

89th Session Legislative Priorities

Top Priorities

1. Increasing parental choice in education, preferably through the implementation of universal education savings accounts in which funding follows the student to the education services of his or her parents' choosing.
2. Implementing additional measures to ensure universities are enforcing campus free speech laws and eliminating Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI).
3. Repealing or eroding tuition "deregulation." For example, capping or freezing the amount public colleges and universities can raise tuition and fees to the previous year's rate plus inflation.
4. Improving border security, through measures such as: strategically increasing the amount of DPS troopers and Texas National Guard presence, constructing fences and barriers where lawfully accessible, and investing in and implementing new technologies.
5. Prohibiting employers from hiring illegal immigrants.

Top Priorities

6. Holding universities accountable for programs of study that yield high debt-to-earnings ratios and rewarding universities for programs of study that yield low debt-to-earnings ratios.

7. Requiring universities' required core curriculum be focused on the history and literature core to the fundamental ideas that underpin western civilization and the US' founding.

8. Banning taxpayer-funded lobbying.

9. A measure to eliminate property taxes or put us on a pathway to eliminate property taxes, preferably by using general revenue surplus to buy down rates. The school maintenance and operations tax should be most prioritized.

10. Oppose any government program designed to award corporate welfare or engage in cronyism by creating winners and losers in the market.

Higher Education

These agenda items relate to the regulation of public institutions of higher education.

Favor

- Additional measures to ensure universities are enforcing campus free speech laws and eliminating Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (DEI)¹.
- Requiring universities' required core curriculum be focused on the history and literature core to the fundamental ideas that underpin western civilization and the U.S.' founding.
- Repealing or eroding tuition "deregulation." For example, capping or freezing the amount public colleges and universities can raise tuition and fees to the previous year's rate plus inflation.²
- Shifting a large amount of the state's appropriated money from individual universities to the TEXAS Grant Program.³
- Requiring universities to publish their admissions criteria and their process for analyzing applicant quality.⁴
- Requiring universities publish annual reports of data on the characteristics of their applicants and admitted students.⁵
- Shifting career-focused programs at post-secondary institutions to an employment outcomes-based funding model.
- Holding universities accountable for programs of study that yield high debt-to-earnings ratios and rewarding universities for programs of study that yield low debt-to-earnings ratios.
- Requiring universities to communicate to students and parents the typical income earned by graduates with each major.
- Requiring institutions of higher education to accept the Classic Learning Test,⁶ or other high-quality alternatives to the SAT and ACT, as an acceptable standardized test in college admissions.
- Increasing innovation in higher education through accreditation reform.
- Conducting an efficiency audit of public colleges and universities.
- Transparency in mandatory fees imposed on students at public institutions of higher education.
- Transparency in budgeting, especially to show how much funding is allocated to administration and other expenses rather than teaching and research.
- An appropriations rider requiring any cuts in higher education funding be taken from research and administrative overhead as opposed to core undergraduate teaching functions.
- Eliminating any so-called "gun-free zones" still in place at public universities.
- Reforming tenure practices so tenure is granted based on job performance. Political beliefs should be excluded from consideration.

Higher Education

These agenda items relate to the regulation of public institutions of higher education.

Oppose

- The restriction of the time, place, and manner of speech and assembly beyond what is absolutely necessary to protect normal academic and institutional activities. Free speech should be protected, including content we don't like.
- Using race, ethnicity, gender, or sexual preference as a factor in determining either acceptance or the amount of state scholarship or grant dollars a student will receive, or determining the beneficiaries of any privilege for students, professors, and staff.⁷
- Student loan forgiveness measures.
- The current requirement mandating a certain portion of each student's tuition be set-aside for financial aid.
- The increase in funding for higher education that does not accompany structural reforms, such as improving graduation rates (without reducing standards) and focusing on high-demand, high-earnings programs.
- Tuition Revenue or Capital Construction bond packages.
- In-state tuition rates and all other financial assistance for illegal immigrants.
- The "Top Ten Percent" Rule and any other automatic admission policies.
- Policies to incentivize students to get certain degrees or go into certain career-fields. [With the exception of a market-based policy incentivizing students to earn high-demand degrees in high-earning fields].
- Universities lobbying with tax dollars, student fees, or tuition dollars.
- Any attempt to weaken or eliminate the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

