



Advocating for Your City

JJ Rocha
Director of Public Policy & Engagement

Rick Ramirez
Director of State and Federal Relations



1

What You'll Learn

A roadmap for engaging effectively at the Capitol



Legislative structure

How the House and Senate are built and led



Timelines & deadlines

The biennial, 140-day session calendar



Advocating for Your City

No one tells your story better than you



Building Relationships Early

Track and search bills on Texas Legislature Online



Key Legislative Issues for 2027

Hot Topics for the 90th Session of the Texas Legislature



**140 days.
Every two
years.
Know the
clock.**

1

2

A Bicameral Legislature

Two chambers, each with a distinct makeup and leader



Texas House

150 Representatives

Term 2 years

Led by Speaker of the House



Texas Senate

31 Senators

Term 4 years

Led by Lieutenant Governor



Meets in regular session only in odd-numbered years — Texas is one of just six states without an annual session.

The 140-Day Session

A compressed, biennial calendar that shapes everything

Convenes on the second Tuesday of January in odd-numbered years and runs for exactly 140 days — usually adjourning around Memorial Day.

The Governor may call 30-day special sessions afterward, but only on topics the Governor specifies.

The only bill lawmakers are required to pass is the state budget.



NEXT REGULAR SESSION

90th Legislature

Convenes January 12, 2027, and ends May 31, 2027.

140

days per session

7,000+

bills typically filed

~20%

of bills become law

A Session by the Numbers

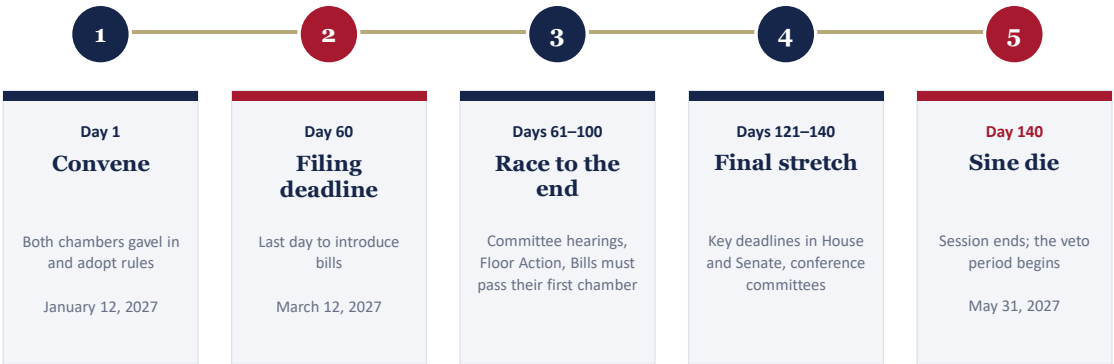
Thousands of bills are filed each session — only a fraction reach the Governor

Year	Total Bills Filed	Total Bills Passed	City-Related Filed	City-Related Passed
2013	6,061	1,437	1,700+	220+
2015	6,476	1,329	1,600+	220+
2017	6,800	1,220	2,000+	290+
2019	7,541	1,437	2,000+	330+
2021	6,927	1,073	2,000+	240+
2023	8,344	1,258	1,800+	230
2025	9,014	1,231	2,000+	262

Texas regular sessions, 2013–2025. “+” denotes approximate counts.

Timeline: Texas Legislature

What happens in the 140 days



★ WHY ADVOCACY MATTERS

No One Can Tell Your City's Story Better Than You

Successful advocacy is about understanding how decisions get made, who influences them, and building relationships to be part of the conversation **before decisions are made.**

Legislators want to hear from the people who implement state policy, manage local budgets, respond to emergencies, and deliver services every day.

Statewide organizations represent municipal interests well — but none can replicate the credibility of local officials and constituents speaking directly about their own communities.



2

7

★ RELATIONSHIPS FIRST

Build Them Before You Need Them

The strongest relationships are built when there's no immediate ask — no pending legislation, no specific objective.

Offices want to meet constituents, celebrate local successes, and better understand the communities they represent. Consistent engagement over time establishes you as a trusted partner and a credible source of information.

And don't wait until the next session — treat legislators and staff as community partners, and stay connected through updates, success stories, and future invitations.

WAYS TO ENGAGE IN THE INTERIM

- ★ Ribbon cuttings & groundbreakings
- ★ Grand openings
- ★ Infrastructure project tours
- ★ Budget discussions
- ★ Public safety initiatives
- ★ Community celebrations & local events

8

8

4

★ HOSTING A LEGISLATOR

When They Visit Your Community

When a legislator or their staff comes to a tour, ribbon cutting, or community event, how you host them — and what you do afterward — turns a single visit into a lasting relationship.

DURING THE VISIT

- ★ Welcome them — and recognize their presence publicly
- ★ Lead with people and stories, not policy
- ★ Respect the schedule — start and end on time
- ★ Capture a few good photos

AFTER THE VISIT

- ★ Send a thank-you — share photos, reinforce takeaways
- ★ Don't wait for the next session
- ★ Stay connected: updates, success stories, invitations
- ★ Consistent engagement over time builds trust

10

9

★ MEETING AT THE CAPITOL

The Do's

- ✓ Know who you are meeting with
- ✓ Understand the district & committee assignments
- ✓ Arrive prepared with a clear objective
- ✓ Respect time — be concise
- ✓ Use local examples & city-specific data
- ✓ Offer factual, nonpartisan information
- ✓ Answer questions honestly
- ✓ Follow through on every commitment

★

Preparation is everything.

Do your research before the meeting and know your audience. Offices remember who shows up ready — and who wastes their time.

If you don't know an answer, say so — and commit to following up. Credibility is hard to earn and easy to lose.

14

10

5

★ MEETING AT THE CAPITOL

The Don'ts

- ✗ Don't assume staff already understand your issue
- ✗ Don't overwhelm offices with lengthy reports
- ✗ Don't exaggerate facts
- ✗ Don't become argumentative
- ✗ Don't bypass staff to reach the member
- ✗ Don't disappear until the next crisis
- ✗ Don't take session scheduling changes personally

15

11

90TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE – 2027 SESSION

Key Issues



City Finance



Land Use & Permitting



Elections



Water



Data Centers



Community Censorship

6

12

State Leadership Property Tax Plans



Governor's Tax Plan

- Eliminate school property taxes (homeowners)
- Appraisal caps
- Expenditure caps
- Supermajority voter approval
- Petition of registered votes to rollback tax rate



Lt. Governor's Tax Plan

- "Operation Double Nickel": lower senior homestead exemption from 65 to 55
- Increase homestead exemptions
- Impose limits on local government tax increases while allowing for reasonable growth

13

Staying Engaged

Other ways to stay involved:



Legislative Update in TML Exchange



TML Annual Conference: November 11-13



TML Legislative Webinars



Legislative Action Day during TML Midyear Conference



7

14

★ KEY TAKEAWAYS

Make Your Voice Count



Respect the 140-day clock

The biennial calendar — not opposition — kills most bills. Know the deadline walls.



Build Relationships Early

That's where your testimony has the most leverage — and start during the interim.



Start Preparing for the Session Now

A coordinated municipal voice carries far more weight at the Capitol.



15



Questions?

JJ Rocha
jj@tml.org

8

16