

The third week of session definitely picked up legislative speed at the House debated and passed the House rules. In addition, at approximately 5:00 p.m. on Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, the Lt. Governor released the long awaited 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature Committee Appointments. Take a look at the appointments and continue to build and strengthen relationships with these members and their staff. House Committees will be named in the next week!

**Lt. Governor Appoints Texas Senate Committees for the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature (Released on Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>)**

**ADMINISTRATION**

Williams, Chair

Uresti, Vice-Chair

Ogden, Shapiro, Wentworth, Whitmire, Zaffirini

**AGRICULTURE & RURAL AFFAIRS**

Estes, Chair

Uresti, Vice-Chair

Hegar, Hinojosa, Jackson

**BUSINESS & COMMERCE**

Fraser, Chair

Harris, Vice-Chair

Averitt, Eltife, Estes, Jackson, Lucio, Van de Putte, Watson

**CRIMINAL JUSTICE**

Whitmire, Chair

Seliger, Vice-Chair

Carona, Ellis, Hegar, Hinojosa, Patrick

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

Harris, Chair

Eltife, Vice-Chair

Deuell, Watson, Zaffirini

## **EDUCATION**

Shapiro, Chair

Patrick, Vice-Chair

Averitt, Davis, Gallegos, Ogden, Van de Putte, West, Williams

## **FINANCE**

Ogden, Chair

Hinojosa, Vice-Chair

Averitt, Deuell, Duncan, Eltife, Harris, Lucio, Nelson, Seliger, Shapiro, West, Whitmire, Williams, Zaffirini

## **GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION**

Ellis, Chair

Hegar, Vice-Chair

Huffman, Lucio, Nelson, Ogden, Whitmire

## **HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES**

Nelson, Chair

Deuell, Vice-Chair

Huffman, Nichols, Patrick, Shapleigh, Uresti, West, Zaffirini

## **HIGHER EDUCATION**

Zaffirini, Chair

Patrick, Vice-Chair

Averitt, Duncan, West

## **INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

West, Chair

Nichols, Vice-Chair

Gallegos, Patrick, Wentworth

## **SUBCOMMITTEE ON FLOODING & EVACUATIONS**

Gallegos, Chair

Nichols, Patrick

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & TRADE**

Lucio, Chair

Seliger, Vice-Chair

Davis, Estes, Fraser, Gallegos, Williams

## **JURISPRUDENCE**

Wentworth, Chair

Gallegos, Vice-Chair

Carona , Duncan, Harris,Hinojosa, Watson

## **NATURAL RESOURCES**

Averitt, Chair

Estes, Vice-Chair

Deuell, Duncan, Eltife, Fraser, Hegar, Hinojosa, Jackson, Seliger, Uresti

## **NOMINATIONS**

Jackson, Chair

Eltife, Vice-Chair

Hegar, Nelson, Nichols, Shapleigh, Watson

## **STATE AFFAIRS**

Duncan, Chair

Deuell, Vice-Chair

Carona, Ellis, Fraser, Harris, Jackson, Lucio, Van de Putte

## **TRANSPORTATION & HOMELAND SECURITY**

Carona, Chair

Watson, Vice-Chair

Davis, Ellis, Huffman, Nichols, Shapiro, Shapleigh, Wentworth

## **VETERANS AFFAIRS & MILITARY INSTALLATIONS**

Van de Putte, Chair

Shapleigh, Vice-Chair

Davis, Estes, Huffman

## **SUBCOMMITTEE ON BASE REALIGNMENT & CLOSURE**

Shapleigh, Chair

Estes, Huffman

## **EMPLOYMENT**

Representative Eddie Rodriguez filed HB 785 relating to employment services for persons with disabilities. This bill addresses issues brought up during the HB 1230 workgroup that needed legislative direction. Also, HHSC submitted the Implementation Status of HB 1230 Workgroup Recommendations to the Governor and Texas Legislature in January which is attached for your review. [HB1230 Report](#) For more information, contact Dawn Choate at [dchoate@thearcoftexas.org](mailto:dchoate@thearcoftexas.org).

