

Interim Committee Charges to the 80th Legislature

Business & Commerce

Study the current governance structure of electric cooperatives. Make recommendations for any legislative changes required to adequately protect customers, increase reliability, and respond to consumer complaints.

Study the current investment in generation and transmission in the Texas electricity market with emphasis on ensuring there will be sufficient generation and cost-effective transmission to meet Texas' growing demand for electricity. Review and make recommendations relating to adoption of smart-metering programs, and the anticipated cost savings to consumers. Analyze options for cost-effective alternative energy production, including solar and biomass electricity generation. Study and make recommendations on options for encouraging residential and small commercial consumers to switch electric products or providers. Review efforts at the federal level to implement legislation or rules that could impact the Texas electricity market.

Study current industry practice and regulation associated with the siting of wind turbines. Compare the wind turbine siting process to processes associated with other forms of electric generation and the siting of facilities in other industries. Determine the advantages and disadvantages of additional siting regulation for wind turbines.

Study the advantages and disadvantages of developing a building code specific to coastal properties in order to mitigate hurricane damage. Focus on avoiding catastrophic losses of property during a major storm. Specifically, consider Florida's building code, which applies to the designation of Enhanced Hurricane Protection Areas (EHPAs) that meet specific criteria to provide shelter and protection for up to eight hours following a catastrophic event.

Examine statutory changes needed to maintain affordable and available homeowner's insurance and industry reinsurance following a natural disaster in Texas. Estimate the potential impact on the Texas insurance market.

Study the number of state business licenses and the need and cost for each license. Estimate the cost and benefits to consumers of licenses and impact on small, start-up businesses.

Study and examine whether Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) should be adhered to under Chapter 66 of the Public Utility Regulatory Act (PURA), and review procedures for revenue audits.

Study and make recommendations on improving the implementation of HB 1196, 80th Legislature, to ensure that public funds are not used to encourage illegal immigration into

the state by prohibiting any taxpayer-subsidized job creation grant or tax abatement given to any business entity in Texas that knowingly hires illegal immigrants.

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Business and Commerce Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation.

Criminal Justice

Determine how private prisons are complying with state laws and how cost, safety, living conditions and rehabilitative services at private prisons compare with state-run facilities. Include an assessment of the staff turnover rates and compensation of private contractors when compared with state-operated facilities, and of the contract bidding processes used by the Texas Youth Commission and the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Monitor the implementation of Senate Bill 103 and the continuing reforms to the Texas Youth Commission and the juvenile criminal justice system. Identify barriers to effective implementation and provide recommendations to ensure that the goals of this legislation are achieved. Provide recommendations relating to best practices and identify needed additional treatment programs for juvenile sex offenders.

Study the impact of laws designed to reduce illegal drug use and make recommendations for reducing access to illegal drugs and for developing best practices for preventative programs, focusing on drugs targeted for the younger population, such as cheese heroin. Assess the impact of limiting access to pseudoephedrine, including the impact restrictions have had on illegal manufacturers' methods for producing methamphetamine.

Monitor the implementation of the new and expanded programs provided to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) within the Fiscal Year 2008 and 2009 budget, and identify their impact on the criminal justice populations. Study security issues within TDCJ, including staffing issues, use of lock down procedures, the control and containment of infectious diseases and the introduction and control of contraband within the institutions. Review the use of career ladders for employees of TDCJ and issues surrounding the retention of professional corrections staff. Study the issues of independent oversight of TDCJ, including the use and effectiveness of the TDCJ ombudsman system. Provide recommendations for the reduction or elimination of barriers to an effective corrections system.

Study and make recommendations for reducing the number of law enforcement officer deaths in the line of duty. This study should include:

- an assessment of the types of calls and assignments that put law enforcement officers most at risk;
- the geographic regions of the state that suffer the most deaths;
- the agencies experiencing the highest rate of deaths in the line of duty;
- the time in an officer's career, and the officer's age that he or she is most susceptible to death in the line of duty; and

- the times of year, month, and day that are most dangerous.

Study the issue of criminal asset seizure and the use of seized and forfeiture funds by district attorneys and law enforcement agencies. Review the oversight of these matters by the Texas Attorney General and provide recommendations to improve the dissemination of information concerning these funds. Ensure that these funds have the appropriate accountability and fiscal controls required for public funds.

Study the system of deferred adjudication in Texas courts and make recommendations for resolving any problems and reducing the potential for release of dangerous criminals.

Study and recommend best practices for reducing re-victimization of child abuse victims associated with delay in resolution of criminal cases. Recommend options for reducing the time lapse between child victimization and criminal hearings.

Review the processes for re-entry of criminal offenders into communities. Identify barriers to the successful return to law-abiding behavior, including the absence of employment opportunities created by restriction on obtaining certain state occupational licenses. Provide recommendations for improvements to our current statutes governing this matter.

Study whether Articles 36.09 (relating to trying multiple defendants from the same transaction either separately or jointly) and 36.10 (relating to severing defendants that show prejudice from a joint trial) of the Texas Code of Criminal Procedure provide sufficient safeguards to ensure fair and reliable trial results in capital cases with multiple defendants. Determine whether the articles provide trial judges with sufficient instruction regarding joinder or severance of defendants and, if not, make recommendations to improve procedures.

Study the relationship between the public mental health system and the criminal justice and civil courts systems, including the identification and sharing of information regarding mentally ill offenders, including minors, among criminal justice and mental health agencies, the courts, state hospitals, and the Veterans Administration. Study how current confidentiality laws impact the exchange of information among groups described above. Study the sentencing of mentally ill offenders compared to non-mentally ill offenders, including minors, and the affect that has on statewide prison capacity and on the health care provided to mentally ill offenders. (Joint Charge with Senate State Affairs Committee)

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Criminal Justice Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, report on the implementation of SB 909, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Sunset legislation, including provisions relating to the Board of Pardons and Paroles, and monitor implementation of the new laws relating to copper theft (SB 1154, HB 1766, and HB 1767).

Education

Study the effectiveness of public school programs serving special education students, including autistic students. Specifically, consider whether special education services are adequately preparing students for post-secondary opportunities. The review should also include the availability and quality of the supports and services provided by adult services agencies for individuals with disabilities. Make recommendations for improving public school special education programs and the coordination of adult education services among state agencies.

