

The TBLC and its members continued its media streak, generating another record-breaking number of news-worthy media hits in 2022. Combining both print and broadcast, the TBLC shattered its 2021 media presence record with a 29% increase in mentions over 2021. The TBLC's work to cultivate local reporters and to effectively communicate the point of view of the Texas business community has proved successful for a third straight year of metric growth. The TBLC is consistently a go-to for expert commentary on issues like workforce solutions, education, economic development, infrastructure, and immigration reform as these issues continue to dominate news cycles in Texas and across the nation. Media outlets from 20 states, to be exact, mentioned the TBLC in their commentary over the course of 2022.

The New York Times

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL.

The Dallas Morning News

**AUSTIN
BUSINESS JOURNAL****SAN ANTONIO
BUSINESS JOURNAL****SPECTRUM
NEWS****Austin American-Statesman**
San Antonio Express-News**EL PASO INC. Caller Times****The Charlotte Observer** **yahoo!** **fortworth
INC.****AMARILLO GLOBE-NEWS** **aldi@dallas** **Killeen Daily Herald**



SWBC CO-FOUNDER NAMED CHAIR OF THE TEXAS BUSINESS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

*By Erin Slowey - Data Reporter, San Antonio Business Journal
Published in - San Antonio Business Journal and Austin Business Journal
January 4, 2022*

Longtime chairman and co-founder of SWBC **Charlie Amato** will serve as the newly elected chairman of the **Texas Business Leadership Council**.

"**Charlie Amato** is a 'closer' and in a time when commitments can be fluid - whether they are related to public policy or business - **Charlie** gets the deal done," **Justin Yancy**, president of **TBLC**, said in a news release on Jan. 4. "**Charlie** is a natural leader and visionary and having the opportunity to work with him toward a more globally competitive Texas is both exciting and humbling."

TBLC is a 100-member council with a range of small to large business CEOs and senior executives. It is the only statewide public policy nonprofit that is executive led in Texas. The advocacy group provides research and financial resources to Texas government officials to encourage a "healthy and vibrant business climate," according to the release.

San Antonio-based SWBC provides a range of insurance, mortgage and investment services to financial institutions, businesses and individuals. In the last three years, SWBC's revenue grew by about \$194 million - the largest per-dollar growth compared to any other company on this year's Fast Track list

Amato is following outgoing chairman **Gay Gaddis**, who was the first female chairman for **TBLC**. She was the founder of T3, which was the largest woman-owned marketing firm in the U.S.



CHARLIE AMATO ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE TEXAS BUSINESS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

By John Henry

Published in - Fort Worth Inc.

January 4, 2022

Charlie Amato, chairman and co-founder of SWBC, a San Antonio-based international financial services company, was recently elected chairman of the **Texas Business Leadership Council**.

TBLC is the only statewide CEO and senior executive-led public policy advocacy group in Texas.

"I am honored to have been elected by my peers to serve as Chairman of the **TBLC**," **Amato** says in a statement. "This group of knowledgeable and influential business leaders is critical to the continued growth and success of the state of Texas."

Amato replaces outgoing chair **Gay Gaddis**.

The **Texas Business Leadership Council** is a statewide network of CEOs and senior business executives who advance a long-term vision of a prosperous Texas in a globally competitive business environment. The **TBLC** brings expertise, research, financial resources, and advocacy to the leaders of Texas state government to provide a unique view of the potential outcomes of legislation, regulation, and statewide funding. Strategic research, ongoing education, and smart collaborations allow **TBLC** membership to develop thoughtful and comprehensive solutions to present to state leadership encouraging a healthy and vibrant business climate.

"**Charlie Amato** is a 'closer' and in a time when commitments can be fluid — whether they are related to public policy or business — **Charlie** gets the deal done," says **Justin Yancy**, president of the **TBLC**. "Charlie is a natural leader and visionary and having the opportunity to work with him toward a more globally competitive Texas is both exciting and humbling."

