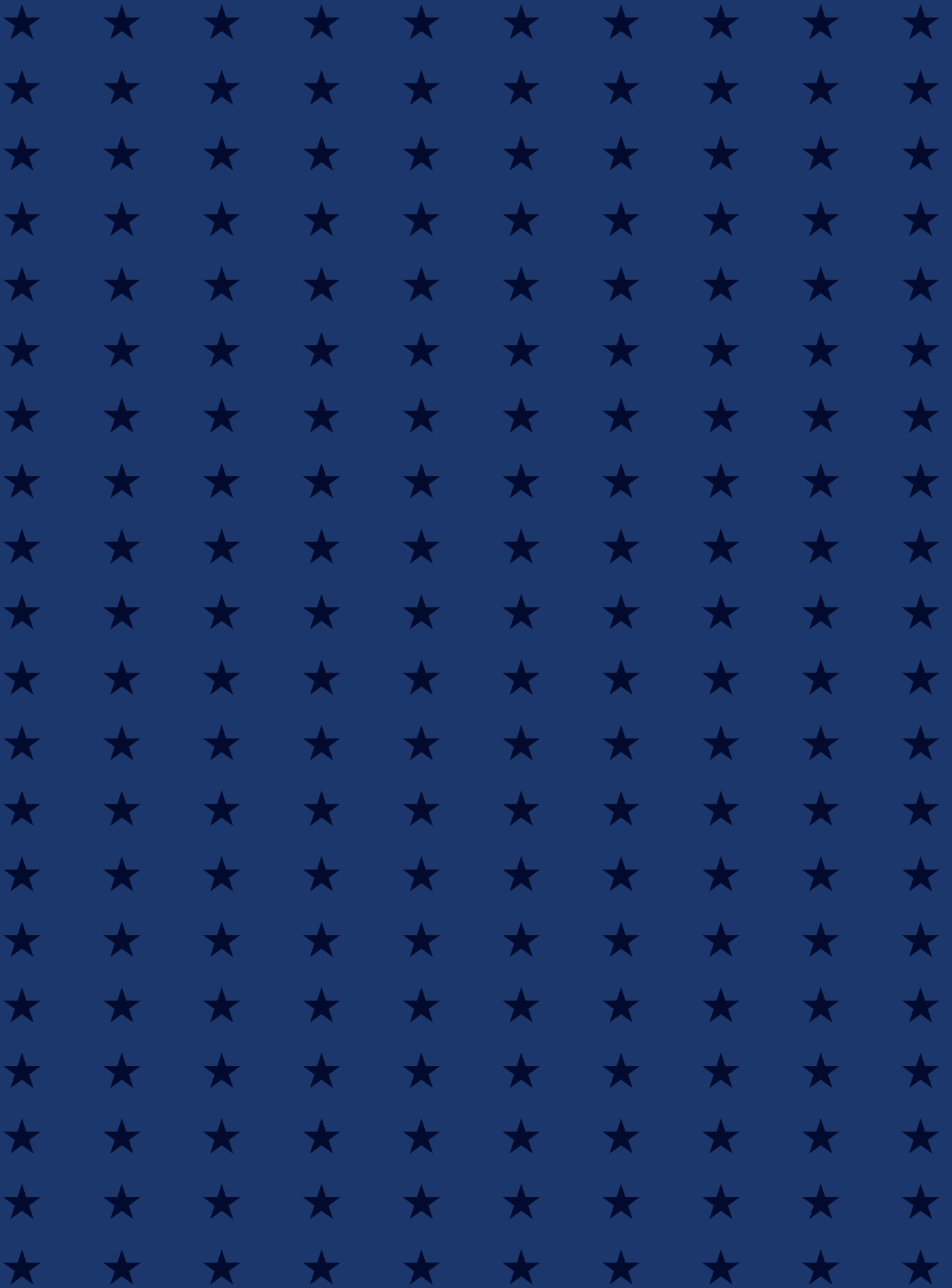


A photograph of the Texas State Capitol building in Austin, Texas, featuring its iconic dome and classical architecture, surrounded by lush green trees and a clear blue sky. The building is the central focus, with its dome rising above the surrounding foliage. The foreground shows a paved walkway and some people, though they are small and not the main focus.

TEXAS **2036**

LEADING THE WAY

2025 LEGISLATIVE REPORT





“

This session showed
what's possible when
Texas prepares not just
for today or tomorrow,
but for the decades to
come.

”

David W. Leebron
President and CEO, Texas 2036



Letter from the CEO and Chair

Dear Friend of Texas 2036,

This year's Texas Legislature advanced policies that reflect both the challenges our state faces and the opportunities that lie ahead. Texas 2036 was proud to support our state's leaders in this work by providing our trusted brand of research and analysis, elevating urgent priorities and helping inform proposals with bipartisan support and long-term significance.

At Texas 2036, we pursue data-driven, results-oriented policy solutions with measurable outcomes that together add up to large benefits for all Texans. Those include **expanded and resilient critical infrastructure**; actionable information about **high-demand, high-wage jobs** and the knowledge and skills needed to obtain them; and **greater transparency** that ensures taxpayer funds are invested in meaningful and accountable ways.

From transforming water security in Texas with a dedicated funding stream, to new strategies to align education and workforce pipelines, to measures that improve housing policy and government performance, this session showed what's possible when Texas prepares not just for today or tomorrow, but for the decades to come.

Of course, even when the Legislature passes a promising reform, that is often only the beginning. The impact of these measures will depend on how well they are implemented. Texas 2036 will continue supporting that work, helping ensure that investments lead to real-world results for Texans.

As we look ahead, we will continue to build on the momentum we have established to strengthen the resilience of our infrastructure and our workforce and the effectiveness of our state government. We aim to serve as a national example of how to bring people together in challenging times and get the important things done for our future.

As always, this great work was made possible by the support of our many generous donors — people like you, whose dedication to the future of Texas inspired our accomplishments.

We are proud of the outcomes our team has produced during this year's legislative session, increasing our visibility and impact to new levels. And we are excited to continue building on them over the coming year as we work together to expand opportunity for all Texans.

Thank you,



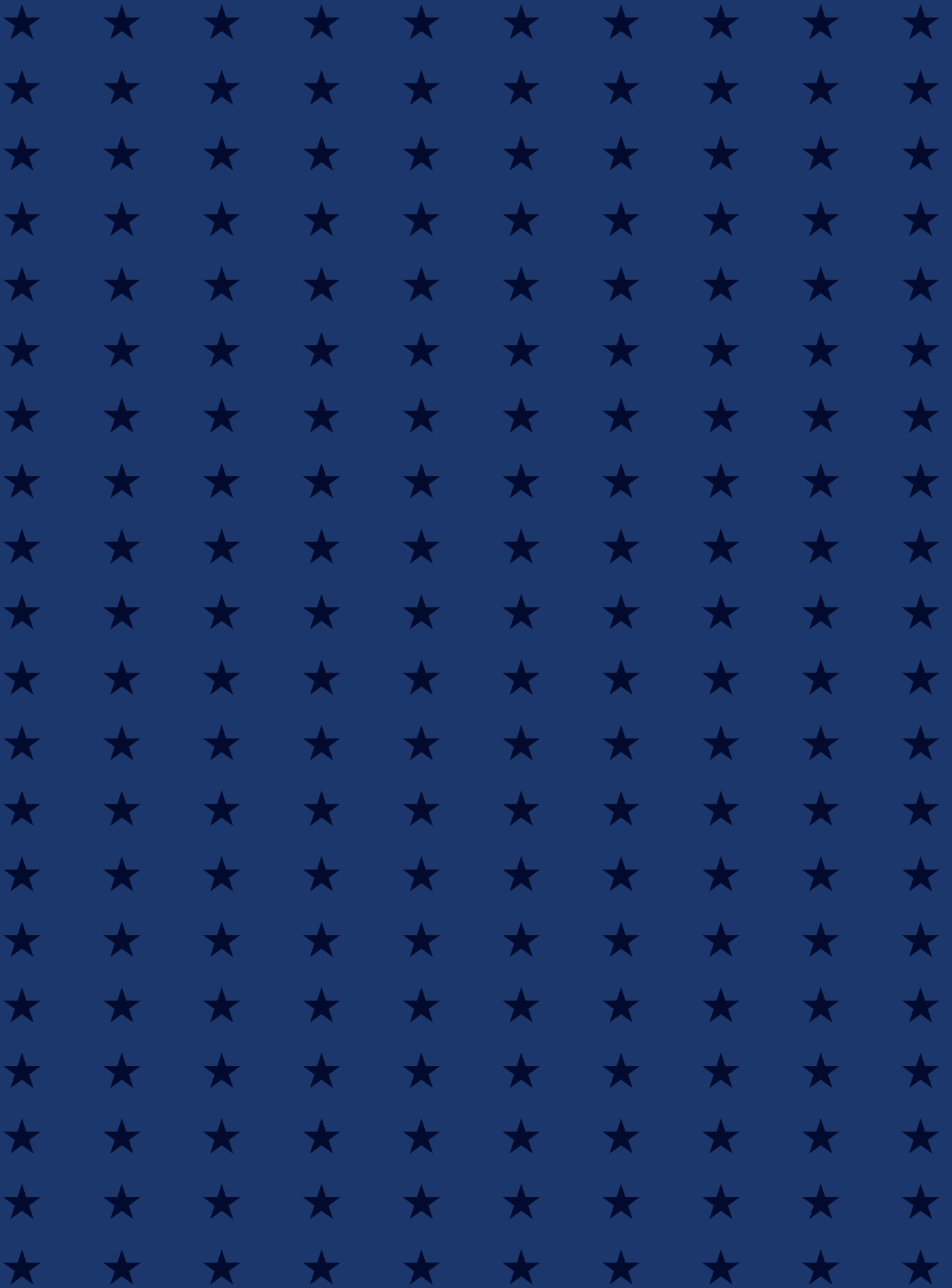


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A Brighter Future for Texas Begins Here

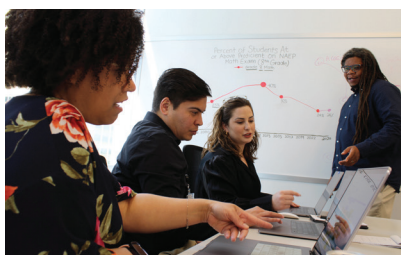
Texas is growing fast, and our workforce, infrastructure and government systems must keep pace. The decisions we make today will define Texas' future.

Who We Are

Texas 2036 is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that identifies and implements data-based solutions that will improve the well-being and opportunities of all Texans.

We Turn Data Into Action

We deliver impact at scale by turning data into policy solutions and building statewide support. By working directly with policymakers and key stakeholders, we deliver solutions that ensure Texas is ready for the future.



Identify long-term challenges



Develop practical, fiscally responsible policy solutions



Build statewide civic demand



Work with stakeholders and state officials on implementation



Our Focus Areas

- Preparing Texans for the jobs of today and tomorrow.
- Strengthening critical infrastructure.
- Making Texas state government more effective and accountable.
- Expanding access, affordability and innovation in health care, childcare and housing.

Our Impact

Our work has informed legislation, making a Texas-sized impact on our future.

- 500,000+ more Texans with health coverage
- Over \$22 billion to repair aging, deteriorating water systems and create new water supplies
- \$250 million per year in additional funds from better investment of the Permanent School Fund
- \$500 million for high-quality instructional materials
- 1.7 million high school students with access to better career-aligned opportunities
- 700,000+ community college students across Texas will have access to programs more closely aligned with labor market needs.
- 230,000+ elementary school students will be eligible to receive tutoring funds to support reading skills and achievement from this year's \$8 billion investment in public schools.
- 50,000+ elementary teachers will receive training in mathematics content and teaching methods.



At a Glance: The 89th Texas Legislature

In a year defined by opportunity, Texas took meaningful steps to shape a more resilient, prepared and ambitious future. From water infrastructure to workforce development, this Legislature demonstrated what's possible when long-term thinking guides bold action.

Thanks to a thriving economy and strong budget surplus, the Legislature passed a biennial budget that makes targeted investments in water, education and the workforce of the future. These investments aim to ensure Texas doesn't just grow in the coming decades, but also leads.

At Texas 2036, we were proud to engage with lawmakers, providing research and policy insights at every stage of the legislative process.

But supporting the passage of legislation and the budget is only the beginning. The work continues to ensure those dollars deliver results. That's why we're focused on implementation and accountability, tracking progress and making sure that every investment lives up to its promise for Texans. Here's what that looked like through this year's Texas Legislature:

Workforce of the Future

Students need a strong foundation in the fundamentals of reading and mathematics, and the knowledge, skills and experience to succeed as adults. That's why we approach workforce development as a classroom-to-career pathway, convening K-12 education leaders, postsecondary innovators and employers to identify opportunities to provide all Texans with the tools they need for life after high school.

Our efforts have resulted in the modernization of the Texas Permanent School Fund, the state's investment fund for public schools. That has led to record-setting funding for Texas public schools. Our efforts have also helped secure a \$500 million investment in providing high-quality instructional materials to schools and teachers and a \$691 million investment in overhauling community college finance to better align programs with workforce demand, placing Texas at the forefront of national higher education reform.¹

This year, Texas 2036 was there at each step of the process with data and insights as the Texas Legislature continued to demonstrate its dedication to Texas students through generational enhancements in Texas public education, with an emphasis on programs that improve student outcomes and make investments in our teachers. This includes key legislation to elevate the quality of mathematics instruction in K-12 schools, ensure the K-12 system is aligned with workforce demands, and increase access for incarcerated adults to workforce-aligned credential programs.

POLICY GOAL	LEGISLATIVE OUTCOME	IMPACT
Ensure the K-12 system is aligned with workforce demands and incentivizes programs that enhance college, career, and military readiness.	<p>Redefining the goals of public education in Texas to ensure every student is graduating career-ready and that students can go to college without the need for remediation.</p> <p>Tripling funding for innovative, career-aligned high schools and supporting the expansion of innovative options in rural areas.</p> <p>Expansion of the Rural Pathways Excellence Partnership (R-PEP) to bring career training to more rural students.</p> <p>Low-income high school graduates previously enrolled in Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) schools and R-PEP programs remain eligible to enroll in dual credit classes at no cost.</p>	<p>All 1,200+ school districts and charter schools will now adopt annual, public-facing goals for college and career outcomes.</p> <p>Nearly 1.7 million high school students will begin to access better career-aligned opportunities.</p> <p>Quadrupled funding available for the R-PEP program to allow for increased adoption of the model.</p>
Improve the quality of mathematics instruction to prepare students with the math skills needed to be successful and competitive in the 21st century.	<p>Improved early education supports, including student-focused interventions, such as screeners — short diagnostics that identify students who are struggling and what types of support they need to progress toward grade-level goals — and targeted tutoring.</p> <p>Investments in teacher training programs, including literacy achievement academies and mathematics achievement academies.</p>	<p>More than 1.5 million students and their families will receive actionable and accurate information about student literacy and numeracy skills.</p> <p>An estimated 230,000+ 1st-3rd graders will be eligible to receive tutoring funds to support reading skills and achievement.</p> <p>More than 50,000 elementary teachers will receive training in mathematics content and pedagogy.</p>
Recruit and retain high-quality teachers.	<p>Permanent pay raises for teachers with at least three years of experience, providing a substantial incentive for teachers to make it to year five by at least doubling that pay raise.</p>	<p>An estimated 260,000+ teachers will receive a pay raise.</p> <p>Today, 12% of the teacher workforce received no formal training or certification. By the 2029-2030 school year, every</p>

Enhancements to the Teacher Incentive Allotment (TIA) program and increased technical assistance to support the effective implementation and management of TIA through TEA-administered grant programs.

