



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

March 10th, 2025

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89th Legislative Session Updates

- Deadline to file bills: March 14th
- House Committees began holding organizational hearings on 3/3
- House Appropriations Subcommittees began hearings on 2/24
 - TxDOT provided updates on railroad grade crossings, the implementation of SB 224 (88R) –a catalytic converter bill passed last session– and ongoing infrastructure projects
 - BDO discussed the Broadband Infrastructure Fund and Federal BEAD grant funding
 - DFPS highlighted their focus on increasing investments in Adult Protective Services this session
 - DSHS emphasized the need for additional funding for vaccine and immunization education

State of the Judiciary

- On February 26, Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Jimmy Blacklock delivered his inaugural State of the Judiciary address to Texas lawmakers
 - called on lawmakers to prioritize an increase in judicial salaries and reiterated that the base pay for district judges has not been raised since 2013, putting Texas 48th out of 50 states for judicial salaries
 - asked to tighten restrictions on when a defendant can be let out on bail, and said this is necessary to support law enforcement
 - called for changes to reevaluate current practices within the child welfare system— to allow families to stay together more easily, saying using the “coercive power of the state ... to destroy a family should never be our first instinct”

Bills of interest

- **HB 9** – Relating to an exemption from ad valorem taxation of a portion of the appraised value of tangible personal property a person owns that is held or used to produce income
- **SB 17** – Prohibiting certain foreign nationals from purchasing property in Texas
- **SB 689** – Relating to the implementation of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives by certain governmental entities
- **SB 985** – Relating to the combination of certain election precincts
- **HB 247** – Relating to the taxation of border security infrastructure

Bills of interest

- **HB 198** – Requiring political subdivisions that employ firefighters to provide occupational cancer screenings at no cost
- **HB 21** – Creates a process to end Housing Finance Corporations (HFCs) from investing in properties outside of their boundaries
- **SB 293** – Relating to the discipline of judges by the State Commission on Judicial Conduct, notice of certain reprimands, judicial compensation and related retirement benefits, and the reporting of certain judicial transparency information

Tax Abatement for Reinvestment Zone Draft

- Representative Vince Perez to file a bill that would allow the 5 taxing entities in El Paso ISD's boundaries to provide a tax abatement to property owners who purchase properties in older neighborhoods
It would:
 - encourage renovation of older homes that need updating
 - encourage young families to locate in the areas where schools are closing



Questions?

State Legislative Update concludes

NACo Priorities

- Direct Investment in Counties
- Safeguard Local Revenue Sources
- Farm Bill
- Behavioral Health & Justice
- PILT and SRS
- Land Use & Environmental Planning
- Disaster Preparedness Response & Recovery
- Local Flexibility to Support Economic Mobility
- Access to Technology Solutions
- Elections & Election Workers

119th U.S. Congress Updates

- The House of Representatives approved its Congressional Budget Resolution
 - includes spending cuts, raising the national debt, continued funding for the 2017 tax cuts, and increased border security
 - the US Senate's committees must finalize legislation for their smaller budget package by March 7
 - Once both chambers complete their respective proposals, leadership must agree on a process to reconcile the differences between the two versions
- Trump gave the State of the Union address
 - Senator Elissa Slotkin gave the Democratic response

Commissioners Court Letters Consideration

- BOTTA Status
- Medicaid, SNAP, among other critical programs for thousands of El Pasoans, we suggest a multi-stakeholder approach for Congressional outreach
 - Recommended motion: Rescind direction on BOTTA letter issued February 24, 2025, and instead authorize a letter be sent to each of our U.S. Senators and Representatives highlighting the economic impact from the federal cuts in the El Paso region.



*Discuss and provide
recommendations or feedback.*