



LEGISLATIVE AGENDA 85TH LEGISLATURE

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.

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TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

85TH LEGISLATURE

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

FAVOR

- Repealing tuition "deregulation" of public universities. [\[1\]](#)
- Eliminating all so called "gun-free zones," especially those still in place at public universities. [\[2\]](#)
- Encouraging improvement in our public school system through competition by route of universal school choice or education savings accounts.
- Ending all state government benefits granted to individuals in this country illegally.
- Requiring zero-based budgeting for all government agencies.
- A constitutional amendment requiring that no governing entity raises spending more than the combined growth of population and rate of inflation.
- "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. [\[3\]](#)
- Barriers to municipalities and counties from enacting overbearing regulations that encroach on personal liberties, employment, and property rights.
- Elimination of state funding to "sanctuary cities" that defy federal immigration laws.
- Paycheck Protection Act and any legislation that ensures taxpayer money is not used for partisan politics and further empower individual employees as opposed to local government unions. [\[4\]](#)

OPPOSE

- The creation of any new taxes and fees.
- Medicaid Expansion or any attempt to further socialize the delivery of healthcare and medicine.
- Using race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual preferences as a factor in determining either acceptance or the amount of state scholarship/grant dollars a student will receive.
- Any efforts to institute a statewide smoking ban or texting ban.
- Targeting individuals and organizations for political purposes through campaign finance law or expanding the reach of the Texas Ethics Commission.
- Arbitrary DWI checkpoints, blood draws by non-medical professionals, and "no refusal" policies as well as any reduction in the maximum blood alcohol content rules for DWI.
- Any taxpayer-funded abortion and/or contraception.
- The property and franchise tax.
- Any expansion of regulated gambling. [\[5\]](#)
- The restriction of the time, place and manner of speech and assembly more than absolutely necessary to protect normal academic and institutional activities. [\[6\]](#)

HIGHER EDUCATION PRIORITIES

FAVOR

- The repeal or erosion of tuition “deregulation.” [\[7\]](#)
- Eliminating all so called “gun-free zones,” especially those still in place at public universities. [\[8\]](#)
- Capping the amount colleges and universities can raise tuition/fees to the previous year’s rate plus inflation.
- An appropriations rider requiring any cuts in higher education funding be taken from research and administrative overhead as opposed to core undergraduate teaching functions.
- Requiring the state Comptroller to audit public colleges and universities.
- Shifting a large amount of the state’s appropriated money from individual universities to the Texas Grant Program. [\[9\]](#)
- Transparency in mandatory fees imposed on students at public universities.
- Eliminating the Sunset exemption for Higher Education and requiring each university system to undergo a sunset review.
- Separating the teaching and research budgets to increase transparency.

OPPOSE

- In-state tuition rates and all financial assistance for illegal immigrants.
- Universities lobbying with tax dollars, student fees, or tuition dollars.
- The “Top Ten Percent” Rule and any other automatic admission policies.
- State or student tuition/fee funding for ethnic and gender studies programs and centers.
- Using race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual preferences as a factor in determining either acceptance or the amount of state scholarship/grant dollars a student will receive. [\[10\]](#)
- The current requirement mandating a certain portion of each student’s tuition be set-aside for financial aid.
- Awarding tenure solely on the basis of seniority and/or longevity.
- The restriction of the time, place, and manner of speech and assembly more than absolutely necessary to protect normal academic and institutional activities. [\[11\]](#)
- Tuition Revenue or Capital Construction bond packages. [\[12\]](#)
- Any attempt to weaken or eliminate the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

K-12 EDUCATION PRIORITIES

FAVOR

- Encouraging competition in our public school system through that of universal school choice or education savings accounts. [\[13\]](#)
- Eliminating the use of property taxes for public school maintenance and operation funding.
- Legislation requiring 75% or more of a school district's budget, excluding bussing costs, goes directly towards classroom teachers and student instruction.
- Giving school districts the flexibility to review and dismiss underperforming teachers.
- Continue doing away with the one-size-fits-all approach to education through increasing options for students to pursue workforce certification and vocational careers.
- Replacing all bilingual education programs with English-immersion programs.
- Eliminating the Texas Education Agency and giving their responsibilities to that of the State Board of Education.
- Restricting the power of the government to interfere with educational programs of private schools.
- Legislation allowing teachers to have more discretion in the creation and enforcement of classroom rules.
- Any legislation that allows for school districts to have more local control over their budgets and policies.