The creation of a new “PREP” allotment to reward teacher candidates and incentivize educator preparation providers.

math, science, history, and reading teacher will be required to be certified.

Ensure community college programming is aligned with the state's higher education strategic plan and workforce demands.

All 50 community college districts provided access to high-quality data for tailored programming and a refined Credential of Value methodology.

Stronger regional labor market alignment and improved data collection through the Texas Workforce Commission will empower a 254-county economic growth strategy.

Increase access to workforce-aligned credentials for incarcerated adults to improve their likelihood of finding jobs post-release.

Expanded higher education opportunities in Texas prisons by transferring responsibility of programming to the Windham School District, one of the largest correctional education systems in the United States, and establishing an advisory board to help Windham oversee and administer programs.

Incarcerated students in certain programs are allowed to enroll in dual credit courses at no cost.

Incarcerated students are allowed to earn a provisional occupational license before their release.

Expanding access to dual-credit and postsecondary education opportunities for over 130,000 incarcerated Texans.

Infrastructure for Growth

Texas' critical infrastructure, including the plants, pipelines and lines that provide water, data and electricity to our homes and businesses, comprises the foundational underpinning of the Texas economic miracle. To sustain our economic might, Texas must adapt, reinforce and expand our critical infrastructure to accommodate growth in populations and business as well as emerging trends in extreme weather and other arising challenges.

In 2023, Texas 2036 supported the Legislature's initial \$1 billion investment toward repairing aging, deteriorating water systems and creating new water supplies — a down payment for clean, reliable water for generations. We also helped inform a critical framework for the growth and development of an “all of the above” strategy for energy expansion.

Leading into this year's Legislature, we centered our work on aligning the state's financial strategy with the state's long-term, escalating needs in water, energy and resilience. Our efforts contributed to a historic, dedicated funding stream for water infrastructure that will underwrite up to \$20 billion in water projects over the next 20 years and the appropriation of an additional \$2.5 billion to repair and replace Texas' aging water infrastructure.

POLICY GOAL	LEGISLATIVE OUTCOME	IMPACT
Establish a dedicated funding stream for the Texas Water Fund.	<p>A proposed constitutional amendment dedicating up to \$1 billion annually in sales tax collections to the Texas Water Fund for 20 years. This long-term financial strategy is paired with an immediate \$2.5 billion appropriation, totaling more than \$22 billion.</p> <p>The establishment of a Texas Water Fund Advisory Committee.</p>	Reliable state funding will catalyze the development of water supply projects and infrastructure upgrades needed for a drought-prone and growing state.
Ensuring Texas' infrastructure is resilient to extreme weather events.	<p>Enhanced state and regional planning for wildfire response and mitigation.</p> <p>Increased preventative inspections of energy infrastructure that present greater wildfire risks.</p>	<p>State acquisition of an aircraft fleet for wildfire response.</p> <p>1,841 fire departments in Texas will have access to a statewide database of firefighter equipment.</p> <p>Oil and gas well sites and electric transmission infrastructure will be inspected to mitigate potential fire hazards.</p>

Foundations for Prosperity

Along with the hard infrastructure that moves water, power and data, the prosperity of Texas families rests on a foundation of health care, childcare and housing.

Our approach to strengthening this foundation is anchored by a unifying principle: creating the conditions for long-term reform and functional, responsive, healthy markets. Prosperity begins with systems that are structured to serve people effectively, and our work this year focused on building the transparency, alignment and strategic vision necessary to support that future.

In health care, our Healthy Markets framework guided key measures designed to make health care more transparent, competitive and aligned with patient interests. Notably, the Legislature established funding and oversight for the All-Payor Claims Database (APCD), ensuring it becomes a vital tool for reform-minded policymakers. Lawmakers also allowed insurers to offer financial incentives for high-value care, paired with a groundbreaking fiduciary duty that ensures these incentives are used to serve the best interests of patients, not just the bottom line.

In childcare, the Legislature laid a critical foundation to streamline oversight and foster smarter policy development. A new Quad-Agency coordination framework creates a formal mechanism for resolving regulatory inconsistencies across the multiple agencies involved in childcare. New legislation enabling robust data sharing will help policymakers identify gaps and priorities more effectively, and a new task force will confront governance challenges and bring clarity to the state's role in childcare, defining a coherent mission and purpose to unify efforts and ensure alignment of action moving forward.

In housing, the primary obstacle to affordability – limited supply – was addressed by tackling outdated and burdensome requirements to enable Texans to build new inventory of the type and location Texans want to purchase.

Together, these efforts reflect our commitment to strengthening the systems that support vibrant markets that respond to the fundamental needs of Texas families. While each initiative addresses specific challenges, they share a common goal: preparing the ground for durable solutions that promote health, opportunity and prosperity.

POLICY GOAL	LEGISLATIVE OUTCOME	IMPACT
Make it easier for employers and patients to identify and obtain high-value care.	<p>\$9 million to fund the Texas All-Payor Claims Database.</p> <p>Establishment of the Health Impact, Cost & Coverage Program at the Center for Health Care Data at the UT Health Science Center at Houston, from which legislators will be able to request evaluations of the impact of changes to ERS and TRS programs.</p> <p>Health insurers are given the flexibility to encourage patients to seek high-value care while also establishing a fiduciary duty for health insurers to act</p>	<p>The Texas All-Payor Claims Database will be open for research and public benefit.</p> <p>Legislators will have the tools and information they need to evaluate trade-offs in health insurance legislation, improving the value of health insurance for teachers and state employees, as well as for purchasers of state-regulated insurance.</p> <p>Private market health insurance enrollees will be able to obtain more high-value care, while saving money when doing so.</p>

	<p>in the best interest of patients, specifically prohibiting self-dealing.</p>	
Increase health coverage.	<p>Medicaid managed care organizations are allowed to engage in marketing about the availability of certain private health benefit plan coverage.</p> <p>Texas universities are allowed to offer affordable health benefit plans that better meet student needs.</p> <p>The price that can be applied to uninsured patients who pay hospitals directly for health care is limited.</p>	<p>Improved awareness of the availability of coverage options, contributing to an increasing number of covered Texans.</p> <p>Additional health insurance options available for young adults, who traditionally are among the least insured.</p> <p>Lower-cost health care for those Texans who remain uninsured.</p>
Improve access to affordable childcare.	<p>The creation of a Governor’s task force on the governance of early education and childcare.</p> <p>The creation of an early childhood integrated data system.</p> <p>The establishment of the Quad-Agency Child Care Initiative.</p>	<p>Childcare providers will have a process to address conflicting regulations.</p> <p>State leaders will have access to better data upon which to base future decisions about the regulation of childcare.</p>
Increase housing supply and improve affordability.	<p>Reforms were made to the “tyrant’s veto,” a 100-year-old provision of state law that allows a small group of residents to block new housing developments.</p> <p>Administrative barriers were removed to allow construction of residential units in areas zoned for commercial, office and warehouses.</p> <p>Lot size requirements were lowered in undeveloped areas of large cities, reducing the amount of land Texas families must purchase for their homes.</p>	<p>Cities will be better able to empower new housing development with improved governance procedures from their city councils.</p> <p>Thousands of commercially zoned plots of land can now be repurposed for residential uses.</p> <p>For new neighborhood developments, builders will have the ability to meet market demands for various lot sizes, reducing costs for new homes.</p> <p>Builders will have the ability to more efficiently utilize land when constructing new</p>

A framework for single-stair apartment buildings was developed, creating opportunities to build multi-family housing on lots that could otherwise not accommodate multi-family housing.

apartment buildings with a single staircase, allowing more units to be built on smaller parcels of land. This will reduce costs and increase supply for multi-family housing.

Government Performance and Accountability

Well-administered government services — particularly in the areas of education, workforce development, justice and safety, health care, infrastructure, and natural resources — establish strong foundations for economic growth and prosperity. Moreover, programs that address real problems increase confidence in government and reciprocal civic engagement.

Improving government performance and accountability has always been at the core of our work leading to modernizations of state court and justice data collection as well as IT systems, optimizing oversight of state agencies, and strengthening our state workforce.

During this year's legislative session, we continued to build on these efforts by helping improve and modernize state IT systems, protecting Texas families and businesses from cyberattacks, and updating the Sunset review processes to meet and keep pace with technological demands in and from state government.

POLICY GOAL	LEGISLATIVE OUTCOME	IMPACT
Secure state IT infrastructure, ensuring publicly held personal data is protected and government services remain reliable.	<p>Creation and funding of the Texas Cyber Command.</p> <p>Enhancement of the critical role the Texas Department of Information Resources (DIR) plays in coordinating state IT, cybersecurity, telecommunications, and data management services.</p> <p>Oversight, monitoring, and facilitation of responsible AI use in state government.</p>	<p>The creation of the Texas Cyber Command will help safeguard the digital lives of over 15 million Texans whose personal data has been exposed in recent cyberattacks.</p> <p>Improved cybersecurity posture in state and other levels of government by requiring all state agencies and certain local government employees and officials to take cybersecurity training by DIR.</p> <p>The new AI division at DIR will promote operational efficiency by using generative AI systems to replace labor-intensive, costly processes with faster, cost-effective automated solutions.</p>

Modernize state agency data infrastructure to meet Texans' needs and measure the performance of government.

The state will improve the IT and data infrastructures of its judiciary to improve the effective delivery of justice.

The Texas Department of Criminal Justice, Board of Pardons and Paroles, and Windham School District are required to improve data collection and reporting across the agencies and to enhance IT systems.

The Texas Department of Family Protective Services was allocated funds to overhaul its IMPACT case management system.

The agencies of the Texas Tri-Agency Workforce Initiative are required and funded to improve the quality of data collection regarding the state's labor market and workforce needs.

Over 2,000 reporting entities in the judiciary will be supported by new regional data coordinators, and over 200 specialty and appellate courts will have updated cloud-based case management systems.

The 13,000+ users of DFPS' IMPACT system – including more than 5,500 caseworkers – will have better tools and information at their disposal with the overhaul of the current case management system.

Improved data interoperability across numerous state agencies will reduce silos that inhibit effective governance and efficiency.

Update the Sunset review process to optimize the review of state agency operations, fiduciary duties, data systems, and technological infrastructure.

The Sunset Commission is directed to establish and evaluate goals and performance metrics of state agencies, ensuring they align with agencies' missions and objectives, then monitor the achievement of their goals and whether they are meeting metric expectations.

Bolsters transparency and accountability in the 131 state agencies subject to the Sunset review process.





POLICY IMPACT

Workforce of the Future

Expanding the Promise of a Texas Diploma

Between 2021 and 2031, Texas will see nearly 1.7 million job openings each year, mostly from new jobs and retirements. Of those new jobs, nearly 1 million are expected to require some level of postsecondary credential.² To succeed in today's workforce, students need a strong foundation in the fundamentals and access to credentials that lead to high-wage, high-demand jobs.



More than 60% of jobs in Texas require some postsecondary education or training,³ but only around one in three Texas high school graduates are attaining this within six years of graduation.⁴

But that is changing.

The Texas Legislature has changed the course of public education in Texas, amending the Texas Education Code to prioritize equipping students who graduate from a Texas public high school with the skills and credentials necessary to succeed as adults. The Legislature has also enacted transformational community college finance reform over the past several years, creating a system that will support regional economies across our state.

Improving educational outcomes and preparing Texans for successful careers is critical to our state's future success. We have worked closely with state officials as they have redefined the goals of public education in Texas to explicitly include career readiness and credential attainment. And we have supported updated state financing systems to focus funding on strategies that lead to student success.

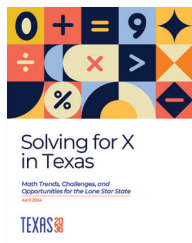
Prior to this year's legislative session, our efforts helped contribute to this change through supporting the modernization of the Texas Permanent School Fund, the state's investment fund for public schools, which is yielding record-setting funding for Texas public schools.⁵ Our efforts have also supported over \$500 million to provide high-quality instructional materials to

schools and teachers and a \$691 million investment in overhauling community college finance to better align with workforce demand, placing Texas at the forefront of national higher education reform.⁶

Following the 2023 legislative session, a sizable budget surplus presented Texas with an opportunity to take more meaningful steps to improve public education by applying resources in smart, targeted ways. At Texas 2036, we seized on this opportunity to advance policy recommendations that could move the needle for kids across the state.

Texas 2036 backed interim committee charges studying how to expand access to work-based learning and credential attainment in fields that lead to family-sustaining wages, while also preserving postsecondary opportunities. We also backed efforts to assist state and local initiatives to increase mathematics achievement and ensure Texas is a national leader in math proficiency. And we supported studying the district and state policy changes and investments that would be needed to increase the number of students reading and doing math at grade level by the end of third grade.

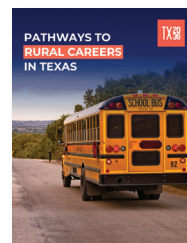
Following the release of the formal House and Senate interim charges in 2024, we engaged heavily in committee hearings as expert resources and advocates for expanding the number of certified teachers and improving student achievement in both reading and math. We also published issue briefs and in-depth reports, including:



Solving for X in Texas, highlighting the urgent need to address declining math proficiency in Texas and providing a menu of policies centered around student identification and intervention, parent empowerment and teacher training;⁷



Improving Funding Efficiencies for Classroom-to-Career Programs in Texas, which reinforced the need to align K–12 funding priorities with long-term economic outcomes and pointed to streamlined funding models that could be expanded to scale effective career and technical education (CTE) and dual credit programs in Texas high schools;⁸



Pathways to Rural Careers in Texas, an examination of the unique challenges faced in rural Texas and policy strategies to improve career readiness among rural Texas high school students.⁹

Individual Economic Opportunity is a Core Purpose of Public Education

Key legislation adopted by the Texas Legislature this year reorients public education, from early childhood through high school, toward a common goal of producing graduates with the knowledge, skills and experience to step into high-wage, high-demand careers.

These efforts are bolstered by the development of a strong and stable teaching workforce underwritten by the largest teacher pay raise in state history, expansion of the successful Teacher Incentive Allotment program, and carefully targeted investments in high-quality teacher preparation pathways, residency programs and mentorship models.

Teachers are the single most important in-school factor in a child's education. Yet, Texas faces a growing crisis in the retention and preparation of highly skilled and prepared teachers. In 2024, more than half of new teachers statewide — and [75% in rural districts](#) — entered the classroom [without certification](#) or formal preparation.¹⁰

The data is clear: students taught by uncertified teachers lose up to three [months](#) of learning in math and four months in reading, putting them at a disadvantage both academically and in their future careers.¹¹

The new Teacher Retention Allotment ensures that experienced teachers — those with three to five years in the classroom, and especially those with more than five years — see meaningful salary increases, keeping those

“

This approach makes sense. If the state seeks to improve student outcomes, it stands to reason that funding should be directed at those programs that have the greatest chance of improving those outcomes.”

Mary Lynn Pruneda
Director of Education and Workforce Policy

teachers who are experienced and “hitting their stride” in Texas classrooms while also closing the pay gaps that exist between smaller rural and larger suburban districts.

This is an essential step in keeping highly qualified teachers in the profession. Furthermore, the expansion of the Teacher Incentive Allotment enhances district-led strategic compensation programs, allowing top-performing educators to earn between \$3,000 and \$36,000 annually in additional pay and giving teachers a path to earning six-figure incomes. An expansion to the Teacher Incentive Allotment program will further increase incentive-based compensation for districts that evaluate principal and assistant principal performance as well.

