

2019 Priorities

for the 86TH TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION

- ★ HEALTH CARE, FOOD & OTHER BASIC NEEDS
- ★ QUALITY EDUCATION & GOOD JOBS
- ★ INVESTING IN TEXAS
- ★ A STRONG, WELL-INFORMED DEMOCRACY

★ HEALTH CARE, FOOD & OTHER BASIC NEEDS

For the health and well-being of Texas families, all Texans need access to affordable, high-quality health care through insurance or direct medical service providers. Texas has some of the world's top medical facilities; we should not have the most people without health insurance of any state. Texans should not be stuck with surprise medical bills or gaps in coverage. Improved policies can limit the harmful impact of the opioid crisis, keep children with families, and help people struggling to get back on their feet.

Policy Recommendations

- Expand health care coverage for low-income Texans who cannot afford private insurance but who don't currently qualify for Medicaid.
- Improve protections and supports for the 4 million Texans enrolled in Medicaid Managed Care.
- Support efforts to improve funding for and access to substance use disorder and addiction treatment, with emphasis on affordable, comprehensive health coverage as the most effective solution.
- Protect Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program from damaging cuts or policy changes that reduce coverage for Texans or their ability to access care.
- Maintain a robust health insurance market with comprehensive coverage for Texans who do not have access to job-based coverage, Medicaid, or Medicare.
- Fortify access to health care, food and other basic needs for Texas immigrants and their family members.
- Ensure adequate support for state family planning programs to protect fundamental health care access.
- Increase consumer safeguards to shield Texans from surprise medical bills that can result in long-term detrimental financial consequences.
- Make it easier for struggling Texans to access the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, formerly "food stamps") to help put food on the table.
- Adjust overly restrictive limits for SNAP eligibility so that Texas families can access healthy food while building self-sufficiency.
- Establish and fund a navigator network to help "kinship" caregivers, like grandparents who step up to care for their grandchildren.



★ QUALITY EDUCATION AND GOOD JOBS

Texans prosper when they have the chance to learn, earn and save. Every child should receive a high-quality K-12 public education, regardless of their background or where they live. Money matters in education, and Texas needs to fund its public schools at a level that meets the needs of all students. Good jobs increasingly require education beyond high school, so Texas needs policies that make college more affordable, increase college graduation rates, and connect students to career opportunities. To ensure that workers can become financially secure, we need policies like paid sick leave that improve the quality of available jobs.



Policy Recommendations

- Revise the school finance system to ensure Texas students of all backgrounds are able to reach their academic potential.
- Improve funding and access to full-day Pre-K for eligible children because early education investments have proven to be effective.
- Combat efforts to divert limited public school funding to voucher programs that lack academic accountability and undermine the public education system.
- Strengthen pathways to college and other post-secondary credentials for adult learners.
- Maintain current levels of per-student financial aid funding to give every student an opportunity for higher education.
- Protect in-state tuition rates and financial aid access for all Texas students, regardless of immigration status.
- Protect access to paid sick days and other job quality standards for Texas workers.

★ INVESTING IN TEXAS

Texas is fortunate to have a thriving economy, so we can afford to make the investments needed to ensure that hard-working Texans can share in the state's prosperity. As Texas continues to grow, state and local governments need enough revenue to invest in high-quality education, health care, transportation and other public goods that help communities thrive. Budget gimmicks and short-sighted tax giveaways threaten our future success.

Policy Recommendations

- Strengthen oversight and transparency of economic development tax incentives to ensure public accountability of resources.
- Improve the fairness of the property appraisal process by requiring assessment of all property at full market value so that all Texans pay their fair share.
- Prevent new state revenue cuts or diversions that undermine access to a quality education, health care, basic services and anti-poverty programs.
- Reject tighter, arbitrary state or local spending caps that weaken the ability of elected officials to meet the needs of their constituents and communities.
- Resist efforts to further restrict local governments' ability to raise the revenue needed for public services.

2019 Legislative Priorities

★ A STRONG, WELL-INFORMED DEMOCRACY

Well-functioning democracies depend on accurate data, informed voters, and strong representation at all levels of government. As we prepare for the 2020 Census, Texas should help ensure that everyone is counted to protect our representation in Congress, federal funding for key programs, and future investment in our economy. To understand how Texas is faring and to hold leaders accountable, we need access to good data and data transparency. In addition, Texas cities, towns, and counties should be able to pass policies that improve our communities without fear of overreach from state leaders.

Policy Recommendations

- Establish a Texas Complete Count Commission with diverse representation and funding from the Legislature to conduct a robust 2020 Census awareness campaign and reduce the possibilities of a significant undercount.
- Promote reasonable and affordable access to information and data from state and local government institutions to ensure public accountability and publicly informed policy making.
- Resist state efforts to interfere in the policy making of local cities and counties, especially in their ability to set local tax rates to meet the needs of their constituents.



We believe in a Texas

that offers everyone the chance to compete and succeed in life.

Texas is a proud state, blessed with abundant natural resources, a thriving economy, and a growing, diverse population.

Yet Texas today is failing to invest in our most valuable resource – our own people. Despite our state's wealth, one in four Texas children live in poverty. Too few students are finishing college or an associate's degree. Too many Texans are stuck in low-wage jobs, so income inequality is rising. And almost 5 million Texans lack health insurance – the highest number in any state. These shortcomings aren't good enough for Texas. They harm not only people and families, but businesses, communities and the Texas economy as a whole.

For Texas to thrive far into the future, we need an economy that works for everyone. That means a large middle class, with ample opportunities for people to work their way

into it. It means quality public schools and colleges that prepare young people to be engaged Texans and to become the talented workforce our businesses need. It means living wage jobs that enable families to meet basic needs, contribute to the economy, and save for the future. It means access to affordable health care and healthy food. And it means dismantling barriers that prevent women, people of color and immigrants from reaching their full potential and participating in our democracy.

CPPP uses data and analysis – not ideology – to identify common-sense public policies that can expand opportunity for all Texans. We are ready and willing to work with lawmakers and partners who are committed to broad-based prosperity for all Texans. Here we offer a proactive, fact-driven policy agenda to invest in our state's best asset – hard-working Texans and their families.

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CPPP is an independent public policy organization that uses data and analysis to advocate for solutions that enable Texans of all backgrounds to reach their full potential. We dare Texas to be the best state for hard-working people and their families.