

**“Caught Up in Committee . . .**  
**an in-depth & simplified look at the power of ‘Committees’ in advocacy.”**

Unless you have spent a little time in the halls of the state or U.S. Capitol, you may have been mystified at all the attention many lobbyists give to the importance of appointed **COMMITTEES** in the House of Representatives (*there are 34 in the Texas House*) and Senate (*there are 17 in the Texas Senate*). In short, to ever become law (*and there are usually about 7,500 bills filed in any given State Legislative Session*), all bills filed must pass a House **AND** a Senate Committee before they can ever go the floor of each respective chamber for a vote. Said another way, founders of our constitution intentionally made it difficult to pass any form of legislation --- and many would argue that has been a blessing in recent times! Conversely, there are numerous ways to “kill” a bill and thus this practice is quite easily performed.

As a consequence, one can see the immediate importance of which legislator is appointed to what committee. That is why a House Speaker (*currently R-Dade Phelan of Beaumont*), who is elected by their fellow 149 members of the Texas House of Representatives and the Lt. Governor, elected by the citizens of the state to serve the 31 – member Texas Senate (*currently R-Dan Patrick of Houston*) are so important. These two individuals get to not only pick what state legislator sits on what committee, but they also choose the chair, vice chairs, and members of each committee as well as decide what committee receives each bill filed for consideration! This is huge in determining the final outcome of a bill. That is why it is key in agriculture that the right person becomes House Speaker and Lt. Governor.

As an example, if the House Speaker does not want a particular bill to pass, they will likely assign it to a committee where they know the chair will never let it pass & it will likely never receive a hearing --- thus the legislation will die in committee before it ever has a chance to advance to the full House chamber floor for a vote. Conversely, in the State Senate, if there is a particular bill the Lt. Governor wants passed, they will likely assign it to a favorable committee with a very supportive chair and members. This same legislative practice occurs on the federal level as well.

The following House and Senate Committee chart: 1) lists the more important committees in the Texas House and Senate with respect to the agricultural industry, 2) the chair and vice chair of each of these committees, 3) which committee traditionally receives the various agricultural - related legislation, and 4) key ag-friendly members on the respective committees.

**Key Texas Senate Committees**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Committee Leaders &amp; Key Ag Members</b>	<b>Legislation Traditionally Assigned to this Committee</b>
<u>Water, Agriculture &amp; Rural Affairs</u>  (512) 463-0340 Room 335, Sam Houston Building	CHAIR—Charles Perry, Lubbock (0128) VICE CHAIR—Drew Springer, Muenster (0130) KEY AG MEMBERS—Brandon Creighton, Conroe (0104); Lois Kolkhorst, Brenham (0118)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any ag, water &amp; rural-related legislation.</li> <li>• Any ag or water-related state agency under Sunset Review such as this year: the Texas Department of Agriculture and Texas Animal Health Commission.</li> </ul>
<u>Finance</u>  (512) 463-0370 E1.038, Capitol	CHAIR—Jane Nelson, Metroplex (0112) VICE CHAIR—Eddie Lucio, Brownsville (0127) KEY AG MEMBERS—Dawn Buckingham, Lakeway (0124); Brandon Creighton, Conroe (0104); Lois Kolkhorst, Brenham (0118); Charles Perry, Lubbock (0128)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any tax-related legislation.</li> <li>• The State Budget, which includes funding of all state agencies.</li> </ul>
<u>State Affairs</u>  (512) 463-0380 Room 380, Sam Houston Building	CHAIR—Bryan Hughes, Mineola (0101) VICE CHAIR—Brian Birdwell, Granbury (0122) KEY AG MEMBERS—Eddie Lucio, Brownsville (0127)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any legal or tort reform legislation.</li> <li>• Any ethics &amp; election reform.</li> <li>• Most all private property rights legislation.</li> </ul>
<u>Select Committee on Redistricting</u>  (512) 463-0393 Room 455, Sam Houston Building	CHAIR—Joan Huffman, Houston (0117) VICE CHAIR—Juan “Chuy” Hinojosa, McAllen (0120) KEY AG MEMBERS—Dawn Buckingham, Lakeway (0124); Bryan Hughes, Mineola (0101); Eddie Lucio, Brownsville (0127); Robert Nichols, Jacksonville (0103); Charles Perry, Lubbock (0128)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The redrawing of all election boundary legislation from 10-year census data for the Texas Senate, Texas House of Representatives, and U.S. Congressional Districts in Texas.</li> </ul>
<u>Transportation</u>  (512) 463-0067 Room 450, Sam Houston Building	CHAIR—Robert Nichols, Jacksonville (0103) VICE CHAIR—Kel Seliger, Amarillo (0131) KEY AG MEMBERS—Lois Kolkhorst, Brenham (0118); Charles Perry, Lubbock (0128)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All road, boat, rail &amp; air transportation legislation.</li> <li>• All Department of Motor Vehicle licensing &amp; permits and Texas Department of Public Safety legislation.</li> <li>• All traffic law-type legislation; including toll roads.</li> <li>• All Texas Department of Transportation-type legislation; including Sunset Review.</li> </ul>
<u>Natural Resources &amp; Economic Development</u>  (512) 463-0390 Room 325, Sam Houston Building	CHAIR— Brian Birdwell, Granbury (0122) VICE CHAIR—Judith Zaffirini, Laredo (0121) KEY AG MEMBERS— Bryan Hughes, Mineola (0101); Lois Kolkhorst, Brenham (0118); Eddie Lucio, Brownsville (0127); Kel Seliger, Amarillo (0131)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any oil, gas, electric, telephone, broadband &amp; energy-type legislation.</li> <li>• All economic development corporation-type bills.</li> </ul>