The Legislature also invested in training, identification and intervention in early literacy and numeracy, providing critical resources to our schools and teachers so they are well equipped to provide students with strong academic foundations.

Literacy and numeracy skills are correlated with [academic](#)¹² and [postsecondary](#)¹³ success, as well as increased wages. Today, only 49% of [Texas third graders](#) are reading at grade level, and just 44% are on track in math.¹⁴

Starting next school year, districts will have to start identifying students struggling with math and reading as early as kindergarten and provide struggling readers with interventions and support. For the first time ever, elementary math teachers will also be provided targeted training in mathematics instruction to increase the quality and effectiveness of mathematics education.

Just as these policies will better prepare students for success in high school, the Legislature acted to better prepare students for life after high school by reorienting Texas high schools around a dual mission: college and career readiness.

By expanding access to high-impact Career and Technical Education (CTE) models and scaling the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) and Rural Pathway Excellence Partnership Program (R-PEP) — programs proven to significantly improve student outcomes — state law further embeds career preparation into the high school experience.

Additionally, the bill enhances transparency and accountability by requiring disaggregated outcome data and measurable district-level goals, so Texans will know that the programs are working.

Since its founding in 2019, the Rural Schools Innovation Zone (RSIZ), an R-PEP program in South Texas, has



By providing ongoing professional development for teachers, focusing on early identification of math struggles, and equipping parents with the tools they need, we can begin to reverse the downward trend in math achievement and set our students on a path to success.”

Gabe Grantham
Policy Advisor

produced impressive outcomes for students, often significantly outpacing statewide metrics.¹⁵

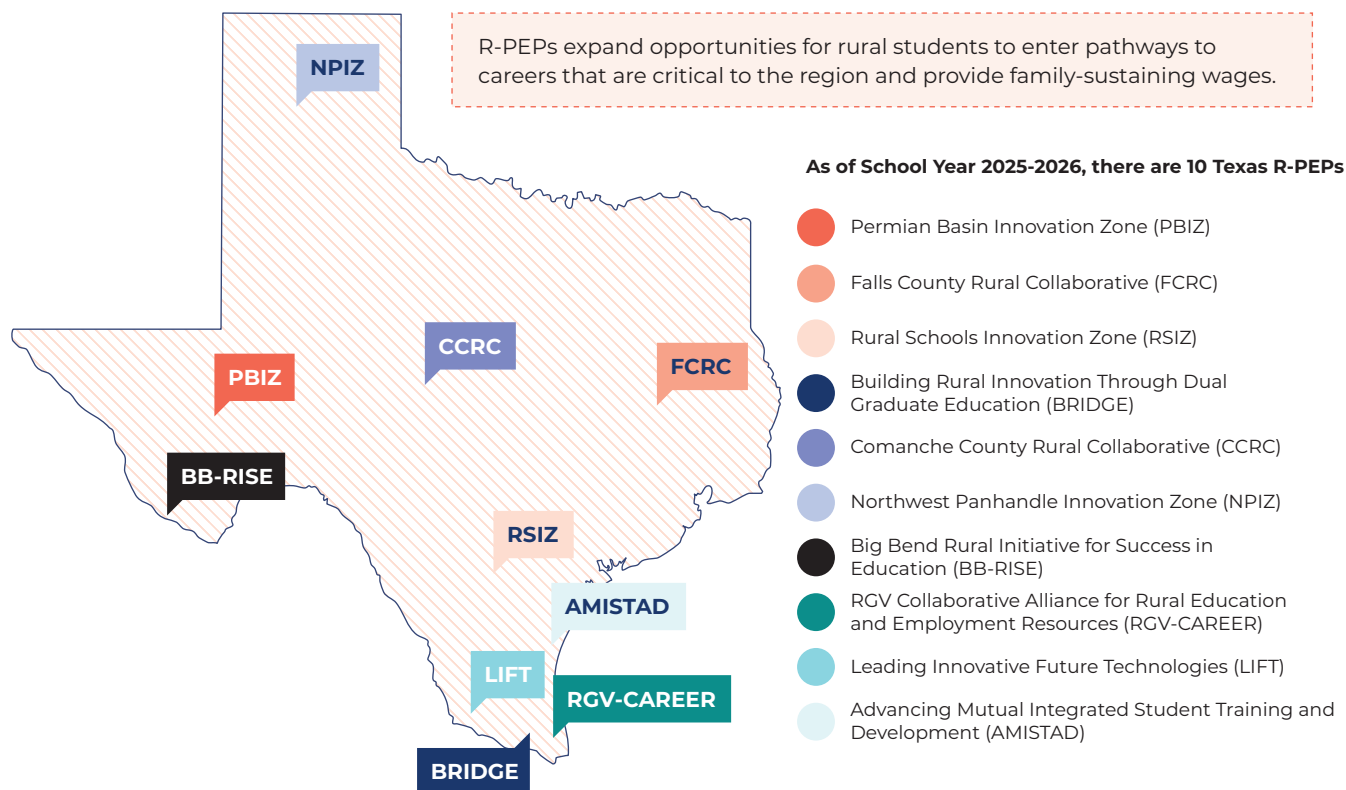
Between 2019 and 2022, the percentage of students in RSIZ districts graduating with industry certifications increased by 45.5 percentage points. The percentage of graduates designated college, career, or military ready increased from 81.2% to 91.6% — 21.6 percentage points higher than the state average.

The percentage of graduates in RSIZ districts who completed a dual credit course skyrocketed from 9% before RSIZ to 58.9% in 2022 — an increase of 49.9 percentage points and over double the state average of 24%.¹⁶

Rural Pathway Excellence Partnerships

How Texas is Transforming Rural Education

Enacted in 2023, the bipartisan HB 2209 established the R-PEP program to strengthen rural districts through formal collaboration between districts (ISDs), coordinating entities (CEs), institutions of higher education (IHEs), and workforce partners. It aims to increase rural students' access to high-quality post secondary pathways aligned with regional workforce needs for rural students through additional allotment funding. The program emphasizes shared accountability, efficient resource use, and long-term support for student success.



Texas Voters Speak

Heading into this year's Legislature, [91% of Texas voters](#) said they believe all Texas high school students should have access to workforce training or credential programs that provide a certification that allows them to graduate ready to compete for good-paying jobs.¹⁷

Leveraging Data to Connect Talent to Opportunity

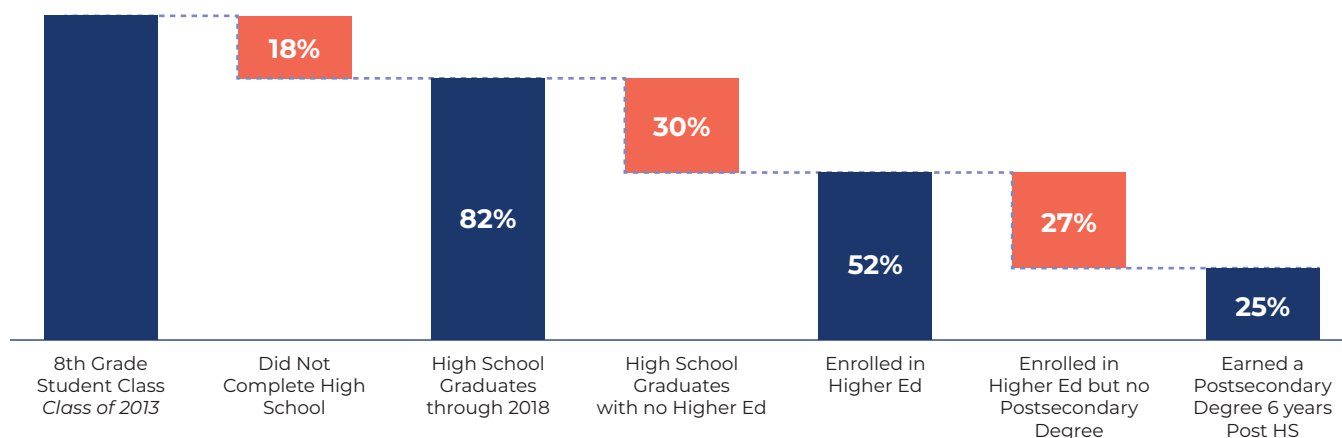
As Texans move along their path from classroom to career, it is essential that the institutions have not only sufficient resources, but also high-quality data needed to tailor programming so that it aligns with the needs of regional labor markets.

This has been another consistent priority at Texas 2036. From using data to pioneer reforms in community college financing and metrics to advocating for the strategic expansion of apprenticeship programs, we have from the outset been working to achieve a better alignment between education and workforce outcomes.

Too few Texas students earn a postsecondary degree or credential.

Only 25% of 8th graders earn a PS degree or credential. Only 16% of economically disadvantaged students earn one.

THECB 8th Grade Cohort Pipeline to a Degree or Certificate, 2013 8th Graders through 2023



This year, too, we carried the momentum from past legislative sessions by playing a role in new legislation that helps community colleges better align programs with regional workforce needs using enhanced data from the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) as well as regional workforce assessments published by the TWC with support from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) and the Texas Education Agency.

We worked with lawmakers to strengthen how Texas defines and measures credentials of value — programs that lead to good-paying, high-demand jobs. This included codifying the state's existing approach while also refining the criteria in several key ways:

- Creating a tailored timeline for evaluating a program's return on investment based on credential type.
- Establishing a minimum earnings threshold tied to the state's self-sufficiency wage standard.
- Providing flexibility for critical workforce credentials in health and education.
- Phasing in short-term credentials into this system by 2027 to allow time for improved data collection.

These changes to the community college finance system hold immense promise for our rural communities. By addressing persistent data gaps at the Texas Workforce Commission, Texas will be able to use regional labor market data to inform what is considered a credential of value. This means that the course offerings that are incentivized in each region will be designed to meet that region's economic needs — a transformational workforce reform.

Through these initiatives, the Texas Legislature will equip rural communities with programs tailored to better meet local labor market needs and the resources they need to thrive.



This Legislature built on last session's landmark community college reforms, which are already a national model, setting Texas up for years of continued economic strength and job growth."

John Hryhorchuk
Senior Vice President of Policy and Advocacy

Improving the Likelihood That Incarcerated Adults Can Find Jobs Post-Release

Access to postsecondary education isn't just valuable for students in traditional classrooms, it's essential for those within Texas prisons where it can reshape lives, boost public safety and enhance economic growth.

Texas prisons house more than 134,000 individuals, and each year over [45,000 reenter society](#).¹⁸ Within three years, nearly half are rearrested, and 15-20% end up incarcerated again, at a cost to Texas of [over \\$585 million](#) every year.¹⁹ But it doesn't have to be this way.

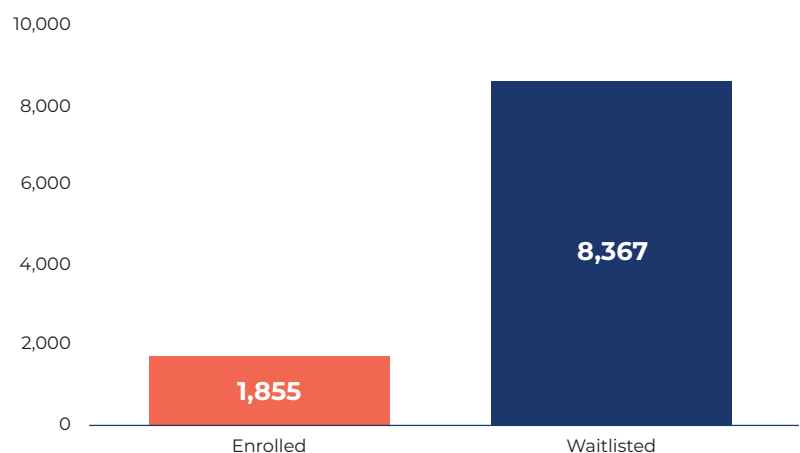
The most recent academic studies indicate that incarcerated individuals who participated in college-level education programs are as much as 41.5% less likely to recidivate, and investments in prison college programs demonstrate a \$1.61 return for every \$1 spent.²⁰

Expanding postsecondary education programs in Texas prisons could reduce recidivism rates and give the formerly incarcerated a path to stable, productive lives — a benefit that extends to their families and communities. Employers are also more likely to hire those with postsecondary credentials. A national study found that employers are [42% more likely](#) to hire someone who was incarcerated with a college credential over a GED.²¹ Access to education creates career pathways for those trying to rebuild their lives.

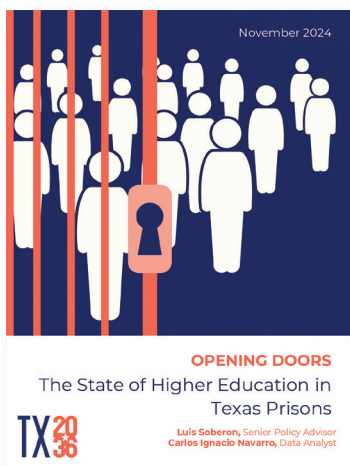
In a first-of-its-kind analysis, Texas 2036 reviewed data from institutions of higher education with students who are incarcerated in a correctional facility. A primary finding was that Texas has seen a 50% decline in incarcerated Texans enrolled in college programs over the past decade, from 7,203 in 2011 to just 3,581 in 2022.²²

This drop isn't for a lack of interest among incarcerated Texans; it's due to limited capacity within the Texas prison system.²³ These findings were shared with the Texas Sunset Advisory Commission and echoed by the Sunset Commission's conclusion that the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) "is unable to dedicate sufficient resources to effectively administer the postsecondary education program and capitalize on expanded [funding] opportunities."²⁴

**TDCJ Higher-Education Students
Enrolled/Waitlisted (April 2024)**



Source: Texas Dept. of Criminal Justice via public information request



The results of this research were published in the November 2024 report, *Opening Doors: The State of Higher Education in Texas Prisons*, along with a set of specific recommendations for improving governance and coordination among the schools and agencies responsible for providing educational opportunities within the Texas prison system. Those recommendations included better leveraging community colleges, enhancing data collection and sharing, and aligning prison education programs with state workforce goals.²⁵

This research informed the Texas Legislature's deliberations on Sunset legislation concerning the TDCJ and the broader adult corrections system and higher education legislation providing dual credit to incarcerated Texans at no cost. It also informed legislative efforts to allow prisoners to apply for a provisional occupational license while awaiting release, thus reducing the potential lag time between release and employment, which can provide stability and reduce the likelihood of recidivism.

Legislation informed by Texas 2036's work also expands opportunities for educational programs in Texas prisons. This addresses existing demand in a way that improves oversight and accountability, ensuring state resources are used in ways that yield positive outcomes.

For the first time, Texas has codified governance and coordination of higher education in its prisons, establishing a strategic plan for expanding and evaluating opportunities and cultivating engagement with key stakeholders to ensure program success.

Lawmakers began by assigning responsibility for the administration of higher education programs in Texas prisons to the Windham School District, one of the largest correctional education systems in the United States, and establishing an advisory board to help Windham oversee and administer programs. The legislation also requires robust data sharing between Windham, TDCJ, THECB, and TWC to evaluate program effectiveness and ensure that offerings are aligned with state workforce goals and employer needs.

Improving the Classroom-to-Career Pathway at All Stages of Life



The pathway to a good career starts at the beginning of an individual's education journey. By building strong checkpoints along the way, from early education through high school and on into postsecondary education and training, students can acquire and accumulate the knowledge and skills they need for success as adults.

