



Legislative Action Team Meeting

June 25, 2026



SIERRA CLUB
LONE STAR CHAPTER

How to Meet With Your State Legislators

Using your power as a constituent before and during the 2027 Legislative Session.

Agenda

Welcome + Why We're Here

Texas Legislature 101

Your Power As A Constituent

Crafting Your Personal Story

What Happens In A Meeting

Upcoming Actions + Closing



Welcome + Why



QUICK POLL



Texas Legislature 101



4 THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT THE TX LEGE



“The Lege”

The Texas Legislature =
the TX Lege =
“the Lege”



2 Chambers

There is a state senate
and a state house of
representatives. Every
Texan is represented by
one state senate rep and
one state house rep.



140 Days

The TX Lege meets
every other year. The
90th Legislature
session will run
January 12, 2027 -
May 31, 2027.



Special Session

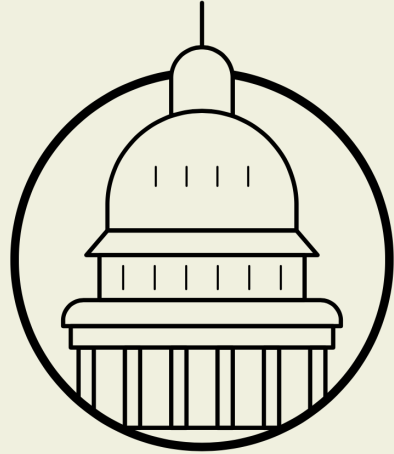
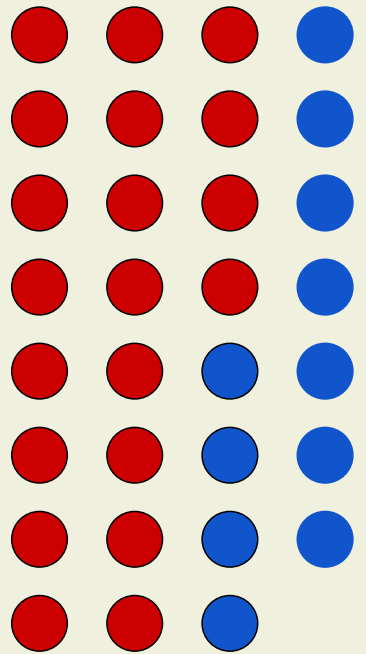
The Lege itself cannot
call a special session
for its own body. Only
the Governor can call a
special session of the
TX Lege.

ONLY ONE BILL MUST PASS: The Budget

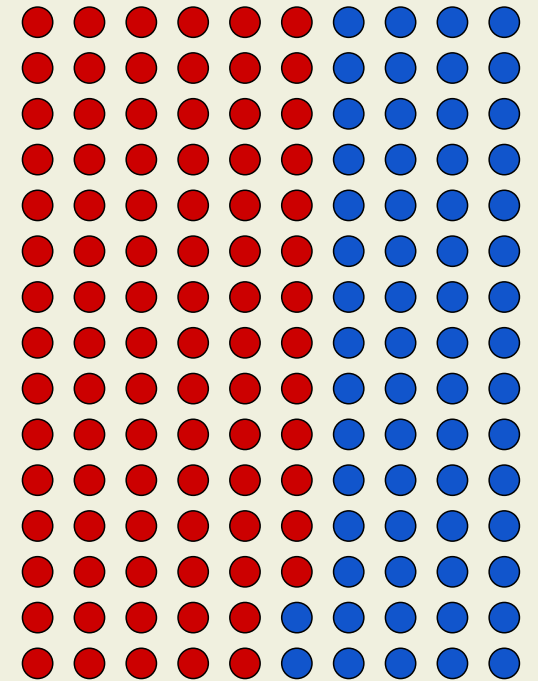
THE TX LEG IS BICAMERAL



TEXAS STATE SENATE (31)



TEXAS STATE HOUSE (150)



GOV. GREG ABBOTT

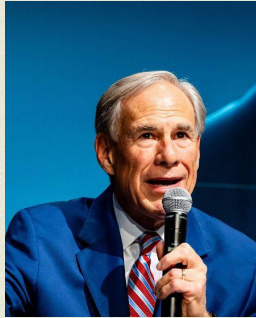
LT. GOV. DAN PATRICK

**SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
Dustin Burrows**

89th Legislature
2025-2026

The Big 3 Roles:

Gov. Greg Abbott



- Makes legal Recommendations
- Vetoes Bills
- Signs Bills
- Allows bill to become law
- Appoints members of state agencies

