

Update from the Texas Lobby Group, L.L.P

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Update - 81st Session of the Texas Legislature

March 13, 2009

Today, Friday the 13th, was the deadline for the House and Senate to file bills. Without a doubt, this is the highest number of bills that have been filed in anyone's memory. OVER SIX THOUSAND bills had been filed by 5 pm today and there are many more that are not yet in the system. After the deadline, it will take a 4/5th vote to grant permission to introduce a new bill.

Comparison of Bills Filed

	Last Session	This Session	CHANGE
House Bills	3457	4071	18%
Senate Bills	1678	2075	24%
TOTAL	5135	6146	20%

Also of note for our legislative calendar purposes, beginning Monday, legislators can start debating bills on the floor of the Senate and House even if they are not declared an emergency by the Governor. Get ready for a wild ride over the next several weeks as both the House and Senate Committees consider bills full time.

Progress

As of March 13th:

Total number of bills reported out of Senate Committees this week: 42

Total number of bills passed by the Senate this week: 1

Total number of bills reported out of House Committees this week: 4

Total number of bills passed by the House this week: 0

As you can see from the above – an incredible amount of bills have been filed this legislative Session – and only now are they really beginning to move. Try doing the math on that...

The Senate

The Senate had a wild ride itself this week pulling an “all-nighter”. On Tuesday, the Senate convened in a committee of the whole to take up **SB 362 by Senator Troy Fraser (R-Horseshoe Bay)**, which would **require a voter to present photo identification** at the polling place before voting. (In the absence of a photo ID, the voter could present two forms of alternate identification, such as a birth certificate, library card, or hunting or fishing license.)

The Senate met for more than 24 hours straight on Tuesday and Wednesday debating the bill and hearing testimony. It was finally voted out of committee Wednesday morning around 10:00a.m., after a long night of testimony and debate. The vote was along party lines of 20 to 12. The 19 **Senate Republicans** and **Lt. Governor Dewhurst** voted for it and the 12 **Democrats** voted against it. The seven Senate committees that were scheduled to meet on Wednesday and Thursday were cancelled.....

The full **Senate** will reconvene at 11:00a.m. on Monday, March 16th. SB 362, the voter ID bill, has been set as a special order on the calendar for Monday.

The Budget

Another timeline in the process was invoked this week, as the House Appropriations Committee announced for the first time a new policy requiring all proposed riders to the appropriations bill to be submitted by a member of the Appropriations Committee by today for consideration.

The **Senate Finance Committee** met on Monday and Tuesday to take up workgroup recommendations on **SB 1** the appropriations bill. The Subcommittees of the **House Appropriations Committee** continued meeting Monday through Thursday and the full committee met on Thursday.

Next week, The **Senate Finance Committee** will meet on Monday to take up workgroup recommendations on **SB 1, this Session’s Appropriations bill**. As of now, HB 1 has not been filed and is not expected to be. Senate Bill 1 will be the only budget bill filed this Legislative Session. Once the Senate votes out its bill, it will then travel across the rotunda for the House to substitute its proposal.

Additional information can be obtained via the Senate and House websites:

www.senate.state.tx.us

www.house.state.tx.us