Says **Gaddis**, founder of T3, formerly the largest female-owned marketing firm in the country: "It has been an honor to lead this organization through a remarkable growth spurt, expanding the **TBLC**'s operation and scope. Further, we have achieved a reputation in the Texas and U.S. Capitol as the go-to group advocating for the issues which Texas businesses see as most consequential to Texas' future success. Our relevance is at an all-time high. I am so excited that **Charlie** is taking the helm. **Charlie** is known globally for his ability to build relationships and I know that his efforts will be exponentially more successful because of the work we have done together."



SWBC CO-FOUNDER CHARLIE AMATO ELECTED CHAIRMAN OF THE TEXAS BUSINESS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

By SBG San Antonio Staff Reports
Published in - News4SA and Fox29
January 6, 2022

AUSTIN - [Charlie Amato](#), chairman and co-founder of the Southwest Business Corporation (SWBC), was elected chairman of the [Texas Business Leadership Council](#).

"I am honored to have been elected by my peers to serve as Chairman of the [TBLC](#)," said [Amato](#) in a statement. "This group of knowledgeable and influential business leaders is critical to the continued growth and success of the state of Texas."

[Amato's](#) bio on the SWBC website says he "has more than 40 years of experience in all aspects of insurance operations, underwriting, and product development."

"[Charlie Amato](#) is a 'closer' and in a time when commitments can be fluid – whether they are related to public policy or business – [Charlie](#) gets the deal done," said [Justin Yancy](#), president of [TBLC](#) in a press release. "[Charlie](#) is a natural leader and visionary and having the opportunity to work with him toward a more globally competitive Texas is both exciting and humbling."

Outgoing chairman [Gay Gaddis](#), the founder of T3, formerly the largest woman-owned marketing firm in the country, released a statement on [Amato's](#) election.

"It has been an honor to lead this organization through a remarkable growth spurt, expanding the [TBLC's](#) operation and scope. Further, we have achieved a reputation in the Texas and U.S. Capitol as the go-to group advocating for the issues which Texas businesses see as most consequential to Texas' future success. Our relevance is at an all-time high. I am so excited that [Charlie](#) is taking the helm. [Charlie](#) is known globally for his ability to build relationships and I know that his efforts will be exponentially more successful because of the work we have done together."

The [Texas Business Leadership Council](#) is a statewide network of CEOs and senior business executives who advance a long-term vision of a prosperous Texas in a globally competitive business environment. It is the only statewide CEO and senior executive led, public policy advocacy group in Texas.



BAYLOR UNIVERSITY NAMES PAUL AND ALEJANDRA FOSTER AS 2022 FOUNDERS MEDAL RECIPIENTS

By Lori Fogleman

Published by Baylor University

February 1, 2022

WACO, Texas (Feb. 1, 2022) – Baylor University today announced **Paul** (BBA '79) and Alejandra **Foster** of El Paso, Texas, as the recipients of the 2022 Baylor University Founders Medal.

Established in 1969, the Founders Medal is one of the most distinguished awards given by Baylor and is reserved for men and women whose service and contributions have been unusually significant to the life and future of the University. Paul and Alejandra Foster have helped to shape the future of Baylor University, as well as Baylor's physical campus, through their gifts and through their service as co-chairs of the Give Light Campaign's National Steering Committee. The Gift Light Campaign is the largest fundraising campaign in Baylor's history, aimed at undergirding the aspirations of Illuminate, Baylor's strategic plan.

"Paul and Alejandra share a commitment to excellence in higher education and a love for Baylor University," said Baylor President Linda A. Livingstone, Ph.D. "You can see the impact of their giving spread across campus, with each gift to scholarships, faculty endowment, student success programs or the buildings bearing their names, telling the story of their commitment to the support and success of our Baylor students. Their philanthropy has shaped the trajectory of this institution as they have shared Baylor's vision and implementation of Illuminate. Their leadership and service have truly contributed in significant and transformational ways, and we are grateful for their philanthropy."

Paul, a graduate of Baylor's Hankamer School of Business, and Alejandra Foster have served for the last four years as co-chairs of the National Campaign Steering Committee for the Give Light Campaign, and Paul is a past member of the Hankamer School of Business's Board of Advisors. The Fosters have given generously to support students and faculty through Baylor Athletics, the Hankamer School of Business, the Foster Academic Challenge and the Paul L. Foster Success Center, named in his honor for their generous support of student success programs at Baylor.

