

POLICY SUMMIT 2019 RECAP



On Feb. 13, the TBLC hosted a movie screening of *The Pursuit* with the film's director, John Papola.



TBLC Vice Chair Charlie Amato delivered introductions for Speaker Bonnen and Lt. Gov. Patrick.



TBLC Members, public officials, and sponsors enjoying the day's events and speakers.



Evan Smith of the Texas Tribune discussing the midterm elections and what they mean for Texas.



Dale Craymer of TTARA wrapped up the morning events with a briefing on tax and school finance.



The day kicked off with a private legislative breakfast featuring Speaker of the House Dennis Bonnen as the keynote.



Lt. Governor Dan Patrick discussed priorities for the 86th legislative session during his luncheon keynote address.



TBLC members, legislative staff, Texas business leaders and stakeholders filled the room for Policy Summit 2019.



TBLC Infrastructure Co-Chair Bobby Jenkins moderated the first panel on Texas infrastructure with Heather Harward of TWSP, Zane Cole of Jones Lang LaSalle, and Dr. Jennifer McEwan of the Texas Transportation Alliance (pictured left to right).



TBLC Member George Watson during the workforce development panel Q&A session.



Melissa Henderson of Educate Texas, Rachel Hirsch of National Skills Coalition, Dr. William Serrata of El Paso Community College, and Angela Farley of the Dallas Regional Chamber (pictured left to right) discussed workforce development on our second panel.



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On February 13th and 14th the TBLC held its 4th Annual Policy Summit at the Alamo Drafthouse and Stephen F. Austin InterContinental Hotel in Austin, Texas. The summit's agenda began with a screening of Arthur Brooks' latest project, *The Pursuit*, and Q&A with the film's director on Wednesday, February 13th. Then, on Thursday, February 14th we met to explore the challenges Texas will face to its long term competitiveness outlook if the state doesn't begin to address long standing issues with public school finance, property tax, transportation infrastructure, water, and workforce policies.

Policy Summit 2019 kicked off with a reception and movie screening at the Alamo Drafthouse. Members, guests from the legislature, and local friends affiliated with the American Enterprise Institute (AEI) and Texas Lyceum joined us for an exclusive screening of *The Pursuit*, a project of AEI President, Arthur Brooks - the preeminent thought leader on free markets, capitalism, and classical liberalism. Following the screening we were joined by the film's director, John Papola. TBLC President Justin Yancy and John sat down for a brief Q&A about the experience and what he took away from traveling the world and meeting the men and women featured in the movie.

The following morning, Thursday, February 14th, we reconvened Policy Summit 2019 hosting a private breakfast with the newly elected **Speaker of the Texas House of Representatives, Dennis Bonnen**. Speaker Bonnen candidly shared with the group his vision for Texas and how he hopes to lead through bipartisan engagement. The Speaker walked us through his strategy for choosing committee assignments, weighed in on hot button issues like property tax and teacher pay, and discussed his united front with Governor Abbott and Lt. Governor Patrick.

Following breakfast, we heard from Evan Smith, CEO and Co-Founder of the Texas Tribune. Smith discussed the 2018 midterm election - which saw the decline of "red suburbia" as prominent politicians like Pete Sessions lost their re-election bids not only in Texas but across the country. This had a down ballot effect too as Democrats picked up seats in the Texas House and Senate. Additionally, Smith primed the members on the issues which will be important to businesses this session - property taxes, school finance, and the complete disappearance of last session's "bathroom bill" - while discussing the future of the leadership make up in Texas.

After a quick break, we were briefed on the looming property tax debate to be taken up this session. Property taxes in Texas are some of the highest in the country and local budgets continue to grow at unprecedented rates. There is an effort - at the state level - to cap the growth of those local budgets so that Texans are not taxed out of their homes and businesses. Dale Craymer, President of Texas Taxpayers and Research Association, walked Members through the issue and how it might play out.

As the Members moved to lunch, we were joined by legislative staff, stakeholders, and private sector partners to hear from **Lt. Governor Dan Patrick**. He echoed the united front we heard about earlier in the day and stated that he, the Governor and Speaker of the House are all on the same page this session in regard to priority issues - those being property tax reform and school finance. There are some differences beginning to emerge as Lt. Governor Patrick differed from Speaker Bonnen on some school finance specifics but both mentioned how these issues are not lines in the sand and that differences will be reconciled.

Following lunch we broke into panel discussions exploring some of the TBLC's primary issues this session on infrastructure, education and workforce. Our first panel featured our Infrastructure task force Co-Chairman, Bobby Jenkins, as he lead a panel on what makes Texas such an attractive place to do business. Panelists included Commercial Realtor Zane Cole with JLL, Heather Harward with Texas Water Supply Partners, and Dr. Jennifer McEwan with the Texas Transportation Alliance. Their conclusion: if Texas can't get a handle on congestion and water resource allocation, business relocations will dry up. Our second panel on workforce education was hosted by Melissa Henderson of Educate Texas and featured Rachel Hirsch of the National Skills Coalition, Dr. William Serrata of El Paso Community College, and Angela Farley of the Dallas Regional Chamber. Their conclusion: Without better integration between high schools, tech schools, community colleges, and universities, Texas students will be left at a competitive disadvantage when entering the workforce.

Policy Summit 2019 closed with 103 total attendees - including **Representative Will Metcalf, Representative Ben Leman, and Representative Tom Oliverson**. The event was covered by media outlets: the *Austin American Statesman*, *Dallas Morning News*, Texas Tribune, and Spectrum News.