Lt. Gov Dan Patrick



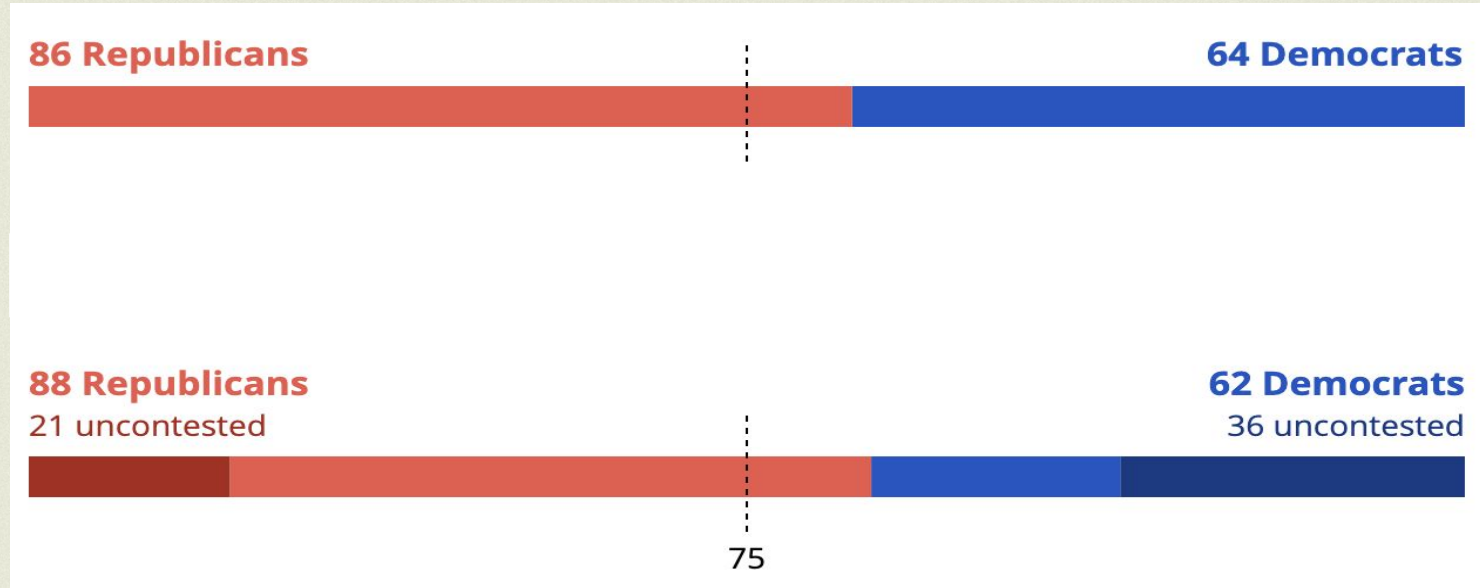
- Names Committee Membership
- Determines where bills are referred
- Controls Senate calendar
- Refers House Bills, or not
- Names Conference Committee Members if house and senate bills are different

Speaker of the House: Dustin Burrows



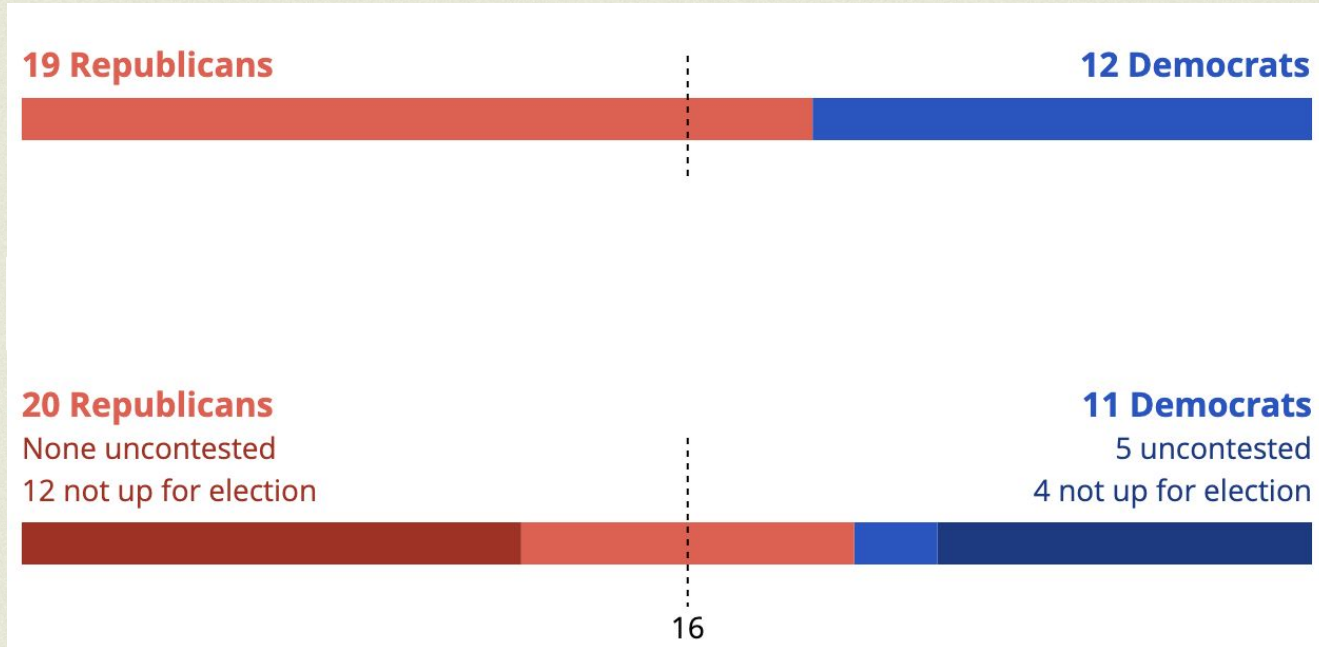
- Names Committees Membership
- Determines where bills are referred
- Names committee (Calendars) that determines Calendars
- Refers Senate Bills, or not
- Names Conference Committee