OPPOSE

- Any increase in funding for education. [\[14\]](#)
- Expensive and excessive standardized testing.
- All legislation that would criminalize childish misbehavior in school.
- The "minimum salary schedule" for teachers. Compensation should be individually-based, assessing results and based off of merit.
- The universal implementation of any federal teaching standards.
- Expansion and increased funding to pre-kindergarten in public schools. [\[15\]](#)
- The free or reduced meals program and limiting food choices in public schools for "nutritional" purposes.
- Any attempt to subvert public school curriculum to advocate an ideology, and/or erode foundational American concepts.
- Measures limiting the authority of parents or discouraging parents from homeschooling their children.
- Unfunded mandates passed down to local school districts from the state.

ISSUES OF LIFE & LIBERTY

FAVOR

- Protecting the lives of unborn children through support of all legislation that further eliminates or limits abortion in Texas.
- Any expansion of Second 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.
- Any legislation that prevents municipalities and counties from enacting overbearing regulations that encroach on personal liberties, employment, and property rights.
- Legislation explicitly allowing Transportation Network Companies to operate statewide in Texas.
- Eliminating “Blue Laws” in Texas.
- 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.
- Legislation that protects law-abiding citizens from having their privacy violated online by the government or private entities.
- Legislation allowing direct-sale of automobiles to Texans.
- Reforming Texas’s Criminal Justice System, including eliminating frivolous, victimless felonies. [\[16\]](#)
- Legislation ensuring that no arrests take place for non-jailable offenses.

OPPOSE

- Targeting of individuals and organizations for political purposes through campaign finance law or expanding the reach of the Texas Ethics Commission.
- Any efforts to institute a statewide smoking ban or texting ban.
- Statewide bans on texting while driving.
- Regulations and fines against private entities that refuse to provide services they object to for religious or personal reasons.
- The Texas “Open Container” law.
- Municipalities annexing land without the consent of the affected residents.
- Laws requiring adults to wear seatbelts while in an automobile.
- Arbitrary DWI checkpoints, blood draws by non-medical professionals, and “no refusal” policies as well as any reduction in the maximum blood alcohol content rules for DWI.
- Raising the legal age to purchase cigarettes and tobacco above that of eighteen years of age.
- Civil Asset Forfeiture without charging an individual with a crime. [\[17\]](#)

FISCAL PRIORITIES

FAVOR

- “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. [\[3\]](#)
- A constitutional amendment requiring a zero-based budget and any legislation requiring agencies to also use the zero-based budgeting method.
- A constitutional amendment requiring that no governing entity raises spending more than the combined growth of population and rate of inflation.
- A constitutional amendment requiring two-thirds approval of both chambers of the Legislature for any new tax or fee increase.
- Abolishing the property tax and franchise tax.

OPPOSE

- The creation of any new taxes or fees.
- Diverting dedicated funds from their specified purposes.
- Excessive licensure of; and regulation of entry into, already regulated professions.
- Funding of any fund that result in corporate welfare or cronyism choosing winners over losers.
- Any regulations that unnecessarily burden business and/or reduce incentives for expansion and hiring.

HEALTHCARE PRIORITIES

FAVOR

- 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.
- Interstate compacts to allow for more choice in insurance providers.
- Any effort to encourage transparency in healthcare costs.
- Comprehensive entitlement reform to decrease individual dependence on government.
- Protecting private religious institutions, entities, and businesses from healthcare mandates which force a violation of well-established principles or beliefs.