By recognizing the interconnectedness of each of the stops along the entire classroom-to-career pathway, the Texas Legislature has transformed the state's education system into a national model of how to prepare citizens for success in the workforce, wherever they are in their lives.



On the Ballot: New Funding for Texas State Technical College

Texas faces an urgent need for a skilled workforce, with about 63% of jobs in our state requiring some form of postsecondary education or training.²⁶ Texas State Technical Colleges (TSTC) are at the forefront of closing this skills gap by providing technical education and training for high-wage, high-demand industries.

During this year's Legislature, Texas 2036 supported the advancement of Senate Joint Resolution 59, which proposes an amendment to the Texas Constitution that would create two new state funds to support the TSTC System: the Permanent Technical Institution Infrastructure Fund and the Available Workforce Education Fund.



By providing TSTC with a stable funding source for capital improvements and modernization, the state can leverage TSTC's proven model to accelerate the closure of the skills gap, fuel sustainable economic growth, and create new opportunities for Texans to access high-wage careers."

Grace Atkins
Policy Advisor

These funds would be kept separate from the state's main General Revenue Fund. The Permanent Fund would act like a long-term savings account, holding money deposited by the state and any investment earnings. The second, the Available Workforce Education Fund, would serve as a spending account. Each year, a portion of the investment earnings would be transferred from the Permanent Fund into the Available Fund, giving TSTC access to funding for program improvements and student support.

The TSTC System could use these funds for a wide range of infrastructure and improvement needs, including buying land, constructing and equipping buildings, making major repairs, purchasing capital equipment and library materials, and paying off debts used to finance these improvements.

Texas 2036 Staff In The News

K-12 Education



KXAN-TV (Feb. 2)

“The model is Texas. What we're doing after the passage of House Bill 3 in 2019 and House Bill 8 in 2023 is going to set the stage for every child in Texas to graduate from high school with a career-aligned credential of value, and that plus the water investments and the energy investments that the governor talked about can set our economy up for decades to come.”

[Abbott earmarks session priorities, calls on Texas Legislature to be 'guardians of freedom'](#)

Dallas Morning News (Feb. 10)

“What we don't want to happen is for districts to be incentivized to offer career and technical programming that's not really aligned to workforce needs.”

[How will Gov. Abbott's priorities impact career training programs in Texas' high schools?](#)

Houston Chronicle (March 10)

“We've seen that dual enrollment courses help expose students to the rigor of college-level work, so that when they do make that transition into higher education, they're more prepared to be successful. We see dual enrollment leads to positive things that include higher enrollment in (college) and then also higher completion rates.”

[Houston ISD's dual enrollment participation, passage rates increase sharply after state takeover](#)



Community Impact (April 2)

“I've always considered myself a math person, but I know that is not true for everyone. In conversations about literacy and numeracy over the past year, I've noticed that no one is really saying they're not a reading person. We universally recognize literacy is essential, and math is often treated as an option.”

[Texas Senate panel considers investments in early learning, teacher preparation programs](#)

Houston Chronicle (April 4)

“You have a significant number of Texans who are not graduating from college with any kind of degree or certification. It creates this problem where you're importing a lot of talent. Well, we have wonderful people here in our state who should and could be able to fill those jobs.”

['A systematic failure:' Less than 25% of Black, Hispanic HISD students graduate college in six years](#)

KVUE-TV (April 15)

“House Bill 120 puts a lot of our best practices in career and education on steroids. ... It's so regional, and we have to adapt. We should make sure they can take the jobs that are in their hometowns that are gonna lead to enough money to support their families.”

[Two priority bills to expand student career training given initial approval by Texas House](#)

Dallas Morning News (April 16)

“House Bill 120 is a monumental investment in career and technical education programs in Texas public schools. ... This is really about changing the conversation in our state and really focusing on how incredibly valuable it is to upskill our young people in high-wage, high-demand jobs, so that when they're just beginning their adult work, they're already earning a wage that can support themselves.”

[Will the Texas Senate join the House's efforts to advance workforce education statewide?](#)

San Antonio Report (April 24)

“Texas families deserve transparency about how their schools are performing because these decisions affect their children's futures.”

[Texas Education Agency releases 2023 ratings two years late. How did your school district do?](#)

Higher Ed in Prison

Gilmer Mirror (April 30)

“Every Texan deserves the opportunity to learn, grow and contribute to our state's future, no matter where they begin, and every Texan benefits when those opportunities are expanded. By investing in higher education in our prisons, we open doors. The benefits are not just for incarcerated Texans, but also for the communities that surround them and the entire state.”

[Opening College Doors Behind Bars: Why Higher Education in Texas Prisons Matters to Us All](#)

Breckenridge American (Feb. 4)

“Access to higher education isn't just valuable for students in traditional classrooms; it's essential for those within Texas prisons, where it can reshape lives, boost public safety, and enhance economic growth.”

[The case for expanding higher education in prison](#)





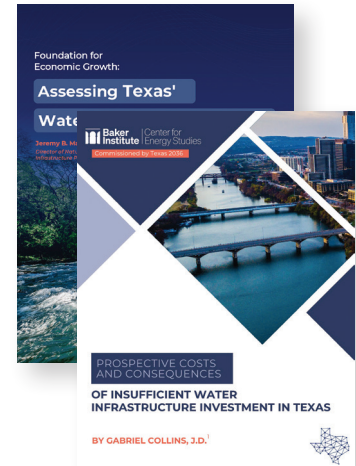
POLICY IMPACT

Infrastructure for Growth

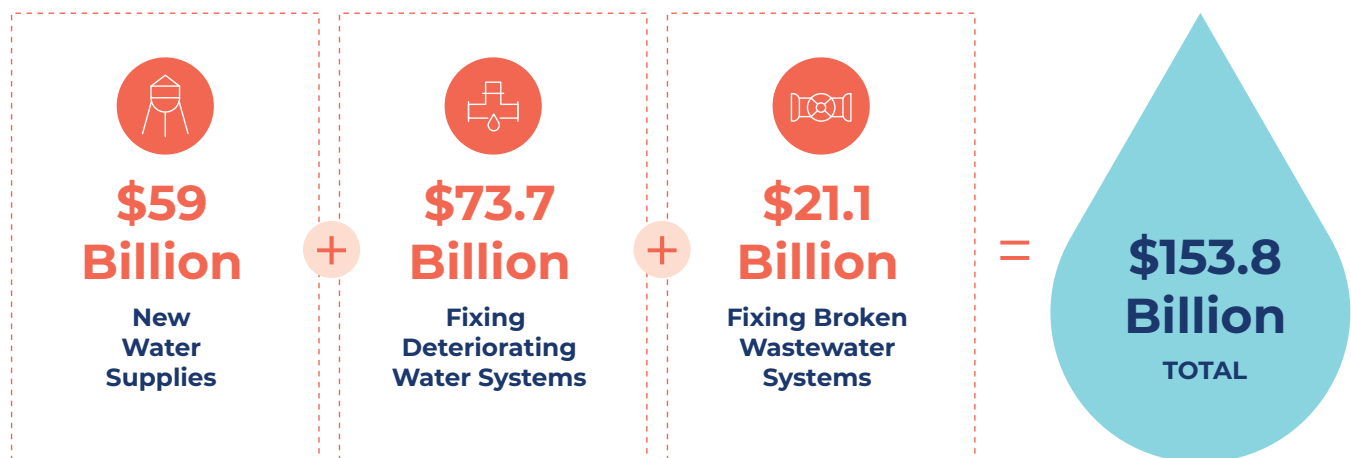
Generational Water Reforms, With the Funding Resources to Drive Long-Term Impact

The success of Texas' [\\$2.7 trillion](#) economy, representing nearly 10% of U.S. economic output, hinges on the reliability of the state's water infrastructure.²⁷ Two reports released by Texas 2036 last year, [Prospective Costs and Consequences of Insufficient Water Infrastructure and Investment in Texas](#) and [Foundation for Economic Growth: Assessing Texas' Water Infrastructure Needs](#), found that inadequate water supplies and aging, deteriorating water systems threaten Texas' economic miracle. Reliable, consistent state investment in water infrastructure protects communities from economic peril while establishing a strong foundation for continued growth and prosperity.

Texas will need to invest [at least \\$154 billion](#) over the next 50 years in new water supplies and infrastructure upgrades.²⁸ This estimate includes the projected state financial assistance needs in the State Water Plan and recent EPA estimates for fixing deteriorating drinking water and wastewater systems.



Texas' 50 Year Water Infrastructure Financial Assistance Needs



Sources: 2022 Texas State Water Plan. US EPA. Cost estimates reflect 2024 values.



This year's Legislature offered an historic opportunity to set the state on a path toward fixing its long-term water infrastructure challenges. To this end, we at Texas 2036 developed a set of recommendations built on the state's recent history of strategic infrastructure investments, forward-looking water policies, and a robust, innovative water industry.

Over the past two years, we built on this foundation, conducting [original research](#) in partnership with the Center for Energy Studies at Rice University's Baker Institute for Public Policy and convening [a statewide coalition](#) of over 100 Texas business leaders and organizations in support of a dedicated revenue source to fund future water projects. That includes expansion of the state water supply portfolio as well as fixing aging and deteriorating water systems — investments essential to the state's long-term resilience and economic future.²⁹

This work resulted in key legislation adopted by the Texas Legislature this year, which — if approved by voters in November — will allocate up to \$1 billion in state sales tax revenues to the Texas Water Fund annually for 20 years, beginning in 2027. At least 50% of the dedicated revenues to the Texas Water Fund are required to be used for water supply projects.

This dedicated revenue stream establishes a strong foundation for economic growth and development, putting Texas on track toward addressing the state's water infrastructure challenges.

In addition to this historic, generational shift in the state's financial strategy for water, the Legislature also approved a \$2.5 billion down payment for water infrastructure projects. This one-time infusion will help jump-start the projects needed to secure Texas' water future.



Texas Voters Speak

Heading into this year's Legislature, [85% of Texas voters](#) were concerned about the risk of future water supply shortages, and a similar percentage expressed support for state investment in a long-term water funding strategy designed to increase water supplies and improve infrastructure.³⁰



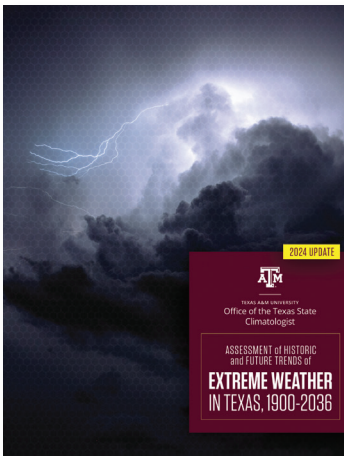
On the Ballot: New Funding for Water Infrastructure

While the Texas Legislature passed legislation providing up to \$1 billion per year for 20 years to the Texas Water Fund through revenue derived from state sales and use taxes, the decision ultimately rests with Texas voters who will see a proposed constitutional amendment, Proposition 4, on the Nov. 4 ballot.

This will be the second constitutional amendment election in a row where voters will have a say on Texas' water future. In 2023, voters approved Proposition 6, creating the Texas Water Fund. The approval of this proposition triggered a one-time deposit of \$1 billion into the new fund.



A Comprehensive Slate of Reforms to Improve Wildfire Prevention & Response Capacity



Extreme drought is just one of the extreme weather trends that Texas faces. Longer droughts, more intense wildfires and more extreme weather events aren't rare anymore; they're becoming the norm. That's why Texas must plan and build for resilience.

Since 2021, we have worked with the state climatologist at Texas A&M University to produce studies examining [future trends of extreme weather in Texas](#) so that we can properly prepare for and mitigate future risks, which can be substantial.³¹

Last year, Texas endured the [largest wildfire in the state's recorded history](#). The Smokehouse Creek Fire in the Texas Panhandle burned [over 1.2 million acres of land, inflicting nearly \\$123 million](#) in economic losses. The state climatologist anticipates that Texas' wildfire season will grow longer as greater portions of the state become susceptible to wildfire risks.

Since 2005, more than 243,000 separate Texas wildfires have burned 13.9 million total acres, and the State Comptroller's office [estimates](#) 244,617 Texas homes were at significant risk of wildfires in 2024 alone.³²

Since 2020, Texas 2036 has partnered with the Office of the State Climatologist at Texas A&M University to better understand Texas' extreme weather risks. The data from the most recent report, [Future Trends of Extreme Weather in Texas](#), reveals that these risks are increasing: hotter temperatures, more severe droughts, worsening floods, and greater wildfire risks are likely to affect Texans in the years to come.

This work informed Texas 2036's support of several measures to enhance state and local wildfire response capacity and improve wildfire prevention. These changes include modernizing inventories of wildfire-fighting equipment, assessing wildfire risk zones throughout the state, and improving inspections of state energy infrastructure that presents wildfire risks.

“

These changes will enable the more efficient and effective deployment of our first responders and emergency equipment in the face of growing wildfire risk.”

Jeremy Mazur
Director of Infrastructure and
Natural Resources Policy

Texas 2036 Staff In The News

Texas Tribune (Jan. 28)

“We're going to have to lean into technology, innovation and water supply diversification in order to meet that 6.9 million acre foot water supply deficit.”

[TribCast: Is a water crisis looming in Texas?](#)

WOAI-TV (Jan. 31)

“We're looking at hundreds of millions in economic damages. ... Our north star is to make Texas the best place to live and work. Texas needs to spend about 154 billion dollars over the next 50 years on new water supplies and fixing aging deteriorating drinking water and wastewater systems. New reservoirs, desalination plants, aquifer storage and recovery, and even water recycling and reuse that will work to expand our needed water supply portfolio that will make us more resilient against future droughts, and prepare us for future population and economic growth.”

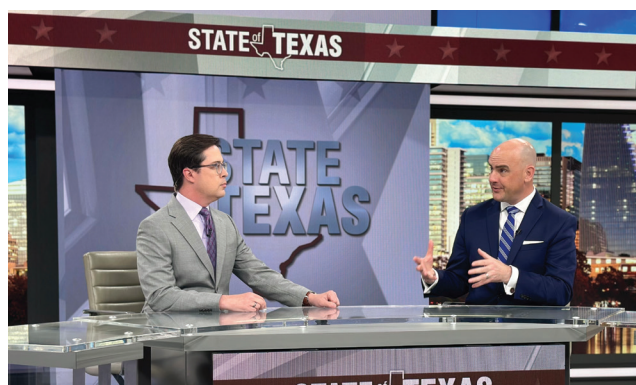
[Texas water infrastructure in need of major updates; plans being put forward](#)

KEYE-TV (Feb. 3)

“We really need to get it right when it comes to water infrastructure, and make sure that the systems, infrastructure, and pipes are in place to support continued economic and population growth. ... Natural gas, coal

or nuclear-fired generation, all these generation sources require water to produce electricity.”

[Governor Abbott declares water infrastructure an emergency in state of the state address](#)



KVUE-TV (March 3)

“And so, I think what we're seeing right now is the convergence of all these issues combined with the recognition of that if we want this Texas economic miracle to continue for decades to come, we need to have reliable water infrastructure in place. And I think that's really what's driving state leaders' and legislators' interest.”

[Texas Water Day 2025 sees progress on water issues at the Capitol](#)

Dallas Morning News (March 10)

“The Holy Grail here is getting the Legislature to approve a constitutional dedication of state revenues to the Texas Water Fund, starting at \$1 billion per fiscal year.”