K-12 Education Favor

- Increasing parental choice in education, preferably through the implementation of universal education savings accounts in which funding follows the student to the education services of his or her parents' choosing.
- Improving the quality of public education by holding public schools accountable to academic standards.⁸
- Increasing transparency of curriculum, classroom activities, and district initiatives and financials.
- Prohibiting the teaching of radical gender theory and other ideas contrary to the definitions of natural man and woman.
- Requiring educators and students be identified by the pronouns related to their natural, biological sex.
- Eliminating Comprehensive Sex Education [CSE] programs in schools.⁹
- Ensuring public school curriculum [and any other classroom activities] teach the principles espoused by the American founding documents, western civilization, and Christian values.
- Prohibiting an activity from counting towards an educator's required professional development hours if it promotes critical theory or Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion [DEI].
- Eliminating the use of property taxes for public school maintenance and operation funding.
- Ensuring school districts are directing more of their budgets to classroom teachers and student instruction.
- Giving school districts more flexibility to review and dismiss underperforming teachers.
- Continuing to do away with the one-size-fits-all approach to education by increasing options for students to pursue careers in skilled trades by earning training and workforce certifications demanded by the local market.
- Legislation protecting teachers' and staff's ability to effectively manage classroom and school environments and enforce consequences for disruptive behavior, while ensuring that childish misbehavior is not unreasonably punished.
- Improving programs which allow educators to conceal carry on campus.
- Measures to increase parental rights and parent engagement in their child's educational success.

K-12 Education Oppose

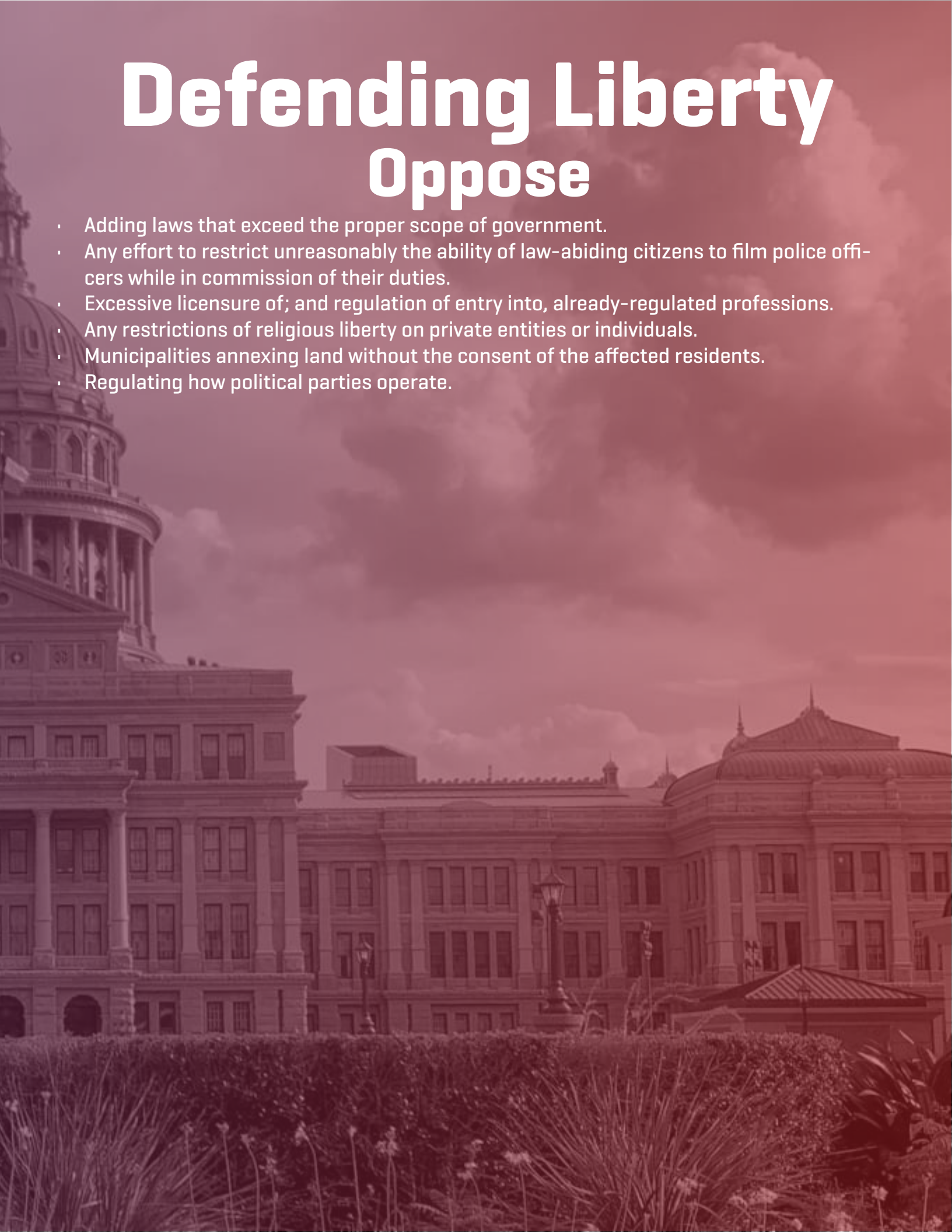
- Any increase in funding for education that does not accompany structural reforms, such as parental choice or merit-based pay for teachers.¹⁰
- Any efforts to weaken the public school accountability system, either by lowering the standards to which we hold schools and students or by lessening the consequences for poor performance.
- The “minimum salary schedule” for teachers. Compensation should be tailored to the individual based on merits and results.
- Expansion and increased funding to pre-kindergarten in public schools.
- The universal implementation of federal curriculum standards.
- The infusion of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), critical theory, or other Marxist values into school district and classroom activities and/or policies.
- Limiting food choices in public schools for “nutritional” purposes.
- Government interference with the educational programs of private schools.
- Measures limiting the authority of homeschooling parents or discouraging parents from homeschooling their children.
- Any restriction of the exemptions from public school vaccine requirements.