Texas House



Source: Texas Tribune

Texas Senate



Timeline of 90th Legislative Session

The 90th Legislative Session has begun... just not officially

Four distinct periods:

1. Interim hearings (now through November)
2. Election in November
3. November 9th to January 12th - Pre-filing of bills
4. 90th Session: January 12th to May 31st

Countdown Continues

March

Interim Charges
Named

April

**Interim Hearings
Begin**

May

SC sets our draft
priorities; hearings
continue

June

SC released our
Legislative Policy
Platform and delivered
to every office

July

Hearings continue,
SC begins working
to draft legislation
with Legislators,
in-district meetings

August

Hearings continue,
SC continues
drafting legislation
with legislators

September

State Budget
hearings begin;
Interim hearings
continue

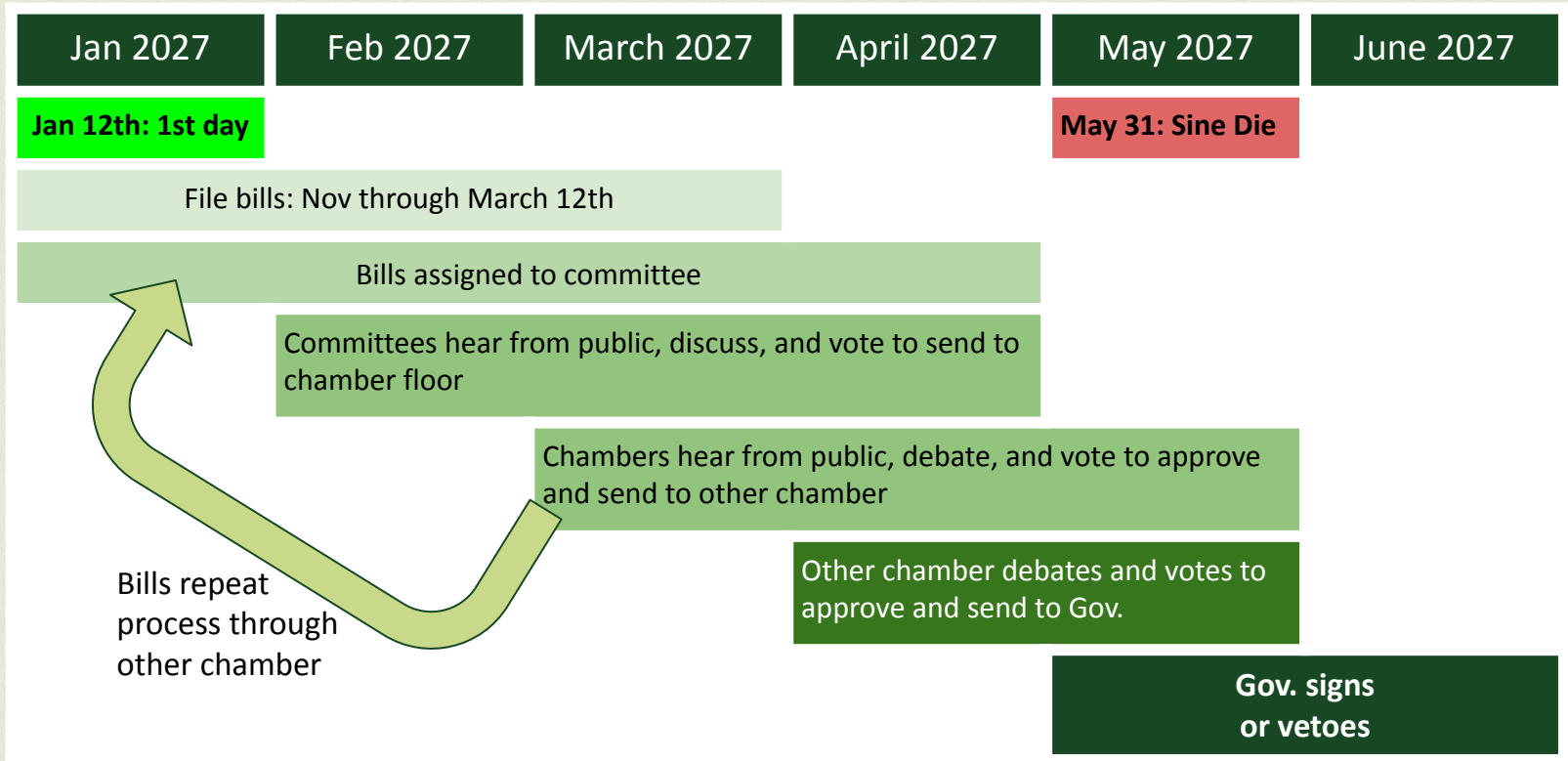
Now - December

Legislative offices (with
public input) submit bill ideas
to Lege Counsel for drafting;
Committees release reports

How does a bill become a law?