**Key Texas House Committees**

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Committee Leaders &amp; Key Ag Members</b>	<b>Legislation Traditionally Assigned to this Committee</b>
<b><u>Agriculture &amp; Livestock</u></b>  (512) 463-0762 E2.114, Capitol	CHAIR— DeWayne Burns, Cleburne (0538) VICE CHAIR— Charles “Doc” Anderson, Waco (0135) KEY AG MEMBERS— Ernest Bailes, Shepherd (0570); John Cyrier, Lockhart (0682); Ryan Guillen, Rio Grande City ( <u>0416</u> ); Abel Herrero, Robstown ( <u>0462</u> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All ag &amp; livestock-related bills.</li> <li>Many animal welfare bills.</li> <li>All ag-related state agency Sunset Review bills like the Texas Department of Agriculture &amp; Texas Animal Health Commission.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Ways &amp; Means</u></b>  (512) 463-0822 E2.116, Capitol	CHAIR— Morgan Meyer, Dallas (0367) VICE CHAIR— Shawn Thierry, Houston ( <u>0518</u> ) KEY AG MEMBERS— Jim Murphy, Houston (0514); Hugh Shine, Temple (0630)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All tax-related legislation; including franchise tax issues.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Appropriations</u></b>  (512) 463-1091 E1.032, Capitol	CHAIR— Greg Bonnen, Friendswood (0729) VICE CHAIR— Mary González, Clint ( <u>0613</u> ) KEY AG MEMBERS— Trent Ashby, Lufkin (0508); Cecil Bell, Magnolia (0650); Giovanni Capriglione, Southlake (0690); Geanie Morrison, Victoria (0456); John Raney, Bryan (0698); Lynn Stucky, Denton (0582); Gary VanDeaver, New Boston (0692); Erin Zwiener, Driftwood ( <u>0647</u> )	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The State Budget, which includes funding of all state agencies.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Natural Resources</u></b>  (512) 463-0802 E2.104, Capitol	CHAIR— Tracy King, Uvalde ( <u>0194</u> ) VICE CHAIR— Cody Harris, Palestine (0730) KEY AG MEMBERS— Kyle Kacal, College Station (0412); Lyle Larson, San Antonio (0646); Four Price, Amarillo (0470)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All water-related legislation; including water pollution bills.</li> <li>All groundwater district bills.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Transportation</u></b>  (512) 463-0818 E2.122, Capitol	CHAIR— Terry Canales, Edinburg ( <u>0426</u> ) VICE CHAIR— Ed Thompson, Pearland (0707) KEY AG MEMBERS— Trent Ashby, Lufkin (0508); Cody Harris, Palestine (0730); Brooks Landgraf, Odessa (0546); J.M. Lozano, Kingsville (0463); Glenn Rogers, Graford (0656)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All rail, boat, air and road transportation legislation.</li> <li>All Texas Department of Public Safety and Texas Department of Motor Vehicles legislation.</li> <li>All road improvement and Texas Department of Transportation bills.</li> <li>All traffic law legislation including toll roads.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Energy Resources</u></b>  (512) 463-0774 E2.162, Capitol	CHAIR— Craig Goldman, Fort Worth (0608) VICE CHAIR— Abel Herrero, Robstown ( <u>0462</u> ) KEY AG MEMBERS— Drew Darby, San Angelo (0331); Charlie Geren, Fort Worth (0610); Tracy King, Batesville ( <u>0194</u> ); Ben Leman, Lola (0600)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All oil, gas, utility and wind legislation.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Environmental Regulation</u></b>  (512) 463-0776 E2.154, Capitol	CHAIR— Brooks Landgraf, Odessa (0546) VICE CHAIR— Alex Dominguez, Brownsville ( <u>0640</u> ) KEY AG MEMBERS— Kyle Kacal, College Station (0412); John Kuempel, Seguin (0602); Geanie Morrison, Victoria (0456)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All air, pollution, and landfill legislation.</li> <li>Most all environmental legislation; including Texas Commission on Environmental Quality bills.</li> <li>All confined animal feeding operation bills; such as dairy, beef and pork.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Redistricting</u></b>  (512) 463-9948 E2.158, Capitol	CHAIR— Todd Hunter, Corpus Christi (0672) VICE CHAIR— Toni Rose, Dallas ( <u>0664</u> ) KEY AG MEMBERS— Ryan Guillen, Rio Grande City ( <u>0416</u> ); Brooks Landgraf, Odessa (0546); Geanie Morrison, Victoria (0456); Andrew Murr, Junction (0536); James White, Woodville (0490)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The every 10-year redrawing of election boundary legislation from 10-year census data for Texas Senate, Texas House of representatives, and U.S. Congressional seats from Texas.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Land &amp; Resource Management</u></b>  (512) 463-1623 E2.136, Capitol	CHAIR— Joe Deshotel, Beaumont ( <u>0662</u> ) VICE CHAIR— Ben Leman, Lola (0600) KEY AG MEMBERS— Dustin Burrows, Lubbock (0542)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Land management legislation.</li> <li>Eminent domain &amp; private property rights bills.</li> <li>All city &amp; county land use authorization bills.</li> </ul>



The four-digit number in parenthesis alongside all legislators listed is their Austin office phone number at (512) 463 – \_\_\_\_.



Phone numbers underlined denote the legislator is a Democrat. Otherwise, they are a Republican.