## **MEDICAID BUY-IN**

HB 67 by Representative Eddie Lucio III and SB 187 by Senator Bob Deuell have been filed and will allow families up to 300% of the Federal Poverty Level to “buy-in” to Medicaid so that their loved ones can access health care and other critical services. Many families of Children and Youth with Special Health Care Needs (CYSHCN) have problems securing adequate health care for their children as many private insurance companies either exclude or limit essential services. However, through a Medicaid buy-in program, a family may be able to obtain such services that are not available through their private insurance. For more information, contact Dawn Choate at [dchoate@thearcoftexas.org](mailto:dchoate@thearcoftexas.org).

## **EDUCATION TRANSITION SERVICES & SUPPORTS**

The Arc of Texas is working on a bill to improve Transition Services for students with disabilities. Many of the provisions in the bill come from recommendations from the HB 1230 Report and the Senate Committee on Education report to the 81<sup>st</sup> legislature.

H.B. 1230, 80th Legislature, Regular Session, 2007, was enacted to improve the services provided to Texas youth with disabilities as they transition from school to adult living with an emphasis on transition into successful employment. A stakeholder workgroup developed and submitted a plan to the Executive Commissioner of the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) on August 13, 2008. The plan consists of five major goals for the delivery of

employment/supported employment services to youth with disabilities and recommendations to accomplish those goals.

The Senate Committee on Education held hearings on an interim charge to study the effectiveness of public school programs serving special education students, specifically, whether special education services are adequately preparing students for post secondary opportunities. The resulting Senate Committee on Education report to the 81<sup>st</sup> legislature (December 2008) includes recommendations to improve transition services for students with disabilities.

The draft bill to improve Transition Services for Students with disabilities would:

1. Require student centered transition planning as part of the students IEP to begin at age 14. (Currently transition planning is required beginning at age 16.)
2. Require TEA to develop, update and make available on their website and at ARD meetings, a Texas-specific comprehensive, transition and employment manual with assistance from HHSC in gathering and compiling all necessary information. The manual would include, information regarding:
  - a. transition services and the transition process; a definition of supported employment/employment services ; SSI/SSDI and social security work incentives;
  - b. community services for people with disabilities, including Medicaid and Medicaid waivers and non-Medicaid long-term services and supports;
  - c. employment and supported employment programs; accessing post secondary educational programs and services; guardianship and alternatives to guardianship,
  - d. Contacts for all relevant agencies; and student and parent/guardian rights, self-advocacy, person-directed planning, and self-determination.
3. Require TEA to ensure each district or co-op designates a transition specialist with working knowledge of the content of the manual.
4. Require TEA to develop state performance based monitoring data indicators for students in special education who are receiving transition services that will measure whether the students IEP includes transition goals that will reasonably enable the student to meet their post secondary goals and the number of students with disabilities who have left school who are competitively employed or enrolled in post secondary school or both within one year of leaving high school.

For more information about transition services contact Rona Statman at [rstatman@thearcoftexas.org](mailto:rstatman@thearcoftexas.org).

### **Come Make a Difference in 2009: Tuesday's @ the Capitol!**

The Arc of Texas will not be hosting an Advocacy Day this year; instead we will host Tuesday's @ The Capitol. Instead of a large one-time rally at the capitol, The Arc of Texas would like to be more strategic in its advocacy efforts. Tuesday's @ the Capitol will be an opportunity for local

Arc chapters and other interested communities to come to Austin and meet with their local legislators about specific issues.

We would like to use this as an opportunity to train advocates on Basic Legislative Advocacy, if needed, in their community first and then have those advocates come to Austin. This is a great way to learn and practice skills in effective advocacy. If you would like to participate in a training and or a Tuesday @ the Capitol, please contact Ginger Mayeaux at [gmayeaux@thearcoftexas.org](mailto:gmayeaux@thearcoftexas.org).

**Media Update:**

The Arc of Texas, in an effort to promote organizational public awareness and inform people, policy makers and other vested parties as to the importance of the waiting list issue, launched a Media Campaign in the Austin area. To date we have updated and refined our two public service announcements, constructed an up to date press release containing the most recent numbers and figures, and are exploring print and television opportunities. All of this will be available on our website soon! The driving force of this campaign are our local volunteers, with their help and assistance we are able to relay the in depth realities of this issue to the public. I look forward to keeping everyone informed as this project continues to develop. Contact Chris Rodriguez for any questions at [crodriguez@thearcoftexas.org](mailto:crodriguez@thearcoftexas.org)