"Paul and Alejandra represent the best of what we hope each of our 500+ student-athletes will become: leaders in their community who use their resources and service to support and benefit others in transformational ways," said Mack B. Rhoades IV, Baylor Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics. "With their love of Baylor

and Baylor Athletics, they have helped to shape Baylor's campus and enrich the Baylor experiences of our students, student-athletes and Baylor fans in incredible ways. Paul and Alejandra wholly embody our core vision of Preparing Champions for Life. They are truly deserving of this honor, and we are grateful for their vision and commitment to invest in our university continually."

On May 4, 2019, Baylor announced a then-anonymous gift of \$100 million from Paul and Alejandra Foster. The largest current gift ever received by Baylor University, the gift sparked unprecedented support for faculty through the creation of a dollar-for-dollar matching program for qualifying gifts providing faculty support to Baylor. Now known as the Foster Academic Challenge, the program prompted the funding of 14 faculty endowed chairs, supporting such varied initiatives and areas of study as Materials Science, Business, Health, Entrepreneurship, Communication Sciences and Disorders, Biochemistry, Biomedical Engineering and Food Security. The Foster Academic Challenge generated annual support for faculty chairs equivalent to \$50 million in endowment. The Fosters' gift also provided significant momentum in for the Give Light Campaign's priority capital projects. In November, the University named the Paul and Alejandra Foster Pavilion in recognition of their transformational support.

On December 21, 2021, Baylor University and the City of Waco announced an initial partnership agreement to construct the Foster Pavilion in the highest visibility area of the city's growing riverfront. Planned as a state-of-the-art home for the men's and women's basketball teams, the Foster Pavilion will be located along the Brazos River on the west side of Interstate-35 adjacent to the University's Clifton Robinson Tower. The groundbreaking for the project is expected to begin in June 2022 with an early opening of the pavilion targeted for January 2024.

A Legacy of Impact

This historic gift is not the first area of Baylor's campus to be shaped by Paul and Alejandra Foster. In 2013, they gave a \$35 million gift, which at the time was the largest gift from a living alumnus in Baylor's history, to name the **Paul L. Foster** Campus for Business and Innovation. At the time, Paul said he hoped his gift, a portion of which also provided support for McLane Stadium, would inspire others to support the Hankamer School of Business's new home. The Paul L. Foster Success Center also bears his name in recognition of Paul's significant contributions to student support services.

Paul L. Foster is the founder and CEO of Franklin Mountain Investments LLC (FMI) and its affiliated companies. FMI is a

diversified investment and operating company with holdings in the real estate, energy, private equity, construction, aviation, sports, medical devices and hospitality industries. He also serves as a director on the boards of Franklin Mountain Investments LLC and its affiliates, and is on the boards of Jordan Foster Construction, Vomaris Innovations and WestStar Bank. He also serves as a Member of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission and is on the Board of Trustees of Baylor College of Medicine. In 2021, Paul was named Chairman of the Board of the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT). He serves on the Executive Committee of the Borderplex Regional Economic Alliance and is a member of the World Presidents Organization.

Paul is a former Chairman of The University of Texas Board of Regents, a former Chairman of The University of Texas Investment Management Company (UTIMCO) and a former member of the University of Texas System's University Lands Advisory Board. He is a past member of the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board and the **Texas Business Leadership Council**. He was the founding Chairman of El Paso Regional Economic Development Corporation (REDCo).

Alejandra De la Vega-Foster is Vice President and serves on the Board of Almacenes Distribuidores de la Frontera, a company that operates over 300 convenience stores in the City of Juarez and northern Chihuahua, Mexico. She also owns the Domino's Pizza franchise in Juarez. Alejandra is also co-owner and President of Franklin Mountain Franchise Ventures LLC, a company that operates, among other businesses, franchise rights for La Madeleine Country French Café in El Paso, Texas, southern New Mexico and Arizona markets.

