

Howdy, Advocates!

There are just 10 days until “sine die,” the official end of the 86th (regular) legislative session. So it’s “crunch time” in Austin, and many decisions made in the next few days will leave a lasting impact on the state for years to come. Generally, higher education advocates are pleased with the draft appropriations bills as they currently exist in conference committee. We will continue to monitor developments in Austin as the session comes to a close and provide updates as appropriate.

In this news update you’ll find:

- A legislative update on A&M’s funding priorities
- Analysis of the Legislature’s “businesslike” session
- A spotlight on A&M’s Veterinary Emergency Team

Here on campus, in the largest commencement in the history of the university, Texas A&M awarded degrees to over 10,700 students last week, and The Association welcomed many of them and their families in the Clayton W. Williams, Jr. Alumni Center for the All-Aggie Grad Party. A&M also reached the milestone of 500,000 former students, and I want to offer a sincere congratulations and heartfelt thanks to my graduating student workers: Katina Economides ’18 and Jeevan Varghese ’19. They both have done outstanding work on behalf of The Association and the Texas A&M Advocacy Network, and have bright futures in graduate and professional schools. Both are true to the Aggie Values and will make a positive impact for years to come.

Thank you again for your continued support and investment in Texas A&M and the Advocacy Network.

Gig ‘em,

Dave Fujimoto ’17
 Director of Strategic Engagement



Texas Legislative Update

The most significant piece of pending legislation in the 86th session that relates to Texas A&M is the appropriations bill. HB 1 is currently in conference committee made up of the the following members:

- Senators Nelson (Chair), Huffman, Kolkhorst, Nichols and Taylor
- Representatives Greg Bonnen ’88, Davis, Longoria, Walle and Zerwas.

The Conference Committee on HB 1 will reconcile differences between the House and Senate versions of the state’s upcoming biennial budget. Once the two sides have come to an agreement, the final product will come back before each chamber for a final up-or-down vote.

Our actions during Orange and Maroon Legislative Day continue to have an impact. Support for both formula funding and the Texas Research University Fund has gained the attention of lawmakers in Austin, and Texas A&M is scheduled to receive more money in both cases over the biennium. These two funding vehicles make up the majority of state-appropriated funds for the university, and we are grateful for all of the volunteers who made the trek to Austin and the elected members who have made a commitment to fund higher education in the state.

Equity funding also continues to be a key component of Texas A&M’s legislative advocacy efforts. We are hopeful that the legislature will recognize the importance of narrowing the per-student funding gap between Texas’ two flagship universities and take the necessary steps to reduce or eliminate the gap.

In addition, Texas A&M continues to monitor the progress of HB 2000 - better known as the Tuition Revenue Bond bill. This bill was referred to the Senate Higher Education committee three weeks ago. As it stands, Texas A&M would be slated to receive \$65M for construction of an instructional laboratory and innovative learning facility. We are pleased that the members are considering the immense value these facilities would bring to our campus and the positive effects they would have on both students and faculty.



Analysis: The Texas Legislature’s unexciting, no drama, very humdrum session

"Are you not bored?"

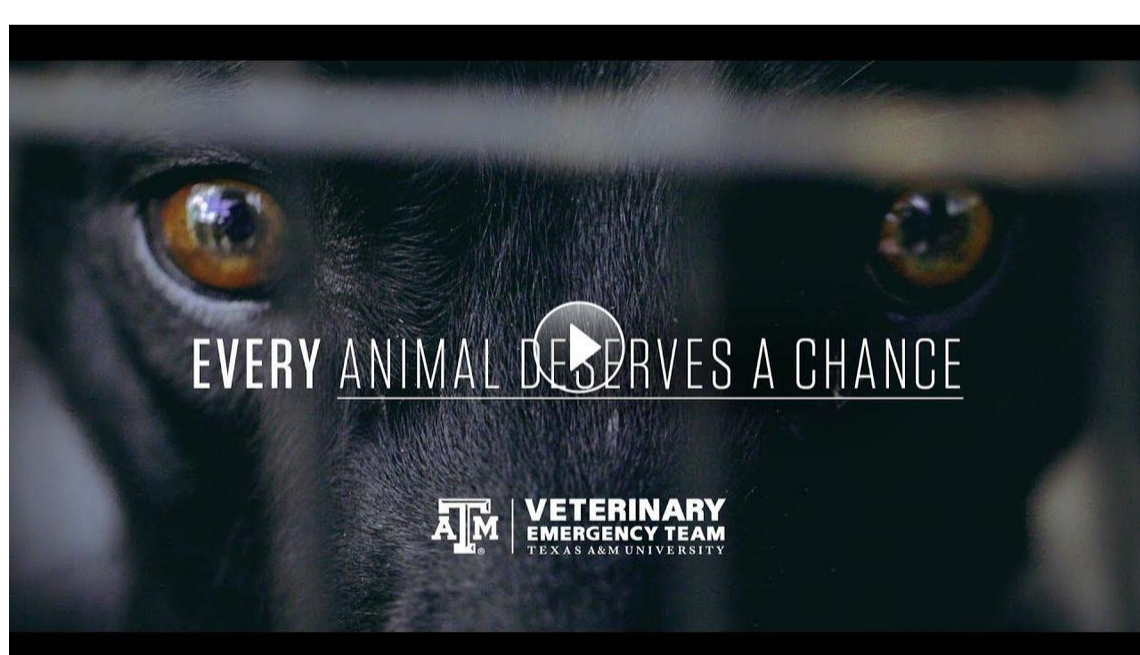
"And do you not remember that this is what the governor and legislative leaders promised the people of the great state of Texas in January?"

"They said they were going to get along, that they were all on the same page, that this would be a meat-and-potatoes or bread-and-butter session (choose your preferred food group, if it’s in there). In conversation, elected officials — the Republicans in particular — said this was going to be a serious, no-nonsense legislative session. They weren’t kidding."

Read more from the Texas Tribune about the state of the current legislative session [here](#).

Did you know?

The Texas A&M Veterinary Emergency Team (V.E.T.) was formed at the request of the Texas Department of Emergency Services and the Texas Animal Health Commission. Since 2009, it has provided a wide range of unique support during and after natural disasters in the state of Texas. For more on the team’s incredible story, please click on the video below:



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