2019
El Paso County
State Legislative Action Agenda & Legislative Values Document
86th Session of the Texas Legislature
Regular Session
ABOUT EL PASO COUNTY

El Paso County is the westernmost County in Texas, with a population of over 840,000 residents, making it the sixth-most populous County in Texas. El Paso County is known for its presence along the U.S. Mexico Border, the largest bi-national metropolis in the United States. It also has the distinct advantage of being located between three states and two nations, making it the fourth largest manufacturing center on the continent and a unique location which presents both challenges and opportunities alike.

VISION

El Paso County is a leading bi-national community with its key principles of being a vibrant community with a dynamic diverse economy and a world class center for health and providing entertainment for all. El Paso County strives to be a high performance, customer-focused organization that is dedicated to building on our legacy, illuminating innovation and succeeding beyond borders.
EL PASO STATE DELEGATION

State Senator
Jose Rodriguez
District 29

State Representative
Mary E. Gonzalez
District 75

State Representative
Cesar Blanco
District 76

State Representative
Lina Ortega
District 77

State Representative
Joe Moody
District 78

State Representative
Art Fierro
District 79
1. **Human Trafficking**: Addresses human trafficking by putting into place requirements for massage parlors, requirements to obtain a massage therapy license and those who are licensed. Amend Texas Occupations Code, Section 455.202(c)(3); 455.156(b); 455.1560(h); 455, Section 83.70(f).

**PROPOSED BY**: El Paso County Attorney’s Office

**SYNOPSIS**: This bill addresses several issues related to human trafficking in massage parlors. The legislation requires massage parlors to display a sign in English, Spanish and Mandarin, concerning services and assistance available to victims of human trafficking, as is required already in nail and hair salons. It also amends the requirements that must be met in order to obtain a massage therapy license and requires an applicant to have a valid Texas ID or Texas driver’s license. Finally, the bill would require a massage parlor licensee to attach a photo of licensee in front of their license, just as it is required for cosmetology licenses.

2. **Mental Health Assessments in County Detention Facility**: Relating to the identification and assessment of defendants suspected of having mental illness or intellectual disability.

**PROPOSED BY**: El Paso County Attorney’s Office

**SYNOPSIS**: Individuals who are incarcerated must undergo a Mental Health Assessment. Currently federal prisoners undergo a Mental Health Assessment when there is no procedure for the use of the mental health assessment. The assessment goes unused in both instances therefore important and expensive mental health resources have been wasted. In addition, under current law the magistrate is required to share the report with the court, prosecutor and defense counsel. This legislative proposal would do two things, 1) refine who is subject to assessment in subsection (a)1 by eliminating federal prisoners from receiving the Mental Health Assessment. Report will only be prepared and used in State and District Courts with responsibility for Class A and B misdemeanors and felonies, and; 2) expanding who has access to the Mental Health Assessment to include: Personal Bond Office, Pretrial Services and Community Supervision and Jail Medical Staff in order to ensure continuity of care. Previously filed during the 85th Session as SB 1313 by Sen. Rodriguez and HB 3638 by Rep. Ortega. The prior proposal included not providing a Mental Health Assessment for those charged with a Class C misdemeanor for having missed court of paying fines, however this was addressed via passage of other legislation during the 85th Session.

3. **Final and non-appealable finding**: Amend Texas Code of Criminal Procedure, Article 27.11 to create a mechanism that imposes a final and non-appealable finding of guilt and assessment of the fine and court costs, even if the judge takes no affirmative action.
PROPOSED BY: El Paso County Attorney’s Office

SYNOPSIS: Ensure that payment of a fine that, under current law, constitutes a plea of guilt or nolo contendere for a misdemeanor punishable by fine only (usually a traffic ticket) results in a final judgment without further action by a judge. There have been examples where individuals who have paid for their ticket, however the Judge never files a judgement/take affirmative action. This would relieve the court from having to take affirmative action. The legislation should read that anything that has not been contested in the last year is final and notwithstanding.

