



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE April 15, 2025

The Session Heats Up

We have now completed the 13th week of our 20 week regular session. This is the busiest time of the legislative calendar, with regular committee meetings every week. Interestingly, while the Senate has been hearing major higher education bills at a high rate, the House has proceeded at a much more measured pace. As a result, we think that the House will generally wait for Senate bills to come over rather than hearing House companions. Given that we have serious concerns with some of the Senate bills, this is a good development, in that we are working on a smaller set of bills than if we were working on companions bills moving in both directions.

Though the Senate had heard several bills that we have opposed, it has chosen to combine several of those policy ideas into one major reform bill, SB 37. The bill has been redrafted since its filed version, but is not materially improved. It currently contains several provisions related to:

- faculty senates and their governance.
- review of curriculum by outside entities.
- review and contraction of degree programs based on post graduation earnings.
- establishment of a higher education "ombudsman" charged with investigating and reporting to the Attorney General on institutional compliance with various laws.

In our view, most of the provisions listed above are extremely problematic for both institutions and faculty. SB 37 is currently on the Senate Intent Calendar, meaning it is eligible for consideration on the Senate floor as early as Monday, April 14. We are working with a coalition of higher education stakeholders and allies in the Senate to both oppose the bill in whole and provide floor amendments to mitigate the negative provisions.

SB 2615 is another seriously problematic bill, creating a blanket statewide policy requiring faculty to work on site rather than remotely. The bill does not recognize the broad diversity of programs and work situations in public higher education, and offers very limited and insufficient flexibility for remote work by faculty. The bill was heard on April 10 and is pending in the Senate K-16 Committee.

What You Can Do

Read the current versions of SB 37

(<https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/billtext/pdf/SB00037S.pdf#navpanes=0>) and SB 2651
(<https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/billtext/pdf/SB02615L.pdf#navpanes=0>)

TFA members should contact your state senate offices to register opposition to SB 37 and SB 2651 as soon as possible. In addition, assuming SB 37 will pass the Senate this week as a priority of the Lieutenant Governor, TFA members should begin contacting legislators on the House Higher Education Committee immediately to register concerns on SB 37 and preview concerns on SB 2651:

(<https://capitol.texas.gov/Committees/MembershipCmte.aspx?LegSess=89R&CmteCode=C290>)

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Though we highlight the bills above, we are monitoring of actively working on a host of other bills in various areas, including accreditation, work force development, and amendment of the success points system used in the community college system. We are also closely monitoring the appropriations bill, particularly to defend against amendments related to the political attacks on our institutions and faculty. We were generally successful in that effort this past week when the House passed the state budget.

The Beginning of the End, But a Long Way to Go

As we move toward the final phase of the legislative session, we still have a tremendous amount of work to do. The next three to four weeks will see the finish of committee work on bills and the rise of floor work, including a growing danger of floor amendments on otherwise innocuous bills. We are working with our allies in both houses on strategies to defend against such measures

Stay tuned for updates and calls to action as the session accelerates.