



# The Texas Public Policy Foundation

## *82nd Session Accomplishments*

The Texas Public Policy Foundation's 22 years of quality, independent research and focused outreach have made it the authoritative voice in support of liberty, personal responsibility, and free enterprise as it relates to policy in Texas. The Texas Public Policy Foundation is proud to have played a role in the 82nd Legislature's major accomplishments:

### **CUTTING SPENDING TO BALANCE THE BUDGET**

Remarkably, this is the first time in nearly 50 years that Texas' total budget will have decreased from one biennium to the next—a major victory for both TPPF and taxpayers! After months of hard-hitting commentary, in-depth analysis, and daily advocacy, the Foundation helped promote the passage of a two-year budget that spends \$15 billion less than the previous budget while protecting the rainy day fund.

### **PRESERVING TEXANS' PRIVATE PROPERTY RIGHTS**

Because of our work, property owners will now have much greater protection from unconstitutional takings of private property via eminent domain. The Foundation has provided significant research while working with legislators to bring about much needed eminent domain reform ever since the infamous *Kelo* decision, in which the Supreme Court grossly expanded the government's ability to take private property for inappropriate use.

### **PROVIDING HEALTH CARE SOLUTIONS THAT WORK**

The Foundation alerted policymakers to the urgent need for reform in our health care system and then provided a blueprint for a new program that provides quality care to more individuals at a lower cost to the state. We also identified the use of an interstate compact as a strategy for Texas and other states to avoid the devastating implementation of ObamaCare and reclaim control of our health care programs.

### **EQUITABLE TORT REFORM**

The Foundation's work supported the passage of "Loser Pays," which significantly reduces the incentives to file frivolous lawsuits, increases access to the courts for legitimate cases, and enhances our state's pro-business, pro-growth climate.

### **PROTECTING WATER RIGHTS**

With the help of our detailed research and practical policy recommendations, legislation was passed that clarifies and reaffirms landowners' real property right to groundwater beneath their land.

### **LIMITING FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GROWTH**

As a result of our efforts to educate policymakers on the need to stop the uncontrolled growth of the federal government, Texas passed legislation calling for a balanced budget amendment to the Constitution. This amendment would require federal spending to be on a pay-as-you-go basis in order to stop the ongoing, unsustainable growth in deficit-financed spending.

### **KEEPING ENERGY MARKETS FREE**

Legislation that would have created a centralized state energy plan was not successful. The impact of such an approach was shown in our research, "Texas Energy and the Energy of Texas," which catalogued the problems created by the government picking winners and losers among energy sources.

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## **REDUCING TAXPAYER BURDEN BY CONSOLIDATING AGENCIES**

In a landmark victory for the Foundation, the Texas Youth Commission and the Texas Juvenile Probation Commission were combined into a single agency. This consolidation will greatly increase the efficiency of the two organizations and the emphasis on proven community-based juvenile justice solutions, saving taxpayers an estimated \$84 million in the coming biennium.

## **LIMITING REGULATION**

Legislation incorporating our policy recommendations was passed into law which establishes a realistic foundation for permitting requirements for oil and gas production sites. The new law will require that new regulations of upstream oil and gas production be based on the actual emissions from production facilities rather than on computer modeled worst-case scenarios.

## **ELIMINATING EXCESSIVE BUSINESS REGULATION**

Our research provided a basis for the passage of legislation abolishing the occupational licensing of talent agents and personnel services. Eliminating such unnecessary occupational regulations reduces barriers to entry, thereby enhancing competition and consumer choice while lowering costs.

## **INTRODUCING CREATIVE, COST-EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Lawmakers adopted the Foundation's recommendation to improve public safety, rehabilitate offenders, and save millions in taxpayer dollars by encouraging counties to use alternatives to incarceration for non-violent offenders.

## **HOLDING HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS ACCOUNTABLE**

As part of our efforts to improve the cost-effectiveness of higher education and control rising tuition costs, legislation was passed that will shift higher education funding in Texas toward a formula based on student success measures, as opposed to funding based on enrollment.

## **DEREGULATION OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

The Foundation provided in-depth research that laid the groundwork for the passage of legislation that significantly reduces the regulation of the telecommunications market in Texas. By keeping regulations low, Texans can enjoy some of the highest quality service and lowest rates in the nation.

## **CONTROLLING SPENDING IN EDUCATION**

The Foundation's support of controlling public education spending produced success in what was otherwise a stagnant session for education reform. Efforts to adopt universal pre-kindergarten were stopped dead in their tracks, and the current pre-kindergarten grant program was defunded. Additionally, the Foundation made progress with its proposal to broaden the use of virtual education as a tool for increasing access to education while reducing costs. Finally, the Foundation's efforts helped bring school districts greater flexibility when it comes to removing contract employees, a powerful tool for reducing costs at the district level.