4. Occupational License: Relating to the supervision by a personal bond office of individuals granted an occupational driver's license; providing for an administrative fee

PROPOSED BY: El Paso County Attorney’s Office

SYNOPSIS: When an individual’s driver’s license is suspended or revoked, they are able to petition in civil court and request an occupational license based upon an assertion of essential need (commute to work). Supervision of the individual utilizing the license for occupational purposes is required. Courts are required to select the local community supervision and corrections department to provide supervision of the individual even though our personal bond office is already doing so. The requested legislation expands the authority of the court to select either the local community supervision and corrections department OR a local personal bond office to provide supervision when the court elects to require the person receiving the license to submit to supervision. Previously filed during the 85th Session as SB 1532 by Sen. Rodriguez/ HB 3979 by Rep. Moody.

5. Emergency Detention Orders (EDO): Allow for an Emergency Detention Order to be issued when there is a minor under the age of 18 in need of transport.

PROPOSED BY: El Paso County Attorney’s Office

SYNOPSIS: Amend the Mental Health Code, statutes: 571.003, 572.001, 573.002, 573.011, 574.001 and 574.001 to address children who may be in need of an emergency mental health commitment when there is no adult authorized to consent to treatment available.

6. Ignition Interlock: Relating to a criminal penalty for violating a condition of bond, condition of community supervision, or court order requiring installation of an ignition interlock device.

PROPOSED BY: El Paso County Sheriff Richard Wiles/William Ellis

SYNOPSIS: Currently, there is no specific enforcement mechanism in place should an individual fail to comply with a court ordered ignition interlock requirement. Instances have been reported where individuals required to have an ignition interlock device elect to use another vehicle that doesn't comply with the order. If an individual is found to be noncompliant this bill allows for law enforcement to take immediate action by taking the individual into custody and impounding the vehicle; and provides a penalty. A first time offense would be classified as a Class B misdemeanor and the second offense would be
classified as a Class A misdemeanor. Was previously proposed during the 85th Session as HB 1275 by Rep. Moody, however it was pulled prior to a hearing being held. There may be the ability to consider alternative language that would create a statutory reporting mechanism where the court and/or pretrial services office would be made aware of any violations at which point the individual may be held in contempt.

7. **Juvenile Probation Department**: Relating to legislation that ensures the County’s ability to control spending by any program or department that requires county funding.

**PROPOSED BY**: El Paso County Commissioners Court  

**SYNOPSIS**: Currently, the County of El Paso is singled out from all other counties in the State of Texas, regarding the Juvenile Probation Department (JPD). El Paso County Commissioners Court has to accept the budget that is presented to them no questions asked. Other Texas counties are however given discretion regarding how much of the budget their respective counties need to contribute to the JPD program. The current circumstance for El Paso County poses a problem in the budgeting of future revenues especially considering the proposed changes to the rollback rate in SB/HB 2.

---

**COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

8. **Hotel Occupancy Tax**: Cross reference the correct “county” statute regarding the authorized use of HOT taxes.

**PROPOSED BY**: El Paso County Attorney’s Office  

**SYNOPSIS**: Amend the HOT tax statute to correct an error in a cross-reference that resulted from a recodification of this law to clarify the activities for which the HOT tax may be used by El Paso County. The omission was not a result of a typographical error and authority was taken away from one session to another.

---

**LAND USE**

9. **25 Year Lot**: Relating to the county regulation of lots in platted subdivisions that have remained undeveloped for 25 years or more.

**PROPOSED BY**: El Paso County Commissioners Court/Public Works Department  

**NOTES**: The proposal amends the Local Government Code to authorize the Commissioners Court of a county with a population of more than 800,000 that is adjacent to an international border by order to implement a process applicable to a subdivision in which 50 percent or more of the lots are undeveloped or unoccupied on or after the 25th anniversary of the date the plat was recorded with the county and through which the county, to the extent practicable, may apply to the subdivision more current street, road, drainage, and other infrastructure requirements. The legislation requires a regulation or standard adopted by a
county under the bill’s provisions to be no less stringent than the minimum standards and other requirements under the applicable Texas Water Development Board model rules for safe and sanitary water supply and sewer services and any other minimum public safety standards that would otherwise be applicable to the subdivision. Currently, any lots purchased and platted prior to September 1st, 1989 are not subject to model subdivision rules. The bill also re-affirms that the cancellation provision of Section 232.0085 are available for border counties. Previously proposed during the 85th Session as SB 692 by Sen. Rodriguez and HB 3924 by Rep. Gonzalez.