[Texas Legislature must dive into water future](#)





POLICY IMPACT

Foundations for Prosperity

Across the most fundamental building blocks of family well-being — health care, childcare and housing — Texas faces growing challenges that demand thoughtful, long-term solutions. While each of these systems operates independently, they share common challenges: fragmented oversight, distorted markets, outdated policies and a lack of actionable data. During the 2025 legislative session, lawmakers took meaningful steps to address these challenges by strengthening transparency, enhancing market functions and reorienting public systems to better serve the needs of all Texans.

Affordability and Transparency of Health Care

This session marked a significant step forward in laying the foundation for a more functional and patient-centered health care system in Texas. The Legislature enacted several measures that collectively advance our [Healthy Markets](#) framework — one in which health care markets are informed, competitive and engaged.³³ Through new investments in transparency, tools for smarter policymaking, and patient-focused reforms, Texas is now positioned to take a more proactive and effective role in managing health care costs and coverage.

The Texas All-Payor Claims Database

A central element of these reforms was the appropriation of funds for the state's All-Payor Claims Database (APCD). This investment ensures not only the ongoing operation of the database but also enables researchers to access the data at minimal cost, expanding its utility as a source of independent insight.

The APCD represents a breakthrough opportunity to understand the drivers behind high and variable prices in Texas' health care markets. With a fuller picture of what Texans are paying and where inefficiencies lie, future reforms can be better targeted and more impactful.

To help operationalize the APCD and convert this data into actionable insight for policymakers, the Legislature created the Health Impact, Cost, and Coverage Analysis Program at the UT Health Science Center in Houston. By providing a deeper understanding of how changes in benefits design, cost-sharing structures, or coverage mandates might affect premiums, access, and state spending, this program will enable lawmakers to request prospective evaluations of legislation affecting state-regulated health plans, as well as the Employees Retirement System of Texas (ERS) and Teacher Retirement System of Texas (TRS) health benefit programs.

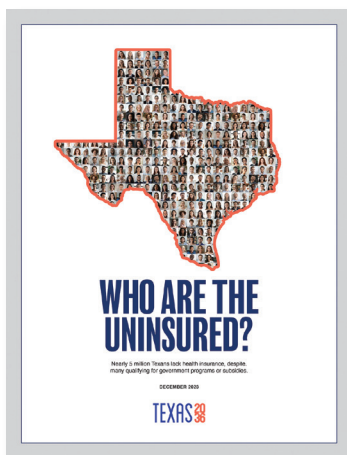
Given the size and market influence of ERS and TRS, reforms enacted in these programs often create downstream effects in the commercial insurance market — where a majority of Texans receive their coverage — saving taxpayer dollars and improving affordability for public employees, with the potential to shape broader market norms in the process.

“

This budget cycle alone, ERS and TRS collectively needed an infusion of \$1 billion in order to keep premium increases to 10%. And this is a problem that has been recurring for appropriators on an ongoing basis, where there are extra infusions of dollars needed. It is something that is impacting the state's ability to pay for this ongoing.”

Charles Miller

Director of Health and Economic Mobility Policy



Increasing supply and reducing financial barriers to care

The Legislature also addressed a series of policy areas consistent with the goals of our Healthy Markets approach — namely, enhancing transparency, improving the supply and capacity of providers, and reducing financial barriers to care.

Insurers will now be permitted to offer incentives to encourage patients to seek higher-value care options. Critically, this flexibility is accompanied by a ban on self-dealing and a requirement that insurers implement such programs in the best interest of the patient.

As more price and quality data become publicly available, these provisions will ensure that insurers are obligated to use that information to drive better care at lower prices for enrollees.

Meanwhile, patients will be equipped to make better-informed decisions thanks to more timely and inclusive disclosure of costs and more actionable pricing information. That includes new limits on price markups for uninsured individuals paying out of pocket and refined patient billing protections that balance clarity and provider compliance feasibility.

A related but distinct priority this session was improving coverage rates, particularly among those already eligible for health insurance but who are not currently enrolled.

Following findings from our comprehensive study on the state's uninsured population, *"Who Are the Uninsured?"*³⁴ which found that nearly two million of the state's five million uninsured residents were already eligible for a free plan, lawmakers developed new strategies to target "eligible but unenrolled" groups. That included allowing Medicaid managed care organizations to communicate directly with members about private insurance options when coverage transitions are likely (such as during redeterminations) and allowing institutions of higher education to offer more flexible, affordable student health plans tailored to the needs of a population with historically low insurance enrollment rates.

Reshaping Texas' health care landscape

Taken together, these reforms begin to reshape Texas' health care landscape. By creating the conditions for better oversight, smarter design, and more active stewardship of public and private insurance, the Legislature has enabled the kind of structural reforms that address both price and coverage. The session's accomplishments reflect a clear recognition that healthy markets are not developed and sustained by themselves, reaffirming the vital role of state policy in nurturing healthy markets that inform, empower and protect the people they serve.

Improving Access to Affordable Childcare



Childcare was a new issue for Texas 2036 this session, and our work on early childhood care and education began with a simple inquiry: where are Texas families able to access quality childcare, and where are they not? That initial question quickly led to many more — and few satisfying answers. As we dug deeper, we found that critical pieces of the overall puzzle were scattered across multiple state agencies, none of which provided the complete picture.

Policymakers lacked the data to answer basic questions like: Where are vacancies and shortages occurring? Which investments in quality are leading to stronger educational outcomes? What are the long-term economic impacts for parents who gain access to subsidized care?



We were talking to a provider out in West Texas who operated a pre-K facility in the morning and a childcare facility in the afternoon. The same children were involved, but [each facility was] covered under a different regulatory structure, which meant that there were different agencies creating the health, safety, wellness and quality standards... We're really excited about the immediate opportunity to get rid of those immediate conflicts that are putting our providers in a bind... These multiple agencies can be working towards the same objective instead of working against each other."

Charles Miller

Director of Health and Economic Mobility Policy

In addition to data gaps, we encountered a governance structure that was not designed to support coherent oversight. Four different state agencies — the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), Texas Workforce Commission (TWC), Texas Education Agency (TEA), and Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) — each played a role in the system, but their responsibilities were siloed.

This fragmentation not only made it difficult for policymakers to weigh trade-offs and align around priorities, it also led to regulatory uncertainty for childcare providers who often faced inconsistent rules, duplicative oversight, and conflicting interpretations. All of this added friction and confusion to an already overburdened sector. Most strikingly, no single agency — or the state as a whole — could articulate a clear mission, objective or purpose for its involvement in early childhood care.

Given the size of the issues, we were proud to be a joint founder of the Employers for Childcare Task Force to develop strategic public policy solutions for the Texas Legislature to consider in 2025 to expand working families' access to affordable, high-quality childcare.

Recognizing the structural barriers discussed above, the Legislature took decisive steps this session to lay the groundwork for a more coherent and coordinated childcare system through the establishment of a formal Quad-Agency Initiative to promote alignment and coordination among the four lead agencies.

By creating a standing structure for interagency communication and issue resolution, lawmakers also laid a foundation for more consistent oversight and a shared policy agenda. This structure is designed to clarify regulatory requirements, providing much-

needed relief for providers in the immediate term, and, over time, reduce confusion for providers, harmonize enforcement practices, and improve the overall functioning of the system.

To address the information challenges that had long hindered effective policymaking around childcare, the Legislature authorized the development of a statewide Early Childhood Integrated Data System (ECIDS). This system is designed to better harness existing (but siloed) data to enable secure data-sharing among agencies, providing a more comprehensive view of availability, quality, outcomes, and unmet needs in early childhood programs. With a fuller picture, policymakers will be better positioned to target resources, evaluate effectiveness, and craft reforms that respond to real-world conditions.

In addition, lawmakers established the Governor's Task Force on Governance of Early Childhood Education and Care, a new advisory body charged with helping to define the state's mission and objectives in this space.

By aligning stakeholders around a shared vision and clarifying the purpose of state involvement, this task force will provide essential strategic direction and inform future reforms. This guidance will be especially helpful during an interim in which two of the key agencies involved (HHSC and TWC) are set to undergo the Sunset review process.

Alongside these foundational changes, the Legislature also allocated an additional \$100 million to help reduce the childcare subsidy waitlist — an immediate step toward improving affordability and access for working families.

To help stretch those dollars and build system capacity

more effectively, lawmakers prioritized childcare workers themselves on the subsidy waitlist. By targeting support to those working directly in the sector, the state is simultaneously reducing barriers for families and helping stabilize the childcare workforce.

Taken together, these efforts reflect a meaningful shift in how Texas approaches early childhood policy — from a fragmented, reactive model toward one that is coordinated, data-informed, and increasingly strategic — and they hold promise for further impact in the 2027 legislative session.



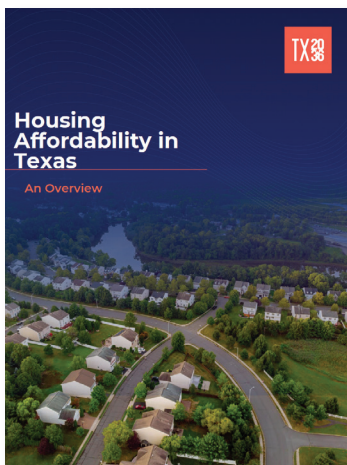
Texas Voters Speak

Childcare continues to be a challenge for many Texas families. In a survey of Texas voters, 74% expressed concern about the availability of affordable options and 45% of these voters indicated that they were extremely or very concerned.

Improving Housing Affordability

For decades, Texas' stock of low-cost housing served as one of the state's most important economic advantages, attracting families, workers and businesses from across the country. But as population growth surged — driven by **more than 1,500 new arrivals each day — housing supply failed to keep pace.**

Since 2019, median home prices have risen 40%,³⁵ far outstripping income growth and putting homeownership out of reach for many Texans. While demand has remained strong, the underlying problem is a shortage of homes: **Texas needs an estimated 320,000 additional units to meet current demand.³⁶**



In 2023, Texas 2036 began a deeper investigation into the roots of the housing crisis, with a focus on regulatory and policy barriers to supply. This investigation resulted in the report, *Housing Affordability in Texas: An Overview*.³⁷ Through that work, it became increasingly clear that many of the obstacles preventing new housing construction, including an array of housing types desired by the market but not in supply, were rooted in outdated regulatory barriers.

During the interim, we elevated the conversation through research, coalition-building and stakeholder convenings aimed at deepening understanding of how land use reforms can unlock supply, improve affordability, and preserve Texas' economic competitiveness, thus enabling Texas to be the best place to live, work, and raise a family.

That work helped lay the groundwork for a pro-housing breakthrough during the 2025 session. This year, the Legislature advanced a slate of reforms designed to remove red tape, diversify the housing stock, and enhance property rights, opening the door to more housing of all kinds, built more quickly and at lower cost.

Key among these reforms was the end of the so-called “tyrant’s veto” — a century-old provision of state law that allowed a small number of neighbors to block new housing through notice-and-protest provisions. This reform improves the predictability of the zoning process for builders while empowering city councils to better meet the needs of their communities.

To further unlock supply, the Legislature also acted to ease development restrictions that artificially limit the types of housing that can be built by authorizing cities to approve smaller lot sizes in new single-family neighborhoods — reducing land costs and supporting both entry-level homeownership and later-in-life homes. This combination can enable neighborhoods for all seasons of life, helping families to sustain and strengthen their bonds through life’s stages.



Additional legislation enabled residential construction in commercial, office and warehouse zones and facilitated office-to-residential conversions, reducing regulatory friction and repurposing underused space for housing. Lawmakers also allowed cities to approve single-stair buildings up to six stories — a housing type common in much of the world that promotes affordability through efficient design.

Recognizing the need for more diversity in housing stock, the Legislature expanded the use of manufactured homes by requiring municipalities to allow their installation in at least one area of the city while streamlining and modernizing state definitions to reflect advances in manufactured housing technology.

To expand rental availability in high-demand markets, lawmakers limited local restrictions on the number of unrelated adults who can share a home — an especially important step for increasing access to affordable housing in college towns.

Together, these reforms reflect a shift in focus: away from restrictive land use rules and toward a statewide policy posture that treats housing availability as a foundational economic and quality-of-life issue.

Rather than prescribing one-size-fits-all solutions, the Legislature removed barriers that prevent private actors from responding to market demand. With these policy changes, Texas has positioned itself to increase housing production, support more types of housing options, and begin to restore the affordability that has long been central to the state's prosperity.



Texas Voters Speak

In 2024, [a statewide poll](#) indicated that nine out of 10 Texans report that housing affordability is a problem where they live. So, we surveyed Texas voters about solutions.

An overwhelming majority (84%) [supported](#) allowing homeowners to build additional housing, such as garage apartments or tiny homes, on their existing lots.

Texas 2036 Staff In The News

All-Payor Claims Database

The Associated Press (Feb. 18)

“With health care costs rising rapidly, the state needs better data to make informed decisions. The All-Payor Claims Database offers a fact-based approach to understanding cost drivers and identifying opportunities to strengthen the system for both taxpayers and public servants.”

[A Billion-Dollar Problem, a \\$4.5 Million Solution: How Data Can Help Texas Rein in Health Care Costs](#)

Increasing Health Coverage

KERA-FM (Feb. 27)

“Medical debt is a lot more arbitrary than other types of debt. There is limited ability of people and consumers to control the amount of that medical debt. And some of that stems from the fact that prices are not terribly transparent and the fact that patients have very little ability to control what happens to them once they get into a situation where they need medical treatment.”

[A new federal rule would help North Texans with medical debt. But it's in limbo](#)

Improving Access to Affordable Childcare

Houston Chronicle (April 10)

“Every dollar spent on this is going to be helping a family get child care, (and) that is a good thing. Our focus and effort and unique approach has been trying to figure out ways to get every single one of those dollars spent to go further and to represent the long-term interest of the state. ...We just don't have good insight into this at this level, and that has been the biggest overall challenge.”

[Demand for Texas child care subsidies is skyrocketing, often leaving families waiting months for help](#)

Housing Affordability

Austin Business Journal (April 7)

“Who knows what kind of new developers, new architects, would be able to interact with these. These buildings make sense in areas where land costs are high and in areas where you already see some solid proliferation of apartment buildings.”

[Austin could approve another 'missing middle' housing type](#)





POLICY IMPACT

Government Performance and Accountability



Our government performance and accountability policy efforts work toward improving the state government’s ability to strategically plan, deliver and measure performance of its services and programs, ensuring the responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars for the benefit of Texans both today and tomorrow.

During our multiple legislative sessions of engagement on issues related to government performance and accountability, Texas 2036 played a crucial role in state employee pension reform, IT modernization, education investment fund reforms, state workforce recruitment and retention, and strategic uses of surplus revenues that promoted long-term growth. Together these changes have yielded billions of dollars of augmented resources.

This session, we built on those past successes while assisting in new efforts to make state government more data-driven, accountable, efficient and responsive to societal and economic trends by addressing data inadequacies in complex systems like workforce development, child welfare and criminal justice while engaging in successful efforts to ensure continuous improvement of agency performance measures in the state budget.

Improving Government Services and Transparency by Modernizing Data Systems

In a state of over 30 million residents and a government operating with the next biennial budget approaching \$340 billion, quality data and technology aren’t luxuries — they’re the foundations of good governance. Relevant, accurate and timely information enables policymakers to allocate resources effectively, measure performance, and hold institutions accountable.

Texas 2036 has long prioritized equipping the state government with the tools, data and talent necessary to meet today’s challenges. Past legislative successes in these areas laid the groundwork for this session, where policy efforts reflected the understanding that technology is core to effective service delivery and maintaining public trust.

