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Legislative Priorities for the 140-Day Siege... The 86th Texas Legislative Session

1) Pass Constitutional Carry – enable all who can **legally possess** a firearm to be able to both open and conceal carry handguns in all places “licensed to carry” citizens can currently carry. Retain licenses for those who need reciprocity in non-constitutional carry states.

2) End Taxpayer-Funded Lobbying – pass legislation to abolish all forms of taxpayer-funded lobbying and end the automatic payroll deduction of union dues by the government.

3) Pro-Life – pass legislation to abolish abortion; including, but not limited to, enacting legislation that would ignore and refuse to enforce any and all federal statutes, regulations, executive orders, and court rulings, which would deprive an unborn child of the right to life, as well as enacting life-saving legislation such as PreNDA or a ‘heartbeat bill.’ Completely eliminate funding for Planned Parenthood and their affiliates and prohibit their physical and digital presence in our schools. Reform the Texas Advance Directives Act’s “10-day countdown” clause in Section 166.046 of the Texas Health and Safety Code, leaving intact the process of allowing physicians to raise ethical concerns about treatment decisions, while still protecting the Right to Life of patients. (Sen. Hughes’ bill allows physicians and hospital committees to transfer a patient, while respecting the decision to maintain life-sustaining treatment until the patient can be safely transferred to another facility.)

4) Property Tax Reform:

a) Establish a property tax revenue growth cap of 2.5 percent per year with an automatic rollback election trigger.

b) **Abolish** the Maintenance and Operation School property tax and replace it with a consumption tax or other mechanism other than income tax, while broadening the tax base, eliminating the appraisal board and taxing the property at the purchased value or the free market value upon change of hands for local government funding and special district funding. **School Maintenance and Operation funds shall be allocated from the state’s general fund to Texas’ Independent School Districts via an inflation-adjusted, per-student-allocation.**

c) Prohibit the Legislature from imposing unfunded mandates on its political subdivisions, including teacher pay raises. If the legislature wants to mandate a pay raise, then the legislature needs to fund it and not just for one year! **This is how the state encourages tax creep at the local level.** [Note: all funding

comes from taxpayers' pockets, but the state should not raise local taxes while crowing it has reduced taxes.]

d) Improve the rights of property owners in the property tax appraisal process and the property tax appraisal protest process.

5) Religious Freedom & Privacy – pass legislation prohibiting the violation of the rights and freedoms of individuals, organizations and businesses to exercise their sincerely held religious beliefs by local ordinances or state laws; and pass legislation that protects the privacy and safety of women and children in multi-use facilities such as bathrooms, locker rooms and showers in all Texas schools and government buildings and oppose legislation that would undermine these privacy and safety protections.

6) Pass Citizen Transportation Protections:

a) Remove tolls from roads when the debt is retired and end multi-leveraging schemes of system financing. Before the debt can be restructured or refinanced, the pay-off date must receive voter approval in a **November General Election** to extend payoff of the toll debt. Maintenance must then revert to the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

b) End public-private partnerships, specifically regarding toll projects.

c) Prohibit conversion of existing roads or lanes to toll roads.

d) End taxpayer subsidies to guarantee, prop up, or bail out any toll projects, whether public or private.

e) Fund highways without hidden taxes, tolls, or raiding emergency funds.

7) Local Taxpayer Debt Reform:

a) Improve the transparency of local debt, prohibit debt from being used for non-specified purposes, and restrict the use of certificates of obligation.

b) Require a two-thirds supermajority vote to approve issuance of new local debt.

c) Prohibit the use of rolling polling in local bond elections.

d) Hold local bond elections in November - uniform election date.

8) Border Security/Immigration Enforcement – secure Texas from border breeches, including refugee resettlement by the federal government; end social welfare magnets (including in-state tuition breaks and loopholes in TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families); enforce the rule of law by mandating the use of the E-verify system for government and private sector employers to **end sanctuary businesses and industries who exploit illegal workers in the modern day slave trade of cheap labor.**

9) Pass Election Integrity and Ballot Security Reforms:

- Early Voting limited to 7 days, ending on the Friday before Election Day.
- Fair Election Procedures: strengthen election laws to ensure ballot integrity and fair elections. Secretary of State shall strictly enforce printing of results tapes for electronic voting for early voting and Election Day at polling locations after the polls close for all counties.
- Increase scrutiny and security in balloting by mail;

- prohibit internet voting and any electronic voting lacking a verifiable paper trail;
- prohibit “rolling polling” for bond and tax rate increase elections;
- prosecute election fraud with jail sentences; raise to felony status infractions of the Texas Election Code during in-person voting, including allowing persons not in the poll book to vote a regular ballot, willfully misclassifying the reason for a provisional ballot, giving one voter multiple ballot access codes or multiple ballots, and all forms of voter assistance not compliant with the TEC, especially “assistants” who force themselves on voters to influence their votes.
- Residency Requirements - define voter and candidate residency and ensure enforcement by the Secretary of State and prosecution by the Texas Attorney General under criminal penalties.
- Close Texas primaries – Democrats have an outsized influence on elections — by voting in the Republican primary. We should stop it now.

10) Save the Alamo & Cenotaph – condemn the premises of the Alamo/Cenotaph and seize it from the City of San Antonio and the General Land Office in order to preserve the history of Texas Independence. Place its management and preservation under the authority of the Texas Legislature.

11) End Tax Abatements, Wind Energy Subsidies, and Other Taxpayer-funded Corporate Welfare & Make Economic Development Transparent Again – virtually unlimited tax incentives allow the value of property improvements in a “reinvestment zone” to be abated for 10 years by well-connected developers. Chapter 312 abatements are up for sunset in 2019, allowing a key opportunity for lawmakers to curb or abolish the practice. Local “economic development” deals must be brought out of the backrooms and into public view. Basic reforms would make deals between politicians and corporations seeking a handout more transparent by subjecting them to Texas’ existing transparency laws. In 1999, state law was changed to exempt economic development negotiations from both the Texas Open Meetings and Public Information Acts. These exemptions don’t serve the interests of taxpayers; rather, they conceal the backroom dealing between politicians and corporations who feed off them.

12) Ban red light cameras – photo enforced traffic citations violate drivers’ due process rights. It’s time to end them for good!

13) Grid Security (Senator Bob Hall’s Sustaining Economic Prosperity through Resilient Energy Communities bill) By establishing appropriate standards for energy resiliency and identifying critical infrastructure for immediate hardening of the grid at the state level, the state can ensure a reliable source of power in any scenario. Then, communities may prioritize coming into compliance with additional standards in the areas of: emergency services; communications systems; clean water and sewer services; health care systems; and financial services. **This legislation represents part of Governor Abbott’s declared “emergency” items for the legislature – improving disaster response and resiliency.**

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