From October 2016 to September 2021, Mrs. De la Vega-Foster served on the Governor's Council as the Cabinet Secretary of Innovation and Economic Development for the State of Chihuahua, Mexico. She is also co-owner and serves as a member of the Board of Directors of MountainStar Sports Group LLC, and is a co-owner and the President of the Board of Directors of FC Juarez, a Liga MX (Mexican Division 1A) soccer franchise playing in Ciudad Juarez as Los Bravos. She serves on the MD Anderson Cancer Center Board of Visitors and is a Co-Chair of the Borderplex Regional Economic Alliance. She is a member of the Young Presidents Organization, Paso del Norte Chapter.

Together, Paul and Alejandra are philanthropists and significant supporters of the Borderplex cities of El Paso, Texas, Las Cruces, New Mexico, and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. They have made generous contributions to countless civic and charitable initiatives, including to the University of Texas at El Paso, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center in El Paso, the El Paso Zoo, La Rodadora Children's Museum in Juarez, Mexico, and the El Pasoans Fighting Hunger Food Bank. They are co-founders of Mountain Star Sports Group, owners of the El Paso Chihuahuas Triple-A Baseball team, the FC Juarez Bravos Liga MX Soccer club, and the El Paso Locomotive USL Soccer club.

The Fosters have received numerous honors at Baylor University, including the Baylor Legacy Award and the

Baylor University Distinguished Alumni Award. They have been honored for their faithful support of Baylor as Legacy Members of the 1845 Society. From 2008-2010, Paul served on the Board of Advisors for Baylor's Hankamer School of Business. He is a current member of the Baylor Bear Foundation.

For more information about the Give Light Campaign, please visit the Give Light website.

ABOUT BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

Baylor University is a private Christian University and a nationally ranked Research 1 institution. The University provides a vibrant campus community for more than 19,000 students by blending interdisciplinary research with an international reputation for educational excellence and a faculty commitment to teaching and scholarship. Chartered in 1845 by the Republic of Texas through the efforts of Baptist pioneers, Baylor is the oldest continually operating University in Texas. Located in Waco, Baylor welcomes students from all 50 states and more than 90 countries to study a broad range of degrees among its 12 nationally recognized academic divisions.

OUR VOICES: RAISING THE MINIMUM WAGE IS LONG OVERDUE

By Sen. Royce West
Texas Metro News
February 19, 2022

One of the unexpected outcomes of the two year plague that is COVID-19, was that minimum and low-wage workers were able to find their voices.

And although some would adamantly block out reason to maintain the status quo, it is clear that increasing the federal and state minimum wage is past overdue.

Last year, after federal COVID relief efforts included additional payments to Americans who had been cut off from jobs, the howls began that too many recipients of weekly \$300 pandemic payments no longer wanted to work.

The payments were on top of standard state unemployment benefits that have been available to separated workers since the program's inception in 1938.

During the last quarter of 2021, the average weekly unemployment benefit paid in Texas was \$407. The maximum amount that those eligible can receive is \$549; all based on the recipient's past earned wages. The minimum weekly benefit is \$71.

Texas was among the first states to stop paying the extra \$300 federal benefit before it was scheduled to expire last September.

The thought of recipients living-it-up on \$700 a week, or a little more than \$2,800 a month per person, was too much for the Texas Association of Business to stomach.

They urged Texas' Governor Greg Abbott to shut it down. And he did. Keep those figures in mind.

On average, state unemployment benefits come to about \$1,630 monthly. Where am I going with this? At \$7.25 an hour, a minimum wage worker earns \$290 a week before taxes.

Even without pandemic supplements, unemployment recipients on average receive nearly \$120 per week more than minimum wage workers get in gross pay!

That's \$1,160 per month (before taxes) that a person is supposed to live on, if this level of impoverishment can be described as "living." This is before, not after paying for rent, food, transportation and clothing.

And oh yes, kids cost money too! Even if there are two

minimum wage workers in a household, it's still \$500 less monthly than one person received in combined pandemic unemployment benefits.

So it makes sense that some minimum wage workers may not have been overly anxious to return to front line jobs where their lives could be at risk.

