

Legislative Update

April 11, 2025

FROM WASHINGTON, D.C.

The US House of Representatives narrowly approved a budget resolution on April 10, with a 216-214 vote, setting the stage for President Trump's proposed tax cuts and spending plans. The resolution had previously passed the Senate and now enables lawmakers to begin drafting legislation on tax reductions and spending adjustments. This legislative procedure is part of a broader effort to use the reconciliation process, allowing budget-related bills to pass with a simple majority, bypassing potential filibusters in the Senate.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation met on April 8, for a hearing titled "America Builds: Airport Infrastructure, Safety, and Regulatory Environment." Chairman Nehls emphasized recent Congressional advancements in the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) reauthorization bill, particularly increased funding for capital projects. Witnesses from across the aviation sector praised the reauthorization bill but urged Congress to streamline FAA reforms that affect users and workers. Committee members also sought guidance on how to best support airports of all sizes—small, medium, and large—in the lead-up to the next reauthorization legislation.

The House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Highways and Transit held a hearing on April 9, titled "America Builds: A Review of Our Nation's Transit Policies and Programs." Chairman Rouzer opened by underscoring the importance of supporting transit systems of all sizes across the country. Witnesses represented a broad swath of the transportation sector, including transit agency officials, labor union representatives, and public sector leaders who shared modern and innovative solutions to current transit challenges. Committee members raised questions on issues such as pre- and post-pandemic ridership trends, operator safety, funding allocation, rightsizing services, and how the upcoming surface transportation bill can improve public transit nationwide.

FROM AUSTIN

On Thursday, April 10, the Texas House passed a \$337 billion two-year budget after nearly 13 hours of debate and hundreds of amendments, many of which were rejected or sidelined. The budget prioritizes education, teacher salaries, property tax relief, and border security, while leaving \$40 billion in general revenue unspent due to constitutional spending limits. Several amendments were proposed on the House floor, but only 25 modifications were adopted, while the majority were either withdrawn or killed. The House also approved a \$12 billion supplemental budget to fund water infrastructure, natural disasters, and higher education. The ultimate budget must still be negotiated in a conference committee and approved by both chambers before it's sent to Governor Abbott.

The Senate Transportation Committee met on April 9 at 8 am to review and approve several bills. One bill of particular interest, SB 2129 (Johnson), which increases the fine for drivers who disregard railroad crossing gates or flaggers from the current range of \$50–\$200 to a new range of \$100–\$400 in an effort to reduce accidents, was approved by the committee. Senator Menéndez's SB 546, which was introduced to the committee on March 26 and concerns seat belts on buses transporting children, also moved forward. A committee substitute to the bill was presented, which removes the option for 2-point seat belts and instead allows financially constrained school districts to submit a report to the Texas Education Agency (TEA) detailing current seatbelt configurations, estimated costs for compliance with 3-point belt requirements, and any potential impact on bus warranties. This substitute was approved.

HIGHLIGHTED BILLS WITH ACTION

- SB 1 Huffman, General Appropriations Bill. Passed the full House. Sent to Conference Committee.
- SB 305 Perry, Relating to the criminal offense of passing certain vehicles on a highway. Passed on Local Calendar, Engrossed and sent to the House.
- SB 1197 Birdwell, Relating to the operation of an unmanned aircraft over a spaceport. Passed the full Senate, Received in the House.

UPCOMING COMMITTEE HEARINGS

TEXAS SENATE

- The Senate Transportation Committee will meet on Wednesday, April 16, at 8 am. The Committee will meet to consider the following bill of interest:
 - SB 1013 Relating to the definition of a crosswalk