Conduct a comprehensive review of the public school accountability system and make recommendations for improvements. The review shall include indicators in the current system, measures of district and campus performance, public expectations, individual student achievement and measures of teacher, program and financial effectiveness.

Review and make recommendations to improve the state's Adult Basic Education program. Emphasis should be placed on ways to advance literacy in Texas in order to promote economic and individual development. The review should also include a study of the coordination of adult education services among state agencies and the availability and accessibility of state and federal funding.

Review and make recommendations regarding best practices for programs targeted to improve the academic success of limited English-proficient students.

Review the access and quality of career and technical education programs in the state and make recommendations to improve these programs to address the economic and workforce needs of this state.

Make recommendations for controlling the costs of textbooks from kindergarten through higher education, and monitor the implementation of HB 188, 80th Legislature, relating to instructional materials.

Review and make recommendations that address the state's facility infrastructure needs for public schools, ensuring that funding remains stable, reliable and equitable. Examine the need for funding adjustments for factors that affect the need for facilities, such as fast growth, age and condition of facilities, adequacy of space, construction and land costs, and concentration of students requiring smaller class sizes. Assess the impact on property taxpayers of “rolling forward” the Existing Debt Allotment (EDA) each session and the change in biennial appropriations for the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA). (Joint Charge with Senate Finance Committee)

Review current property tax rates at school districts. Explore what mechanisms may exist to prevent any future constitutional funding challenges. Review any funding issues that are particular to certain types of school districts, such as fast growth districts. (Joint charge with Senate Finance Committee)

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Education Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance and/or complete implementation. Specifically, monitor the implementation of HB 2237, relating to grants and programs for dropout prevention, high school success and college and workforce readiness in public schools. Include a review of the revised methodology the Texas Education Agency uses to calculate the dropout rate. Report on the implementation of education reforms in House Bill 1, 79th Third Called Special Session. The review should include: the implementation of the high school allotment, the development of the best practices clearinghouse and the electronic student records system, the alignment of curriculum to attain college readiness, student improvement/growth models and access to college credit in high school. The committee should also study and make recommendations on how to continue strengthening the P-16 Initiative to promote college attendance in this state.

Subcommittee on Higher Education

Examine different methodologies for assessing the quality of degree and certificate programs at higher education institutions and for measuring student learning outcomes. Review current institutional performance standards and make recommendations that promote academic and financial accountability. Review the method for measuring graduation rates to determine whether alternative measures are more appropriately suited for institutions with a large percentage of non-traditional students.

Identify potential future economic trends and workforce needs, including those created by additional nuclear generation facilities, and identify strategies to help meet these needs.

Examine ways to assess and improve academic advising to help students succeed in higher education and complete their course of study and graduate in the minimum time required.

Study the need for new higher education institutions and make recommendations for developing a long-term strategy for creating and supporting new institutions, especially additional flagship public research universities. Explore methods for determining where such universities should be located and ensuring that such universities admit a qualified and diverse student body. Consider the state's allocation of and need for resources for medical education, including graduate medical education, geographic distribution of those resources, and the value of associating a medical school with a top-tier academic campus.

Study research funding and assess the research infrastructure and capabilities at higher education institutions. Make recommendations for streamlining the various sources of funding (Texas Competitive Knowledge Fund, the Research Development Fund, and the Advanced Research Program) and for developing a statewide strategy for increasing research at higher education institutions, including ways to improve research commercialization.

Evaluate the cost and feasibility of a range of options for providing health care insurance for students attending institutions of higher education.

Review the status, effects, and success or failure of higher education authorities operating under Chapters 53, 53A, and 53B, Education Code, and nonprofit corporations carrying out the functions of higher education authorities under those chapters. Make recommendations regarding any necessary changes in the statutes and administration of same. (Joint charge with Senate Finance Committee)

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Subcommittee on Higher Education, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance and/or complete implementation. Specifically, monitor any pending federal legislation that would impact student financial aid.

Finance

Provide effective budget oversight of state agencies to ensure that monies appropriated are spent wisely. Particular areas of focus will include the Texas Department of Transportation, Department of State Health Services coordination of Mental Health Services, Texas Parks and Wildlife Department revitalization of State Parks, Health and Human Services Commission management of *Frew* settlement agreement and waiting list slots, Department of Aging and Disability Services improvement of State Schools, Texas Department of Criminal Justice roll out of treatment programs and review of the salary career ladder for employees for retention purposes, Texas Youth Commission achievement of reform, Texas Southern University rehabilitation, Higher Education Coordinating Board implementation of incentive programs and the creation of the Texas Cancer Research and Prevention Institute.

Study the effectiveness of cash management strategies of the state. Review the quarterly amount of cash on hand and its use and potential to generate excess returns. Include an assessment of cash flow problems that exist in school districts and request that the Comptroller of Public Accounts report on the additional short-term borrowing needed and the potential impact on bond ratings if legislation is not passed which allows for the "smoothing" of state payments to school districts.

Explore the policy implications of allowing school districts, or other public agencies, to participate in a permissive pooled collateral program which provides for the centralization of collateral in a pool which will be tracked and verified to meet state requirements.

Evaluate the effectiveness of existing state tax incentives that encourage employers to provide health coverage to their employees, including tax incentives under the revised state business tax, and make recommendations for additional deductions or credits that increase the number of employees covered by health care insurance.

Compile a list of significant state assets and infrastructure, including but not limited to the state lottery and state real property, and determine if each asset is being used to the highest and best use possible in the interest of taxpayers of Texas. Where appropriate, provide analysis of alternative uses of underperforming assets, potential cost savings or revenue gains and the legislative actions that would be needed to make the changes that are in the best interest of taxpayers.

Study the funding of county public hospitals and the role neighboring counties without a county hospital should play.

