



# 84th TEXAS STATE LEGISLATURE

## SUMMARY OF BILLS

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA ISSUE		BILL NUMBER	BILL DESCRIPTION	WHY IT MATTERS	ACTIONS TAKEN	OUTCOME
PRIORITY ISSUES	Revenue and appraisal caps	<a href="#">H.B. 1965</a>	Would lower the property tax rollback rate from 8% to the statewide inflation rate plus 1% and require cities to hold a ratification election to adopt a tax rate that exceeds the inflation rate-based rollback rate.	Since 2004, the City's property tax rate has been 0.648. Revenue has increased 2-3% over the past three fiscal years. If sales tax revenues dropped sharply, like after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the City wouldn't have the flexibility to capture additional revenue without incurring the cost of special elections. Current limit on appraisal increases is 10% per year; lowering it could result in distorted and depressed real estate markets like in states that have decreased their limits.	Opposed via TML.	Failed.
		<a href="#">S.B. 1</a>	Increases the homestead exemption for school district taxes from \$15,000 to 25% of state home median market value (estimated to be \$33,625 in 2016 and \$35,979 in 2017). Prohibits cities from repealing or reducing a homestead exemption until 2024. Amendment #4 would set a 5% appraisal cap on all real property.		Contacted House delegation to oppose Amendment #4. Also opposed via TML.	Passed without Amendment #4. Signed by Governor. Voters to decide on exemption in November.
		<a href="#">S.B. 182</a>	Would change the rollback tax rate to 4% and repeal the current petition requirement.		Letters of opposition. Also opposed via TML.	Failed.
	Economic development tools	<a href="#">S.B. 1220</a>	Would have limited Tax Increment Reinvestment Zones to 10 years, essentially eliminating the ability to sell bonds for infrastructure. Also would have required citywide elections for bonds and limited plan amendments.	Arlington has 4 zones in key areas that provide gap funding for public infrastructure improvements related to economic development projects. Successful projects include The Highlands and Viridian.	Letter of opposition. Registered in opposition at committee hearing.	Failed.
	Gas well drilling	<a href="#">H.B. 40</a>	Cities may only enact, amend, or enforce ordinances that: 1) regulate above ground activity, including fire and emergency response, traffic, lights or noise, or impose notice or reasonable setback requirements, 2) are commercially reasonable, 3) do not effectively prohibit an oil and gas operation conducted by a reasonably prudent operator, and 4) are not otherwise preempted by state or federal law.	Arlington has 300+ gas wells. The City's Fire Code and Gas Drilling and Production ordinance protect the health, safety, and general welfare of the public as well as the environment and minimize potential impacts to private and public property and mineral rights owners.	Letters of opposition. Testified against at committee hearings. Worked with bill's author to modify language to include local control measures.	Passed. Signed by Governor. Effective immediately.
		<a href="#">H.B. 3123</a>	Sunset bill for various state agencies. The conference committee added language giving the Railroad Commission (RRC) an 8-year reprieve. The RRC regulates oil and gas and coal production.	Delaying review would hinder cities' ability to participate in: rate making reform for gas rates; review of any proposed rules for H.B. 40; and providing input on processes effecting injection wells and earthquakes.	Contacted House delegation to oppose new language for RRC sunset review. Also opposed via TML.	Passed without reprieve for RRC. Signed by Governor. Effective immediately.
TRANSPORTATION	High Speed Rail	<a href="#">H.B. 1</a>	Budget Rider #48, which would prohibit TxDOT from spending funds on high speed rail projects.	As part of the Council's priority "Enhancing Regional Mobility," the City is working to advance a high speed rail system connecting Fort Worth-Arlington-Dallas. Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of Arlington's transportation connections within and beyond our borders is critical because of our central location within the region and important to growing our economy.	Supported funding for libraries and parks. Allied with other cities to oppose Budget Rider #48.	Rider #48 failed.
		<a href="#">H.B. 3918</a>	Would have prohibited use of bonds for high speed rail.		Letter of opposition.	Failed.
		<a href="#">S.B. 1601</a>	Would have defined "high speed rail" as an intercity passenger rail service and expressly prohibit such from exercising eminent domain authority.		Registered in opposition along with Tarrant Regional Transportation Coalition.	Failed.