Defending Liberty Favor

- Any expansion of Second Amendment rights, including the complete elimination of so called “gun-free” zones on public property and loosening the restrictions on a law-abiding citizens’ ability to purchase firearms and ammunition.
- Legislation protecting the rights of a student to possess a firearm in their dorm room or apartment on a college campus.
- Legislation protecting an individual who uses a weapon in self defense from unreasonable punishment.
- Repealing laws that are not within the proper role of government.
- 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.
- Abolishing civil asset forfeiture or reforming civil asset forfeiture preferably by raising the burden of proof and shifting the burden of proof to the government.
- Expanding online privacy protections for law abiding citizens, including protections from data collection techniques by the government or private entities.
- Allowing the direct sale of automobiles to Texans.
- Returning the statewide legal purchasing age of tobacco and nicotine products to 18 years old.
- Free market reforms to increase the supply and decrease the cost of housing in Texas.
- Ensuring due process rights for police officers that district attorneys put on the Brady List.¹¹
- Protecting the freedom of law-abiding citizens to access public spaces including roadways, businesses, public buildings, schools, houses of worship, and other spaces that may be targets of public protests.
- Right to Repair legislation.
- Protecting First Amendment rights from weaponization of the FACE Act against Pro-Life Texans.
- Legislation that prevents municipalities and counties from enacting overbearing regulations that encroach on personal liberties, employment, and property rights.
- Legislation declaring Texas a Sanctuary State from the ATF.
- Exempting intrastate-produced firearms from federal firearms laws and the authority of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (BATFE).

Defending Liberty Oppose

- Adding laws that exceed the proper scope of government.
- Any effort to restrict unreasonably the ability of law-abiding citizens to film police officers while in commission of their duties.
- Excessive licensure of; and regulation of entry into, already-regulated professions.
- Any restrictions of religious liberty on private entities or individuals.
- Municipalities annexing land without the consent of the affected residents.
- Regulating how political parties operate.