Study the feasibility and the advisability of establishing an investment policy that is consistent across all state trust funds, including the trust funds of the Employees Retirement System, the Teachers Retirement System, the Permanent University Fund, and the Permanent School Fund. Identify best investment policies for state trust funds. Examine recent portfolio diversification strategies and the effect they have on long-term fund performance. The recommendations should consider what is an acceptable rate of return, an acceptable degree of risk, the appropriateness of certain investments. (Joint charge with Senate State Affairs Committee)

Review and evaluate appropriate state regulation of a private operator of the state lottery should the state receive bids for a lease of the lottery that merit strong consideration. Provide recommendations for ensuring the security and integrity of the lottery and for adequate consumer protections. (Joint charge with Senate State Affairs Committee)

Review and make recommendations that address the state's facility infrastructure needs for public schools, ensuring that funding remains stable, reliable and equitable. Examine the need for funding adjustments for factors that affect the need for facilities, such as fast growth, age and condition of facilities, adequacy of space, construction and land costs, and concentration of students requiring smaller class sizes. Assess the impact on property taxpayers of "rolling forward" the Existing Debt Allotment (EDA) each session and the change in biennial appropriations for the Instructional Facilities Allotment (IFA). (Joint Charge with Senate Education Committee)

Review current property tax rates at school districts. Explore what mechanisms may exist to prevent any future constitutional funding challenges. Review any funding issues that are particular to certain types of school districts, such as fast growth districts. (Joint charge with Senate Education Committee)

Review the status, effects, and success or failure of higher education authorities operating under Chapters 53, 53A, and 53B, Education Code, and nonprofit corporations carrying out the functions of higher education authorities under those chapters. Make recommendations regarding any necessary changes in the statutes and administration of same. (Joint charge with Senate Subcommittee on Higher Education)

Review Medicaid provider reimbursement rate methodologies, including the impact of factors such as infrastructure concerns, federal minimum wage changes, and cost reports.

Study the impact on access to care, quality of care, and value, and make recommendations for legislative changes, taking into account rate increases contained in the current budget. (Joint charge with Senate Health and Human Services Committee)

Study and review state and local options for expanding transportation funding and explore options to reduce diversions of Fund 6 revenue. (Joint charge with Senate Committee on Transportation and Homeland Security)

Study and make recommendations relating to whether the Texas Department of Transportation is in compliance with Transportation Code §201.109, Revenue Enhancement, and whether the Texas Department of Transportation is using the funding sources provided by the Legislature, including, but not limited to, General Obligation, Fund 6 and Mobility Fund bonds, to build new roads. (Joint charge with Senate Committee on Transportation and Homeland Security)

Monitor and provide a brief update on the implementation of legislation addressed by the Finance Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve or enhance and complete implementation.

- SB 247, relating to Sudan divestment, and make recommendations about whether to include Iran in the divestment strategy;
- SB1332 to help improve the state's debt management and oversight, including a more comprehensive review of state debt and improved communication between entities and oversight of state bond issuance;
- SB 10 and the *Frew* settlement to ensure that the initiatives carried out by the Health and Human Services Commission affect meaningful improvement in access to quality care in the Texas Medicaid program; and
- HB 3732 relating to ultra-clean coal technologies, and determine the amount of property tax removed from the tax rolls, as well as the corresponding impact on school finance. Identify any changes needed to strengthen the program and ensure its success.

Subcommittee on Higher Education Finance:

Review and make recommendations regarding the structure and organization of higher education, focusing on funding of the current higher education system, including financing capital projects for general academic institutions and for health-related institutions and changes to funding flagship research universities such as The University of Texas at Austin and Texas A&M at College Station. Determine the adequacy of formula funding to support basic functions as well as supporting critical statewide needs and improvements on the various methods of funding research. Reviews should include institutional structures that maximize efficiencies and incentive structures that increase the number of graduates. A review of funding formulas should also include the application of proportionality of state contributions for higher education employee health benefits.

Review state student financial aid programs (TEXAS Grants, B-on-Time) and provide assessment of the programs' effectiveness and future funding needs.

Study the effects continued tuition deregulation will have on college enrollment and accessibility.

Subcommittee on Property Appraisal and Revenue Caps:

Review the property tax appraisal system, including the following:

- the duties and responsibilities of chief appraisers and appraisal districts;
- any abuses that occur in the appraisal process;
- the process of appointing the members of boards of directors of appraisal districts;
- the impact of adding members to the boards of directors of appraisal districts who are not appointed by the taxing jurisdictions of the district and methods for appointing these additional directors;
- the usefulness of information provided in a notice of appraised value;
- the impact of HB 1010, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, relating to appraisal districts crossing county lines;
- any benefit from requiring more uniformity in appraisal standards used by appraisal districts;
- any revisions to the property valuation appeal system that could reduce the cost of dispute resolution;
- the likelihood of, and any associated benefit from, increased compliance with the existing business personal property rendition law if chief appraisers are given limited audit authority.

Study the benefits and limitations of property tax appraisal caps compared to a limit on revenue a local jurisdiction can receive without the approval of the voters in the locality. Consider alternative sources of funding to replace property tax revenues.

Study the cost and benefit to the state of projects approved by school districts limiting the value of business investment under the Texas Economic Development Act (Ch 313, Tax Code), and the funding impact on public schools.

Review the practice of school districts approving budgets contingent on the passage of a rate-rollback election.

Government Organization

Study the function, structure, funding and operations of the State Energy Conservation Office (SECO). Identify opportunities to maximize the impact and further the mission of SECO, and support SECO's role in achieving energy efficiency reporting requirements and targets established through legislation.

Examine criminal background check requirements across Texas health and human service, law enforcement, and education agencies, as well as other licensed professionals.

Determine best practices, develop cross-agency standards, and make recommendations for reducing costs and streamlining the process.

Study the economic and security costs and benefits, both short-term and long-term, of adoption of an open document format for state-created documents.

Study whether Texas should adopt high performance building standards. In light of the potential impact of Texas' population growth on the need for electricity and water, study whether high performance buildings can cost-effectively lower utility costs and make more efficient use of natural resources.

Study options for developing a new master-planned campus to serve the needs of state government and provide for future growth. Consider locations accessible to the government center, as well as relative property values and lease rates. Consider divestiture of certain real estate assets within Travis County to take advantage of favorable market conditions and the cost and benefits of reducing reliance on leased facilities. Coordinate activities with the Texas Facility Commission and the General Land Office.

