



ADVOCACY TALKING POINTS

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Texas' pro-growth policies and strategic location drive our leading economy. The Dallas Region thrives with corporate relocations and job growth, but sustaining success requires continued investment in infrastructure, incentives, and resources to ensure long-term competitiveness and attract future business expansion.

Topic 1: Dedicated funding for Texas' water infrastructure

- Texas faces persistent droughts, with 42% of the state experiencing moderate or worse drought as of Jan. 2025
- Texas voters overwhelmingly voted to create the Texas Water Fund in 2023 with a \$1B down payment toward Texas' water needs.
- Over the next 50 years, the state will have \$145 billion in water needs, and early action is critical to prevent economic losses in excess of the Great Recession and COVID.

Why it matters for business: Reliable water supply is essential for companies across all industries when considering Texas for investment.

Request: Dedicated an ongoing funding stream to Texas' water needs, similar to the state highway fund's Oil and Gas Severance Tax dedication.

Topic 2: Enhance state electric grid resiliency and reliability

- Unstable electricity supply can lead to economic losses, such as the \$130B in state GDP lost in Winter Storm Uri.
- Energy-dependent sectors – such as tech, health care, and manufacturing – require stable power.
- The growth of data centers, cloud computing, and AI-driven industries that help Texas remain a leader in innovation increase demands on the grid.

Why it matters for business: Companies fueling Texas' powerhouse economy rely on a resilient and reliable energy supply.

Request: Invest in grid modernization and incentivize diverse energy generation with smart use of emerging technologies to match dispatchable energy to market needs.

Topic 3: Economic development incentives

- Texas competes with other states that aggressively offer incentive packages to attract new corporate projects
- Competitive incentives help attract corporate locations and high-growth industries

Why it matters for business: Economic development incentives help attract new business and support expansion of existing businesses, driving job creation and economic growth.

Request: Maintain and expand incentive programs that encourage investment and job creation.

Topic 4: Transportation

- DFW's rapid growth requires continued infrastructure expansion
- Traffic congestion affects supply chains and workforce mobility

Why it matters for business: Efficient transportation enhances productivity and talent retention.

Request: Sustain investment in state transportation infrastructure and make investments to promote multimodal transportation options, including high-speed rail and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure

EDUCATION & WORKFORCE

A skilled workforce fuels Texas' growth and innovation. To stay competitive, Texas must invest in education, workforce development, and talent attraction. The DRC supports policies that strengthen K-12, expand higher education, and enhance workforce training to meet evolving industry needs.

Topic 1: PK-12 school finance, assessments, and accountability

- Texas lags in student performance, with only 47% of students meeting grade-level standards.
- School finance reforms in 2019 improved funding but further investment is needed.
- A-F Accountability System helps ensure educational return on investment, but only one full set of A-F ratings have been assessed on Texas public schools since the system was introduced in 2017.

Why it matters for business: Strong education systems build a skilled workforce for future economic needs.

Request: Increase per-student funding and uphold A-F accountability standards

Topic 2: Child care

- 62% of Dallas County's young children have all available parents in the workforce, making child care a critical enabler of workforce participation
- Lack of child care access costs Texas \$9B annually in lost productivity

Why it matters for business: High costs of child care come at employers' expense: when working parents leave, it triggers recruiting costs, added training time, and lost productivity.

Request(s): Establish a Texas Employer Child Care Matching Program to provide state matching funds for employers investing in employees' child care

- Establish franchise tax credits for eligible employers that provide child care benefits
- Additional investment in the state's child care infrastructure, including additional funding to reduce the waiting list for state child care subsidies

Topic 3: Higher education – four-year investments and community college finance

- DFW leads Texas in higher education enrollment and research output, which results in \$5.8 billion in gross product
- Community colleges provide essential workforce training

Why it matters for business: Investment in higher education fuels workforce innovation and economic expansion

Request(s): Make a one-time investment to fully or partially clear the TRIP backlog

- Fully fund HB 8, which overhauled the state's community college finance system to prioritize student outcomes

HEALTH CARE

We collaborate with business and community partners to improve health care access and foster innovation in the Dallas Region. Key policies support increased health care access, biotech and life sciences growth, and business flexibility in providing employee health care.

Topic 1: Increasing accessibility of health care and mitigating workforce barriers

- Texas faces critical health care workforce shortages.
- Health care access ensures a productive and stable workforce.

Why it matters for business: A healthy workforce reduces absenteeism and improves productivity.

Request: Increase adequate, accessible, and affordable health care coverage to promote Texas businesses' and their employees' health and well-being.

- Support initiatives to mitigate workforce barriers and encourage high retention rates.

Topic 2: Improve mental and behavioral health outcomes

- Mental health challenges affect employee productivity and retention.
- Timely access to care can improve workforce well-being.

Why it matters for business: Better mental and behavioral health care improves business performance and reduces costs

Request: Allocate \$29.3M in ramp-up support for FY25 to open the Dallas State Hospital and \$253.4M in ramp-up and operational funding for FY26-27 to provide transformative treatment for Texans.

Topic 3: Biotech and life sciences expansion; supporting providers, employers, and innovators

- Texas has the potential to compete with biotech hubs like Boston.
- R&D investment spurs job growth and medical innovation.

Why it matters for business: A strong biotech and innovation sector creates high-paying jobs, attracts top talent, and drives innovation through business, university, and medical collaborations.

Request: Create a state-funded biotech incentive program and expand R&D tax credits.

TECH POLICY

The tech sector drives Texas' economy, contributing 5% of GDP and 9% of jobs. Post-pandemic growth continues in innovation, infrastructure, and job creation. To sustain this momentum, the DRC supports legislation that ensures strong regulatory frameworks and infrastructure for emerging technologies.

Topic 1: Regulation of emerging technologies

- Emerging technologies need clear but business-friendly regulations.
- Over-regulation could drive companies elsewhere.

Why it matters for business: Regulatory clarity fosters innovation and job creation.

Request: Promote a balanced regulatory approach for AI and emerging tech.

Topic 2: Digital infrastructure

- High-tech industries require strong digital infrastructure.
- Connectivity and cloud computing are essential for business expansion.

Why it matters for business: Without proper infrastructure, tech companies may face operational challenges and costs that drive them to relocate to other states.

Request: Ensure ongoing investments in broadband and digital infrastructure

QUALITY OF LIFE

Texas' economy thrives on strong communities and a trusted public safety system. While Dallas has reduced crime since 2020, further action is needed to ensure safety, fairness, and stability, fostering an environment where businesses and entrepreneurship can continue to grow.

Topic 1: Supporting pathways to re-entry

- Formerly incarcerated individuals are unemployed at a rate of 27%, hindering the state's ability to meet growing workforce needs.
- Data-driven policies supporting meaningful employment opportunities reduce recidivism and promote economic growth.

Why it matters for business: Re-entry programs create workforce stability and economic opportunity.

Request: Expand data-driven re-entry programs to help promote a more productive workforce

Topic 2: Accessible housing

- Texas gains 2,000 new residents daily, driving up housing demand.
- Housing shortages increase commute times and impact workforce retention.

Why it matters for business: Accessible housing supports employee retention and regional economic growth.

Request: Support incentives that encourage diverse and affordable housing options