



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## Texas Business Leadership Council Optimistic as 86<sup>th</sup> Legislature Convenes

As the 86<sup>th</sup> Legislature convenes today, the TBLC is optimistic that there is a real opportunity to create and improve upon public policy that will promote Texas' competitiveness. TBLC president, Justin Yancy noted that, "The divisive tone that has overshadowed many of our state's policy debates cannot continue if Texas is to stay the economic engine of this country. I do believe that a great majority of our elected officials understand that, are tired of the animosity, and are ready to return to a time where leaders can work on issues — sometimes disagree — but remain civil and respect the shared goals for a more competitive state."

The TBLC will continue advocating for the critical issues that our state must address for Texas to continue growing in a strategic way. Those issues include education and workforce, economic development, state infrastructure, and cybersecurity policy. The TBLC commends the leadership of Governor Greg Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, and soon to be Speaker Dennis Bonnen and looks forward to working with their offices — and both chambers — for a successful legislative session. TBLC priorities include:

### EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

- Support efforts to enhance high quality Pre-K programs.
- Support funding for full-day Pre-K programs.
- Expanded educational choice for families.
- Support comprehensive school finance reform.
- Support differentiated pay scale for teachers.
- Strengthen K-12 and postsecondary linkages to improve educational opportunity and outcomes.
- Improve efficiency and transparency with regard to portability of credits and credentials.
- Improve and strengthen education and workforce alignment.
- Support outcomes based funding in higher education.
- Support the adequate funding of state financial aid programs.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Preserve competitive tax incentives used to support corporate expansion, corporate relocations, and job growth by reauthorizing Chapter 312 of the Tax Code (the Property Redevelopment and Tax Abatement Act).
- Maintain a competitive Texas Enterprise Fund with a minimum balance of \$200M for the biennium.
- Support legislation pre-empting cities from enacting local employment and labor ordinances that are detrimental to business and job growth.
- Maintain a tax and regulatory environment that encourages innovation and job growth.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- Support public-private partnerships and regional authorities' ability to add infrastructure capacity

through user pay models such as managed lanes and dedicated toll lanes.

- Foster a climate for innovation, additional investment, and modernization of Texas transportation infrastructure.
- Accelerate the deployment of smart infrastructure investments by updating policies and practices that impede progress.
- Support continued fiscal stewardship in managing the corpus of the State Water Implementation Fund for Texas (SWIFT), and continued implementation of projects included in the State Water Plan and financed through SWIFT.
- Support statewide coordination to plan for and respond to floods impacting Texas.
- Through science and innovation, strive to implement strategies that capture excess flows resulting from floods, to increase water supply, needed during times of drought.
- Support an investment in science necessary to address water challenges facing the state. Specifically, support an investment of state fiscal resources to update maps related to flood plains, as well as the updating of Groundwater Availability Models and Water Availability Models.

### CYBERSECURITY

- Continue to improve state agency preparedness through modifications to the Texas Cybersecurity Act (HB 8).
- Support legislation that increases cybersecurity preparedness, education, and training throughout state government.
- Support legislation that mitigates cybersecurity risks to election and voting systems.