This view is underscored by lawmakers’ allocation of an estimated \$1 billion for “high-risk” cybersecurity

projects, as well as the adoption of IT projects designed to directly improve the functionality and the ability to measure the effectiveness of Texas government services. Notable among these funded data system improvements are the enhancement of our state’s workforce data system and overhaul of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services’ case management system.

Workforce Data

Texas, like many states, relies on unemployment insurance data to evaluate workforce outcomes, inform policymaking, and measure the effectiveness of our education and training programs. However, [as Texas 2036 explained in testimony earlier this year](#), critical gaps in this data, like occupation or accurate

employment location, have prevented the state and employers from accurately assessing job placement and program success.

Last session, [we supported efforts](#) by the Legislature that instructed the TWC to submit a report and set of recommendations for enhanced workforce data reporting. Based on that [report's recommendations](#), this year's Legislature approved funding to implement enhanced workforce data reporting.

These workforce data enhancements, in tandem with refinements to the recently implemented outcomes-based community college finance formulas, will help effectively tailor state and regional educational and workforce programming and meaningfully measure success.

Case Management at the Department of Family and Protective Services

This session, legislators approved an allocation of \$54.5 million to transition away from DFPS' outdated Information Management Protecting Adults and Children in Texas (IMPACT) case management system.

As illustrated in our 2023 report, [Modernizing Texas' Child Welfare IT System](#), IMPACT's data silos and inability to store critical documents, including birth certificates, school records, legal documents, medical and dental records, as well as developmental and psychological evaluations, have impeded caseworkers' ability to review important electronic case file information.

In 2024, this report helped inform discussions that led to the Legislature requiring DFPS to produce a report on how to transition away from this case management system. This year, Texas 2036 [voiced support in budget hearings](#) for updating the IMPACT system by following the recommendations in the DFPS report to improve the state's ability to serve its most vulnerable children and adults.

Building a Better Justice System Through Data and Transparency

Texas 2036 has had a multi-session focus on data quality inadequacies that have long undermined the ability of policymakers to make data-informed improvements in the administration of justice and public safety.

Our justice-related data efforts have included support for improved quality and transparency in police data through the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement (TCOLE) Sunset bill in 2023. That legislation developed

detailed, case-level data reporting requirements for district and county courts at the Texas Office of Court Administration (OCA), as well as necessary IT and personnel improvements to help TCOLE and OCA implement these improvements.

These past successes helped catalyze continued legislative progress in 2025, including OCA's successful budget requests for additional employees to implement case-level data collection and create new cloud-based case management software for over 200 specialty courts and appellate courts.

Building on last session's success with the TCOLE Sunset bill, we also supported efforts to enhance IT and personnel support for the regulation of law enforcement, along with new data-sharing and reporting requirements at the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Board of Pardons and Paroles, and Windham School District.

Together, these improvements to data quality and sharing will enable better policy evaluation and service coordination in our justice systems.

State IT Cybersecurity and Resilience

Whether from hostile foreign entities, sophisticated criminal enterprises, or technological vulnerabilities, Texas faces increasing cyber threats. These threats endanger not only our state government's operations but also our critical infrastructure — power grids, water systems, financial services, and emergency response networks — which support the essential services that Texans rely on daily.

Texans lost [over \\$1 billion](#) to cybercrime in 2023 alone, and AI-driven cyberattacks [increased by 135%](#) in the first two months of 2023. In fact, 80% of bank security executives fear that AI-powered cybercriminals are [outpacing their ability to defend](#) against attacks.

Texans lost **over \$1 billion** to cybercrime in 2023 alone, and AI-driven cyberattacks **increased by 135%** in 2024.

We at Texas 2036 have been [tracking and analyzing cybersecurity data](#) for years, working in cooperation with Rice University's Baker Institute along with other statewide partners to equip state leaders with the information necessary to protect Texas from cyberattacks.



Cybersecurity and the Texas Cyber Command

In addition to the \$1 billion to address “high-risk” IT systems in the budget, the Texas Legislature passed key measures to enhance the state’s cybersecurity posture, highlighted by the establishment of the Texas Cyber Command.

The Texas Cyber Command will oversee a robust strategy for the state of Texas to anticipate and detect potential cyber threats, promote cybersecurity awareness, and increase professional training. Cyber Command will also defend against, respond effectively to and mitigate the effects of cyberattacks when they occur, working across the state and with relevant partners.

Formed as a standalone, mission-specific agency focused on cybersecurity, the Texas Cyber Command will build on existing cybersecurity expertise in San Antonio to become a national leader in state-level cyber defense while creating a pipeline of top-tier expertise and talent development.

In addition to the Cyber Command, Texas 2036 also supported efforts to enhance the Texas Department of Information Resources’ abilities to guide the state toward a stronger overall IT footing. This included supporting legislation to improve DIR’s governance, strengthen IT procurement, and reinforce our state’s cybersecurity. We additionally supported legislation that will require training on and increased governance for artificial intelligence in state government.

With the increasing prevalence of digital tools in today’s society, state IT systems must effectively deliver state services and protect state-held data. In this nascent era of increasing digitization, online interactions, artificial intelligence and rapidly evolving cyber threats, Texas 2036 continues to serve as an important voice in support of efforts to strengthen and build out robust, secure and efficient state IT systems that are responsive to future technological demands and challenges.

“

Our state's growing population and economy depend on a robust and efficient digital infrastructure to deliver services to Texans while protecting state-held data against cyberattacks.”

Rahul Sreenivasan

Director of Government Performance and Fiscal Policy

Optimizing the Sunset Review Process

At the core of Texas 2036's mission is a focus on ensuring Texas' government can strategically plan, deliver and measure the performance of services when using taxpayer dollars to meet the needs of Texans today and tomorrow. To that end, we are consistently looking for opportunities to build on the state's trusted Sunset review processes in ways that aid efforts by the State Auditor's Office and Legislative Budget Board to enhance oversight, accountability and public trust.

We also provided support to lawmakers as they optimized the Sunset review process with improved agency goal setting and evaluation of state budget performance measures, and as they implemented third-party efficiency audits to optimize the use of taxpayer dollars and agency operations.

This legislation also created a more frequent opportunity to review agency rules as part of the Sunset review process, which will ensure regulations remain relevant and beneficial to Texans and prevent the accumulation of outdated, ineffective or redundant rules and processes.



By implementing these mid-cycle reviews, efficiency audits, transparency improvements, and improvements in performance measures, the Texas Legislature continues to demonstrate a commitment to proactive governance, fiscal accountability, and public trust backed by our data-driven approach to improved government performance and accountability."

Rahul Sreenivasan

Director of Government Performance and Fiscal Policy

State Workforce Recruitment and Retention: Spotlight on the Texas Department of Criminal Justice

Working conditions have contributed to a high level of turnover at TDCJ, which consistently ranks among the highest in agency turnover, averaging 28.2% turnover over the past five fiscal years. In FY 2024 alone, 27% of the state's 20,779 correctional officers separated from that position.

Many TDCJ facilities lack adequate climate control systems, making extreme summer temperatures hazardous for both incarcerated Texans and the public safety professionals who work there.

Since 2021, Texas 2036 has recommended the installation of new climate control systems, which would improve both working conditions for the state's correctional officers and living conditions for incarcerated Texans. Our 2024 Texas Voter Poll found that 74% of Texas voters believe that temperatures shouldn't exceed 80 degrees in Texas prisons.³⁸

Building on an \$85 million investment in 2023, this year's Legislature appropriated another \$118 million toward climate control systems, marking the largest investment of its kind in Texas history.

Texas 2036 Staff In The News

KXAN-TV (April 9)

“The members will be spending a lot of these amendments and debating the merits of it through the day. Members are prepared for a long day, historically, they’ve gone late into the night. ... The biggest things to me (in this budget) are the money that is contemplated for water infrastructure funding. You have a lot of money. You have additional money being contemplated to invest in university research funding. There’s more money contemplated for flood mitigation funding. There’s more money contemplated for wildfire response, and that’s also in the supplemental bill. ... In years where you had tighter revenue cycles, the discussion was more around cuts, whereas this time, you have more revenue available to meet a lot of the state’s needs, so you don’t have as many legislators worried about key priorities being cut deeply.”

[Texas House preparing for long budget session](#)

Gilmer Mirror (June 16)

“Budgets aren’t just about numbers, they’re about priorities. And the more Texans pay attention and engage, the better these priorities will reflect the future we all want to build.”

[Texas Just Passed a \\$338 Billion Budget. Here's Why That Matters to You.](#)

KEYE-TV (June 23)

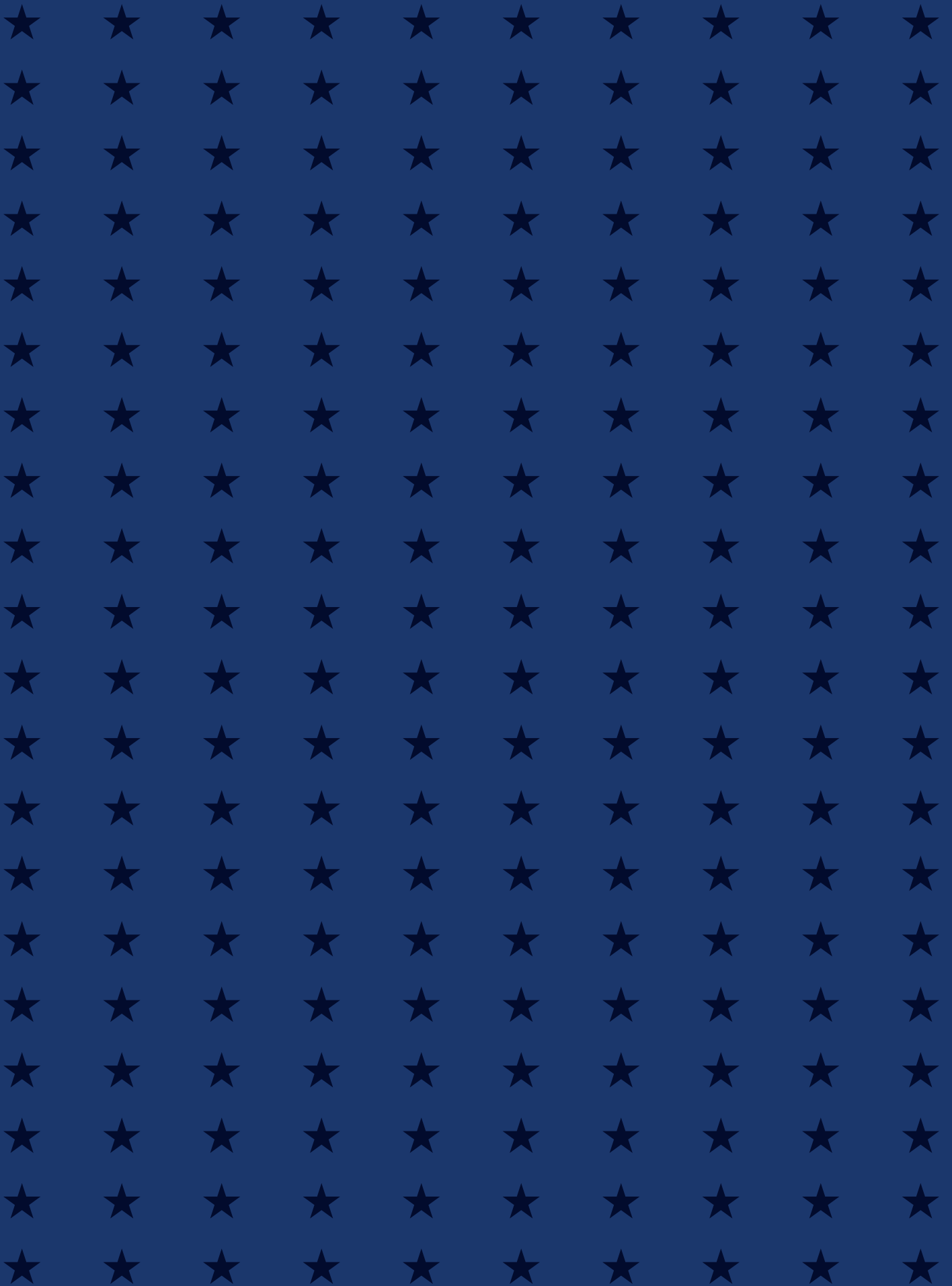
“The big takeaway is that the Legislature made tremendous investments in areas like water and energy as well as in workforce development and education that will be key to maintaining that Texas Miracle.”

[Texas Fuels Future with Major Investments in Water, Energy, and Workforce](#)

House Committee on Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence (April 16)

HB 5354 testimony

“There’s generally speaking in our criminal justice data ecosystem, a prosecutor-shaped hole. We have data on police. We have data on courts. We have data on jails. We have data on prisons, parole, probation. But we do not get data directly reported from prosecuting attorney offices to the state.”





2025 IMPACT

BY THE NUMBERS

OVER \$22 BILLION

TO REPAIR AND REPLACE TEXAS' AGING WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

\$382 MILLION

FOR WILDFIRE RESPONSE

\$135 MILLION

TO ESTABLISH THE TEXAS CYBER COMMAND

\$20,516

IN SAVINGS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS
THROUGH FLEXIBLE, LOW-COST
BACHELOR'S DEGREES

300 MILLION

PRESCRIPTIONS FILLED EVERY YEAR
IN TEXAS WILL HAVE BETTER PRICE
TRANSPARENCY



1.7 MILLION

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH
ACCESS TO BETTER CAREER-
ALIGNED OPPORTUNITIES

50,000+

ELEMENTARY TEACHERS WILL
RECEIVE TRAINING IN MATHEMATICS
CONTENT AND TEACHING METHODS

1,841

FIRE DEPARTMENTS IN TEXAS
WILL HAVE ACCESS TO A
STATEWIDE DATABASE OF
FIREFIGHTER EQUIPMENT

130,000+

INCARCERATED TEXANS
WILL HAVE ACCESS TO DUAL
CREDIT AND POSTSECONDARY
EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

120,000+

COLLEGE STUDENTS WILL
HAVE ACCESS TO MORE
AFFORDABLE HOUSING

20,000

TEXAS CHILDCARE PROVIDERS
WILL HAVE A REDUCED
REGULATORY BURDEN

700,000+

COMMUNITY COLLEGE STUDENTS
ACROSS TEXAS WILL HAVE ACCESS TO
PROGRAMS MORE CLOSELY ALIGNED
WITH LABOR MARKET NEEDS

230,000+

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WILL
BE ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE TUTORING
FUNDS TO SUPPORT READING SKILLS
AND ACHIEVEMENT

COMMUNICATIONS

BY THE NUMBERS | JAN. 1 - JUN. 30, 2025

Shaping the Conversation

This session, Texas 2036 brought critical data and insights to the forefront of public debate. From the Capitol to communities across Texas, we expanded awareness, built trust and elevated the urgent issues shaping our state's future. Through strategic storytelling, media engagement and digital outreach, we transformed research and policies into action, ensuring our work informed decisions and inspired dialogue statewide.

Communication Goals

- **Expand our reach.** Grow visibility for Texas 2036 and its mission in every corner of the state.
- **Earn trust.** Serve as a go-to source for policymakers, media and the public with timely, nonpartisan data.
- **Drive demand for solutions.** Inspire civic engagement and policy momentum on the issues shaping Texas' future.

