



City of Houston Legislative Principles For the 85th Session of the Texas Legislature

City of Houston Mission Statement

The City of Houston will focus its proactive legislative efforts on the enhancement of life in Houston through emphasis on public safety and criminal justice initiatives; economic development and increasing jobs; protecting the quality of life; improving mobility; creating complete communities; working towards creating a healthier environment; providing affordable housing opportunities; and making the government more responsive, transparent, and fiscally responsible.

All of this must be pursued with a focus on regional cooperation, while preserving local control and ending unfunded state mandates.

Regional Cooperation/General Government

- Oppose all unfunded state mandates that negatively affect the operations of the City of Houston fiscally, by requiring state micro-management of local programs, or by limiting the City's local authority, public safety, revenue collection, city operations or other local programs.
- Oppose diminishing the City of Houston's regulatory authority, water rights, and representation on the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO) Board of Directors, Port of Houston Authority, or other entities. Support and protect the City's authority in its rights of way and on municipal premises.
- Support proportionate funding and financing models by the State and other relevant units to assist Houston in meeting its needs including health care, public safety, housing, transportation and infrastructure development.

Public Safety/Criminal Justice

- Support improvements in the ability to train, deploy, and fund emergency operations and public safety personnel. Support legislative and administrative efforts to assist the City of Houston in preparation for and prevention of acts of terrorism and emergencies, including the equitable, threat-based distribution of Homeland Security funds.
- Support changes and improvements to the Criminal Justice Codes, Juvenile Justice Codes and Transportation Codes including those supported by the City of Houston in previous sessions of the Texas Legislature.
- Support legislation to address the growing problem of substance abuse, with a particular focus on synthetic drugs (such as Kush) and the ramifications of these drugs in society.
- Support legislation to combat human trafficking and provide additional tools to law enforcement, prosecutors and city regulators to eliminate this crime. Support legislation that provides assistance to trafficking victims.
- Support legislative efforts to prevent and end homelessness and connect individuals and families with appropriate services.

Neighborhood Improvement and Quality of Life

- Support technical legislation that assists the City's homeowners and strengthens neighborhoods, our environment and quality of life, as well as neighborhood and park programs.
- Support legislation that reduces unnecessary regulatory burdens for removing dangerous buildings and urban blight.

Economic Development

- Support legislation enhancing economic development and fostering job creation in regional growth areas.
- Support legislative efforts to promote inner city redevelopment including the creation and maintenance of quality affordable workforce housing.
- Support legislative and administrative initiatives to improve the economic viability of the Houston Airport System, including funding for the Spaceport Trust Fund.
- Support efforts that allow for continued cooperation between municipal management districts and other jurisdictions to enhance community development in Texas cities.
- Support the arts and Cultural District funding through the Texas Commission on the Arts' agency budget as submitted.

Environment & Public Utilities

- Support legislative and administrative efforts to assist the Houston region in improving air quality and addressing flooding/drainage challenges. Support initiatives for additional green space, urban forestation and park enhancements.
- Support legislation promoting energy efficiency and the authority of local governments, the Public Utility Commission, Railroad Commission and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to have sufficient regulatory authority over industry participants to protect consumer interests and make delivery systems more reliable and resilient.
- Support legislation that protects adequate compensation for the use of City of Houston property and public rights-of-way.

Education

- Support legislation to enhance after school programs and summer programs for youth.
- Support legislation to improve education, health and safety, literacy, library programs, and to emphasize opportunities for youth to ensure our workforce remains competitive.
- Support additional funding for the TexShare and TexQuest shared online resources.
- Support reforms to the State's education finance system that halt the practice of requiring recapture of funds for urban school districts that are deemed "property wealthy" but have a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students.
- Support the community schools model that promotes city-wide collaboration to support local schools with wrap around services and resources.
- Support increased state funding and investment in research and development at institutions of higher learning. Support incentives to institutions of higher learning to collaborate with local government entities to assist in collaboratively solving public issues.
- Support arts education and access initiatives, increasing the scope of the Texas Commission on the Arts to include arts education and expanding the Arts Department at the Texas Education Agency.

Health

- Support legislation and funding for expanded health care coverage and access for Texans, including continued progress on behavioral health.
- Support expanded capacity for substance use treatment in the Houston area, as well as fully funding Graduate Medical Education positions to increase our healthcare workforce.
- Support funding for research into health care related initiatives to grow Houston's economy, and trauma funding to improve Houston's ability to respond to emergencies.

Pensions

- Support efforts to enact the Mayor's proposal on City of Houston pensions for Houston Firefighters Relief and Retirement Fund, Houston Municipal Employees Pension System and Houston Police Officers Pension System.

Mobility

- Support legislation to expand transportation funding for regional connectivity, project implementation, congestion relief and enhanced mobility to enable economic opportunity in the region. Pursue balance in the region's allocation of transportation funding based on the region's population, projected growth, vehicle miles traveled, and public transportation efforts.
- Support an end to diversions from the state highway trust fund for use with non-transportation programs.
- Support legislation that provides resources to the Port of Houston, the Houston Airport System, and the Metropolitan Transit Authority of Harris County (METRO).

Other

- Support, where possible, other local governments, school districts, local colleges, universities and medical institutions, health care providers, non-profits, and film, arts and tourism.