Let's plug those wages into how much it costs to live in 2022. Those two minimum wage workers, even without kids, cannot afford to live in a 2-bedroom apartment in the Dallas area, which according to Rent.com, now costs an average \$2,414 a month.

It's consistent with 2020 findings by the National Low-Income Housing Coalition that said a minimum wage worker cannot pay rent for a two-bedroom home in any state in the U.S.

Prices for new and used automobiles have both increased by thousands due to the COVID supply-chain, shortage of processing chips.

Gas prices, even in petroleum-king Texas, hover above \$3.00 per gallon; meaning a minimum \$40 fill-up for most cars. And I don't need to mention how much more we all now spend at the grocery store or the hike in fast food prices.

Three times in the past, I've authored bills that would have increased Texas' minimum wage. None were granted a hearing.

Two bills filed by House Democrats in 2021 failed to move - as predicted by Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick while speaking to the **Texas Business Leadership Council** a year ago. Their opposition is the same, raising the minimum wage will prove too costly for small businesses and will eventually cost workers their jobs.

A new twist was added last year when a House member evoked the automation boogeyman, saying that raising the minimum wage would mean more self-serve kiosks in stores and fewer workers.

Funny, that's already happened. Yet, I'm unaware that the owner's savings have been shared with customers or remaining workers.

But outside Texas, some have seen the light. California will be the first state to raise the minimum wage to \$15 an hour for businesses with more than 25 employees.

As of 2021, 29 states, plus the District of Columbia, have raised their minimum wage above the federal \$7.25 floor. Twenty-nine states have proposed incremental increases

to at least \$15 an hour.

Nine states have agreed to index the minimum wage based on the cost of living, while 10 states' minimum wage increases kicked-in in 2021 following earlier passage of voter initiatives or new legislation. Even Florida raised its minimum wage to \$15 in 2020, supported by 60 percent of voters.

National retailers like Amazon, Target and Starbucks have raised minimum pay to \$15 an hour. Costco pays \$17. Walmart pays \$12. Starting pay at Texas-based Bucee's averages \$14 an hour. Studies say increased pay produces better employee productivity and retention.

A study by the Economic Policy Institute pointed to a 2020 survey of small business owners by CNBC which concluded that an increase in the minimum wage "would have no impact on their business."

But we're stuck at \$7.25.

Those who say no to increasing the minimum wage are woefully out of touch with those who work for it. Maybe they should be forced to walk in that man's shoes to see just how uncomfortable they are.



FORT BEND HEALTHCARE CEO SELECTED FOR STATEWIDE BUSINESS BOARD

By Landan Kuhlmann
Published by The Fort Bend Star
April 10, 2022

A local healthcare CEO has been named to a statewide executive board.

Juliet Breeze, the owner and founder of Next Level Urgent Care at 16312 Southwest Freeway in Sugar Land, has been accepted as a member of the **Texas Leadership Business Council**. The organization aims to “advance a long-term vision of a prosperous Texas in a globally competitive business environment,” according to a news release from Next Level.

To qualify for membership, the **TBLC’s** website says a person must be the CEO, president, managing director of the Board of Directors, or the top executive in the state for his or her employer. There are only about 100 members statewide at any time, according to the release.

“The **TBLC** brings expertise, research, financial resources and advocacy to the leaders of Texas state government to provide a unique view of the potential outcomes of legislation, regulation and statewide funding,” the organization’s website says.

Breeze founded Next Level Urgent Care in 2013, the release said, and previously led an orthopedic practice in Richmond. She started her career as a primary care physician in the county, according to the news release.

Among her accomplishments, the release said, was creating Next Level PRIME – a program which allows a company’s employees and their health care plan dependents to utilize any Next Level clinic for acute care, chronic medical conditions and annual physicals at no cost.

“Access to high-quality, cost-effective medical care is essential to attract businesses to Texas,” Breeze said.