Digital Engagement



70K+

FOLLOWERS

4.6M+

SOCIAL MEDIA IMPRESSIONS

(63% increase from the 2023 session)

211K+

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENTS

(14% increase from the 2023 session)

507K+

VIEWS GENERATED BY 456 VIDEOS

(101% increase from the 2023 session)

Emails

35K+

EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS

Located in Every Legislative District in the State

(241% increase from the 2023 session)

180K

OPENS OF 20 WEEKLY NEWSLETTERS

Website

99K

WEBSITE VISITORS

80

PUBLISHED BLOGS

161

DOCUMENTS AND VIDEOS POSTED ONLINE IN THE RESOURCE AND MULTIMEDIA CENTERS

Media

57

OP EDS AND PRESS RELEASES

910

MEDIA MENTIONS IN BROADCAST, PRINT AND ONLINE STORIES

(52% increase from 2023 legislative session)

253

MEDIA OUTLETS MENTIONING TEXAS 2036

Legislative Index

During the 2025 legislative session, **80 bills and two constitutional amendments supported by Texas 2036 were passed by the Texas Legislature**, and Texas 2036 engaged with legislators at every stage of the legislative process — from convening stakeholder coalitions to providing key testimony, policy briefs and expert insights that informed legislative drafts. Each of these measures reflects the organization’s commitment to building a more prosperous future for all Texans.

From strengthening the K-12 education, higher education and workforce training pipeline to improving the affordability and accessibility of health care, childcare, and housing, each bill aligns with data-driven solutions to address pressing challenges.

This index also includes measures that improve water infrastructure, support energy expansion, and increase wildfire resilience, as well as reforms to enhance government performance, improve the justice system, and bolster the state’s cybersecurity posture. Collectively, these bills represent a strategic approach to ensure Texas’ future remains vibrant for years to come.

Workforce of the Future

BILL NUMBER	BILL AUTHOR	BILL DESCRIPTION
HB 500	Rep. Bonnen & Sen. Huffman	<p>Up to \$1.3 billion more for the Texas University Fund (TUF).</p> <p>Appropriates \$89.5 million to the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) to support community colleges for outcomes already achieved during the current biennium.</p>
SB 1	Sen. Huffman & Rep. Bonnen	<p>\$8.5 billion in new investments to support students, teachers and schools across Texas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• \$4 billion for teacher and staff pay raises and expansion of the Teacher Incentive Allotment, Texas’ merit-based pay program• \$153 million to expand career and technical education opportunities• \$648 million targeted to strategies for improving early literacy and numeracy• \$187 million for teacher preparation and certification programs• \$296 million for adjustments to the Tier II funding formula, which provides a \$55 basic allotment increase per student <p>Allocated over \$2.4 billion to fully fund community college finance outcomes-based formulas under the recently enacted HB 8 (2023).</p> <p>Provides \$850 million to seed the TSTC endowment, pending voter approval, to support capital needs and allow expansion of critical technical education.</p>

SB 1	Sen. Huffman & Rep. Bonnen	<p>Provides \$15 million to allow THECB to continue ongoing technology modernization efforts, including enhancing and securing educational and workforce data collection, to further assist the agency in support of the decision-making needs of students, institutions and policymakers.</p> <p>Allocates funds to the Texas Workforce Commission necessary to enhance workforce data to better tailor job training programs and measure performance of state education and workforce programming.</p>
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K-12 Education

HB 2	Rep. Buckley & Sen. Creighton	<p>Appropriates \$8.5 billion in new investments to support students, teachers and schools across Texas. The reforms in the legislation include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redefining the goals of public education to better align the mission of Texas high schools with the workforce and postsecondary needs of our students in the future economy. • Expanding CTE programs, including the growth of P-TECH and R-PEP, and improved data access for student outcomes. • Enhancing early literacy and numeracy, including investments in screeners, interventions and the Additional Day School Year program. • Permanent teacher pay raises, with larger increases for more experienced educators and expansion of the Teacher Incentive Allotment. • Strengthening the teacher pipeline through funding for mentorship, residency, grow-your-own programs, and certification support. • The creation of a Teacher Bill of Rights, waiving certain exam fees, providing rehiring grants, and reinforcing due process protections.
HB 100	Rep. Leo-Wilson & Sen. Middleton	<p>Ensures that districts are not using public funds on low-quality curricula that are rejected by the State Board of Education due to poor curricular design or a lack of alignment to the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills.</p>
HB 120	Rep. K. Bell & Sen. Schwertner	<p>Expands access to career and technical education (CTE) across Texas and scales proven high school models that promote college and career readiness, including those mentioned above under House Bill 2 (89-R).</p>

HB 1178	Rep. Cunningham & Sen. Campbell	Makes it easier for certified teachers from other states to start teaching in Texas by giving them a temporary one-year certificate while their full certification is processed. By reducing barriers to entry, it ensures more certified educators can enter the classroom.
HB 1481	Rep. Fairly & Sen. Creighton	Requires school districts to adopt a policy prohibiting cell phone use during class time to minimize distractions and support both students and teachers in improving academic outcomes.
HB 3627	Rep. Tepper & Sen. Sparks	Allows the State Board of Education to hire staff to ensure they can implement the curricular reforms from previous sessions and effectively review and approve high-quality curriculum.
HB 5515	Rep. Buckley & Sen. King	Prohibits publishers from charging more for shipping and handling of instructional materials in order to support efforts to make high-quality educational resources more accessible to teachers, parents and students.
SB 569	Sen. Bettencourt & Rep. K. Bell	Updates the state's virtual learning model and provides for a greater uptake of virtual and hybrid campuses, programs and courses.

Postsecondary Workforce Development

HB 11	Rep. Phelan & Sen. Middleton	Tasks the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation with maximizing licensing reciprocity agreements with other states, providing a more streamlined integration of professionals into the state's workforce.
HB 2768	Rep. Capriglione & Sen. A. Hinojosa	Addresses shortages in the state's information resources workforce by establishing a state information technology apprenticeship credential.

HB 3923	Rep. K. Bell & Sen. Parker	Directs state agencies to remove bachelor's degree requirements for positions where a degree is not essential, expanding career advancement opportunities for non-degree holders.
HB 4848	Rep. Harris-Davila & Sen. A. Hinojosa	Requires every public higher education system to offer at least one competency-based degree program that's flexible, career-aligned, and priced at no more than half the average cost of a traditional degree. Standardizing these programs across systems ensures more equitable and efficient access to workforce-aligned degrees.
HB 5629	Rep. Wilson & Sen. Sparks	Removes residency requirements and updates licensing criteria for military service members, veterans and their spouses, making it easier to transfer licenses to Texas. This reduces barriers and helps skilled military families quickly join the workforce.
SB 1080	Sen. West & Rep. Cook	Allows incarcerated students to earn a provisional occupational license prior to their release. Reduces barriers to employment by supporting successful reentry and improving outcomes for formerly incarcerated Texans.
SB 1143	Sen. Blanco & Rep. Talarico	Requires local workforce boards to include target goals for youth aged 14-24 in their strategic plans and mandates annual evaluations of programs serving this group. By prioritizing services for "opportunity youth," it helps reengage young Texans in education and the workforce, and it builds a stronger Texas workforce.
SB 1786	Sen. Creighton & Rep. VanDeaver	Improves data collection through the Texas Workforce Commission, ensuring all 50 community colleges have access to high-quality data for tailored programming; refines the credential of value methodology; expands community college outcomes funding to include transfers to private institutions; streamlines workforce education funding across agencies; improves coordination of workforce education funding across state agencies; and allows incarcerated students in certain programs to enroll in dual credit courses at no cost.

SB 2314	Sen. Creighton & Rep. Wilson	Creates an electronic platform and submission portal, known as My Texas Future, to support high school students in exploring and applying to Texas colleges and universities using the electronic common admissions application form and expanding direct admissions.
SB 2405	Sen. Parker & Rep. Canales	Transfers authority over postsecondary education programs from TDCJ to Windham School District, the agency responsible for academic, career and technical education for Texas' adult corrections population.
SB 2448	Sen. Sparks & Rep. Ashby	Establishes the Rural Workforce Development Grant Program to provide technical assistance and support to institutions of higher education and school districts located in rural areas of the state. The program aims to help these entities align and deliver workforce training and education programs that address skill gaps and meet the urgent workforce needs of rural communities.
SJR 59	Sen. Birdwell & Rep. Lambert	Establishes an endowment to fund capital projects at Texas State Technical Colleges, creating a long-term solution to address Texas' workforce challenges.

Infrastructure for Growth

BILL NUMBER	BILL AUTHOR	BILL DESCRIPTION
HB 500	Rep. Bonnen & Sen. Huffman	<p>Allocates \$2.6 billion, including \$1.7 billion in new money, toward Texas' water infrastructure needs.</p> <p>\$100 million to plug orphaned oil and gas wells.</p> <p>Provides over \$600 million to the Texas A&M Forest Service to enhance wildfire response, including over \$236 million to support volunteer fire departments and \$257 million for the purchase and maintenance of a wildfire response aircraft fleet.</p> <p>Allocates \$350 million for the proposed Texas Advanced Nuclear Development Fund.</p> <p>Provides \$7.7 million to the Texas Railroad Commission to develop a produced water and injection data reporting system.</p>
SB 1	Sen. Huffman & Rep. Bonnen	<p>Provides staff capacity to the Texas Railroad Commission to develop a produced water and injection data reporting system.</p> <p>Allocates necessary funds to the Texas Water Development Board to ensure compliance with state and federal financial assistance programs by increasing agency capacity and provides targeted salary adjustments for recruitment and retention.</p> <p>Provides funding to Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to support timely regulatory oversight by addressing vacancies and retention with targeted salary increases.</p> <p>Provides funding to TCEQ to issue permits for the land application of produced water.</p> <p>Allocates funds to the Texas A&M Forest Service for the establishment of a self-insurance program for certified prescribed burn managers.</p>

Water

HB 2078	Rep. Gerdes & Sen. Perry	Requires tracking of groundwater use with long-term planning goals. This improved measurement and oversight helps gauge regional achievement toward meeting groundwater pumping goals.
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HJR 7	Rep. Harris & Sen. Perry	Proposes a constitutionally dedicated revenue stream of as much as \$1 billion a year to support new water supply projects and upgrade aging, deteriorating infrastructure.
SB 7	Sen. Perry & Rep. Harris	Requires that at least 50% of revenues dedicated toward water infrastructure be used for water supply projects. Expands the types of water infrastructure projects eligible to receive funding through the revenue dedication to include wastewater, flood control, agricultural water conservation, and water reuse projects. Establishes the Texas Water Fund Advisory Committee and requires that the Texas Water Development Board report on the state's progress toward developing needed water infrastructure.
SB 565	Sen. Perry & Rep. Harris-Davila	Supports regional solutions of drinking water and wastewater service through the removal of a regulatory disincentive for system consolidation. This change allows water providers to cure violations and fix problems while achieving more efficient service delivery.
SB 740	Sen. Perry & Rep. Spiller	Supports faster improvements and consolidation of water and wastewater services. Streamlines the process for qualified utilities to acquire struggling water or wastewater systems, promoting more efficient, reliable and regionalized service.
SB 971	Sen. Sparks & Rep. Gerdes	Clarifies which rural utilities qualify for the Texas Water Development Board's financial assistance and technical assistance program.
SB 1169	Sen. A. Hinojosa & Rep. Guillen	Expands the state's legal tools to support regional water and wastewater solutions, making it easier for communities to collaborate on shared infrastructure. This approach can improve service delivery and access, particularly in small and rural areas.
SB 1967	Sen. J. Hinojosa & Rep. Martinez	Allows funding for flood control projects that can also be used to expand water supplies. This dual-purpose approach strengthens both flood resilience and long-term water security.

Resiliency

HB 143	Rep. King & Sen. Hancock	Requires the Railroad Commission to notify the Public Utility Commission and well operators of fire safety violations found during inspections, supporting proactive steps to reduce wildfire risks and improve emergency response coordination.
HB 144	Rep. King & Sen. Schwertner	Requires electric utilities to submit a distribution pole management and inspection plan to the Public Utility Commission, advancing efforts to reduce wildfire risks linked to utility infrastructure.
HB 145	Rep. King & Sen. Schwertner	Requires electric utilities in wildfire risk areas to develop wildfire mitigation plans, helping prevent utility-related fire hazards and strengthening statewide wildfire resilience.
HB 1089	Rep. Paul & Sen. Alvarado	Creates the Gulf Protection Account to fund projects that protect and support the Gulf Coast, ensuring dedicated resources for coastal resilience and long-term regional benefit.
HB 2128	Rep. Spiller & Sen. Hagenbuch	Directs the Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service to study the differences in rural and urban firefighting and rescue capabilities, informing strategies to address gaps and improve emergency response statewide.
HB 2563	Rep. Ashby & Sen. Kolkhorst	Creates a self-insurance program for certified prescribed burn managers, addressing liability concerns that can limit this important wildfire prevention tool.
SB 34	Sen. Sparks & Rep. King	Addresses the growing threat of wildfires by improving state wildfire risk planning and enhancing local wildfire response capacity.
SB 767	Sen. Sparks & Rep. Fairly	Requires that the Texas A&M Forest Service maintain a comprehensive, real-time database of the statewide inventory of equipment for fighting wildfires, enhancing coordination and readiness during wildfire emergencies.

Energy

HB 14	Rep. Harris & Sen. Schwertner	Provides a clear state framework to advance next-generation nuclear power by establishing the Texas Advanced Nuclear Energy Office within the Office of the Governor. Creates the Texas Advanced Nuclear Grant Program for nuclear project development.
HB 431	Rep. Cortez & Sen. Johnson	Prohibits homeowner associations from banning the installation of solar roof tiles.
SB 879	Sen. Birdwell & Rep. Darby	Exempts a closed-loop geothermal injection well permitted by the Railroad Commission (RRC) from the drilling permit fees and financial assurance requirements applicable to oil and gas wells under RRC's jurisdiction.
SB 1145	Sen. Birdwell & Rep. Landgraf	Authorizes the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to issue permits for the land application of treated produced water, enabling the beneficial reuse of this water resource.
SB 1535	Sen. Zaffirini & Rep. Button	Establishes the advanced nuclear energy workforce development program to address nuclear energy industry labor supply gaps and to develop a strategic plan for advanced nuclear workforce development.
SB 1762	Sen. Blanco & Rep. Darby	Reclassifies energy conservation wells as geothermal energy conservation wells and clarifies that they are distinct from battery storage, providing regulatory clarity and supporting the growth of geothermal energy.

Foundations for Prosperity

BILL NUMBER	BILL AUTHOR	BILL DESCRIPTION
HB 500	Rep. Bonnen & Sen. Huffman	Adds an extra \$100 million in state funding to increase access to subsidized childcare.
SB 1	Sen. Huffman & Rep. Bonnen	Provides \$9 million to fully fund the Texas All-Payor Claims Database.

Health Care

HB 18	Rep. VanDeaver & Sen. Perry	Establishes the Texas Rural Hospital Officers Academy to train board members in rural hospitals, addressing management challenges that can lead to closures. By equipping local leaders with essential skills, the bill helps ensure rural hospitals remain financially sustainable and continue serving their communities.
HB 138	Rep. Dean & Sen. Bettencourt	Establishes the Health Impact, Cost & Coverage Program at the Center for Health Care Data at the UT Health Science Center at Houston, from which legislators could request evaluations of the impact of changes to ERS and TRS programs, as well as to other state-regulated health insurance plans.
HB 216	Rep. Harris-Davila & Sen. Hughes	Provides technical and implementation improvements to an effort from the 2023 session that ensures patients receive clear, itemized hospital bills while protecting hospitals that make good faith efforts to provide this information. This balance promotes transparency and fairness in medical billing.
HB 879	Rep. Frank & Sen. Hagenbuch	Increases the number of providers by creating an expedited path to licensure and requiring the licensing of certain military veterans as health care providers.
HB 1314	Rep. Hickland & Sen. Hughes	Strengthens price transparency for patients by shortening the timeframe for hospitals to provide advance price estimates.