1. The Bill must be filed by a member of the Legislature
2. The Bill must be referred to a committee by the Speaker in the House or the Lt Governor in the Senate
3. The Bill must receive a public hearing in the committee;
4. The Bill must be considered for a vote and get a majority of the votes
5. The Bill must then be put on a calendar on the House or Senate floor and be approved by a majority of Senators/Reps on two occasions (second and third reading).
6. The bill must then go through the exact same process in other chamber
7. The bill must either be signed by Governor or not Vetoed by Governor if it passes both chambers.

How a bill becomes a law in the 90th session



MOST BILLS DON'T PASS: Statistics from 89th Legislative Session

| | Dem Bills Filed | Dem Bills Passed | Rep Bills Filed | Rep Bills Passed | Total Filed | Sent to Gov | % Sent to Gov |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| House Bills | 2354 | 138 | 3290 | 481 | 5644 | 619 | 11% |
| Senate Bills | 1232 | 158 | 1843 | 436 | 3075 | 594 | 19% |
| Total * | 3739 | 317 | 5501 | 1038 | 9240 | 1355 | 15% |

*Total includes joint resolutions and concurrent resolutions.

Committees

What's a committee?

- A group of legislators focused on particular issues with a Chair and Vice-Chair named by the Lt Gov or Speaker

How do committees operate?

- Budget, Committee Staff and Rules by which they operate
- Committee have lots of power! And chairs have most of it!
- During session all bills must go through at least 2 committees



Key Committees: House

State Affairs

Electric Grid, ERCOT and
PUCT

Renewable Energy &
Batteries

Lots of other Business and
Social Issues

Data Centers

Energy Efficiency

Natural Resources

Water Supply

Uranium Mining

Groundwater Management

Flooding

Water Conservation

Water Use and Planning

Energy Resources

Oil and Gas

Geothermal Energy

Railroad Commission

Abandoned Wells

Carbon Capture

Environmental Regulation

Air Pollution

Water Pollution

Texas Commission on
Environmental Quality

Recycling

Key Committees: House

Appropriations

STATE BUDGET

Intergov. Affairs

Cities and Counties

Building Codes

Permitting

Housing Issues

Land & Resource Mgt

Eminent Domain

Some Parks issues

Land Conservation

Culture, Rec, Tourism

Coastal Issues

Parks and Wildlife

General Land Office issues

Key Committees: Senate

Business and Commerce

- Electric Grid and ERCOT
- Renewable Energy and Batteries
- Building Codes
- Texas Energy Fund
- Energy Efficiency
- Business Development
- Data Centers

Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs

- Water Supply
- Groundwater Management
- Flooding
- Water Conservation
- Water Use and Planning
- Produced Water

Natural Resources and Economic Development

- Oil and Gas
- Abandoned Wells
- TPWD Issues
- TCEQ Issues
- Air Pollution
- Water Pollution
- Carbon Capture

Finance

- State Budget
- Taxes & Incentives

Key Legislators by Committee



Senator Joan Huffman - 17
Chair - Finance Committee



Sen. Charles Schwertner - 5
Chair - Business & Commerce



Senator Charles Perry - 28
Chair - Water, Ag, Rural Affairs



Senator Kevin Sparks -31
Chair - Natural Resources &
Economic Development

Key Legislators by Committee



Representative Greg Bonnen - 24
Chair - Appropriations Committee



Rep. Cody Harris - 8
Chair - Natural Resources



Rep. Brooks Landgraf - 81
Chair - Environmental Regulations



Representative Ken King - 88
Chair - House State Affairs

Who Represents Me website

<https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/>

Who Represents Me?

i Site Information ▼

[Find by Address](#) [Find by City](#) [Find by ZIP Code](#) [Find by County](#)

Street address

City , TX

Zip

Congressman Greg Casar
U.S. Congressional District 35

Representative Sheryl Cole
Texas House District 46

Senator Sarah Eckhardt
Texas Senate District 14

Ms. Rebecca Bell-Metereau
State Board of Education District 5

Senator John Cornyn
U.S. Senate

Key Points to Know in Advocacy

- It is easier to kill (a million ways) a bill than pass a bill (one way)
- Whatever happens in Nov, to pass a bill you need bipartisan support
- Showing strong public support is important but so is showing unlikely alliance of stakeholders
- A Republican bill is about twice as likely to pass
- Getting a member of a committee to sponsor a bill that will go to that committee increases the chance of passing a bill
- Getting the chair of a committee to sponsor a bill really ups your chances
- Having the same bill filed in the Senate and House increases your chances of passing a bill

Why In-District Meetings Are Important Now

- Senators and Representatives are thinking about ideas & bills right now
- Bills are being considered and drafted now
- Members have more time before election and before session to think outside the box
- Creating a relationship now makes it more likely they will listen to you in future
- Your Rep or Senator doesn't need to be the author of a bill but can still be a sponsor or supporter!