10. Fractionalized Lots: Relating to a study regarding the feasibility of creating a mechanism by which a governmental entity could acquire small parcels of real property in an area and convey them to a developer in order to ensure the property is developed in compliance with model subdivision rules.

PROPOSED BY: El Paso County Commissioners Court/Public Works Department

SYNOPSIS: El Paso County has a strong need for a useable inventory of land which may be developed into residential and commercial uses to address future growth. However, this growth is being stymied by land which, because of prior sales practices, can’t be profitably developed. Unless a solution is found, thousands of acres will remain undeveloped, and instead remain in the hands of local government trustees and off-market by private citizens. It is estimated that there over 54,000 acres of lots that fit this category within El Paso County. Given lots were subdivided to such a high degree or “fractionalized” among various owners/individuals/entities are unable to provide coordinated infrastructure to the area. Therefore the lots have and will remain undeveloped and there is currently no viable mechanism to develop these bundles of lots on a reasonable economic basis. Previously proposed during the 85th Session as SB 1596 by Sen. Rodriguez and HB 2512 by Rep. Gonzalez.

11. Require drainage for commercial development: Adopt reasonable specifications for providing adequate drainage for new commercial development and re-development.

PROPOSED BY: Public Works Department

SYNOPSIS: Currently, counties have limited authority to address drainage. Counties may require drainage in certain circumstances when development occurs in a flood zone. If the property is in a proposed residential subdivision or in an urbanized area as defined by the Census Bureau based on density. However, counties have insufficient ability to address new commercial development or re-development which contributes to flooding in public rights-of-way outside of the above referenced examples. This proposal would require new commercial development and re-development to submit plans and obtain a permit which would make them subject to existing standards for drainage and prevention of flooding. This proposal would authorize a reasonable review and inspection fee for the submitted plans and the ability to authorize a penalty for development that occurs without an approved permit.

12. Drainage as part of plat requirements: Adding compliance of drainage standards as an element of certificate of plat compliance.
PROPOSED BY: Public Works Department

SYNOPSIS: Currently, the Texas Local Government Code requires a certificate of plat compliance be issued prior to the connection of utilities (water, sewer, gas and electricity). Under current law lot owners must demonstrate compliance with plat requirements including the extension of water and sewer. However, it fails to address compliance with drainage requirements which are a condition of plat approval and occupancy. This results in homeowners either being unaware of or simply failing to comply with drainage standards leading to additional flooding of their lots, neighboring lots and public rights-of-way. This proposal would require that homeowners also demonstrate compliance with drainage standards prior to obtaining a certificate of plat compliance.

13. Communication Facility Structure: Amend the Texas Local Government Code, Section 240.083, authority of county to regulate a communication facility structure.

PROPOSED BY: County Commissioner Vincent Perez

SYNOPSIS: Currently the Texas Local Government Code, Section 240.083 allows a county with a population of 1.8 million or more to regulate the location of communication facility structures in the unincorporated areas of the county. In addition, the section also allows a county to establish a permit for the construction or expansion of the facility and may impose fees, not to exceed $50, on regulated persons to recover the cost of administering the regulations. This proposal would expand the population bracket to include counties with a population of 800,000 or more.

MILITARY PREPAREDNESS


PROPOSED BY: El Paso County Commissioners Court/County Commissioner Carl Robinson

SYNOPSIS: Fort Bliss is a significant employer in El Paso County and is without question a major economic driver for the Upper Rio Grande Region. It directly contributes to the livelihood of at least one in five people in El Paso, and helps define the culture and character of the region. The Base’s impact isn't limited to just El Paso County, with its size and prominence, Fort Bliss contributes at least $23.1 BILLION to the Texas economy. For these reasons and others it is proposed that appropriations for military preparedness be dedicated to ensure we preserve, protect, expand, and attract new military missions and assets for Fort Bliss.