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Government Organization Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation.

Health & Human Services

Monitor the Department of Aging and Disability Services' improvement plan for the system of care for individuals with developmental disabilities, focusing on efforts to improve state schools and provide more community care options. Evaluate the process for preventing, reporting, and investigating abuse and neglect in state schools, ICF/MRs and the Home and Community-Based Services (HCS) program. Determine the short-term and long-term financial impact of increasing the number of individuals served in home or community locations and the financial impact this shift has on state schools. Monitor the department's efforts to convert institutions to community care providers through the money-follows-the-person program designed to improve access to community care services. Specifically make recommendations on:

- how to further improve the system of care for individuals with developmental disabilities;
- preventing, reporting, and investigating abuse and neglect;
- developing a transition plan for reducing waiting list for community care service;
- incentives for converting institutions into community care providers; and
- a long term plan to address issues that result from the current federal Department of Justice investigation.

Study and make recommendations related to creating an outcome-based reimbursement model in Texas' Medicaid program as a way to improve quality of care, reduce medical errors, and create cost savings. Develop a pilot health care program that pays for best

practices, rather than only paying for actual procedures performed. Examine the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid's (CMS) efforts to create an outcome-based system in the Medicare payment system that sanctions serious, preventable medical errors. Examine Pennsylvania's efforts to implement a similar outcome-based reimbursement model to make providers more vigilant about patient care, encourage best practices, and reduce costs in their Medicaid program. If necessary, examine other health care coverage models that have successfully incorporated an outcome-based reimbursement system. Consider pay-for-performance, options that reward good outcomes and the use of best practices, and changes to the reimbursement system that will reduce serious preventable medical errors and hospital acquired infections.

Study the effectiveness of the Resiliency and Disease Management (RDM) program in the mental health service delivery system, implementation of changes to the crisis care program, and recommendations for appropriate use of the mental health transformation grant. Identify strategies to increase access to services and meet future demand for services. Examine resource allocation and opportunities to maximize funding. Policy recommendations should maximize the number of inpatient psychiatric acute care beds, enhance access to outpatient services, promote the use of recovery-based services, and enhance access to community-based services.

Monitor the implementation of the Department of Family and Protective Services' improvement plan to reduce caseloads for Child Protective Service caseworkers, and to provide family-based safety services and ongoing substitute care services. Evaluate the efficiency of Child Protective Services "functional units," and determine if other organizational models would allow for a reduction in caseworkers' caseloads, without increasing other administrative costs. Develop recommendations aimed at lowering individual caseloads, making casework more efficient, and improving the retention of caseworkers. Assess the viability of caseworker reimbursement as a manner to lower caseworker turnover.

Monitor the implementation of the Department of Family and Protective Services' plan to stabilize the foster care system and increase permanency options for children. Study placement capacity to determine how Child Protective Services can better develop the necessary adoptions or foster homes to meet the needs of children and families by increasing foster care capacity, recruiting and retaining more foster and adoptive parents, increasing the use of relative care, and developing best practices for reducing foster care placement breakdowns. This includes studying innovative ways to promote adoption and kinship care in Texas and best practices for foster/adoptive parents to improve their ability to care for abused and neglected children. Explore potential improvements and enhancements in the Preparation for Adult Living (PAL) program to increase successful transitioning from foster care to adult living. Study current death review processes for children who die while in state care.

Examine Texas' current strategies for preventing child abuse. Specifically study the effectiveness of current programs and how these programs compare to other state efforts. Identify national research-based solutions, including best practices and programs

addressing sexual abuse. Explore promising existing and emerging approaches to child abuse and neglect prevention, especially those with a strong evidence base. Identify additional funding sources for increased child abuse prevention activities by the state.

Study the changes in statute contained in SB 10, 80th Legislature, as well as the state's current prevention and wellness efforts and chronic care management efforts, and identify opportunities for improvement in state policies and programs. Examine options for expanding and optimizing the state's current investment in wellness programs and management tools for individuals with chronic care conditions, including options that address childhood asthma. Review partnerships with the private sector that specifically address the following:

- tobacco cessation, including the evaluation of a statewide smoking ban in public places;
- reducing obesity;
- availability and effectiveness of childhood and adult vaccines, including public education programs to promote the use of vaccines; and
- more effective management of chronic care conditions.

Study the effectiveness and efficiency of nursing homes and home-based solutions/home care in Texas, and make recommendations to improve nursing homes and their funding. Identify and study successful nursing home funding models established by other states. Consider ways to fund infrastructure for nursing and therapists and home care. Examine the possibility of an incentive-based “pay for performance” rate plan for nursing facilities and consider factors that it could be based on, taking into account similar plans implemented in other states. Make recommendations on how best to use Medicaid to fund skilled nursing and home health care in Texas. Explore options for improving graduation rates for nurses in Texas.

Study and address ethical issues surrounding the impact of a pandemic influenza in this state, particularly focusing on the following:

- the availability of human and material resources;
- the benefits and burdens of mass vaccination plans;
- the involvement of private sector professional organizations and businesses in the state's pandemic influenza preparedness and response plans; and
- development and implementation of communication plans that will inform and prepare the public on risk reduction behaviors and local/state preparedness and response.

Study the potential for development of Health Enterprise Zones, which could offer tax incentives to medical providers who locate within the boundaries of designated medically underserved areas. Analyze similar legislation enacted in other states, specifically New Jersey, and estimate costs and benefits. Consider expanding incentives to medically related industries such as medical research facilities, laboratories and equipment manufacturers in order to spur economic development.

Monitor the collection and availability of cord blood stem cells for treatments and research in Texas. Review the current state of basic and clinical research using these and other types of adult stem cells. Assess the potential for clinical and economic benefits from current and increased adult stem cell research.