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TRANSPORTATION, cont.	Funding options	<a href="#">H.J.R. 13</a>	Would provide \$3 billion of net sales tax revenue + an additional 2% of the net revenue every fiscal year to construct, maintain, or acquire rights-of-way for non-toll public roadways or repay debt for such purposes.	Also as part of the Council's priority "Enhancing Regional Mobility," the City supports increased funding and funding options. Arlington seeks to improve those areas of our existing infrastructure which are not adequate to accommodate residents, forecasted population and employment growth, and increasing number of visitors. In Tarrant County, there are various planned transportation projects with a combined cost of approximately \$7.2 billion - several of those projects in need of funding are in Arlington.	Letter of support.	Failed.
		<a href="#">S.J.R. 5</a>	If voters approve, \$2.5 billion of the net revenue from the state's general sales and use tax (after revenue exceeds \$28 billion) + 35% of the net revenue from the motor vehicle sales tax (after revenue exceeds \$5 billion) will pay to construct, maintain, and acquire rights-of-way for non-toll public roadways or repay debt for such purposes.		Letter of support.	Passed. Filed with Secretary of State. Voters to decide measure in November.
REVENUES	Ballot language	<a href="#">S.B. 1041</a>	Would require the following information on ballots for bond elections: the total amount of debt, debt payments, amount of taxes required to be imposed on a homestead with a value equal to the median homestead value to repay the debt obligations, and the estimated tax burden that would be imposed on a homestead to repay the bonds to be authorized, if approved, among other provisions.	Arlington already provides budget and accounting data, and has been recognized by the state for transparency. While the proposed measures align with transparency efforts, a more effective approach is informing voters about the cost of ballot propositions before an election.	Opposed via TML.	Failed.
	METF/ETF	<a href="#">H.B. 26</a>	Renames the program to the Major Events Reimbursement Program, as well as abolishes the Emerging Technology Fund, and creates a new initiative to provide matching funds for state universities to recruit recognized faculty researchers, among other provisions.	Arlington events that have been eligible for these programs have included the Super Bowl XLV, NCAA Men's Final Four Championship, USA Football International Bowl, RFD-TV The American, USA Track and Field Youth Championships, 2011 Offense-Defense Bowl, and U.S. Open qualifying tennis tournaments. These events attract thousands of visitors which increases tax revenues for the local and state economies.	Monitored.	Passed. Signed by Governor. Effective 9/1/2015.
		<a href="#">H.B. 1860</a>	Would create a grant program to provide money for security at certain major events.		Letter of support.	Failed.
		<a href="#">H.B. 1950</a>	Would limit reimbursement from the Event Trust Fund to one event per year.		Letter of opposition. Testimony provided by the CVB at the committee hearing.	Failed.
		<a href="#">S.B. 293</a>	Expands the definition of "site selection organization," for purposes of selecting a site in Texas for certain events that are eligible to receive funding, to include ESPN or an affiliate, the National Association for Stock Car Auto Racing (NASCAR), and the Ultimate Fighting Championship.		Monitored.	Passed. Signed by Governor. Effective immediately.
		<a href="#">S.B. 633</a>	Transfers the programs from the Comptroller's to the Governor's Office.		Letter of support.	Passed. Signed by Governor. Effective 9/1/2015.



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<b>PUBLIC SAFETY</b>	Drunk driving	<a href="#">H.B. 2246</a> Requires ignition interlock devices for those convicted of DUIs.	In 2010, 30% of fatality crashes were caused by drivers with a blood alcohol content level of 0.08 or higher or a combination of alcohol and drugs. In 2013, that jumped to 46%. Last year, APD investigated 450 alcohol- and drug-related traffic crashes, more than in 2013, and arrested 1,306 motorists suspected of DUI.	Letters of support. Testimony provided by APD at the committee hearing.	Passed. Signed by Governor. Effective 9/1/2015.
	Synthetic	<a href="#">S.B. 172 / S.B. 173</a> Modifies state statute to include chemicals commonly referred to as synthetic cannabinoids to improve enforcement and prosecution.	Makers of illegal drug-mimicking compounds often change formulas, which have led to problems with prosecuting cases.	Registered in support.	Passed. Signed by Governor. Effective 9/1/2015.
	"Doxing"	<a href="#">S.B. 923 / H.B. 1061</a> Makes it a crime to intentionally distribute personal and confidential information of a public servant or a member of that servant's family or household as retaliation.	In recent years, law enforcement has experienced retaliation by some individuals who post personal information on social media (known as "doxing") jeopardizing the safety of officers and their families.	Letters of support. Worked with author to modify and strengthen language.	Passed. Signed by Governor. Effective 9/1/2015.
<b>OTHER PRIORITY ISSUES</b>	Community Services	<a href="#">H.B. 1</a> \$209.4 billion state budget. For FY 2016-2017, the Legislature appropriated \$37.4 million for Library Resource Sharing and \$4.9 million for Aid to Local Libraries. The Local Park Grants, a competitive program, will receive \$42 million.	State library funding assists with providing online homework help, college assistance, workforce development, and digital content. Arlington has received \$5M+ in state grants to assist with funding park improvements.	Supported via TML. Contacted House delegation to support measures.	Passed. Signed by Governor. Effective immediately.
	Support quality education	<a href="#">H.B. 4</a> Creates a prekindergarten program beginning with the 2015-16 school year. Districts and open-enrollment charter schools could opt into the program and receive additional funding per eligible student.	One of the Council's priorities is to support quality education - from early learning and K-12 grades, through college and post-graduate studies. Focusing on such efforts will assist with achieving a quality of life that is attractive to new residents and businesses that will invest in our community and economy.	Registered in support.	Passed. Signed by Governor. Effective immediately.
		<a href="#">H.B. 100</a> Authorizes the issuance of \$3.1 billion in tuition revenue bonds for institutions of higher education to finance construction and renovation of infrastructure and facilities, including \$70 million for UT Arlington for the construction of a science and education innovation and research building.		Registered in support.	Passed. Sent signed by Governor.
		<a href="#">H.B. 3245</a> Would make Arlington the sole sponsoring entity for the North Texas Higher Education Authority, Inc.		Letter of support.	Passed. Signed by Governor. Effective immediately.



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ARLINGTON BILLS	TPID	<a href="#">S.B. 837</a>	Authorizes Arlington, as well as Austin, Fort Worth and San Antonio, to consider creation of a Tourism Public Improvement District.	Creation of a district would assist with advancing the CVB's effort to make Arlington a top destination for conventions and tourism, which supports jobs and businesses.	Worked with the CVB to introduce and advance. Letters of support. Testimony provided by CVB.	Passed. Sent to Governor.
	Viridian	<a href="#">H.B. 648</a>	Authorizes the Arlington City Council to appoint 3 members of the 5-member board of directors for the Viridian Municipal Management District. The remaining members will be elected by property owners. When 90% of the developable acres have been developed, the Board reverts back to all 5 members being directly elected by property owners.	Appointment of board members by Council makes the governance structure more congruent with other similar district boards. The new composition of the board balances the interests of all investors – homeowners, private investors and public entities participating in the district.	Worked with bill's author to introduce and advance. Letter of support. Testimony provided by developer.	Passed. Sent to Governor.