



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

File Number:20-6580

Agenda Item Number: 15.

Agenda Date: 11/12/2020

In Control: City Council A Session

DEPARTMENT: Government & Public Affairs

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Jeff Coyle

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: City Wide

SUBJECT:

State Legislative Program for the 87th Texas Legislative Session

SUMMARY:

This ordinance approves the City of San Antonio's 2021 State Legislative Program for the 87th Texas Legislative Session, which begins January 12, 2021.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Texas Legislature meets every two years in odd numbered years. The 87th Texas Legislative Session begins on January 12, 2021.

Prior to the convening of each regular Texas Legislative Session, the City of San Antonio identifies policy priorities and legislative initiatives that it would like to have addressed by the Legislature. These priorities and initiatives are codified in a City of San Antonio State Legislative Program. The City's Government & Public Affairs (GPA) Department began the process of identifying the issues for the upcoming session by working with City departments and community partners to consider recommendations to for inclusion in the draft of the City's proposed State Program. A draft program was presented to the Intergovernmental Relations Council Subcommittee on November 2, 2020. A briefing on the proposed program was provided to City Council at the November 4, 2020, B Session.

The City's 87th legislative program priorities are issues staff and consultants will actively support or opposed through the drafting of legislation and amendments, finding bill sponsor(s), providing testimony, and/or actively pursuing legislative action. Proposed priorities include:

- Police accountability and transparency
- Public health investments
- Broadband accessibility and affordability

- Domestic violence prevention
- Economic and workforce recovery
- Pre-K through college education funding
- Preserving local decision making

The State Legislative Program is designed to be strategic and impactful, align with the priorities of San Antonio residents, preserve the authority of those elected to represent them to make decisions that are in the best interests of their constituents, protect the ability to generate the revenue necessary to provide critical public safety, infrastructure and other essential services and/or promote efficient governance and delivery of services.

The State Legislative Program provides City Council direction to staff and its consultants regarding important issues potentially impacting the City of San Antonio. As such, staff will regularly present publicly-accessible updates to both the IGR Committee and the full City Council on developments at the Legislature. Few, if any, other interests at the Texas Capitol conduct more transparent legislative activities.

With the coronavirus pandemic comes uncertainty of how business - and therefore, the City's advocacy on behalf of its residents - will be conducted at the Capitol this upcoming Session. During the interim, normal legislative processes, including public hearings on interim charges, have been interrupted due to COVID-19, and the Texas Capitol remains closed to the general public. At this time, it is still unknown how the legislature will convene while maintaining transparency and public access. In-person meetings and hearings may be restricted, and Legislators may be limited to filing a defined number of bills.

ISSUE:

The 87th Regular State Legislative Session will begin on January 12, 2021. The State Legislative Program guides and focuses City's legislative efforts and aligns with City Council priorities.

ALTERNATIVES:

The City Council may choose to not adopt a state legislative program and address legislation as it is filed. This would be inconsistent with previous policy set by City Council and limit staff ability to address filed legislation in a timely manner. Alternatively, City Council may delay approval of the state legislative program. This action would delay staff efforts to file legislation supported in the program.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Approval of the State Legislative Program has no immediate fiscal impact to the City. City departments must analyze legislation filed throughout the session to determine the fiscal impact of specific bills.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends approval of the City's 2021 State Legislative Program.