



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

84TH LEGISLATURE

JANUARY 2015

YCT.ORG

Young Conservatives of Texas (YCT) releases its legislative agenda each session with the hope that Texas legislators will support bills that promote effective, limited government. Our priorities also shape our endorsement and legislative ratings process. They are designed to make clear to challengers and incumbents alike the foundational principles that guide our organization.



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

84TH LEGISLATURE

Below are YCT's "Top Legislative Priorities," which can also be found throughout the document:

FAVOR

1. Repealing tuition "deregulation" of public universities.¹
2. Eliminating all so-called "gun-free zones," especially those in place at public universities, and allowing students with a CHL permit to carry on campus.
3. Encouraging improvement in our public school system through competition by passing universal school choice.
4. Putting an end to all state government benefits granted to illegal immigrants, starting with repealing in-state tuition for illegal immigrants.
5. Requiring zero-based budgeting for all government agencies.
6. A constitutional amendment requiring that no governing entity raises spending more than the combined growth of population and rate of inflation.
7. Ending all diversions from designated funds, taxes, and fees.
8. Expanding scope of practice for trained, licensed, and regulated medical professionals, allowing them to practice to the full extent of their training.
9. Any legislation that prevents municipalities and counties from enacting overbearing regulations that encroach on personal liberties and property rights.
10. Transferring the Public Integrity Unit away from the Travis County District Attorney's office.

OPPOSE

1. All new taxes and fees.
2. The expansion of Medicaid in Texas in any form.
3. Our State's franchise tax and property tax.
4. Any efforts for a statewide smoking ban.
5. Any effort to enact amnesty for those here illegally, regardless of age.
6. Targeting individuals and organizations for political purposes through campaign finance law or expanding the reach of the Texas Ethics Commission.
7. Arbitrary DWI checkpoints and "no refusal" policies.
8. Any effort to reduce the authority of the State Board of Education.
9. Budget gimmicks (i.e. support "Truth in Budgeting").
10. Any expansion of regulated gambling.²

¹ HB 3015 - 78R

² YCT believes that the issue of the expansion of gambling has little to do with liberty and everything to do with increasing the size and scope of government. As such, YCT opposes the regulated practice of gambling in the State of Texas. Regulated gambling would create large, expensive bureaucratic agencies that would grow government exponentially and cost the state billions of dollars.



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

BY TOPIC

HIGHER EDUCATION

K-12 EDUCATION

ISSUES OF LIFE & LIBERTY

FISCAL ISSUES

HEALTH CARE

IMMIGRATION

GOVERNMENT & ETHICS

OTHER PRIORITIES

FAVOR

1. The repeal or erosion of tuition “deregulation.”³
2. Legislation allowing students with a CHL permit to carry on campus.
3. Capping the amount colleges and universities can raise tuition/fees to the previous year’s rate plus inflation.
4. An appropriations rider requiring any cuts to higher education funding be taken from research and administrative/overhead as opposed to core undergraduate teaching functions.
5. Requiring the Comptroller to audit public colleges and universities.
6. An appropriations rider requiring a dollar-for-dollar reduction in matching state money for every dollar earned by tuition increases with the savings being transferred to the Texas Grant program.
7. Transparency in mandatory fees imposed on students at public universities.
8. Eliminating the sunset exemption for Higher Education and requiring each university system to undergo a sunset review.
9. Shifting a large amount of the state’s appropriated money from individual universities to the Texas Grant Program.⁴
10. Separating the teaching and research budgets to increase transparency.

OPPOSE

1. In-state tuition rates for illegal immigrants.
2. Universities lobbying with tax dollars, student fees, or tuition dollars.
3. The “Top Ten Percent” Rule and any automatic admission policies.
4. State or student tuition/fee funding for ethnic and gender studies programs and centers.
5. Using race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual preference as a factor in determining either the acceptance or the amount of state scholarship/grant dollars a student will receive.⁵
6. The current requirement mandating a certain portion of each student’s tuition be set-aside for financial aid.
7. Awarding tenure solely on the basis of seniority and/or longevity.
8. The restriction of the time, place and manner of speech and assembly more than absolutely necessary to protect normal academic and institutional activities.⁶
9. Tuition revenue bond packages.
10. Any attempt to eliminate or weaken the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

³ The tuition deregulation experiment has failed. Since the legislature placed the power to raise tuition in the hands of unelected bureaucrats in 2003, tuition has risen rapidly statewide. The Legislature should act immediately to limit tuition increases.

⁴ Allowing state funds to follow students will increase competition in higher education, thus increasing the effectiveness of universities in Texas.