VETERANS AFFAIRS
15. **Veterans Affairs Officer:** Amend reporting requirement for Veterans County Service Officer.

**PROPOSED BY:** Chief Administrator's Office

**SYNOPSIS:** Current statute requires that a county with a population of 200,000 or more maintain a Veterans County Service Office. The law states the Veterans Service Office will report directly to Commissioners Court. It is being proposed that the statute be clarified and amend to state that the Commissioners Court may allow for that Veteran’s Service Office to report to the County’s Chief Administrator.

---

**HEALTH & WELFARE**

16. **Vacation Leave Donation:** Allow employees the ability to donate their vacation leave to other qualifying employees who are utilizing FMLA.

**PROPOSED BY:** Human Resources

**SYNOPSIS:** Amend Government Code-Title 6, Subtitle B, Chapter 661-Subchapter A Section 661.207 to allow for employees to voluntarily transfer their vacation leave to another employee within the County of El Paso when receiving employee is utilizing FMLA at the time of the request. Currently employees are only able to donate their sick leave. The statute would be amended to allow any County the ability to opt into allowing the vacation leave donation as well.

---

**LAW ENFORCEMENT**

17. **Fees Set by Commissioners Court:** Amend fees for services by the offices of the sheriff and constables to the year prior if gone unchanged.

**PROPOSED BY:** County Commissioner Carlos Leon & Constable Hector Bernal

**SYNOPSIS:** Amend the Local Government Code, Section 118.131 which provides the commissioners court of any county to set reasonable fees and fines that can be charged for services by the offices of the sheriff and constables. If a commissioner’s court does not set fees under this section, the fees for services would then revert to those fees provided by the law in effect on August 31, 1981. The proposal indicates that if no action is taken by the Commissioners Court, the fees revert to those of the year prior and not to the rates established in 1981.

---

**TRANSPORTATION**
18. **Fee on Inspection Form:** Amend the Texas Transportation Code, Sec 501.033, paragraph E to increase the current fee a county law enforcement agency can collect when it conducts an inspection from $40 to $60. The increase is meant to help defray the agencies cost associated with the inspection.

**PROPOSED BY:** El Paso County Tax Assessor Collector

**SYNOPSIS:** Currently, the County's auto theft unit under the Tax Assessor/Collectors Office can impose a fee of $40.00 to defray the cost associated with an auto inspection for the purposes of providing an individual with a Vehicle Identification Number (VIN). This request comes when the VIN been removed, altered, obliterated or has never been assigned. As a result of S.B. 20176 (effective 9/1/2017), additional requests from the Texas Department of Motor Vehicles to perform VIN inspections have increased the workload for the Tax Assessor-Collectors Enforcement Division. Although positive for our County General Fund there is a revenue deficit. The cost to perform these inspections has increased since the start of the program in 2009. Currently, the County's expense in performing the inspection is $52.30. Furthermore, if we were to adjust the 2009 dollars to 2015 dollars by using the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the adjusted fee would be $53.20. The current fee collected of $40 against a cost structure of $52.30 leaves the County in the red by $12.30 per inspection.

19. **Fee on foreign truck crossing our international bridges:** Amend Texas Transportation Code Section 502.003, Subsection A and allow counties to charge a “wear and tear” fee on foreign commercial vehicles entering the United States.

**PROPOSED BY:** El Paso County Tax Assessor-Collector

**SYNOPSIS:** Allow a county along the U.S./Mexico border to charge a “wear and tear” fee, also known as a transit fee, to offset the cost of addressing wear and tear on county roadways. The fee would be imposed on foreign commercial vehicles entering from Mexico through our ports of entry and exceed two tons and would be collected at any Ports of Entry from Mexico into the United States. Such “transit fee” can be in the range of $5 when crossing/entering Texas or when buying a permit for such vehicle. An additional option is purchasing an annual county “wear and tear” permit at $100 per vehicle to be valid only in the County of El Paso. Such fee could be credited to the county under Texas Transportation Code 502.401. Violators could be cited under existing registration statutes similar to expired registration and subject to applicable penalties. The proposal would allow for the agency collecting the fee to retain the fee.