For more information on the **Texas Business Leadership Council**, visit the organization’s website at txblc.org.



amarillo.com
AMARILLO GLOBE-NEWS

**ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ TO LEAD XCEL ENERGY SW,
SUCCEEDS DAVID HUDSON AS REGIONAL PRESIDENT**

Staff Reports

Amarillo Globe-News

May 17, 2022

AMARILLO – Adrian Rodriguez, senior vice president of Regulatory and Strategy at Puget Sound Energy in Washington and former interim CEO and general counsel at El Paso Electric Co., is returning to his home state of Texas to assume the role of president, Xcel Energy – Southwest effective June 1.

According to a news release, Rodriguez is succeeding David Hudson, who is retiring after 38 years of service to the company. He joins a leadership team tasked with transforming the grid to meet evolving energy needs while maintaining the company’s commitment to reliability, affordability and community engagement.

“We’re proud to serve our New Mexico and Texas customers and communities as they continue to grow and thrive. Adrian’s expertise in regulatory, legislative and environmental matters and his dedication to community and economic development will enable us to further David’s legacy of achievement in our Southwest region,” said Bob Frenzel, chairman, president and CEO of Xcel Energy in the release. “This is a time of rapid change as we move closer to our clean energy and customer goals, and Adrian is ideally suited to lead this effort.”

At Puget Sound, Rodriguez has overseen clean energy strategy, regulatory and government affairs, resource planning, new product development, and energy efficiency, the release states. As general counsel at El Paso Electric, Rodriguez was responsible for the legal, corporate governance, regulatory, rates, and governmental affairs functions working with regulators at the federal level and within Texas and New Mexico.

Before his work at El Paso Electric, Rodriguez was an attorney in the Dallas office of Houston-based Vinson & Elkins LLP, where he practiced law in the energy regulation practice group and complex commercial litigation practice group, the release says. He also served as a law clerk to the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas in San Antonio.

“Adrian has a broad view of the energy industry and the creation of sound energy policy that ultimately benefits every person in every walk of life,” said Brett Carter, Xcel Energy group president, utilities and chief customer officer in the release. “We are rapidly advancing our customer-focused energy solutions and making proactive changes

that will have long lasting implications for the sustainability of our communities.”

Rodriguez is a native of El Paso. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree with highest honors in economics and government from the University of Texas at Austin where he was a state of Texas recipient of the 1999 Truman Scholarship. He earned a master’s degree in public policy from Harvard University where he was the editor-in-chief of the Harvard Journal of Hispanic Policy, and a juris doctorate from Columbia University School of Law where he was a managing editor of the Columbia Law Review.

In El Paso, Rodriguez served as a member of the Boy Scouts of America Yucca Council executive board and on the board of the Paso del Norte Health Foundation. Additionally, he has served on the Council for Regional Economic Expansion & Educational Development, Borderplex Alliance, El Paso Chamber of Commerce, the Texas Tech University Hunt School of Nursing advisory board and he has been a member of the [Texas Business Leadership Council](#).

Hudson, who had announced his retirement for April 1, has extended his service to July 1 to facilitate the transition of leadership. Hudson became president of Xcel Energy’s Southwest region in December 2013 and led the expansion of the region’s power grid that quadrupled power import/export capabilities, boosted job-creation and electrified large areas of newly developed oil and gas fields in southeastern New Mexico and West Texas.

Hudson also expanded the region’s low-cost clean energy portfolio by 1,000 megawatts with the addition of the Hale and Sagamore wind energy facilities in 2019 and 2020.

“We’re grateful for David’s willingness to extend his service a little longer to make this a seamless transition,” Frenzel said.



WHAT ENDING DACA WOULD DO TO THE ECONOMY

By Craig Huber
Spectrum News 1
June 16, 2022

TEXAS — DACA has been in effect for 10 years, since the Obama administration. However, the program remains threatened. Capital Tonight's Karina Kling speaks to an expert who says ending the program would likely cause the loss of billions of dollars.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE VIDEO!](#)





TEXAS BUSINESS LEADERS CALL FOR DACA AND TPS LEGISLATION

By Texans for Economic Growth
TexasGOPVote
June 16, 2022

June 15, 2022
Texas Congressional Delegation
United States Capitol
Washington, D.C.