Your Power As A Constituent



We are more powerful together!

- Without bringing together and training people around the state, we're just the Sierra Club
- We need organized people to combat organized money
- Your legislator needs your help—do the work they/their staff can't



VS



You are your legislators' boss!

- Work for voters
- Need community information
- Need stories, data, etc from constituents
- Cannot know everything happening in their districts





2022

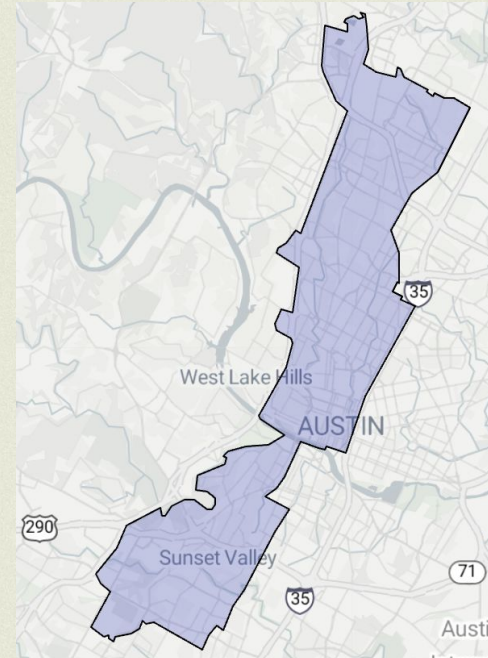
See also: Texas House of Representatives elections, 2022

General election

General election for Texas House of Representatives District 49

Incumbent Gina Hinojosa defeated Katherine Griffin and David Roberson in the general election for Texas House of Representatives District 49 on November 8, 2022.

| | Candidate | % | Votes |
|---|--|---|--------|
| ✓ |  Gina Hinojosa (D) | <div style="width: 83.4%;"><div style="width: 83.4%;"></div></div> 83.4 | 68,786 |
| |  Katherine Griffin (R) | <div style="width: 14.4%;"><div style="width: 14.4%;"></div></div> 14.4 | 11,882 |
| |  David Roberson (L)  | <div style="width: 2.1%;"><div style="width: 2.1%;"></div></div> 2.1 | 1,768 |



You are the expert!

- The expert on your experience
- The expert on your community
- The expert on why this issue matters
- People with lived experience of a problem are the experts on the solutions to that problem

Don't be afraid to talk about power dynamics

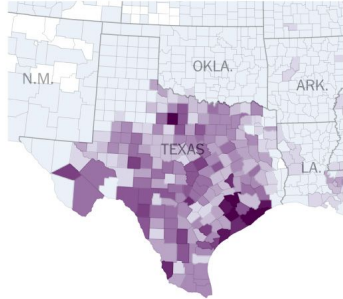
- Gender dynamics
- Race and identity
- Age
- Professional status
- Disability
- And many more

Texans are realizing what affects one indirectly, affects all indirectly

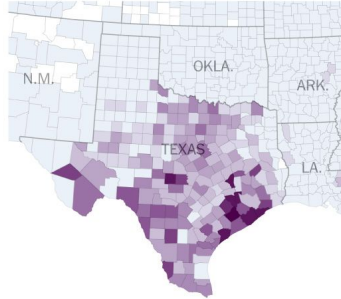
Source: New York Times



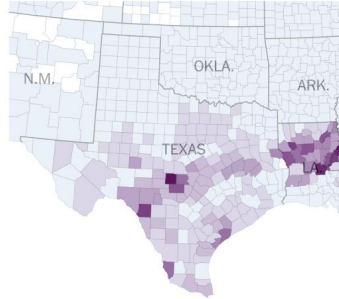
Monday, 10 p.m.



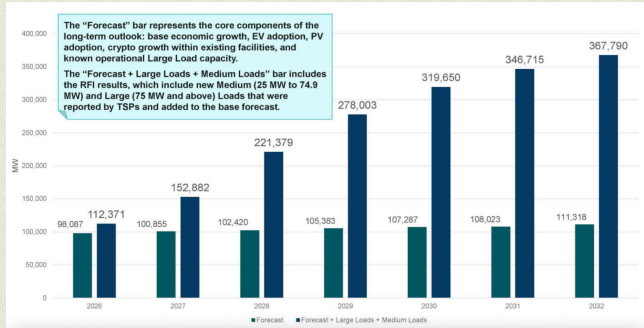
Wednesday, 11:30 a.m.