Review Medicaid provider reimbursement rate methodologies, including the impact of factors such as infrastructure concerns, federal minimum wage changes, and cost reports. Study the impact on access to care, quality of care, and value, and make recommendations for legislative changes, taking into account rate increases contained in the current budget. (Joint charge with Senate Finance Committee)

Study the state's current and long-range need for physicians, dentists, nurses, and other allied health and long-term care professionals. Make recommendations on how the state can help recruit high-need professions, especially for primary care providers and long-term care professionals in the underserved regions of Texas. (Joint charge with the Senate Committee on International Relations and Trade)

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Health and Human Services Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, report on the implementation of SB 10 to ensure meaningful improvement in access to quality care in the Texas Medicaid program, focusing on how to cover more uninsured in Texas with market-based plans or premium assistance for employer health plans, and monitor the creation of the Texas Cancer Research and Prevention Institute.

Intergovernmental Relations

Study and make recommendations on Texas' housing programs, with particular focus upon:

- Increasing the effectiveness of the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs' (TDHCA) Housing Tax Credit (HTC) Program. Examine potential rule changes to the HTC Program's Qualified Allocation Plan to give owners of mixed-income projects seeking low-income housing credits the same opportunity to receive credits that low-income projects have, thus helping cities address the problem of a lack of adequate quality affordable housing while enhancing central city revitalization;
- Significantly improving homeownership rates by evaluating Texas' efforts to address the growing housing need. Efforts should include assessment of the range of tools which may be used to help low-income Texans develop equity through homeownership. Tools should be evaluated in terms of their economic development impact, leverage of federal and private funds, and how they are utilized in other states;
- Evaluating the progress of affordable housing programs within the state and developing recommendations to boost the capacity of non-profits to build increased affordable housing developments;

- Monitor the expansion of the Housing Trust Fund by the 80th Legislature; review the funds of other states to develop recommendations for a permanent funding source for the Texas Housing Trust Fund;
- Promote home-ownership through self-help initiatives such as the Texas Bootstrap Loan Program;
- Assessing the existing use of state and federal housing funds in relation to statutory and budgetary mandates; and
- Examining the incidence of health and safety violations and concerns for general habitability among multi-family and single-family rental properties across the state, including properties financed or supported by the state. Consider the adequacy of the existing authority conferred by the state upon local governments to address violations of habitability standards. Make recommendations for extension of local capacity for redress.

Review title insurance requirements relating to the purchase of a home under an installment contract or contract for a deed. Study title insurance requirements and costs in Texas as compared to other states.

Study the provision of fire and emergency medical services through Emergency Service Districts (ESDs) and make recommendations concerning the provision of those services, and for reconciling potential conflicts due to overlapping taxing jurisdictions in the areas of the state served by ESDs.

Review the process for the creation of Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) and other special districts, and investigate whether the creation of a standard municipal utility district statute is feasible, and whether it would enable the legislature to more efficiently evaluate proposed districts during the legislative session.

Study the shifting geographic nature of low-income neighborhoods in urban and suburban areas, focusing on factors that contribute to economic displacement of low income homeowners and factors that contribute to beneficial redevelopment of distressed neighborhoods.

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Intergovernmental Relations Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, report on changes made by SB 968, relating to financing tools for certain obligations for public improvements and for certain obligations of The University of Texas System and evaluate the need for further changes to Chapter 1371 Texas Government Code.

Subcommittee on Flooding & Evacuations

Monitor the implementation of priority legislation addressed by the Subcommittee on Flooding and Evacuations, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve or enhance and complete implementation.

Report on the implementation of SB 1436, which transferred the National Flood Insurance Program from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to the Texas Water Development Board. Make recommendations for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the program.

International Relations and Trade

Review state and local policies relating to development and growth in rural and unincorporated regions of the state. Work with housing advocates, county organizations and appropriate officials to assess the proliferation of substandard housing in rural and unincorporated areas.

Determine the appropriateness of and make recommendations on the existing extraterritorial jurisdiction authority currently granted under colonia prevention measures along the border region.

Develop recommendations to better provide Border and rural communities access to state and federal resources. Review the programs established by different states and recommend initiatives that Texas can enact to increase the competitiveness of these communities, engender critical development, provide affordable housing, identify community assets, retain/create wealth and create regional jobs. Study and make recommendations to expand business opportunities in international markets for businesses located in economically distressed areas, including rural and Border areas.

Study the state's current and long-range need for physicians, dentists, nurses, and other allied health and long-term care professionals. Make recommendations to recruit high-need professions, especially for primary care providers and long-term care professionals in the Border region of Texas. (Joint charge with the Senate Health and Human Services Committee)

Study and make recommendations to stem the tide of illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and human smuggling, and to reduce the criminal activities within the Border region. (Joint charge with Senate Committee on Transportation and Homeland Security)

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the International Relations and Trade Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation.

Jurisprudence

Study the laws governing suits affecting the parent-child relationship involving non-parents, including suits for possession of or access to a child by a grandparent, and make recommendations for providing the best care and protection for the children involved. Provide an assessment of the constitutional issues involved with these suits.

Study the management and storage of adoption records, including the costs and benefits of converting records into digital format. Study ways to increase access by adopted persons and their children and spouses to important family medical history information and ensure that medical history information is updated, while maintaining privacy and anonymity of records.

Examine the role of heir finders in Texas and make recommendations regarding professional standards and fees for heir finders.

Identify and study best practices for representation of children in child abuse and neglect cases and determine whether to implement further training, oversight, or other requirements for judges, attorneys, and others responsible for child abuse and neglect cases, including child sexual abuse cases. Develop and implement tools for children's advocacy centers (CACs) and prosecutors to successfully investigate and prosecute child abusers. Include the following:

- Explore changes to the rules of evidence that could facilitate the presentation of child testimony in court;
- Explore making prior extraneous sex offenses admissible during determination of guilt, as has been adopted in the federal court system; and
- Explore possible expansion of the rules regarding how cases are consolidated and punishments are stacked in a single trial involving a crime committed against a child.

Study practices intended to enhance the jury experience and increase jury participation, including:

- allowing jurors to ask questions of witnesses by submitting them to the judge in writing;
- allowing lawyers to periodically summarize testimony for the jury;
- allowing jurors to take notes during trial; and
- allowing jurors to discuss evidence among themselves during trial.

Study and make recommendations relating to the jurisdiction, authority, power and discretion of probate judges in Texas, including the authority of a probate judge to intervene in a non-probate case.

