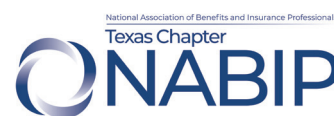


# NABIP-TX eNews

Bi-monthly Publication

November 15, 2023



## NABIP-TX Legislative Update Mike & Shannon Meroney, Meroney Public Affairs



Goodbye third special session of the 88th Texas Legislature... and hello fourth special session.

After the 3rd called special legislative session ended on Tuesday without a deal on school vouchers and several border security bills, Gov. Greg Abbott called lawmakers back for a 4th special session beginning this evening.

“There is more work to be done,” Abbott said in a statement. “I am immediately calling lawmakers back... to complete their critical work to empower Texas parents to choose the best education pathway for their child while providing billions more in funding for Texas public schools and continuing to boost safety measures in schools.”

Abbott’s agenda for the new session includes four items: 1) boosting funding for schools, including through the creation of a voucher program; 2) school safety measures; 3) legislation to create criminal



offenses for crossing the Texas-Mexico border illegally; and 4) funding for border walls and border security operations, including more police for the Liberty County community of Colony Ridge. All are left over from the third special session.

The biggest point of contention was Abbott’s request for a voucher bill that would allow parents to use taxpayer dollars to send their children to private and religious schools. An effort to do so in the regular session in the spring was defeated by a coalition of Democrats and rural Republicans. There’s been no public signaling that a majority of the two-dozen Republican holdouts have changed their minds, despite Abbott’s declaration on October 31st that he had struck a deal with House

Speaker Dade Phelan’s negotiating team.

While the Senate passed its voucher bill on the sixth day of the session, the House never held a hearing on any voucher bill, let alone advanced legislation to the floor for a vote. The House inaction further soured the relationship between Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick and Phelan, who began sparring in the spring over property taxes and later over the House impeachment of Attorney General Ken Paxton. Patrick accused Phelan of caving to the Democrats and anti-voucher Republicans to preserve his speakership.

The spat had collateral damage. Senate Bill 6, which would

*See Meroney Page 2*



have appropriated \$1.5 billion for the state to continue building a wall along its border with Mexico, died in the House.

The chambers passed different versions of a bill that would allow police officers to arrest immigrants who cross the border illegally, but never agreed on a compromise between them. Phelan called the Senate plan “pro-illegal immigration” while Patrick derided the House plan as a “Texas-sized catch-and-release bill.”

By law, special sessions can last no longer than 30 days. There may be a glimmer of hope, however. Last week Rep. Brad Buckley (R-Killeen) the chairman of the House public education bill, unveiled a new voucher bill with more concessions than ever to the Republican holdouts. Most significantly, it increases the amount of money each public school district receives per student.

One final thing to keep in mind: this new special session ends just a few days before lawmakers’ re-election filing deadline on Monday, December 11th at 6:00pm. How many lawmakers will decide not to run again? Further complicating matters: record votes to impeach Attorney General Ken Paxton or to oppose vouchers, and promises of political retribution and heavy political spending, particularly in the primaries next Spring. Stay tuned and we’ll keep you informed along the way.



## Texas Political Update: Constitutional Amendment Election

**Mike & Shannon Meroney, Meroney Public Affairs**

In the November 7, 2023 election, all but 1 of the 14 propositions on the 2023 statewide ballot passed, amending the state constitution. Only Prop 13 (which would have lifted the mandatory retirement age for judges from age 75 to 79) failed 38-62%.

Turnout was 2.56 million, which is 14.4% of registered voters. Those numbers and percentage were far higher than the last two constitutional amendment elections: 1.485 million in 2021 (8.75%) and 1.986 million in 2019 (12.4%). Here are the results:  
**Prop 1** – Establishes a right to farming, ranching, timber production, horticulture, & wildlife management on privately owned or leased property (Passed: 79-21%)

**Prop 2** – Allows local governments to exempt child-care facilities from property taxes (Passed: 65-35%)

**Prop 3** – Bans lawmakers from imposing “wealth taxes” without voter approval (Passed: 68-32%)

**Prop 4** – Raises the homestead exemption for homeowners from \$40,000 to \$100,000 (Passed: 83.4-16.6%)

**Prop 5** – Texas University Fund for research, establishes an ongoing revenue source from the interest accrued from the state’s rainy fund (Passed: 64-36%)

**Prop 6** – Creates the Texas Water Fund to finance water projects around the state (Passed: 78-22%)

**Prop 7** – Creates the Texas Energy Fund to be administered by the Public Utilities Commission and authorizes the state legislature to allocate funds for the modernization of electric generating facilities (Passed: 65-35%)

**Prop 8** – Creates the Broadband Infrastructure Fund to finance high-speed broadband access and other telecommunications projects (Passed: 69-31%)

**Prop 9** – Grants retired teachers cost-of-living (COLA) raises (Passed: 83.7-16.3%)

**Prop 10** – Establishes an ad valorem tax exemption on equipment & inventory manufactured by medical/biomedical companies (Passed: 55-45%)

**Props 11 & 12** – both local governance issues for El Paso and Galveston Counties passed

**Prop 13** – Increase the mandatory retirement age for state judges from 75 to 79; TLR & TCJL Priority (Failed: 37-63%)

**Prop 14** – Creates the Centennial Parks Conservation Fund to pay for the creation or improvement of state parks (Passed: 77-23%)

**House District 2 Special Election** - Only one legislative election to fill the unexpired term of former state Rep. Bryan Slaton (R, HD 2) who was expelled from the Texas House of Representatives on May 9, for an inappropriate relationship with his 19-year-old staff member. A special election was called by Gov. Greg Abbott for Nov. 7.