OPPOSE

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

IMMIGRATION PRIORITIES

FAVOR

- Requiring all employers to use the “E-Verify” system during the hiring process.
- Requiring documentation of legal status in the U.S. to receive a driver’s license and further require 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.
- Allowing officers of the law to inquire about legal status during a lawful stop, detention, or arrest.
- Making English the official language of the state government of Texas.
- 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

- Any effort to enact amnesty for those here illegally here today, regardless of age.
- Illegal immigrants receiving state entitlements, healthcare, or education.
- Any special considerations for the children of illegal immigrants.
- Elimination of state funding to “sanctuary cities” that defy federal immigration laws.
- Any temporary release from custody of arrested illegal immigrants before the conclusion of their trials.

GOVERNMENT & ETHICS PRIORITIES

FAVOR

- Paycheck Protection Act and any legislation that ensures taxpayer money is not used for partisan politics and further empower individual employees as opposed to local government unions.
- Electronic record voting in machine readable format.
- Requiring strict and transparent disclosures of campaign expenditures, and ending the practice of conglomeration of expenses through consulting firms. [\[18\]](#)
- Changing the name of the Texas Ethics Commission to that of the Texas Compliance Commission and giving sole-appointment authority to the Governor of Texas.
- Moving school board and local elections to the unified November election date.
- Making the process for taxpayer rollback elections easier and more taxpayer-friendly.

OPPOSE

- Any effort to allow collective bargaining by public employees, or any measure to erode the state's "Right to Work" laws.
- Allowing any individuals to cast a ballot for election online.
- Allowing for Election Day voter registration or decreasing the 30-day deadline before Election Day to be appropriately registered.
- Any effort to take redistricting out of the hands of a democratically-elected legislative body.
- All efforts to cap campaign contributions or spending.

OTHER PRIORITIES

FAVOR

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

OPPOSE

- Any measure related to judicial selection or appointment as a preferred method to direct elections.
- Texas “Hate Crimes” laws and laws that give preferential treatment to particular segments of society.
- Any effort to expand regulated gambling in Texas. [\[5\]](#)
- Use of cameras or any other photo/video recording equipment to enforce red light or other traffic laws.
- Any effort to restrict the ability of law-abiding citizens to film police officers while in commission of their duties.

CITATIONS/FURTHER EXPLANATION

1. House Bill 3015 (78R).
2. Senate Bill 11 (84R).
3. Conservative Texas Budget. YCT is a coalition member. The 2018-19 Conservative Texas Budget limits growth of all Texas state government spending to the rate of population growth plus inflation for the last two fiscal years. \$147.5B State Funds, \$218.5B All Funds, and 4.5% Increase.
4. Paycheck Protection Act. Over two million Texans voted in favor of non-binding ballot Proposition 3 in 2016 Republican Primary Election leading to its roughly 83% to 17% passage.
5. 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.
6. YCT favors the report entitled *Campus Free Speech: A Legislative Proposal* solicited by the Goldwater Institute and authored by Stanley Kurtz, James Manley, and Jonathan Butcher.
7. 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.
8. The passage of Senate Bill 11 in the 84th legislative session though a step in the right direction still leaves exceptions to areas in which law-abiding citizens who obtain a License to Carry are relegated to not carry on college campuses. Even worse, is the now contrast in rules as they vary from campus to campus. YCT supports legislation that works to correct 'watered-down' campus carry.
9. Toward EXcellence, Access and Success Grant Program (TEXAS Grant). Allowing state funds to follow students will increase competition in higher education, thus increasing the effectiveness of universities in Texas.
10. By creating quotas or giving preferential treatment to specific segments of society, the most empirically deserving are often deprived of opportunities that have otherwise been earned through their own hard work. YCT has long opposed affirmative action in college admissions and would rather see a system in place where a sequential number was used through the entirety of the process so to ensure that no identifying information itself was used to decide admissions.
11. i.e. "free speech areas" on campus.
12. House Bill 100 (84R).
13. 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.
14. 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.
15. House Bill 4 (84R).
16. 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/>
17. Current law enables law enforcement to seize personal property without charging an individual with a crime under civil law. Individuals can challenge the forfeiture in a civil suit but pay for this proceeding from their own pockets as state appointed attorneys are not provided unless for criminal defense cases. The Institute for Justice estimates that law enforcement agencies within the state of Texas average over \$41M in forfeitures every year which potentially encourages 'policing for profit' as opposed to public service and safety.
18. 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.

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