Thursday, 10:30 a.m.

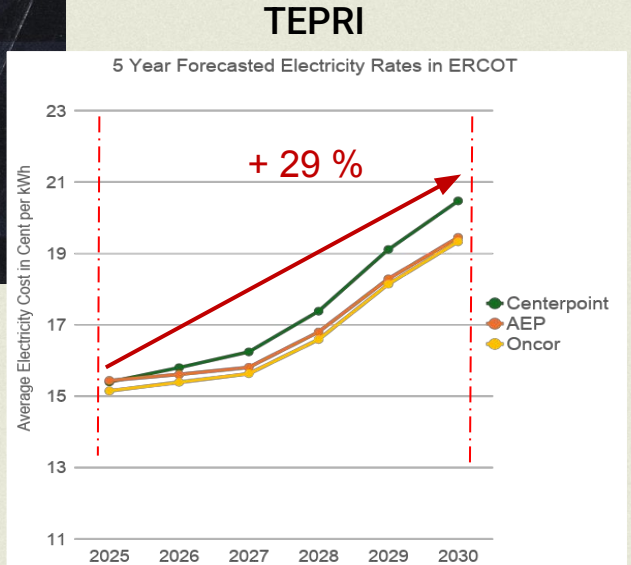
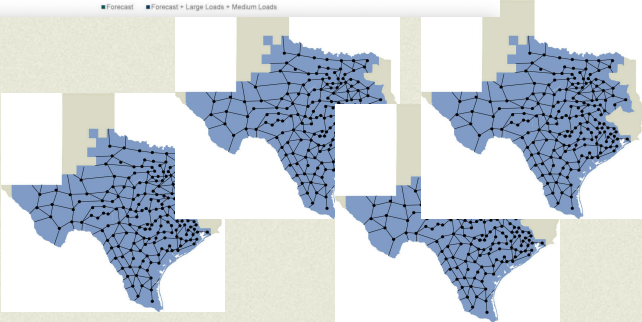


Texans are realizing what affects one indirectly, affects all indirectly



Electricity prices are *climbing* more than twice as fast as inflation

More Perfect Union



Power of Constituents: We are seeing it in Data Center Advocacy Today!

- Data center companies have huge pockets but....
- Tens of thousands of Texans are organizing and reaching out to their reps and senators
- Governor, in an election, put out a letter to PUCT with a list of proposed changes, showing power of constituents
- This week, more than 120 Texans showed up at House Committee on Natural Resources on data center and water.
- Powerful stories of people on the ground impacted by proposed data centers!
- To be successful we must build on this power. Showing up once won't equal success.



Crafting Your Story

Storytelling is a key component of advocacy.

Ask yourself these three questions:

1. Why do I care?
2. How has this issue affected me or my community?
3. What change do I want to see?

Write, refine, and practice your personal story.

Story Activity

Next, we're going to write and practice your stories - together!

In a moment, we will go into breakout rooms. There, you will do the following:

1. Pretend you're heading into a constituent meeting to discuss water quality standards (remember, you don't need to be an expert!).
2. Ask yourself the three questions from before: Why do I care? How has this issue affected me or my community? What change(s) do I want to see?
3. Write out your answers to begin crafting your story. Then, refine it. Add your personal touch, and make it your own.
4. Read your story out loud to the group as if they were your legislators.
5. Optional: the group can offer constructive feedback.

The Meeting

- Setting up a meeting
- What to expect
- How to prepare
- During the meeting
- After the meeting
- Unwritten rules



Who Represents Me? <https://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home>

Bryan

Congressman Michael T. McCaul
U.S. Congressional District 10

State Representatives (2)
Districts 12 and 14

Senator Charles Schwertner
Texas Senate District 5

Mr. Tom Maynard
State Board of Education District 10

Step 1: Schedule a Meeting

Senator Charles Schwertner - District 5

Bills: 89-2 | E-mail | Office Information | Committee Membership | District Information

Occupation: Orthopedic Surgeon
Education: B.S. in Pharmacy from the University of Texas at Austin; M.D. from the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston
Legislative Experience: House Member, 2011 - 2013; Senate Member: 2013 - present
Hometown: Georgetown
Party: Republican

Senator Charles Schwertner, MD is a sixth-generation Texan and lifelong conservative Republican. Since 2013, Dr. Schwertner has represented Senate District 5, an eleven-county region of central and east Texas that includes Bastrop, Brazos, Freestone, Leon, Limestone, Madison, Milam, Robertson, San Jacinto, Walker, and Williamson counties.

As Chairman of the powerful Senate Committee on Business and Commerce, Schwertner oversees a number of critical policy areas for the state of Texas, including electric utilities, insurance, banking, technology, and telecommunications. Schwertner also serves as a member of the Senate Committees on Finance, State Affairs, Economic Development, and on the Legislative Budget Board.