HD 2 is a heavily Republican district (81.5%) covering Hopkins, Hunt & Van Zandt Counties in Northeast Texas.

Six candidates filed to replace: five Republicans and one Democrat. The race is now headed to a Dec. 9 Run-off Election:

- Jill Dutton (R-Ben Wheeler) is in the construction consulting business, she is a former school board member; backed by Associated Republican of Texas & Texans for Law-suit Reform; and endorsed by former Gov. Rick Perry & eight State Representatives. Dutton received 25% of the vote.

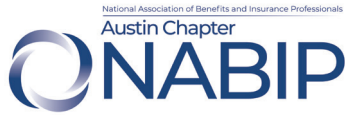
- Brent Money (R-Greenville) is the City Attorney in Greenville; a former Greenville City Council member; title company owner; backed by the Defend Texas Liberty PAC; and endorsed by Attorney General Ken Paxton, U.S. Senator Ted Cruz & Sen. Bob Hall. Money received 31% of the vote.

It'll now be four more weeks of proxy war spending between AG Paxton-aligned Defend Texas Liberty PAC vs. “establishment GOP” led by Speaker Dade Phelan and several Republican Representatives.

Finally, in the Houston Mayor’s race, incumbent Mayor & former State Rep. Sylvester Turner was term-limited and could not seek re-election. With 17 candidates in this race, the odds were very high that it was headed to a run-off election. State Sen. John Whitmire (D) led with 43% over U.S. Cong. Sheila Jackson Lee (D) at 35%. Like HD 2, the run-off election will be held on December 9.

# Fall Chapter Agendas

## AUSTIN



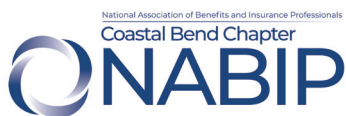
**NOVEMBER 16 - 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM**

**NABIP Austin-November 16 Virtual Meeting - Gap Insurance: Bridging the High Cost of Medical Claims**  
**Course Presenter: Joe Brining**

Summary: With the increasing cost of employer sponsored health insurance, gap plans can be a method to reduce premium prices as well as member out of pocket costs. This session will provide attendees with a basic knowledge of Gap plans, design, and claims processing.

[www.austinhahu.org](http://www.austinhahu.org)

## COASTAL BEND



[Website Coming Soon](#)

## EAST TEXAS



[www.etahu.org](http://www.etahu.org)

## DALLAS



[www.dahu.org](http://www.dahu.org)

## LONESTAR



[www.lonestarahu.org](http://www.lonestarahu.org)

# Fall Chapter Agendas

## FORT WORTH



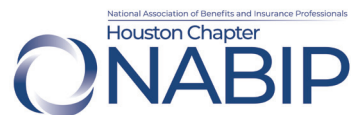
**December 14 @ 4:00 pm - 7:00 pm**  
**Happy Hour Celebration**

**Baja Grill 1212 William D Tate Ave., Grapevine, TX, United States**

Get Tickets \$100.00 – \$250.00  
297 tickets left

[www.fwahu.org](http://www.fwahu.org)

## HOUSTON



**NABIP Houston Volunteer Event**  
**December 14th, 2023**  
**Kids Meals**  
**330 Garden Oaks - Houston, TX 77018**

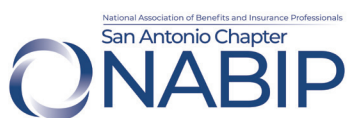
Come join NABIP Houston as we give back to our community on December 14th at Kids Meals.

\*\*We recommend volunteers wear comfortable clothing, closed toed-shoes, and a hat. In case someone prefers not to wear a hat, we distribute hair nets as an option.\*\*

\*\*Also, after you register there will be a note thanking you for registering along with a link that you need to click on to register with Kids Meals directly.\*\* PLEASE MAKE SURE YOU DO THIS!

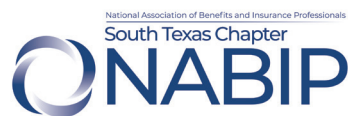
[www.nabip-htx.org](http://www.nabip-htx.org)

## SAN ANTONIO



[www.sanantonioahu.org](http://www.sanantonioahu.org)

## SOUTH TEXAS



**December 14 @ 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm**  
**Give & Be Merry Toy Drive for Easter Seals**

**Top Golf - Pharr TX**

Join us as Agencies in the RGV compete for bragging rights as the Top Golf Champions as we raise money and toys for the RGV Easter Seals.

Get your team ready!

[www.nabipsotx.org](http://www.nabipsotx.org)