

Public Safety Commission - Questions & Answers

January 8, 2024 - Regular Meeting

Item 4. 88th Legislative Session & Special Sessions Update – Intergovernmental Relations Office

See Exhibit A below

February 5, 2024 - Regular Meeting

Item 3. Public Safety Quarterly Report - Austin Fire Department

1) *Is there a typo on Slide 19, regarding the number of Hispanic or Latino Applicants in the Hiring Process Demographics chart?*

Yes. We apologize for the error on this slide. The corrected percentages should be:

- American Indian/Alaskan Native: 3%
- Asian: 3%
- Black or African American: 5%
- Hispanic or Latino: 28%
- White: 47%
- Two or more races: 11%
- Choose Not to Disclose: 3%

2) *Is there an update on Wildfire outreach to different language groups and homeowners without HOAs, particularly in the east side? Have there been any changes or process on approaching these homeowners or renters who may not have the ability to make those changes?*

One noteworthy development is the assignment of a Wildfire Mitigation Specialist to Outreach and Education, with a particular emphasis on assisting underserved communities and populations at risk from wildfires. This dedicated role underscores our commitment to inclusivity and ensuring that vulnerable groups receive the support and resources they need.

As part of our ongoing efforts, we are actively engaged in updating our Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This update will prominently feature a robust component focused on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, providing a clear roadmap for engaging and protecting vulnerable populations. Additionally, we are collaborating with UT graduate students on research initiatives aimed at evaluating the equitability of our wildfire programs.

In a bid to maximize our outreach, we have established partnerships with community groups to distribute Wildfire Preparedness literature specifically tailored to vulnerable populations. This collaborative approach strengthens our connection with the communities we serve, ensuring that vital information reaches those who need it the most.

Where communities do not have an organizing structure like an HOA we are limited to working with individual community members

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I am also pleased to share that our wildfire vulnerability mapping approach, pioneered in Austin, has been successfully integrated into the national model.

<https://headwaterseconomics.org/wildfire/homes-risk/austin-wildfire-population-risk/>

PENDING QUESTIONS:

February 5, 2024

Item 4. Policing and Disabilities – Austin Police Department - Data

- 1) Would like additional information from the planning and research department on data that is available around interactions with our disabled community and the police.*

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EXHIBIT A



MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Brie Franco, Intergovernmental Relations Officer

CC: Jesús Garza, Interim City Manager
Veronica Briseño, Assistant City Manager

DATE: March 1, 2024

SUBJECT: State and Federal Updates

The Intergovernmental Relations Office would like to provide you with the below update, as well as a state update provided by Focused Advocacy and a federal update provided by Capital Edge.

State Update

Federal Court Blocks SB 4

On Thursday, a federal judge in Austin issued a preliminary injunction blocking [Senate Bill 4](#), the state immigration law passed during the fourth-called special session that created state immigration crimes for unlawful entry and unlawful reentry into Texas from Mexico and, in some circumstances, permitted judges and magistrates to order the removal of noncitizens from the country.

The lawsuit to overturn the law was filed in December 2023 by the American Civil Liberties Union, the ACLU of Texas, and the Texas Civil Rights Project (TCRP) on behalf of El Paso County, American Gateways, and Las Americas Immigrant Advocacy Center. It was subsequently consolidated with a lawsuit by the Department of Justice.

In his ruling, U.S. District Judge David Ezra stated that “SB 4 threatens the fundamental notion that the United States must regulate immigration with one voice,” and that the United States would “suffer grave irreparable harm were SB 4 to take effect.”

SB 4 had been set to go into effect on March 5; it will now be put on hold while the federal lawsuit moves forward. The State of Texas has already appealed the ruling to the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals and the law could end up reaching the United States Supreme Court.

Federal Update

Government Shutdown

On Thursday, Congress passed another stopgap spending bill, thwarting a partial government shutdown on Saturday and extending funding for half of the government for one week, through March 8, and the rest for three weeks, until March 22. The continuing resolution passed the House by 320-99 and then was

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EXHIBIT A

passed by the Senate by a 77-13 vote, with Texas Senator Ted Cruz among the 13 Senators opposing the measure.

Under the agreement congressional leaders struck this week, the six appropriations bills that fund military construction, water development, the Food and Drug Administration and the departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Justice, Energy, Interior, Veterans Affairs, Transportation and Housing and Urban development are due March 8.

Appropriators are still working to come to an agreement on the remaining six measures— funding the financial services, general government, the legislative branch, state and foreign operations and the departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Labor and Health and Human Services — which are due March 22.

Thursday's vote marked the fourth stopgap bill passed by Congress since the fiscal year kicked off in October.

FAA Extension

On Thursday, the House voted to extend the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) funding authority, marking the third extension in recent months for the reauthorization bill. The bill, which extends the FAA's funding authorities until May 10, will now go to the Senate for a vote, then to President Biden's desk for his signature.

The agency's funding authority was slated to expire on March 8 under a temporary extension passed by Congress in December. Without the extension, the FAA would no longer have the authority to collect revenues from the Airport and Airway Trust Fund.

The FAA's last five-year authorization expired at the end of fiscal 2023, on Sept. 30. In July, the House passed its full reauthorization bill that would uphold the FAA's funding authorities over the next five years. The Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation advanced its five-year FAA reauthorization bill earlier this month, but the bill has yet to be considered by the full Senate.

Airports Council International – North America has reported that the House and Senate are currently pre-conferencing their respective bills to come to a consensus on a final product.

Senator Cornyn Running for Senate Republican Leader

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn officially announced Thursday that he is running to replace Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) as leader of the Senate Republican Conference.

Cornyn's announcement comes a day after Leader Mitch McConnell announced that he would not seek another term as Republican leader. McConnell is the longest serving Senate leader of either party.

Republicans will elect their leadership for 2025 and 2026 in November after the national general election. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at brie.franco@austintexas.gov or 512- 974-2333. Thank you.