TEXAS HOUSE

- The House Transportation Funding Subcommittee will meet on Monday, April 14, at 10 am. The Subcommittee will meet to consider the following bills of interest:
 - HB 1589 Relating to requiring voter approval for the construction of a new toll project by a toll project entity
 - HB 2208 Relating to requirements for certain notices or invoices relating to toll collections by a toll project entity
 - HB 2297 Relating to the suspension of toll collection while an evacuation order is in effect
 - HB 2725 Relating to discount programs provided by toll project entities for certain customers
 - HB 4417 Relating to the use of certain money from the state highway fund for certain projects in the Safe Routes to School Program
 - HB 4473 Relating to a study by the Texas Department of Transportation of the construction and maintenance of certain county road systems in this state
 - HB 4520 Relating to requirements for loans or grants provided by the Texas Transportation Commission to aviation facilities located in economically disadvantaged counties
 - HB 4888 Relating to the provision by a regional mobility authority of financial assistance for transportation projects of governmental entities located in the area of the authority
 - HB 4906 Relating to the dedication of revenue received from certain oversize or overweight vehicle permits to the state highway fund
- The House Environmental Regulation Committee will meet on Thursday, at 10:30 am. The Committee will meet to consider the following bills of interest:
 - HB 4519 Relating to programs established and funded under the Texas emissions reduction plan
 - HB 5033 Relating to elimination of the motor vehicle emissions inspection and maintenance program

RECENT COMMITTEE HEARINGS

TEXAS HOUSE

- Defense and Veterans Subcommittee (April 7)
 - HB 1557 Relating to waiver programs for certain veterans provided by toll project entities (Pending)

- Intergovernmental Affairs (April 8)
 - HB 4313 Relating to the authority of a political subdivision to impose a fee to fund a climate or environmental project (Pending)
- Natural Resources (April 9)
 - HB 2815 Relating to the financing of water supply projects included in the state water plan (Pending)
 - HB 3915 Relating to the projects eligible for financial assistance from the flood infrastructure fund (Pending)
 - HB 4135 Relating to the regulation of stormwater management by certain counties (Pending)
 - HB 4329 Relating to a study by the Texas Water Development Board of factors that affect the costs of developing drainage infrastructure in this state (Pending)
- State Affairs (April 9)
 - HB 3278 Relating to the study of and incentives for the use of solar and wind energy (Pending)
 - HB 3511 Relating to the interconnection of electric vehicles to the ERCOT power grid (Pending)
 - HB 3782 Relating to the type of newspaper required for publication of public notices (Pending)
 - HB 3826 Relating to the creation of the Texas Energy Efficiency Council (Pending)
 - HB 4049 Relating to the tracking of greenhouse gas emissions (Pending)
- Delivery of Government Efficiency (April 9)
 - HB 111 Relating to the public information law (Pending)
 - HB 2145 Relating to the installation of electric vehicle charging stations at certain state-owned parking lots and garages (Pending)
 - HB 2520 Relating to the open meetings law (Pending)
 - HB 4214 Relating to the public information law (Pending)

TEXAS SENATE

- Water, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (April 7)
 - SB 1967 Relating to the projects eligible for financial assistance from the flood infrastructure fund (Approved)
- Local Government (April 7)
 - SB 844 Relating to procedures for changes to a zoning regulation or district boundary (Approved)
- Criminal Justice (April 8)
 - SB 2569 Relating to the reporting requirement for certain law enforcement agencies regarding the agencies' use or operation of an unmanned aircraft (Approved)
- Business and Commerce (April 8)
 - SB 2717 Relating to the creation of the Texas Energy Efficiency Council (Approved)
- Transportation (April 9)
 - SB 546 Relating to seat belts on buses that transport children (Presented on March 26, Approved on April 9)
 - SB 2129 Relating to the operation of vehicles at railroad grade crossings (Approved)
- Finance (April 9)
 - SB 935 Relating to an exemption from certain motor fuel taxes for counties in this state (Pending)

- Border Security (April 10)
 - SB 2199 Relating to increasing the criminal penalty for loading certain overweight vehicles transporting hazardous materials at a weight that exceeds the weight limitations authorized for the vehicle (Approved)
 - SB 2200 Relating to the creation of a criminal offense for operating or moving an overweight vehicle transporting hazardous materials on a route other than the designated permit route (Approved)
- Business and Commerce (April 10)
 - SB 1495 Relating to the establishment of an Electric Vehicle Supply Equipment Advisory Board (Pending)

US HOUSE

- The House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Aviation met on April 8, 2025, to discuss the needs of the aviation industry in America
- The House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Transit and Highways met on April 9, 2025, to review the current transit policies in the nation