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February 08, 2021

MEMORANDUM

TO: DPROA, David Elliston, Sally Lannom, Boux Bland, and Ken Seguin

FROM: Randy Elliston

SUBJECT: Legislative Update

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the Legislature began its work on January 12th the House and Senate spent time debating and adopting their rules on how to proceed with business due to COVID 19. After adopting their rules each chamber adjourned until January 26, 2021.

The Senate adopted rules on January 13th, and in general will require all Senators and visitors to pass a COVID-19 test before entering the Senate chamber, chamber gallery, or committee hearing rooms. Social distancing and mask wearing will also be enforced. Individual Senators will decide if office visitors will be required to have a negative test wrist band. These rules will be in place for the first 60 days of session and will be reviewed later to determine if changes are needed.

The House adopted rules on January 14th which unlike the Senate do not require COVID-19 testing. In general, they do however require all House members and visitors entering the House chamber, the chamber gallery, or committee hearing room to wear a mask and comply with social distancing. Individual members will decide if office visitors will be required to have a negative wrist band.

COVID-19 testing and wrist bands are provided in a tent at the Capitol's north entrance. As you can imagine the COVID-19 rules will definitely make it more challenging to operate around the Capitol. All hearings and floor debates will be available online.

The Texas House and the Texas Senate re-convened Tuesday January 26th. After conducting its business, the Texas Senate adjourned until Tuesday February 9th at 3 PM. The House adjourned on January 27th. until Tuesday February 9th at 2 PM.

Lieutenant Governor Dan Patrick has published the members and chairs of the Texas Senate Committees. I have attached an email pdf file with the make-up of all Senate Committees. Of most interest to you will likely be the Senate Committee on State Affairs which I have included below.

Senate Committee on State Affairs

Bryan Hughes, Chair - Mineola
Brian Birdwell, Vice Chair - Granbury
Donna Campbell – New Braunfels
Bob Hall - Edgewood
Eddie Lucio, Jr. - Brownsville
Jane Nelson – Flower Mound
Beverly Powell - Burleson
Charles Schwertner - Georgetown
Judith Zaffirini – Laredo

House Speaker Dade Phelan has published the members and chairs of the Texas House Committees. I have attached an email pdf file with the make-up of all House Committees. Of most interest to you will likely be the House Committee on Pensions, Investments, & Financial Services which I have included below.

House Committee on Pensions, Investments, & Financial Services

Rafael Anchia, Chair – Dallas
Tan Parker, Vice-Chair - Flower Mound
Glenn Rogers – Graford
Phil Stephenson – Wharton
Giovanni Capriglione – Southlake
Sergio Munoz – Palmview
Mary Ann Perez – Houston
Shelby Slawson – Stephenville
Hubert Vo - Houston

Pension Legislation Filed:

There have been no new bills filed pertaining to pensions since my last update.

Special Election Runoff:

Republicans David Spiller and Craig Carter are headed to a runoff in the special election to fill the seat of former state Rep. Drew Springer, R-Muenster, now a state senator. Governor Gregg Abbott has set the run-off election for February 23, 2021.

Senate State Affairs: Chaired by Senator Bryan Hughes:

As of this report the Senate Committee on State Affairs has not scheduled any hearings.

House Committee on Pensions, Investments & Financial Services Chaired by Rep. Rafael Anchia

As of this report the House Committee on Pensions, Investments & Financial Services has not scheduled any hearings.

Pension Review Board of Texas:

The Review Board has no posted meetings for 2021.

Governor Greg Abbott has appointed Robert Ries to the State Pension Review Board for a term set to expire on January 31, 2023. The board reviews all Texas public retirement systems, both state and local, for actuarial soundness and compliance with state law.

Robert Ries of Austin is the Deputy Executive Commissioner for Compliance and Quality Control for the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC), and previously served as a Senior Advisor to the Chief Policy and Regulatory Officer for HHSC. Prior to his work as HHSC, he served as the Budget and Finance Director for the Texas Facilities Commission. Ries earned a Bachelor of Arts in Economics from The University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Business Administration from Texas State University.

Please let me know, if you have any comments or questions.

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Randy Elliston is a retired Chief of the Texas Highway Patrol with over 35 years of experience in Texas State Government Relations. He is now a member of the Ratliff Company team representing clients in areas of public safety, law enforcement, transportation and state administrative processes.