Study administrative and legal procedures used by municipalities to exert regulatory authority beyond city limits and extraterritorial jurisdiction. Determine whether conflicts exist with agencies' regulatory authority and regulatory authority delegated to home-rule municipalities, and make recommendations for appropriate delegation and clarification of respective authorities.

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Jurisprudence Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation.

Natural Resources

Study the safety of major dams, levees, and other flood control structures across Texas, and determine the appropriate responsible agency [Texas Commissioner on Environmental Quality (TCEQ), Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) or the Governor's Office of Homeland Security] and the level of authority and funding needed to inventory, assess, repair or replace those with impairments. Develop liability and control standards for flood control structures and make recommendations to properly and safely manage these assets in the future.

Review Texas' current air emissions inventory and evaluate the need for additional data to enhance or improve the inventory. Review current federal, state and local incentive programs related to emissions reductions and recommend improvements.

Study and assess the use of advanced control technologies for the reduction of point source pollution emissions, including, but not limited to:

- Identifying state-of-the-art pollution control technologies;
- Identifying facilities which could benefit from state-of-the-art control technologies;
- Identifying mechanisms for implementing state-of-the-art controls in Texas;
- Reviewing the ability of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to regulate the use of pollution control technologies, including possible legislative options to grant, improve, or mandate TCEQ actions to implement state-of-the-art control technologies; and
- Investigating the use of different approaches or methods in regulating emissions based on geographical/regional locations around the state.

Assess the environmental impact of new electric generation sources and technologies. Collect and evaluate data related to use and conservation of water used in the production of energy. Examine the need to include electric generation facility water needs in regional water plans.

Inventory and analyze bodies of water with high salinity. Explore new technologies and approaches to reduce salinity in the state's surface and groundwaters. Examine the need for state action to address salinity levels in surface waters of the state. Include an assessment of the following:

- brackish desalinization projects, including brine disposal options;
- permitting of brackish water by groundwater districts;
- the value and potential uses for brackish water; and
- the imposition of export fees for brackish as opposed to potable water.

Monitor the implementation of House Bill 1763, 79th Legislative Session, including progress by Groundwater Conservation Districts (GCDs) on joint planning within Groundwater Management Areas (GMA) and collaboration with entities within a GMA in joint planning including areas not covered by a GCD. Study the impact of HB 1763 on the following:

- GCD creation within areas not covered by a GCD;
- single or partial county GCDs;
- consolidation with existing GCDs, and within priority groundwater management areas.

Investigate issues related to groundwater use in areas of the state without a Texas Water Development Board defined aquifer, such as the Barnett Shale. Evaluate the impact of permitting the increase of the cap on export fees by GCDs.

Review all state-created river authorities, including the powers exercised by each authority and the advisability of subjecting these authorities to legislative review. Consider options for ensuring adequate protection of public assets, improving transparency of operations, enhancing appropriate access to financial and management records, and authorizing audits by the State Auditor's office.

Study and assess issues concerning mercury and arsenic emissions, including, but not limited to:

- identifying the sources of mercury and arsenic pollution in air and water;
- investigating the status of drinking water, reservoir, river, estuary, and fish and wildlife mercury and arsenic monitoring programs in Texas;
- investigating the implementation by TCEQ of the Federal Clean Air Mercury Rule (CAMR) on power plants in Texas;
- studying the potential costs and benefits of including all coal/lignite burning sources in Texas, not just power plants, into the State's CAMR program; and
- determining the legislative and regulatory mechanisms and advisability of including all coal/lignite burning sources into the State's CAMR program.

Study the need for regional water quality standards, particularly in the Edwards and Barton Springs recharge zones.

Monitor the progress of the Edwards Aquifer Authority (EAA) Recovery Implementation Plan to determine, after reviewing reports to the Legislature and with input from the EAA Oversight Committee, any changes in legislation needed to implement the plan.

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Natural Resources Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, focus on SB 3, relating to water; SB 12, relating to air quality; and the transfer of historic properties from Texas Parks and Wildlife Department to the Texas Historical Commission.

Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Affairs & Coastal Resources

Study the economic development impact, benefits and costs of the Fuel Ethanol and Biodiesel Incentive Program. Analyze and make recommendations regarding the following areas of interest:

- state cost versus economic benefit, including any impact on the price of feed for livestock and food for human consumption;
- the program as compared to other state and federal incentives;
- any federal legislative or administrative changes relating to the program; and
- options to encourage research and new technologies and market based incentives and competitive feedstock issues including feedstock development.

Study the impact of funding increases and their effectiveness for the Coastal Erosion Planning and Response Program and provide options for possible future funding sources.

Study the economic impacts and unintended consequences of allowing whitetail deer raised on deer farms in Texas to be legally processed for venison. Study the interstate shipment issues with venison from other states currently faced by Texas restaurant suppliers.

Study the impact of the thoroughbred and quarter horse industries on agriculture in Texas, specifically the reasons for decline in those industries over the last several years.

Study the growth potential for rural economic development through the wine and grape industry as a result of expanded traditional agricultural operations and expanded agritourism.

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Subcommittee on Agriculture, Rural Affairs & Coastal Resources, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete the implementation. Specifically, monitor the implementation of HB 2819 relating to enforcement of the Open Beaches Act. Additionally, monitor the implementation of the federal 2007 Farm Bill and determine the impact on the Texas agricultural industry.

State Affairs

Study the factors that impact the transparency and efficiency of the health insurance market. Make recommendation to result in the use of best practices, lower health care costs, and better health outcomes, including the following:

- Study factors contributing to the increasing cost of health care;
- Study insurer and health maintenance organization (HMO) use of tiers, ratings, or classifications to differentiate among credentialed physicians already admitted to the insurer or HMO panel of preferred providers or network;
- Examine methods to remediate incorrect tiering, ratings, or classifications;
- Examine how physicians are notified of the standards against which they will be compared and whether they are notified of the standards prior to the evaluation period;
- Improve transparency with respect to the marketing of prescription drugs; and
- Study the use of certain nonprofit health corporations - approved under Chapter 162, Occupations Code, in Texas. Examine whether such entities operate on a statewide scale or on a limited scale, whether such entities adhere to the

formalities required of corporations, whether the operation of such entities are influenced by owners or members who are not licensed to practice medicine, and whether such entities have ever been decertified or investigated for failure to maintain compliance with Texas law or regulations.