⁵ By creating quotas or giving preferential treatment to specific segments of society, the most empirically deserving are often deprived of opportunities that they have otherwise earned through their hard work.

⁶ i.e. “free-speech areas” on campus.

FAVOR

1. Encouraging competition in our public school system through universal school choice.⁷
2. Legislation requiring 75% or more of a school district's budget, excluding busing costs, to go directly towards classroom teachers and student instruction.
3. Eliminating the use of property taxes for public school maintenance and operation funding.
4. Giving school districts the flexibility to review and dismiss underperforming teachers.
5. Continue doing away with the one-size-fits-all approach to education through increasing options for students to pursue workforce certification and vocational careers.
6. Replacing all bilingual education programs with English-immersion programs.
7. Eliminating the Texas Education Agency and giving their responsibilities to the State Board of Education.
8. Restricting the power of government to interfere with the educational programs of private schools.
9. Legislation allowing teachers to have more discretion in the creation and enforcement of classroom rules.
10. Any legislation that allows school districts to have more local control over their budgets and policies.

OPPOSE

1. Any increase in funding for education.⁸
2. Expensive and excessive standardized testing.
3. The universal implementation of any federal teaching standards or curriculum such as "Common Core."
4. Measures limiting the authority of parents or discouraging parents from homeschooling their children.
5. Expansion of pre-kindergarten in public schools.
6. The "minimum salary schedule" for teachers. Compensation should be individually-based, assessing results and based off of merit.
7. Expanding the free- and reduced- meals program and limiting food choices in public schools for nutritional purposes.
8. Any attempt to subvert public school curriculum to advocate an ideology, and/or erode foundational American concepts.
9. All legislation that would criminalize childish misbehavior in school.
10. Unfunded mandates passed down to local school districts from the state.

⁷ Education should be about the students, not the system, and we should allow for all parents to utilize their child's share of state-appropriated funds for public school enrollment, private school tuition and transportation costs, or for the purpose of homeschooling.

⁸ The problems with public education are structural, not fiscal. Education can be improved through market reforms, not increased spending. The bulk of education spending needs to be moved from administrative bureaucracy to the classroom.

FAVOR

1. Protecting the lives of unborn children through support of all legislation that further eliminates or limits abortion in Texas.
2. Any expansion of 2nd Amendment rights, including the complete elimination of so called “gun-free zones” on public property, allowing for constitutional carry, and loosening the restrictions on a law-abiding citizen’s ability to purchase guns and ammunition.
3. Any legislation that prevents municipalities and counties from enacting overbearing regulations that encroach on personal liberties and property rights.
4. Legislation explicitly allowing Transportation Network Companies to operate statewide in Texas.
5. Eliminating “Blue Laws” in Texas.
6. Protecting private property rights by limiting the government’s power of eminent domain, protecting against eminent domain corruption and abuse, and ensuring that property owners receive full compensation for the value of their property.
7. Legislation that protects law-abiding citizens from having their privacy violated online by the government or private entities.
8. Legislation allowing direct-sale of automobiles to Texans.
9. Reforming Texas’s Criminal Justice System, including eliminating frivolous, victimless felonies.⁹
10. Allowing fireworks sales on Texas Independence Day.

OPPOSE

1. Any effort to ban smoking or drinking in private businesses or residences.
2. Laws requiring adults to wear seatbelts while in an automobile.
3. Statewide bans on texting while driving.
4. Regulations and fines against private entities who refuse to provide services they object to for religious or personal reasons.
5. The Texas “Open Container” law.
6. Municipalities annexing land without the consent of the affected residents.
7. Targeting of individuals and organizations for political purposes through campaign finance law or expanding the reach of the Texas Ethics Commission.
8. Arbitrary DWI checkpoints, blood draws by non-medical professionals, and “no refusal” policies.
9. Any reduction in the maximum blood alcohol content rules for DWI.
10. Raising the legal age to purchase cigarettes and tobacco above eighteen.

⁹ TPPF’s Marc Levin notes that: “The Constitution lists only three federal crimes, but the number of statutory federal crimes has now swelled to around 4,500. This is to say nothing of the thousands of bizarre state-level crimes, such as the 11 felonies in Texas related to the harvesting of oysters. The explosion of non-traditional criminal laws grows government and undermines economic freedom. Criminal law should be reserved for conduct that is blameworthy or threatens public safety, not wielded to regulate non-fraudulent economic activity involving legal products.” See <http://www.rightoncrime.com/the-conservative-case-for-reform/>

FAVOR

1. “Truth in budgeting.” The Legislature should fully balance the biennial budget without the use of deception and/or accounting tricks. We support the Conservative Texas Budget proposed by the Texas Public Policy Foundation.
2. A constitutional amendment requiring a zero-based budget.
3. A constitutional amendment requiring that no governing entity raises spending more than the combined growth of population and rate of inflation.
4. A constitutional amendment requiring two-thirds approval of both chambers for any tax or fee increase.
5. Abolishing the franchise tax and property tax.