Fiscal Favor

- “Truth in Budgeting.” The Legislature should fully balance the biennial budget without the use of deception or accounting tricks.
- A constitutional amendment requiring a zero-based budget and any legislation requiring agencies to also use the zero-based budgeting method.¹²
- A constitutional amendment requiring that no political subdivision raises spending by more than the combined growth of population and the rate of inflation.
- Requiring all property tax increases above the no-new-revenue rate to gain taxpayer-approval via an election at the unified November election date.
- A constitutional amendment requiring two-thirds approval of both chambers of the Legislature for any new tax or fee increase.¹³
- Continue to pass measures to eliminate property taxes or put us on a pathway to eliminate property taxes, preferably by using general revenue surplus to buy down rates. The school maintenance and operations tax should be most prioritized.
- Abolishing the franchise tax.
- Legislation that allows homeowners to protest their property tax assessments remotely rather than in-person.
- Eliminating government waste.
- Eliminating or limiting the expansion of government welfare programs that disincentivize independence, work, earned income, best financial practices, or other virtuous behavior such as marriage and family building.
- If a new government program or type of public assistance is introduced, it should incentivize virtuous behavior.
- The buying back of bonds by the state and local governments to reduce total debt and interest.
- Measures to make the tax code more fair (i.e., more balanced and not artificially favoring or disfavoring certain industries or companies).
- Measures to make the state government more efficient, such as streamlining agency operations, reigning in agencies from creating burdensome rules, etc.

Fiscal Oppose

- Any government program designed to award corporate welfare or engage in cronyism by creating winners and losers in the market.
- Incentives for so-called “green” energy or disincentives for natural gas, such as green energy tax breaks, including carbon emission taxes and dividends, electric car subsidies, and wind energy subsidies.
- Any regulations that unnecessarily burden business or reduce incentives for expansion.
- Any investment of state funds in companies that consider ESG¹⁴ scores or similar factors when making investment decisions.
- Any investment of state funds in companies that purchase single family housing en masse with the intention of renting them out.
- The budget growing by more than the combined growth of population and rate of inflation; ideally the budget shouldn’t grow at all.
- The creation of new councils, committees, or task forces [unless they will serve the purpose of reducing the size or scope of government or making government more efficient].
- The creation of any new taxes or fees, or increasing any taxes or fees.
- Legislation that necessitates increased funding for a purpose not within the proper role of government.
- Diverting dedicated funds from their specified purposes.
- The issuing of new debt by the state and local governments.

Healthcare Favor

- Increasing transparency in healthcare prices, especially in a way that makes prices readable and easily digestible to the consumer and increases the consumer's ability to shop for care based on price and quality.
- Any legislation allowing innovative, cost-efficient models of care delivery or coverage.
- Expanding scope of practice for all medical professionals to the fullest extent of their training.
- Allowing APRNs to practice independently, and reforming the current convoluted prescriptive authority model for APRNs.
- Interstate compacts to allow for more choice in insurance providers.
- Continue to protect Texans, especially those under the age of 18, from medical "gender transitions," including through the use of surgery, hormone therapy, and puberty blockers.
- Revising the dispute resolution process in Texas Health and Safety Code 166.046, especially the 25-day rule, to give more rights to patients and their decision-making surrogates.

Oppose

- Medicaid expansion, or any other attempt to further socialize the delivery of healthcare.
- Excessive regulations that limit patient access to quality, affordable healthcare, including insurance coverage mandates and regulations that encourage industry consolidation.
- Price controls of prescription drugs or other healthcare goods or services.
- Government healthcare mandates which force violations of the sincerely held principles or beliefs of healthcare providers, private religious institutions, entities, businesses, and individuals.
- Taxpayer-funded contraception or "gender transitions".

Culture & Civics Favor

- Protecting the lives of unborn children through legislation that further limits abortion in Texas, including abortion enabled by mail-in abortion pills and negligent law enforcement.
- Legislation that protects life beginning at conception.
- Legislation that further protects children from being exposed to sexually explicit content or activity.
- Requiring that a person's birth certificate or state identification reflects their biological sex.
- Requiring that state laws reflect the true definition of marriage: the natural union of one man and one woman.
- Legislation that limits no-fault divorce.
- Eliminating the Texas State Lottery.

Oppose

- Legalizing regulated gambling in Texas.
- Regulations and fines against private entities that refuse to provide services they object to for religious or personal reasons.
- Texas' "hate crimes" laws and laws that give preferential treatment to particular segments of society.
- Legislation that enables discriminatory hiring practices, such as affirmative action.
- Restricting Texas' ability to utilize capital punishment where appropriate and necessary.