20. **Administrative Fee for Hearings on Refusal for Issuance/Revocation/Suspension:** Amend Texas Transportation Code, Section 501.052 - Hearing on Refusal for Issuance/Revocation/Suspension of Title, to allow a county tax assessor-collector to charge a $15 administrative fee for hearings held under this section.

**PROPOSED BY:** El Paso County Tax Assessor Collector
SYNOPSIS: When a citizen is denied or there is a revocation/suspension/cancellation of their title by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) he/she can either request an administrative hearing with the County Tax Assessor-Collector or secure a surety bond. If the individual seeks a bonded title, the state charges a $15 administrative fee. If the individual elects to have an administrative hearing the Tax Assessor-Collector's office reviews documents, conducts a hearing, and makes a determination. Currently, the state statute does not allow the Tax Assessor-Collector to collect a fee to cover the administrative cost of holding such a hearing which can take considerable time given the need to review each case for unsigned title documents, outstanding liens, lack of documentation, etc. The proposal would allow for a County Tax Assessor-Collector to charge a $15 administrative processing fee for said hearing which mirrors the $15 fee enjoyed by the DMV when a bonded title is requested. It is recommended that $5 of the fee be remitted back to the state for any administrative hearings held by the County Tax Assessor-Collector.

21. **Motor Vehicle Sales Tax**: Amend Tax Code Section 152.123(a) to increase the percentage a county can collect on the motor vehicle sales tax.

**PROPOSED BY:** El Paso County Tax Assessor-Collector

**SYNOPSIS:** Currently when a county collects a Motor Vehicle Sales Tax, they have the ability to retain 5% of the total collected amount. This year El Paso County collected over $100 million, thus the ability to keep $5 million at the current 5% rate structure which is utilized to pay county debt. This 5% has remained stagnant and not changed over time. This proposal is requesting an increase by 1% which could bring in an additional $1 million or increase the 5% to 10%. This proposal has been shared with the Tax Assessor-Collectors Association who felt it better suited for a County to pursue.

22. **County Road and Bridge Fund**: Amend the Texas Transportation Code, Section 502.198(c)(1) to increase the amount of funding a County is able to retain on general registration fees collected for the Road and Bridge Fund.

**PROPOSED BY:** El Paso County Tax Assessor-Collector

**SYNOPSIS:** Currently, counties are able to retain annually $360,000 for registration fees collected for the County Road and Bridge Fund. This statute and that amount of $360,000 has not changed since the late 1970’s. There have been however fee structure changes that have benefited the state. On a given year El Paso County collects an estimated $54 million for the state. This proposal is asking for the consideration to increase the allocation to equal one million to support a counties Road and Bridge program.

23. **Temporary Registration Fees**: Increase fees for temporary registration permits which would be allocated to a county Road and Bridge Fund under the Texas Transportation Code, Sections 502.401. Can also refer to Texas Transportation Code, Section 502.094 (72/144 hour permit); 502.095 (one trip or 30 day permit); 03.063 (Buyers Tag).