HB 1612	Rep. Frank & Sen. Kolkhorst	Limits the price premium that can be applied to uninsured patients who pay hospitals directly for certain health care services, helping make care more affordable and transparent.
HB 2038	Rep. Oliverson & Sen. Sparks	Increases the provider pool by creating expedited pathways to licensure for foreign-trained doctors and medical school graduates.
SB 331	Sen. Kolkhorst & Rep. Frank	Expands existing price transparency requirements that apply to hospitals to cover other types of facilities, like outpatient surgery centers.
SB 493	Sen. Kolkhorst & Rep. Wharton	Outlaws clauses in contracts that prevent pharmacists from informing their patients of cheaper options (gag clauses).
SB 926	Sen. Hancock & Rep. Frank	Gives health insurers flexibility to encourage patients to seek high-value care while also establishing a fiduciary duty for health insurers to act in the best interest of patients, specifically prohibiting self-dealing.
SB 963	Sen. Hughes & Rep. Manuel	Allows Medicaid managed care organizations to engage in marketing about the availability of certain private health insurance plan coverage for members who have recently lost or are about to lose Medicaid coverage.
SB 1038	Sen. Sparks & Rep. Noble	Allows the HHSC inspector general to pursue claims for Medicaid fraud, strengthening oversight and protecting public resources.
SB 1401	Sen. West & Rep. Davis	Establishes a pipeline of mental health professionals through a combination of scholarships and clinical training hubs.
SB 1409	Sen. Parker & Rep. Johnson	Allows universities to offer affordable health benefit plans that better meet student needs, helping to reduce financial barriers and improve access to essential health care.

Childcare

HB 117	Rep. Schoolcraft & Sen. Campbell	Creates a Governor-led task force to seek long-term policy solutions for persistent childcare challenges.
HB 3963	Rep. Capriglione & Sen. Paxton	Establishes the framework for inter-agency data sharing and allows the development of an interoperable data infrastructure so state leaders can better understand the challenges facing our state's many communities.
HB 4903	Rep. Harris-Davila & Sen. Birdwell	Aligns agency oversight across four state agencies involved in childcare to reduce regulatory conflict and confusion for providers.
SB 462	Sen. Kolkhorst & Rep. Harris-Davila	Prioritizes access to existing childcare subsidies to individuals who work in childcare to address labor shortages for childcare centers.

Housing

HB 24	Rep. Orr & Sen. Hughes	Reforms the "tyrant's veto," a 100-year-old provision of state law that allows small groups of residents to block new housing developments through notice-and-protest mechanisms.
SB 15	Sen. Bettencourt & Rep. Gates	Allows new single-family neighborhoods in big cities to have smaller lot sizes, reducing the amount of land required to build a home.
SB 785	Sen. Flores & Rep. Guillen	Expands the availability of manufactured homes by requiring municipalities to allow the installation of manufactured homes in at least one area of the city.
SB 840	Sen. Hughes & Rep. Hefner	Supports much-needed housing production by allowing residential development in commercial, office and warehouse zones, reducing regulatory barriers that currently slow down or increase the cost of building housing.

SB 1341	Sen. Hancock & Rep. McQueeney	Streamlines definitions related to manufactured housing to better reflect the innovations occurring in the industry.
SB 1567	Sen. Bettencourt & Rep. Vasut	Limits local governments in some college towns from restricting the number of unrelated people who can live in a home together. Increases available housing supply by opening more rentable units from existing stock with an eye toward improving housing affordability for students.
SB 2477	Sen. Bettencourt & Rep. Patterson	Expands housing supply by making office-to-residential conversions more feasible.
SB 2835	Sen. Johnson & Rep. Talarico	Allows cities to adopt standards to build single-stair buildings up to six stories, promoting more affordable housing through innovative design.

Government Performance and Accountability

BILL NUMBER	BILL AUTHOR	BILL DESCRIPTION
HB 500	Rep. Bonnen & Sen. Huffman	<p>Allocates \$1 billion to the Employees Retirement System of Texas to reduce interest payments on legacy liabilities.</p> <p>Appropriates an additional \$300 million to the Space Exploration & Aeronautics Research Fund.</p> <p>Provides \$54.5 million to replace the outdated DFPS' IMPACT case management system.</p> <p>Allocates funds for the installation and retrofitting of climate control systems in Texas prisons.</p> <p>Appropriates funds to the Office of Court Administration for new case management systems for specialty courts and for appellate courts.</p>
SB 1	Sen. Huffman & Rep. Bonnen	<p>Provides funds to the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement to improve law enforcement training standards, accountability and operations with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High-quality training among academies and training providers; • Supporting the hiring of compliance analysts; and • Additional legal support for the State Office of Administrative Hearings and records management. <p>Provides \$135 million to launch the proposed Texas Cyber Command.</p> <p>Allocates funding to establish the Texas Regulatory Efficiency Office.</p> <p>Appropriates funds to the Texas Department of Information Resources to better monitor and to facilitate responsible AI use in state government.</p> <p>DIR was also allocated funds to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet increased demand for DIR services from their customers and implement improvements to procurement processes, and • Expand and enhance the capability of cybersecurity services and defenses to protect state and local agencies from cyber threats.

Cybersecurity and IT Systems

HB 150	Rep. Capriglione & Sen. Parker	Creates the Texas Cyber Command as a vital tool to defend against increasingly complex threats and proactively coordinate cyber defenses across all levels of government.
HB 1500	Rep. K. Bell & Sen. Parker	Directs the DIR to implement key Sunset recommendations that enhance governance, strengthen IT procurement and reinforce our state's cybersecurity.
HB 2818	Rep. Capriglione & Sen. Parker	Creates an AI division within the DIR, responsible for facilitating the implementation of artificial intelligence technologies for state agencies and other DIR customers.
HB 3512	Rep. Capriglione & Sen. Blanco	Positions certain state and local government employees to better manage emerging technology risks, maximize the benefits of AI applications and uphold strong standards of data security and proper, ethical use of advanced technologies.
HB 4751	Rep. Capriglione & Sen. Parker	Establishes the Texas Quantum Initiative, attached to the Office of the Governor, to position Texas as a national leader in quantum technologies.

Government Efficiency and Accountability

HB 12	Rep. K. Bell & Sen. Parker	Improves the Sunset process to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and transparency of our state regulatory agencies.
HB 252	Rep. Walle & Sen. Hughes	Allows certain state agencies to pay employees in specific salary groups twice a month, modernizing state employment practices to improve public-sector workforce recruitment and retention.
HB 5195	Rep. Capriglione & Sen. Alvarado	Mandates the modernization of state agency websites and digital services, emphasizing enhanced online accessibility, improved user experience, reduced paperwork burdens and interagency coordination.

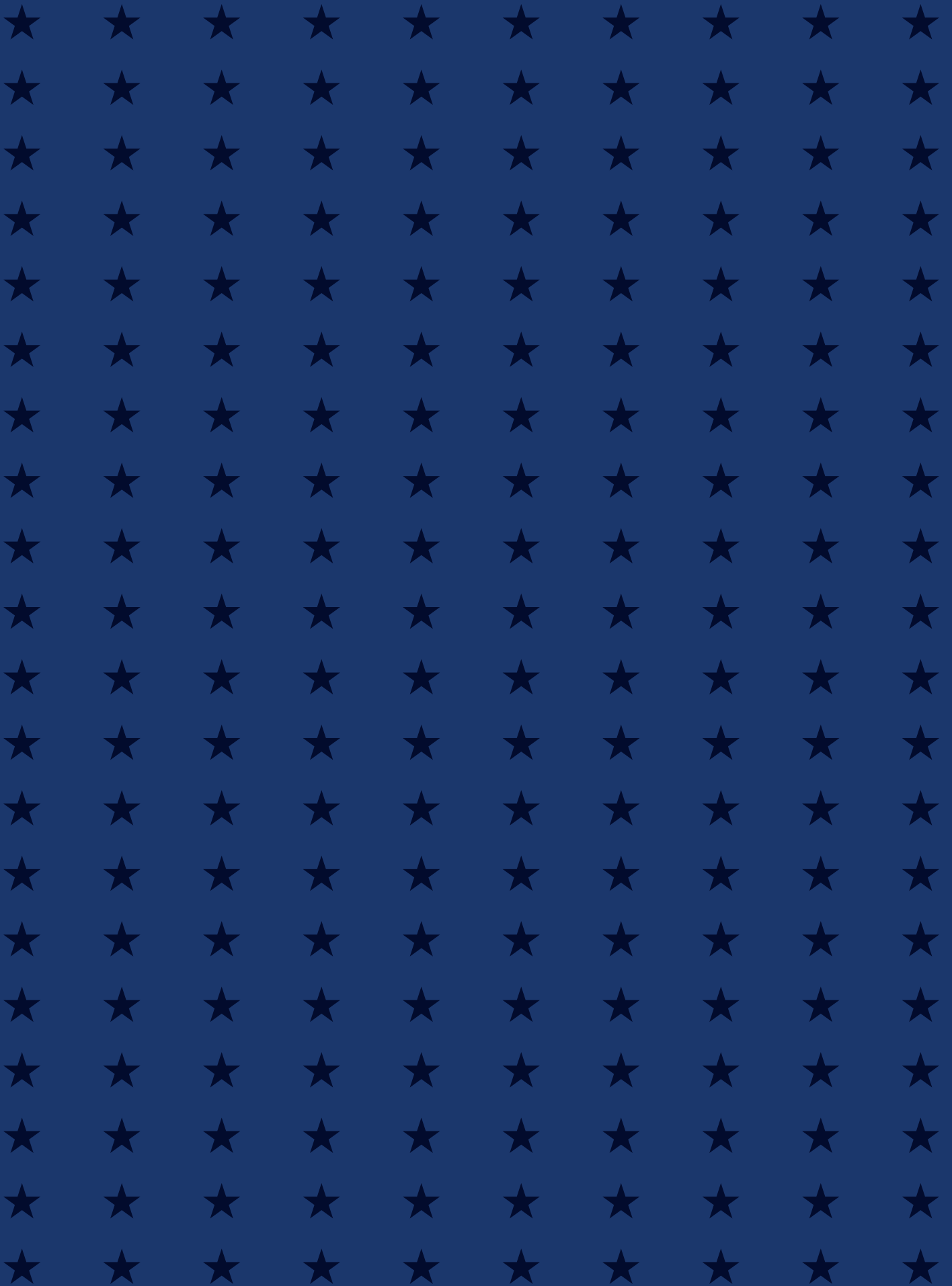
HB 5246	Rep. Bonnen & Sen. Huffman	Strengthens Texas' space and aerospace development by expanding the Texas Space Commission's powers and creating a consortium to coordinate research and funding.
SB 14	Sen. King & Rep. Capriglione	Omnibus regulatory reform bill that would establish a new Regulatory Efficiency Office within the Office of the Governor to help agencies streamline and improve their regulations.
SB 1350	Sen. Hughes & Rep. Leach	Creates the Texas Bicentennial Commission for the purpose of celebrating Texas' 200th birthday.
SB 2065	Sen. Huffman & Rep. Bonnen	Aims to enhance the Texas Emergency Services Retirement System by adjusting funding methods, including state contributions, to ensure its long-term financial stability.
SB 2405	Sen. Parker & Rep. Canales	Texas Department of Criminal Justice Sunset bill, which improves the workforce alignment of credentials and provides transparency and accountability of results by linking prison data with education and workforce data.

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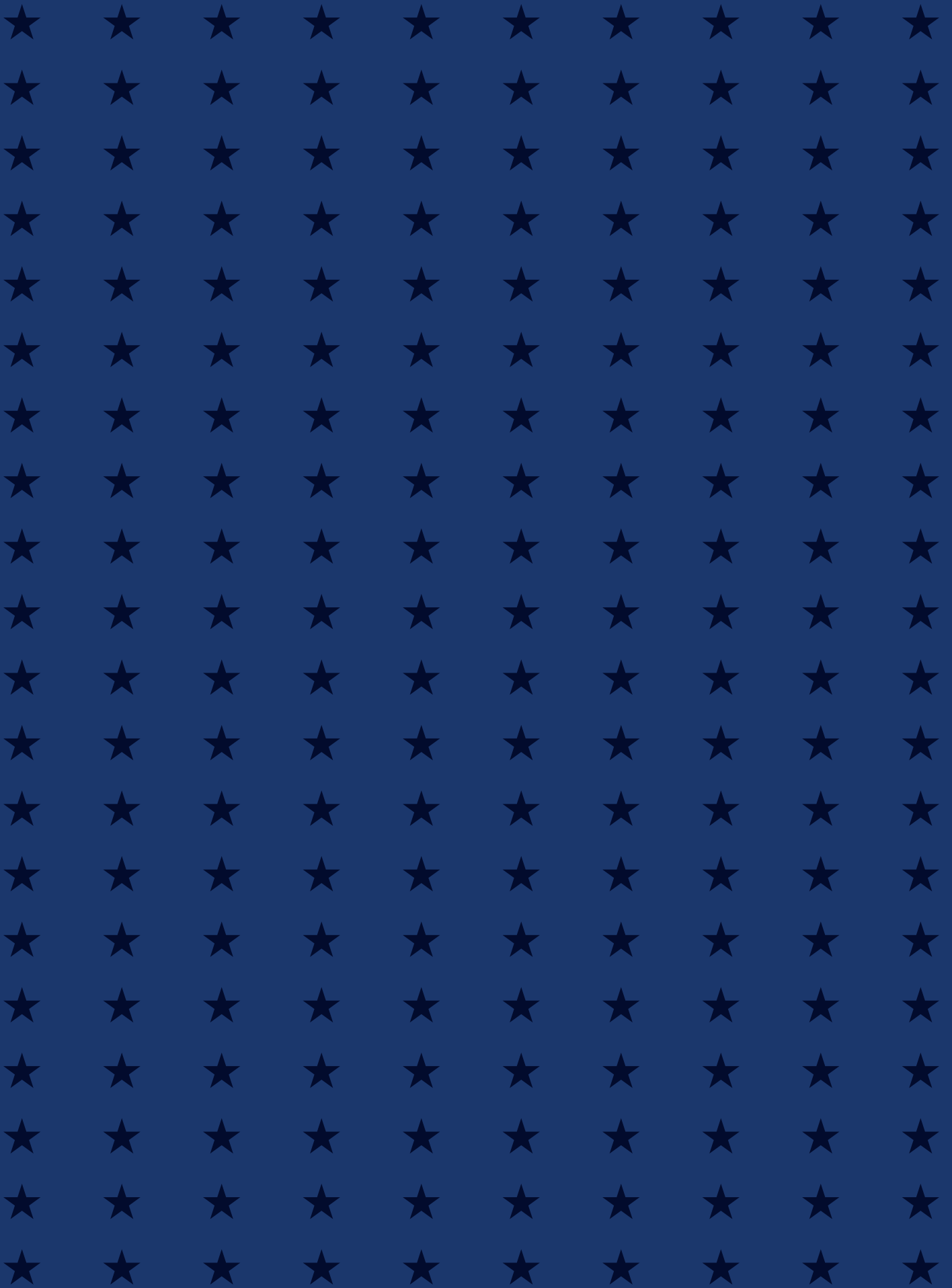
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