A KIDS’ GUIDE

GET INVOLVED!

Do you want to let your legislators know what you think? When writing your legislators about important issues, address your letters as follows:

Texas House of Representatives
The Honorable (First and Last Name)
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78762-2910

Texas Senate
The Honorable (First and Last Name)
Texas Senate
P.O. Box 12094
Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711

You can find out who represents you online at www.capitol.texas.gov and even send your legislators an e-mail! Remember to sign your name clearly and give your correct address so the legislator can respond to your letter.

The Texas Legislature passes laws that determine all types of issues, as well as other important matters. This brochure describes some of the key parts of our government.

You will also find some fun facts about Texas and its history.

The Speaker of the House
Speaker Dade Phelan is a member of the House and is chosen by his fellow members on the first day of the session. The Speaker is responsible for maintaining order, recognizing members who wish to speak on the House floor, appointing committees and interpreting rules of the House.

Did you know?
Each of the 150 Representatives serves a 2-year term and represents about 60,000 people.

The House is made up of 150 members and is led by the Speaker. Together, the members pass new laws, consider amendments and pass resolutions.

The Senate is comprised of 31 members. The leader of the Senate is the Lieutenant Governor.

Executive
The Governor is the head of the Executive branch and the leader of the State, working with State Senators and State Representatives to pass laws that will help citizens of Texas. All bills must pass through the Governor’s office, where it will be signed into law or vetoed.

Legislative
The Texas Legislature is the lawmaking branch of the government, and is made up of two chambers: the Texas House of Representatives and the Texas Senate. Both Representatives and Senators create and approve laws that govern Texas.

Judicial
The Judicial branch is made up of different courts, the highest being the Texas Supreme Court and the Texas Court of Criminal Appeals. Judges interpret the laws, how they are applied and whether they follow the Texas Constitution. The courts also determine whether a group or person has broken any laws and if so, what disciplinary actions should be taken.

Kids’ House
Check out all the new features: Capitol Dome Tour, Kids Friendly Laws, Texas State Pledge kids.house.texas.gov

Texas House of Representatives

The Speaker of the House
Speaker Dade Phelan

The Executive
Governor Greg Abbott

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How a Bill Becomes a Law

INTRODUCTION
Bills are introduced on the House floor by the member who wrote the bill. A brief description of the bill is read out loud in the chamber. The bill is then assigned to a committee.

COMMITTEE
In committee, members listen to testimony from the public, discuss issues relating to the bill, and then decide whether to move it on to the House floor for debate.

FLOOR ACTION
Bills are debated on the House floor. Changes can be made to the bill if a majority of members agree. Members vote if a majority are in favor. The bill goes to the Senate chamber for approval.

SIGN THE BILL
If both the Senate and the House vote in favor of a bill, it goes to the Governor's office for his signature, officially making the bill a Texas law.

TEXAS UNDER SPAIN
(1521-1690)
In 1519, Spain established the first European claim to what is now Texas. After much exploration, the first Spanish settlement, the Yaquina Mission, was established in 1680. In 1690, the Province of Texas was established.

TEXAS UNDER FRANCE
(1685-1803)
In 1685, France claimed parts of eastern Texas and the Gulf Coast to expand west of Louisiana and a colony called Fort St. Louis was founded. By 1800, the French abandoned their claim because of shipwrecks, disease, famine, hostile Indians, and fighting.

TEXAS UNDER MEXICO
(1821-1836)
In 1821, Mexico won independence from Spain. Hispanic settlers from the south and Anglo settlers from the north came to settle this frontier region. When Mexican General Santa Anna declared himself dictator, Texas revolted and won independence April 21, 1836, at the Battle of San Jacinto, near Houston.

TEXAS AS A REPUBLIC
(1836-1845)
By entering the Union, Texas remained an independent nation for nearly ten years. Things were hard for this new nation, but leaders like Sam Houston, the Texas Rangers, and the ways of the cowboy will forever be remembered in history. On December 29, 1845, Texas joined the United States.

TEXAS IN THE CONFEDERACY
(1861-1865)
In 1861, Texas joined the Confederacy in their effort to separate from the Union. The "Star and Bars" was the first Confederate flag flown in Texas. When the war was over, Texas returned as a member of the Union and rebuilt its economy through cattle ranching, cotton, and trade with Mexico.

TEXAS IN THE USA
(1845-1861 - 1865 PRESENT)
In 1845, Texas became the 28th state on the U.S. flag when it regained the Union. The "Star Spangled Banner" remains the national flag of Texas today. The Lone Star emblem from the days of the Republic of Texas remains the state flag.