**PROPOSED BY:** El Paso County Tax Assessor-Collector
SYNOPSIS: Currently, counties collect a fee for the state on any temporary registrations. These temporary registrations allow for individuals to use vehicles seasonally, or to move them on a highway for a set amount of time when they don’t have a title. Current fees are $5 for a One-Trip; $25 for a 30-Day; $25 for 72 hr; $50 for 144 hr; and $5 for a Dealer Buyer’s Tag. The proposed breakdown would be as follows: $10 for a One-Trip; $50 for a 30-Day; $50 each for a 72 hr, 100 for 144 hr permit; and $10 for the Dealer Buyer’s Tag. Currently, when these permits are issued, only a processing and handling fee of $4.75 is collected by the issuing entity and all statutory fees such as permit fees go directly to the State and no fee is allocated to the county. Yet, these vehicles are using our county roadways and ultimately bring no revenue to support our local county infrastructure. There is a great abuse on these permits because law enforcement overall, does not consistently enforce our registration laws and many abusers take advantage of the current ease of the on-line program available from the state where they can purchase these permits with minimal verification. Any additional fees collected would be allocated/credited to the county road and bridge fund.
This general statement of principles provides El Paso County’s positions on a broad range of issues that may arise during the upcoming legislative session.
Support:
1. Support Legislative Appropriations Requests for the Texas Indigent Defense Commission, specifically in ensuring Texas counties are provided additional funding to offset the cost of providing indigent defense. (84th Legislative Session)
2. Support additional funding to the Department of Public Safety for crime labs. (Conference of Urban Counties) (85th Legislative Session/86th Legislative Session)
3. Support legislation that provides county jails the ability to take necessary action that results in the suspension of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) & Medicaid benefits and their re-instatement on release, rather than termination of those benefits. (Conference of Urban Counties) (85th Legislative Session)
4. Support additional state funding for juvenile probation departments if the age of criminal responsibility is raised to 18. If passed, El Paso County would see a $2 million increase in personnel given the need to hire 39 new employees and capital costs of $25-$30 million to expand the detention center to meet the new number of juveniles entering the system. (Juvenile Probation Department) (85th Legislative Session)
5. Support state payment to counties for costs of detaining in county jails technical parole violators and new–offense parole violators held solely for parole revocation purposes. (85th Legislative Session)
6. Support legal reforms that divert non-violent, low-level drug offenders from jails to treatment. (85th Legislative Session)
7. Support legislation that furthers any counties ability to modernize the way bail bonds are accepted (specifically electronic filing) and achieve efficiencies for all parties involved. (Judge Angie Juarez-Barill) (86th Legislative Session)
8. Support legislation that funds the ability for Texas driver’s license to be equipped with Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) chips to enhance cross border travel. (County Commissioner David Stout) (86th Legislative Session)

Oppose:
1. Opposes reductions to funds supporting local juvenile justice functions or a shift of funding to incarceration over cost effective and outcome driven local treatment alternatives. (84th Legislative Session)
2. Opposes legislation that increases the cost of law enforcement without demonstrating improved outcomes. (84th Legislative Session)
3. Oppose any increase in fees to be paid to attorneys appointed to represent indigent criminal defendants until the adoption of the next county budget and require at least 90 days’ notice of the proposed increase to be provided to the commissioner’s court. (84th Legislative Session)
COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Support:
1. Maintains support for efforts to preserve the state’s historical and archeological heritage through the Texas Historical Commission and its various programs and services. (84th Legislative Session)
2. Supports legislation which grants counties regulatory authority around military facilities in certain circumstances to prevent unnecessary encroachment on military installations or the creation of incompatible land use or otherwise interfere with the military's capacity to sustain its mission. (84th Legislative Session)
3. Support legislation that increases funding and mechanisms for local governments to work toward eliminating illegal dumping of tires, bulk items, household hazardous waste, etc. (84th/85th/86th Legislative Session)
4. Support using TERP and LIRAP fund balances for congestion relief transportation projects as long as, it does not impair SIP compliance, it is done in non-attainment and near non-attainment areas; and is in addition to transportation funding for those areas. (84th Legislative Session)
5. Support capital construction needs for research/academic facilities and programs for the University of Texas at El Paso, the Texas Tech – El Paso Campus (to include preserving the special line item appropriation and formula funding) and El Paso Community College. (84th Legislative Session)
6. Support legislation or a change in practice by state administrators of the Texas Enterprise Fund that would allow for any businesses seeking to utilize the Fund to only be obligated to only create 50 new jobs as opposed to 75, in turn making El Paso as competitive as other communities in the process. (County Commissioner Carl Robinson) (86th Legislative Session)
7. Support legislation that increases funding or provides funding for military preparedness as it relates to Fort Bliss; and support new or expanded military missions as well as shield military facilities in Texas from the next round of Base Realignment and Closure. (County Commissioner Carl Robinson) (86th Legislative Session)