Immigration Favor

- Improving border security through measures such as strategically increasing the amount of DPS troopers and the Texas National Guard presence, constructing fences and barriers where lawfully accessible, and investing in and implementing new technologies.
- Increasing efforts to detain illegal immigrants within Texas' borders and return them to ports of entry.
- Prohibiting employers from hiring illegal immigrants.
- Fully enforcing laws requiring documentation of legal status in the U.S. to receive a driver's license, or any other government documentation, service, or privilege.
- 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.
- Legislation codifying the measures of Operation Lone Star or other important border security measures.
- Allowing officers of the law to inquire about legal status during a lawful stop, detention, or arrest.
- Fully enforcing laws requiring proof of U.S. citizenship when registering to vote.

Oppose

- Illegal immigrants receiving any state- or locally-funded benefits, including entitlements, healthcare, or education.

Government & Ethics Favor

- Banning taxpayer-funded lobbying.
- Preventing the state and political subdivisions from using taxpayer-funded resources to send the dues of public employees to private organizations, and any other legislation that ensures taxpayer money is not used to support unions or partisan politics. YCT favors empowering individual employees rather than public-sector unions.
- A constitutional amendment that would enable the Texas Legislature to be called into special session with a petition of 2/3rds of the members of each house of the Legislature.
- Reforming the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, or implementing other measures to limit executive overreach. YCT favors requiring that any declaration of emergency made by the Governor lasts a maximum of 30 days unless extended by the Legislature.
- Ensuring public and transparent record voting for all committee, subcommittee, and floor votes taken.
- Banning racial, ethnic, and gender preferences in hiring, promotion, and contracting by state agencies and political subdivisions.
- Conducting a comprehensive review of all Texas roads and highways for the purpose of improving safety.
- Ensuring only conservative committee chairs.
- Moving school board and local elections to the unified November election date.
- Strengthening election integrity by enforcing existing election laws, expanding audits, granting the Attorney General jurisdiction to prosecute election fraud cases, eliminating voting by mail, securing the integrity of absentee voting, and any other measures that eliminate voter fraud.

Oppose

- Allowing collective bargaining by public employees, or any measure to erode the state's "Right to Work" laws.
- Taking redistricting out of the hands of a democratically-elected legislative body.
- Shifting to a system of appointing, rather than directly electing, judges.
- Efforts to cap campaign contributions or spending.
- Targeting of individuals and organizations for political purposes through campaign finance law or expanding the reach of the Texas Ethics Commission.

Endnotes

- 1 DEI is code language for policies and ideas that view people primarily as their race or gender/sexual identity, rather than as individuals. DEI is a rejection of merit and overcoming adversity; instead, it promotes coddling those who the woke class consider disadvantaged.
- 2 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.
- 3 The “Toward EXcellence, Access and Success Grant Program” (TEXAS Grant), in which state funds follow students to their institution of choice. Allowing state funds to follow students will increase competition in higher education, thus increasing the effectiveness of universities in Texas.
- 4 <https://www.jamesgmartin.center/2024/10/lets-open-the-black-box-of-selective-college-admissions/>
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 The Classic Learning Test is a standardized test that is more rigorous than the SAT and ACT and is grounded in the classical, liberal arts tradition. Classical education restores education to its true meaning: forming the soul and teaching students to love the true, the good, and the beautiful. Classical education is a solution to the woke curriculum taught in many schools and should, at the least, not be discouraged. <https://www.cltex-am.com/>
- 7 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 as to ensure that no identifying information itself was used to decide admissions.
- 8 YCT believes we cannot fix what we cannot see. Having a transparent system to measure how students in Texas public schools perform is vital for the state and schools to know how to improve, to motivate schools to improve, to get parents more involved in their child’s educational success, and to help kids get the high-quality education they need.

Endnotes

9 The goal of CSE is to prepare students for sexual activity. It promotes unethical contraception and abortion, and does not teach correct sexual ethics such as reserving sex for marriage. https://www.guttmacher.org/sites/default/files/report_downloads/demystifying-data-handouts_0.pdf

10 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.

11 The Brady List is a public database with information including police misconduct.

12 Zero-based budgeting is a method of budgeting in which the budget is crafted from a base of zero, thus ensuring that all budget items and amounts are actively considered each budget period.

13 Fees refers to required payments as a way for the government to raise revenue; it does not refer to penalties used to prevent certain undesirable behavior.

14 ESG stands for Environmental, Social, and Governance. An ESG score rates a company's policies and practices often according to woke standards, such as contribution to climate change or diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI).