



## TARRANT COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

G. K. MAENIUS  
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

**TO:** Tarrant County Commissioners Court

**FROM:** Russell Schaffner, Asst. County Administrator

**DATE:** April 27, 2023

**SUBJECT:** Legislative Update

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### Overview

The House and Senate have appointed conferees for the appropriation act (**HB 1**) and the supplemental appropriations act (**SB 30**). House conferees are Chair Bonnen, Rep. Mary Gonzalez, Rep. Jetton, Rep. VanDeaver, and Rep. Walle. Senate conferees are Chair Huffman, Sen. Nichols, Sen. Kolkhorst, Sen. Creighton, and Sen. Schwertner. The conferees will make changes to the appropriation and supplemental appropriation acts as legislation is passed and property tax legislation develops.

Neither version of **HB 1** includes studies for new state hospitals; however, several strategies have been created or expanded to meet the growing needs of the state.

- **Mental Health Grant Program:** This new strategy was proposed in response to the mental health needs of various communities. If approved, the program would provide \$100 million for “county-based collaboratives” to construct “jail diversion facilities, step-down facilities, permanent supportive housing, crisis stabilization units, and crisis respite units.”
- **Inpatient Capacity Expansion:** This new strategy would authorize \$91 million over the biennium to contract for 150 competency restoration beds. These funds can be used for local partnerships to provide competency restoration.
- **Purchased Psychiatric Beds:** This strategy will be expanded by 234 state-purchased inpatient psychiatric beds for civil commitments. Tarrant County has 29 purchased beds through the current program.

## **Bills of Interest**

The competing property tax relief bills and their corresponding constitutional amendments have passed out of their respective chambers. **HB 2** (Meyer) was received in the Senate on April 17 and has not yet been referred to a committee. **SB 3** (Bettencourt), **SB 4** (Bettencourt), and **SB 5** (Parker) were received in the House on March 23 and were referred to the House Ways and Means Committee on April 10.

Economic development reform legislation is slowly making its way through the process. **HB 5** (Hunter), which would create a new mechanism to abate school district property taxes for businesses, was voted out of the House Ways and Means Committee on April 24. **SB 1419** (Birdwell), which makes changes to existing 312, 380, and 381 agreements, will likely be voted on by the Senate the first week in May.

There are three active bills that would allow for properties to be deannexed. **HB 3053** (Dean) has passed out of the House. The bill was amended to not include Tarrant County. **SB 369** (Campbell) is expected to pass out of the Senate. This bill would force all properties not receiving “full municipal services” to be deannexed on December 31, 2023. **SB 2038** (Bettencourt) would allow property owners or residents of an area with less than 200 residents to petition to be removed from municipal ETJ. If the area to be removed has more than 200 residents, the residents must vote to be removed.

**SJR 44** (Huffman/Smith) and **SB 1318** (Huffman/Smith) will make meaningful changes to the bail and magistration process. The Senate bills were heard in the House Criminal Jurisprudence Committee on April 25. **SJR 44** would propose a constitutional amendment to allow a defendant to be denied bail for certain charges. **SB 1318** would alter the magistration process and make needed changes to the bail reform legislation of the previous Session. House, Senate, and stakeholder negotiations are ongoing.

## **Important Dates:**

- March 10 – Unrestricted bill filing deadline
- May 11 – Last day for the House to consider second reading House bills
- May 23 – Last day for the House to consider second reading Senate bills
- May 24 – Last day for the Senate to consider all bills on second or third reading
- May 29 – sine die
- June 18 – Last day the Governor can sign or veto bills