Oppose:
1. Oppose any legislation that would endanger the State’s ability to be competitive and welcoming by discriminating against certain segments of our State’s population, to include but not limited to opposing sanctuary cities and anti-LGBTQ legislation. (Commissioners Court) (85th Legislative Session)
2. Oppose any legislation that would detract from a local community’s ability to implement community identification programs for their residents. (County Commissioner David Stout) (85th Legislative Session)

TRANSPORTATION

Support:
1. Support a higher priority for transportation funding in the state’s budget process and increased funding for the Texas Department of Transportation for state highways. (Commissioners Court) (85th Legislative Session)
2. Support eliminating tolling options if state funding for highways is increased sufficiently to replace lost toll revenues. (Conference of Urban Counties) (85th Legislative Session)

HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Support:

1. Preserves effective enforcement authority to prevent the creation of substandard housing in unincorporated areas of the county. (84th Legislative Session)
2. Preserves “build-it-or bond it” authority that ensures an adequate infrastructure for water, sewer and roads in unincorporated areas of the county. (84th Legislative Session)
3. Supports legislation that provides resources to counties to expand basic services required by population growth in unincorporated areas. (84th Legislative Session)
4. Support additional funding for community mental health and intellectual/developmental disabilities programs throughout the state to avoid costly and unnecessary treatment in hospital emergency rooms and/or jails. (84th Legislative Session/86th Legislative Session)
5. Supports innovative measures to address overcrowding in county jails, the impact of homelessness on jail populations and the needs of inmates requiring detoxification from drugs and alcohol or treatment for a mental illness. (84th Legislative Session)
6. Promote the opportunity for counties to receive the authority to participate in Medicaid expansion to reduce the financial burden of their uncompensated care on local taxpayers. (84th Legislative Session)
7. Support any propositions that call for a constitutional amendment providing for the issuance of additional general obligation bonds by the Texas Water Development Board to provide assistance to economically distressed areas. (86th Legislative Session – was previously an action item for the Commissioners Court during the 85th Legislative Session)
8. Support for legislation granting El Paso Water the authority to establish a customer assistance program to aid customers who are at risk of disconnection of water service due to non-payment and customers who are determined as low-income. (86th Legislative Session per El Paso Water Utility)

REVENUE/TAXATION

Support:

1. Protects the ability of local units of government to issue certificates of obligation. (83rd Session)
2. Support legislation to better assure appraisals on commercial property, appraisal district legal fee reform, equity appeals reform, require sales price disclosure so that appraisers have the tools they need to establish a property’s market value and legislation that establishes increased minimum qualifications for members serving on an Appraisal Review Board. (84th Legislative Session)
3. Support legislation that ensures that values arrived at through equal and uniform appeals are more reflective of market value, such as capping the size of adjustments that can be made under equal and uniform appeals to no greater than 10 percent reduction from
market value. (County Commissioner Vincent Perez/Texas Association of Appraisal Districts) (85th Legislative Session)

4. Support legislation and/or resolutions that keep the state legislature from issuing unfunded mandates to local governments (Commissioner Stout/Commissioners Court) (86th Legislative Session)

5. Support legislation that proposes the ability to collect additional fees to fund a county's law library.

6. Support efforts to ensure County and District Clerks are able to continue charging the $10 Records Management and Preservation Fees. (County & District Clerks Office) (85th Legislative Session/86th Legislative Session)

7. Support the Texas Legislature conducting an interim study aimed at evaluating disparities in appraisal district practices to ensure Texans are receiving consistent and standardized service from their respective Central Appraisal Districts. (Commissioner Perez) (86th Legislative Session)

8. Support the Texas Legislature changing the status of Texas to a disclosure state to help provide greater resources to Central Appraisal Districts in an effort to meet the growing demands of local governments. (Commissioner Perez) (86th Legislative Session)