OPPOSE

1. The creation of new taxes or fees.
2. Diverting dedicated funds from their specified purpose.
3. Excessive licensure of, and regulation of entry into, regulated professions.
4. Funding the Texas Enterprise Fund, Emerging Technology Fund, Major Events Trust Fund, Texas Moving Image Industry Incentive Program, and other forms of corporate welfare.
5. Any regulations that unnecessarily burden business and/or reduce incentives for expansion and hiring.

FAVOR

1. The expansion of scope of practice for all medical professionals to the fullest extent of their training. Specifically, expanded scope of practice for Optometrists, Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), and Podiatrists.
2. Interstate compacts to allow for more choice in insurance providers.
3. Any effort to reduce Medicaid expenditures and the impact of ObamaCare.
4. Comprehensive entitlement reform to decrease individual dependence on government.
5. Protecting private religious institutions, entities, and businesses from healthcare mandates which force a violation of well-established principles or beliefs.

OPPOSE

1. Medicaid Expansion or any attempt to further socialize the delivery of healthcare and medicine.
2. Any taxpayer-funded abortion and/or contraception.
3. Increasing taxes or fees to fund public healthcare programs.
4. Excessive regulations that limit patient access to quality, affordable healthcare.
5. The current convoluted and needlessly confusing prescriptive authority model for Texas' APRNs.

FAVOR

1. Requiring all employers to use E-Verify during the hiring process.
2. Requiring documentation of legal status in the U.S. to receive a driver's license. Requiring that all licenses issued to non-citizens expire when the individual's legal status in the U.S. terminates, and for that expiration date and residency status to be clearly noted on their licenses.
3. Allowing officers of the law to inquire about legal status during a lawful stop, detention, or arrest.
4. Making English the official language of the state government of Texas.
5. Improving border security through strategically increasing the amount of border patrol agents, constructing fences and barriers where lawfully accessible, and investing in new technologies.

OPPOSE

1. Any effort to enact amnesty for those here illegally today, regardless of age.
2. Illegal immigrants receiving state entitlements, healthcare, or education.
3. Any special considerations for the children of illegal immigrants.
4. Sanctuary cities.
5. Any temporary release from custody of arrested illegal immigrants before the conclusion of their trials.

FAVOR

1. Transferring the Public Integrity Unit away from the Travis County District Attorney's office.
2. Requiring strict and transparent disclosures of campaign expenditures, and ending the practice of conglomeration of expenses through consulting firms.¹⁰
3. Changing the name of the Texas Ethics Commission to the Texas Compliance Commission and giving sole-appointment authority to the Governor of Texas.
4. Moving school board and local elections to the unified November election date.
5. Making the process for taxpayer rollback elections easier and more taxpayer-friendly.

OPPOSE

1. Any effort to allow collective bargaining by public employees, or any measure to erode Texas's "Right to Work" laws.
2. Allowing individuals to cast ballots online.
3. Allowing for Election Day voter registration or decreasing the 30-day window before Election Day.
4. Any effort to take redistricting out of the hands of a democratically-elected legislative body.
5. All efforts to cap campaign contributions or spending.

¹⁰ Currently, candidates often make lump-sum payments to their general consultants and allow the consultants to make purchasing decisions without revealing individual contractors and vendors. This process conceals necessary information about candidates and their campaign activities and subverts the transparent design of the reporting system.

FAVOR

1. All efforts to nullify any unconstitutional federal law.
2. A constitutional amendment allowing for the repeal of any federal law or regulation upon the vote of two-thirds of all state legislators.
3. Exempting intrastate-produced firearms from federal firearms laws and the authority of Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE).
4. Banning racial, ethnic, and gender preferences in hiring, promotion, contracting and university admissions by state agencies, counties, cities and other political subdivisions of the state.
5. Eliminating or privatizing the Texas State Lottery.

OPPOSE

1. Any measure related to judicial selection or appointment.
2. Texas "Hate Crimes" law.
3. Any effort to expand regulated gambling in Texas.
4. Use of cameras to enforce red lights or other traffic laws.
5. Any effort to restrict the ability of law-abiding citizens to film peace officers while in the commission of their duties.