolution from the House, where Speaker Johnson has worked to coalesce the House Republicans around a plan

119th Congressional Budget

- Public comments from Texas Representatives embody a divide:
 - Representative Babin is focused on implementing the President's vision
 - Representative Roy and Freedom Caucus advocate for spending cuts
- Speaker Johnson announced plans to release the House's budget resolution in the next two weeks
- Traditionally, the President releases their budget in the month of February which will guide appropriators developing the 12 FY26 appropriation bills
- Fiscal Year 2025 bills still need to be passed by March 14 to avoid a partial government shutdown

Congressional Priorities: Domestic Relations Office

- **Hague Convention Requirements: The Administration for Children and Families**
 - Current law does not include Mexico, which leaves us unable to enforce child support agreements when a parent resides and works there
- **Agreement with other states to recognize Social Worker licenses**
 - Serious hurdles during custody-related evaluations, especially when a parent lives in another state
 - Courts in El Paso require comprehensive home evaluations for placement decisions, necessitating assessments of both the Texas home and the home in the other state

Proposed Federal Priorities (NACo)

1. Reforming FEMA and involving representation from NACo in this process to represent the interest of Counties
2. Support the FEMA low interest payment relief act
3. Supporting Water Resources Development
4. Support the Fix Our Forests Act
5. Support the Resolution on Reducing Grant Requirements
6. Interim Resolution on Equity in Pretrial Health Coverage
7. Interim Resolution on Transparency in Unfunded Mandates
8. Interim Resolution on Incentivizing Landlords for Affordable Housing



*Discuss and provide
recommendations or feedback.*