Study and make recommendations for reducing the number of uninsured Texans, focusing on the following:

- Options to increase access to private health insurance, including 3 Share programs, employer sponsored plans and portable, individual insurance;
- Incentives for encouraging counties and local governments to participate in private health insurance cost sharing for their respective residents;
- Options to reduce health care premiums, including creation of special plans with increased deductibles and catastrophic coverage;
- Implementation and possible expansion of health services districts;
- Other state programs for increasing market-based coverage of the uninsured, including costs and effectiveness;
- Options that will increase consumer choice and personal responsibility; and
- Analysis of state and federal regulations that contribute to higher premium costs.

Study and make recommendations relating to the Texas Health Insurance Risk Pool, including the current eligibility for coverage requirements, the economic profiles of participants and former participants, the affordability of the insurance products' premiums and deductibles, and the public's awareness of the Pool.

Study the issue of security and accuracy in Texas elections. The study should include the benefits and risks of electronic voting technology, including the necessity of maintaining a paper record of each electronic vote. The study should also include an analysis of fraud in Texas elections, including prosecution rates for voter fraud, the processes for purging ineligible voters from voter lists, and the integrity of the mail-in and provisional ballot systems. Study the effectiveness of electronic voting technology and voter ID laws in other states. Monitor the implementation of the federal Help America Vote Act of 2002, including the implementation of the Texas Election Administration Management system. Recommend statutory and regulatory changes designed to ensure that only eligible voters are allowed to vote in Texas elections and that each vote is accurately counted.

Review and make recommendations for requiring insurance coverage of routine medical care for patients with a life-threatening disease or condition who have elected to participate in a clinical trial.

Study the economic impact of recent civil justice reform legislation in Texas.

Study whether Texas should adopt the Restatement 2nd of Torts Sec. 674 (Wrongful use of Civil Proceedings) and whether a person should be allowed to recover court and attorneys fees when he has been forced to defend a lawsuit filed without probable cause or for intimidation purposes.

Monitor the Texas workers' compensation system, and the continued implementation of the reforms of HB 7, 79th Legislature, Regular Session, by the Texas Department of Insurance and other state agencies. Specifically evaluate the recent decision by the Texas Supreme Court in *Entergy v. Summers* in terms of its impact and the impact of previous legislation on the workers' compensation system.

Study and make recommendations to reduce illegal gambling in Texas, including, but not limited to, the illegal use of Eight-Liners.

Analyze the advantages and disadvantages of phasing in a defined-contribution pension for future employees versus the existing defined-benefit pension plan. Study options for transition or implementation issues and how the phase-in could be structured. Evaluate the possibility of requiring the state employee contribution rate to meet the annually required contribution for the statewide retirement funds each biennium in order to prevent unfunded liabilities.

Study the relationship between the public mental health system and the criminal justice and civil courts systems, including the identification and sharing of information regarding mentally ill offenders, including minors, among criminal justice and mental health agencies, the courts, state hospitals, and the Veterans Administration. Study how current confidentiality laws impact the exchange of information among groups described above. Study the sentencing of mentally ill offenders compared to non-mentally ill offenders, including minors, and the affect that has on statewide prison capacity and on the quality of health care provided to mentally ill offenders. (Joint charge with Senate Criminal Justice Committee)

Review and evaluate appropriate state regulation of a private operator of the state lottery should the state receive bids for a lease of the lottery that merit strong consideration. Provide recommendations for ensuring the security and integrity of the lottery and for adequate consumer protections. (Joint charge with Senate Finance Committee)

Study the feasibility and the advisability of establishing an investment policy that is consistent across all state trust funds, including the trust funds of the Employees Retirement System, the Teachers Retirement System, the Permanent University Fund, and the Permanent School Fund. Identify best investment policies for state trust funds. Examine recent portfolio diversification strategies and the effect they have on long-term fund performance. The recommendations should consider what is an acceptable rate of return, an acceptable degree of risk, the appropriateness of certain investments. (Joint charge with Senate Finance Committee)

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the State Affairs Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. In particular, monitor and report on the effect of HB 2365, which allows public entities to report "other post employment benefits" (OPEBs) on a statutory modified accrual basis, including any effect on auditor opinions, bond ratings, or other fiscal issues. Monitor the implementation of Senate Bill

1731, relating to transparency of health information, and Senate Bill 1846, relating to TRS.

Transportation & Homeland Security

Evaluate the state's homeland security efforts and the state's recent \$140 million investment in law enforcement to help secure the border and study and make recommendations to deter transnational and drug-related gang violence and crime, including the use of injunctions and any possible improvements to Chapter 125 of the Civil Practices and Remedies Code, relating to membership in street gangs.

Study and make recommendations for the creation of [a tamper-proof driver's license or photo ID that complies with the federal Real ID Act](#), including the implementation of the Secure Enhanced Drivers' License Program (SB 11, 80th Legislature), by the Department of Public Safety and issue recommendations for improving and expanding the pilot program.

Examine the roles and best practices among individuals, state and local governments, hospitals and other health care providers, and the insurance industry for disaster planning and first response efforts. Explore what changes are needed to better prepare for natural disasters to mitigate claims and losses. Include an assessment of the state's implementation of recent recommendations for evacuations, including movement of medically fragile populations. Study the level of preparedness among critical infrastructure entities in both the public and private sector, the effectiveness of state disaster relief policies relating to this infrastructure and the sufficiency of personnel needed to restore this infrastructure. Assess the state's preparedness to handle a public health emergency. Examine the challenges of interoperability of communications technologies to improve coordination of different plans across jurisdictions.

Study and make recommendations regarding state and local regulation of billboards. Produce a graphical analysis of current billboards, evaluate objective criteria for locations where billboards can be permitted or prohibited, including but not limited to geographical (corridor or urban/rural), land usage (e.g. industrial), or cultural/historical criteria, and include consideration of the impact on any federal funding.

