STATE LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

December 2, 2010

(This update is produced by the UH System Office of Governmental Relations and the UH Division of University Advancement as a service to our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and friends.)

Pre-Legislative Session Report

Throughout the legislative session, which begins at high noon on January 11th, we will issue update reports each Friday. These reports will include the list and status of all the legislation we are tracking. Additional pre-session reports are anticipated.

Legislators began pre-filing bills on the Monday after Election Day. So far, they have filed 576 bills and joint resolutions (constitutional amendments). Of that, nearly ten percent (51) are pertinent to University of Houston System operations. You will find a complete list of tracked bills at the end of this report.

To give you an idea of the breadth of legislation that we already are tracking, we highlight a few below:

HB 21 by Riddle
Relating to reporting by state agencies on the financial effect of providing services to illegal immigrants.

HB 33 by Branch
Relating to measures to increase the affordability of textbooks used for courses at public institutions of higher education.

HB 51 by Lucio
Relating to energy efficiency standards for certain buildings and to high-performance design, construction, and renovation standards for certain government buildings and facilities.

HB 86 by Simpson
Relating to the carrying of concealed handguns on the campuses of institutions of higher education.

SB 28 by Zaffirini
Relating to eligibility for a TEXAS grant and to administration of the TEXAS grant program.

SB 29 by Zaffirini
Relating to the eligibility of certain postdoctoral fellows and graduate students to participate in health benefit programs at public institutions of higher education.

SB 68 by Zaffirini
Relating to contracting issues of state agencies, including ethics issues related to state contracting.

Under the Texas constitution, the regular legislative session lasts 140 days (Monday, May 30 this year). Because of the significant shortfall of state revenue, many do not expect either the appropriations bill or the redistricting bills to be completed during the regular session. That would require the Governor to call a special session or even several special sessions. Each special session lasts only 30 days and must be called for a specific purpose. The following are important dates or deadlines:

Tuesday, January 11, 2011 (lst day)
82nd Legislature convenes at noon

Tuesday, January 18, 2011
Inauguration of Governor and Lt. Governor at noon

Friday, March 11, 2011 (60th day)
Last day for free introduction of legislation

May 30, 2011 (140th day)
Last day of the regular session

Sunday, June 19, 2011 (20th day following final adjournment)
Last day governor can sign or veto bills passed during the regular session

Thursday, September 1, 2011
Start of new fiscal year (appropriation bill must be passed and signed)

More information may be found at the Texas Legislature Online site