Throughout his time in the Texas Legislature, Schwertner has led the way on a number of important policy initiatives including authoring one of the strongest Constitutional Carry laws in the nation, reforming the state's electrical grid, expanding access to mental health services, improving the state foster care system, strengthening landowner rights, cutting taxes for small businesses, protecting seniors from abuse, and fighting to lower tuition at public universities.

Schwertner and his wife Belinda (a Juris Doctor and obstetrician/gynecologist) reside in Georgetown. They have three adult sons: Carson, Zachary, and Matthew.

E-MAIL YOUR SENATOR
Click here to e-mail the Office of Senator Charles Schwertner

Press Room

- 06/07/2017: About Sierra Schwertner's Pre-Born Protection & Dignity Act
- 05/17/2017: Statewide Ridesharing Bill Passes Texas Legislature
- 04/19/2017: Schwertner Takes Action to Protect Vulnerable Texans
- 03/15/2017: Texas Senate Gives Overwhelming Approval to SB 8
- 03/14/2017: Schwertner Works to Bring UJI Events to the Brazos Valley

> MORE...

Newsletter Archives

- August 29, 2018: Fall 2018 Newsletter
- October 28, 2013: Fall 2013 Newsletter

> MORE...



Office Information

| Capitol Address | District Address |
|---|---|
| The Honorable Charles Schwertner P.O. Box 12068 Capitol Station Austin, TX 78711 (512) 463-0105 (TEL) | 3000 Briarcrest Drive Suite 202 Bryan, TX 77802 (979) 776-0222 (TEL) (979) 776-0220 (FAX) |
| Block 27, 501 S Austin Ave. Georgetown, TX 78626 (512) 863-8456 (TEL) (512) 863-8436 (FAX) | |

Committee Membership

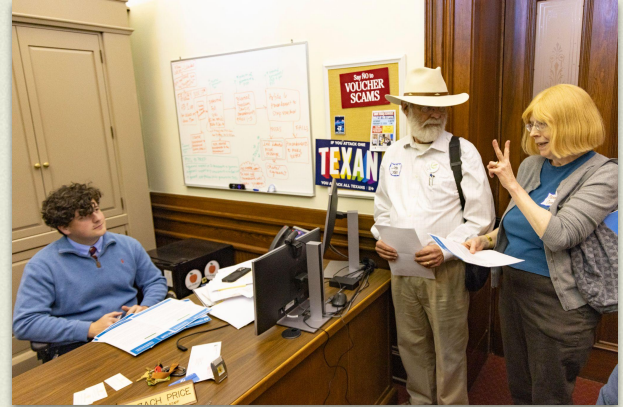
- Business and Commerce — Chair
- Economic Development
- Finance
- State Affairs
- Disaster Preparedness and Flooding, Select

District Analysis: District 5

- District Profile: Population, Households, Education, Employment, Income and Analysis
- Population Analysis
- Precinct and Districts
- Cities and Census Designated Places
- School Districts
- General Election Analysis

Step 1: Schedule a Meeting *(cont'd)*

- Via phone
 - Introduce yourself & mention that you're a constituent
 - Say that you'd like to schedule a meeting, briefly mention what you'd like to discuss
 - Schedule a meeting
- Via email (this is not a text!)
 - Salutation & closure
 - Phone number (optional)
 - Same practices as above
- Reconfirm 1-2 days before the date (optional)



Step 2: Know What to Expect

- You may meet with a legislative staff instead of the legislator
- Meetings are often brief (~10-30 minutes)
- The office will want a clear & specific ask
- Don't expect commitment to solving the issue
- You may be asked questions that you can't answer (and that's okay!)
- Schedules can change at the last minute (reschedule in this case)



Photo credit: Al Braden

Step 3: Prepare, prepare, prepare

- Learn about the legislator (basic background research)
- Practice your story & be sure to have a clear ask
- Bring a *reasonable* amount of *relevant* resources (e.g., printed one-pagers, infographics, articles, etc.)
- As a group, coordinate & decide ahead of time:
 - Who opens the meeting
 - Who tells the story
 - Who covers technical details
 - Who makes the ask
 - Who takes notes



Step 4: Make the Most of the Meeting

- Introduce yourself & thank them for the opportunity to meet with you
- State that you're a constituent & explain why you requested a meeting
- Share why the issue matters to you (your story!)
- Lead with your story and values
 - Facts/statistics are most effective when they *support* your story
- Make sure that your ask is clear and specific (it's one of the major takeaways from your meeting)
- Listen & have a conversation → You're seeking understanding, not victory
- Thank them for their time & ask for their email (to follow up afterwards)

Step 4: Make the Most of the Meeting

Having a Conversation

If you don't know the answer

- *I don't know the answer, but I'd be happy to follow up.*
- *Let me get back to you with accurate information.*
- *I'd be happy to connect you with someone who knows more about this.*

If they start talking about a different issue

- *That's interesting, but I'd like to focus on ... today*
- *Before we move on, I'd like to make sure we've fully discussed ...*
- *Can we return to ...?*
- *That's important, but the main reason I'm here today is...*

Step 4: Make the Most of the Meeting

Having a Conversation *(cont'd)*

If they ask what specifically you want them to do

- *I'm asking you to support... / I'm asking you to oppose...*
- *I'm asking your office to look into...*
- *I'm asking you to meet with...*
- *I'm asking you to attend...*

Action-focused questions to ask before you leave

- *What are the next steps on this issue?*
- *How can I be helpful moving forward?*
- *Who is the best contact for future questions?*
- *What additional information would you like me to provide?*

Step 4: Make the Most of the Meeting

Having a Conversation *(cont'd)*

How to handle disagreement?