Study and make recommendations for improving management and oversight of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Include a review of populations served, MPO governance, oversight, roles, variation among MPOs, and MPO decision-making ability in relation to TxDOT or other agencies.

Study Comprehensive Development Agreements (CDAs) and make recommendations to ensure the maximum benefit to taxpayers. Study the implications of requiring CDAs to have definitive buyback formulas that can be calculated without using any form of future revenue forecasts. Study requiring potential CDA projects to be solicited only after environmental clearance has been granted. Study the implications of shortening CDA's maximum allowable contract duration. Study provisions affecting competing facilities.

Review the status of structurally deficient bridges and provide increased oversight of TxDOT's bridge repair activities to ensure that any unsafe bridges are identified and repaired as soon as possible.

Study and make recommendations relating to the status of current and planned toll road projects in Texas, the use of public-private partnerships to build new roads and/or transit services, and the market valuation process. Analyze the impact of lengthening the number of years a toll road authority may issue bonds.

Study the effectiveness of the Trans-Texas Corridor (TTC) and make recommendations for its future role in providing additional roads in Texas. Provide specific recommendations relating to public input in the development of the TTC.

Study the impact of prohibitions in Section 2301.476 (Manufacturer or Distributor Ownership, Operation, or Control of Dealership), Occupations Code, on the sale of buses in Texas and make recommendations. Gather information and monitor the methods of sale of buses in other states and the dealership network, if any. Evaluate the need and possible benefits or detriments caused to public and private sector in application of this law and rule to the bus industry.

Study the issue and amount of state agency expenditures on media activities and the legal authority for such expenditures. Develop recommendations for guidelines to ensure appropriate use of state funds to provide legitimate public education.

Monitor urban crime laboratories and their compliance with state laws regulating their functions and make recommendations to restore public trust in their functions and to ensure full compliance with federal Homeland Security reporting requirements. Specifically, review the report issued by the Independent Investigator for the Houston Police Department Crime Laboratory and Property Room, the independent panel review of certain criminal convictions prompted by the conclusions of this report, and the implementation by the City of Houston of any reforms recommended in this report.

Study and review state and local options for expanding transportation funding and explore options to reduce diversions of Fund 6 revenue. (Joint charge with Senate Finance Committee)

Study and make recommendations relating to whether the Texas Department of Transportation is in compliance with Transportation Code §201.109, Revenue Enhancement, and whether the Texas Department of Transportation is using the funding sources provided by the Legislature, including, but not limited to, General Obligation, Fund 6 and Mobility Fund bonds, to build new roads. (Joint charge with Senate Finance Committee)

Study and make recommendations to stem the tide of illegal immigration, drug trafficking, and human smuggling, and to reduce the criminal activities within the Border region. (Joint charge with Senate Committee on International Relations and Trade)

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Transportation & Homeland Security Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Specifically, report on implementation of SB 792 and SB 1723, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, to improve the overall collection rate and compliance rate with the Driver Responsibility Program.

Veteran Affairs & Military Installations

Examine any existing state veteran hiring and procurement preferences and procedures and make recommendations for improving and enhancing these programs to increase efficiencies and maximize funding.

Study veteran reintegration issues, including the occurrence of post traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse problems, and domestic violence and other family issues. Make suggestions regarding what the state could do to supplement and enhance related services for veterans and their families, focusing on state military forces veterans and reservists. Include an assessment of the implementation of SB 1058, 80th Texas Legislature, relating to reintegration counseling services.

Study state services and benefits for injured service members and their families who are recovering from their injuries and rehabilitating in Texas. Make recommendations on how to better serve them.

Study the relationships between military installations and the surrounding communities and make recommendations addressing encroachment and quality of life.

Examine ways that "The Fund for Veterans Assistance" established by H.B. 3107, 80th Texas Legislature, could be maximized to the benefit of Texas veterans.

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Veteran Affairs & Military Installations Committee, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Focus on the implementation of the Texas Veterans Commission (H.B. 3426) and Texas Veterans Land Board (H.B. 3140) Sunset reviews.

Subcommittee on Base Realignment and Closure

Monitor national and overseas BRAC developments and Department of Defense redevelopment efforts.

Monitor and analyze the closure process for the following installations and communicate with district Senators and communities: Naval Station Ingleside; Brooks City-Base, San Antonio; and Lone Star Army Ammunition Plant.

Monitor and analyze the realignment of the various installations across the state, including but not limited to, Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, Fort Bliss in El Paso, and Red River Army Depot in Texarkana.

Monitor the implementation of legislation addressed by the Subcommittee on Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC), 80th Legislature, Regular Session, and make recommendations for any legislation needed to improve, enhance, and/or complete implementation. Focus on implementation of the following:

- SB 962 relating to school districts affected by troop reassignments at military installations,
- SB 1237 relating to defense base development authorities,
- SB 1724 relating to the Texas Military Facilities Commission,
- SB 1743 relating to the Red River Redevelopment Authority,
- SB 1956 relating to areas affected by defense restructuring, and
- HB 3879 relating to defense base development authorities.

Senate Select Committee on Economic Development

Inventory economic development programs and incentives, including tax abatements, offered by state and local governments. Review the costs and benefits of Texas' economic development tools, including the Texas Enterprise Fund and the Texas Emerging Technologies Fund, and make recommendations for improvements. Review similar incentive programs in other states and the potential impact on Texas' competitive advantage in attracting and keeping strong businesses. Analyze regional economic development trends and opportunities and identify option for maximizing economic development with region-specific incentives.

Review the costs and benefits of using the Texas Enterprise Zone Program as an economic development tool for local communities to partner with the State of Texas to promote job creation and capital investment in economically distressed areas of the state.

Study the current state of the nanotechnology industry in Texas. Analyze the impact of the industry on economic development. Review federal and state regulations regarding the development, use, and disposal of materials and waste products related to nanotechnology. Make recommendations for ensuring that Texas is a competitor in the nanotechnology industry and for ensuring the safety of the public as this industry grows.

Examine the costs and the effectiveness of policy options, including state incentives, available to cities and counties to preserve and redevelop historic downtown properties.

Study the merits of developing a comprehensive state policy of offering incentives to local governments for activities relating to recruiting and hosting special events.