9. Support the Texas Comptroller having additional regulatory authority to ensure more standardized valuation practices across the state. (Commissioner Perez) (86th Legislative Session)

Oppose:

1. Opposes substitution of expanded sales tax base for property tax. (84th Legislative Session)

2. Opposes legislation that caps the County's ability to generate revenue to fund its operations or that endangers its bond ratings. (84th Legislative Session)

3. Opposes the elimination of funds consolidation to balance the state budget if that elimination requires deeper cuts in education or health and human services. (84th Legislative Session)

4. Oppose Revenue Caps. (Commissioners Court) (85th Legislative Session)

5. Oppose all new property tax exemptions, expansion of existing exemptions, or any other narrowing of the tax base unless approved by Urban Counties. (Commissioners Court/Conference of Urban Counties) (85th Legislative Session)

6. Oppose and efforts to remove El Paso County's ability to collect a one-half percent county sales and use tax. (86th Legislative Session)

GOVERNMENT EFFICIENCY/TRANSPARENCY

Support:

1. Support legislation that enables local units of government to seek relief when existing statutory fees fail to cover the cost of a necessary public service. (84th Legislative Session)

2. Promotes opportunities for local units of government to consolidate functions to streamline and reduce the cost of services to local taxpayers. (84th Legislative Session)

3. Support legislation that will make changes to Ethics Form 1295 that will make it less burdensome for counties and the vendors seeking to do business with counties. (Human Resources) (85th Legislative Session)
4. Support legislation that provides financial accountability/metrics to measure border security and the effectiveness of increased appropriations. (85th Legislative Session)

5. Support legislation that allows counties the ability to provide preferences to local bidders via Local Government Code 271.9051 which would allow for consideration of local businesses in awards for services and construction contracts, in addition to contracts for real and personal property and provide the Commissioners Court the ability to award preference within a range of 3-5 percent of the lowest bid, which is higher than a counties cap at 3 percent. This was a bill previously proposed by El Paso County and passed during the 84th Session (SB 408 by Rodriguez). It was subsequently vetoed by the Governor. (County Commissioners Carlos Leon & David Stout) (86th Legislative Session)

Oppose:
1. Oppose restrictions on the ability of local governments to effectively and efficiently communicate with the legislature and other state and federal entities. (84th Legislative Session)

ELECTIONS

Support:
1. Support the creation of an online voter registration system. (84th Legislative Session)
2. Support any efforts to expand the types of electronic ballots that can be utilized in elections. (Elections Department) (85th Legislative Session)
3. Support reimbursement to entities that have purchased new elections equipment over the last few years in advance of any state or federal funding. (Chief Administrator) (86th Legislative Session)
4. Support any efforts to designate Election Day a school holiday, for voting purposes. (Commissioners Court) (86th Legislative Session)

Oppose:
1. Opposes bills that constrain voting opportunities for eligible individuals. (84th Legislative Session)

MISCELLANEOUS

Support:
1. Support the Texas County and District Retirement System (TCDRS) and any other public retirement system that is a prudently and conservatively structured defined contribution pension plan that provides flexibility and local control. (84th Legislative Session)
2. Support legislation that promotes fairness in employment by supporting the removal of barriers to employment for individuals with certain convictions. (Human Resources) (85th Legislative Session)
3. Support legislation that allows counties to regulate the carrying of weapons on county premises. (85th Legislative Session)

Oppose:
1. Opposes legislation that requires the County to perform a federal function. (84th Legislative Session)

2. Opposes efforts to constrain reliable retirement benefits from responsibly funded plans that are savings based and provide local flexibility and control. (84th Legislative Session)

3. Oppose legislation that would further limit county authority to regulate fireworks to protect public health and safety; preserve current authority granted to counties to restrict or ban the sale and use of fireworks during drought conditions and when included in a local disaster declaration. Oppose the creation of a new fireworks season unless commissioners’ courts are granted discretion over the sale of fireworks in that county for the new season. (Commissioners Court/Conference of Urban Counties). (85th Legislative Session)