- Remain respectful & calm
- Listen to understand, not to argue
- Don't interrupt
- Acknowledge their perspective
- Ask clarifying questions before responding
- Stay focused on the issue (not on the person you're talking to)
- Remember: your goal is to build relationships & find common ground



Step 4: Make the Most of the Meeting

Having a Conversation *(cont'd)*

How to handle disagreement?

Instead of...

You're wrong

That doesn't make any sense

You clearly don't understand / don't care about the problem

We'll just have to agree to disagree

Say this...

I see it differently (and elaborate why)

Could you tell me more about that?

May I offer another perspective?

While we may not agree on everything, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss it.

Step 4: Make the Most of the Meeting

Having a Conversation (*cont'd*)

How to express frustration?

- Remain respectful & calm
- Focus on the problem, not the person → Avoid accusations, be constructive
- Highlight how the issue affects *you*, *your* family, *your* community
- Channel frustration into a clear request for action
- Build relationships & try to find common ground



Step 4: Make the Most of the Meeting

Having a Conversation *(cont'd)*

How to express frustration?

Instead of...

This is ridiculous!

You politicians don't want to do anything

I'm sick and tired of this

How could you let this happen?

Say this...

I'm disappointed because this issue has gone unresolved for a long time.

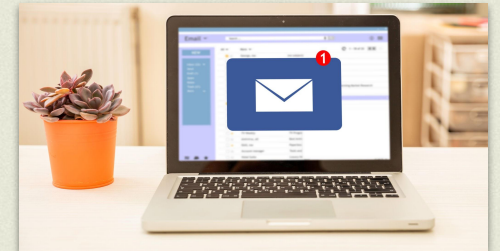
I'm concerned about the impact this issue has on me and my community.

The issue has reached the point where many residents are looking for action.

Step 5: Follow Up

Send a follow-up email (works only if you know their email, so remember to ask!)

- Thank them for their time
- Briefly recap your main points, restate the ask & offer to serve as a resource on the issue
- Share handouts & any requested information (if applicable)
- Close with your name and contact information



Unwritten (but important!) Rules

- Arrive early (if as a group, be sure you walk in together)
- Dress appropriately (no beachwear, offensive slogans, ripped jeans, etc.)
- (!!!) Be respectful & constructive throughout the conversation
- (!!!) Listen as much as you speak
- Treat staff with the same respect as legislators
- Approach this meeting with curiosity vs. assumptions/confrontation
- It's okay to take notes during the meeting → Use a pen & notepad, not a phone, tablet, or laptop

How You Can Make A Difference *Right Now*



Join a meeting.

Sierra Club members across the state are gearing up for constituent meetings over the summer. Now that you know what to expect, you can join them and have a say in shaping the future Texans deserve.



Send a message.

Your legislators need to hear from you - or they will only be hearing from high-paid lobbyists. Send them a message with one of our simple action alerts, or by emailing or calling their offices. Everything helps!



Invite a friend.

Not only is advocacy more fun as a team, but we need as many people as possible to be a part of this movement for change. We are stronger together, and there is a place for everyone in this work!



LET'S MAKE IT
HAPPEN

Summer In-District Meetings

- Sierra Club members will be meeting with their legislators this summer to lay the groundwork for the 2027 session.
- We want YOU to join us! Fill out this brief interest form if you're ready to take action.
- Participants will receive staff and volunteer support, training materials, educational resources, and 1x1 meeting time to prepare if desired.
- The goal is to send a small team of advocates to each meeting.



Up Next




SIERRA CLUB
LONE STAR CHAPTER

Watt's Offshore? Harnessing Wind Power In Texas

Date and Time:

Thu, Jul 16, 2026; 6:30 PM - 7:30 PM (Central)

 Add to Calendar

Organized By: Lone Star Chapter

Location: Virtual



RSVP Below

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Mobile Phone

Check to join Sierra Club's Mobile Action Network!

RSVP

By taking this action to protect the planet, you are affirming you want to receive regular Sierra Club communications and may vote on policy designated by the Sierra Club Board. [Terms and Conditions & Privacy Policy](#)

Thank you!

For further questions, please reach out to:

Jordan Goodrich

Communications Manager

jordan.goodrich@sierraclub.org, 214-733-4874