Dear Senators and Congressmen:

Every year since our coalition was established in 2019, we have submitted open letters, participated in private meetings, held press conferences, webinars, and written countless OpEds in newspapers across the state, all in support of the 204,453 DACA-eligible Texans and 66,261 TPS holders who call Texas home.

In 2019, Texans for Economic Growth (TEG) launched with 50 Texas business leaders and associations dedicated to recognizing and supporting the positive impact immigrants have on the Texas economy as business owners, taxpayers, and consumers. Three years later, that number has more than doubled, with TEG now representing more than 125 Texas business leaders, including the Metro 8 chambers and statewide organizations like the Texas Association of Business and the [Texas Business Leadership Council](#), urging for action on immigration.

On this 10th anniversary of DACA, we again implore Congress to act so these hardworking Texas Dreamers and TPS holders, who hold a combined spending power of \$4.6 billion and contribute \$1.38 billion in taxes, know their future here in Texas is secure.

While TEG advocates for many commonsense immigration policies that reflect the economic needs of our state, passing legislation that creates a pathway to legal status or citizenship for Dreamers and TPS holders is important to our coalition. This will demonstrate to the business community that our policy leaders are ready to set politics aside and get to work on creating an immigration system that mirrors our values of being a welcoming state full of hardworking men and women.

Sincerely,
Texans for Economic Growth

FUTURE OF DACA REMAINS UNCERTAIN AS TEXAS-LED CHALLENGE PASSES ON

By Reena Diamante
Spectrum News 1
June 17, 2022

WASHINGTON — It has been 10 years since then President Barack Obama established a program to protect immigrants who came to this country as children. Known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, the program has allowed more than 600,000 young immigrants to live, work and study in the U.S. without fear of deportation. But without congressional action, the program's future and the future of DACA recipients is unclear.

What You Need To Know

- The DACA program is celebrating its 10th anniversary this week
- There is a Texas-led challenge to DACA currently making its way through the courts
- A federal judge in Texas last year ruled the Obama administration did not have the authority to create DACA. The State of Texas also argues it is financially burdened by the program
- However, supporters say DACA recipients help the economy

After graduating from the University of North Texas at Dallas two years ago, Gloria Rinconi plans to pursue her master's degree in clinical mental health at the university this fall. She hopes to one day go to medical school and become a psychiatrist. These are opportunities, she said, are possible in part because of DACA.

Rinconi was born in Mexico and was brought to the U.S. when she was one-year-old. She said growing up, she knew her legal status differed from her peers because her parents did not shy away and encouraged her to work hard because the U.S. was the "land of opportunity."

"(DACA) means to be able to fulfill many of the traditional American college student roles and the traditional milestones of being able to graduate college, being able to obtain a driver's license, being able to apply to a job, internships and continue life as a normal 24-year-old," Rinconi said.

Wednesday marked the 10-year anniversary of DACA, which Obama created over the objections of Republicans in Congress.

Thirty-three-year-old Sandra Avalos of Dallas said 10 years later, she and other DACA recipients are living with uncertainty because there is no guarantee the program will remain. Avalos said she was brought to the country when she was seven years old and said the U.S. is really the only home she knows. She also graduated from UNT Dallas and started a family. Avalos now works with high school students from first-generation and low-income households in North Texas through a college readiness program.

She and Rinconi were back in Washington to call on Congress to establish a pathway to citizenship for DACA recipients.

"That peace of mind is important. It's important for our mental health, it's important so that we can support our families and for some even to contribute to the society that we live in," Avalos said. "That uncertainty is definitely something that affects us daily. And so that's why having a path to citizenship will alleviate that, right? Also, having a path to citizenship will give us the opportunity to not worry who's our president at the time."

In 2020, the Supreme Court overturned President Donald Trump's termination of DACA. The Trump administration argued the program is illegal.

Democrats in Washington celebrated the anniversary with DACA recipients, also known as Dreamers, but said it is not enough.

"I regret that this is the anniversary of DACA and not the anniversary of a full path to citizenship for Dreamer[s] and also for their parents and family members in a more comprehensive bill," said Rep. Joaquin Castro, D-San Antonio.

"The biggest barrier has been Republican opposition to creating a path to citizenship, and also during the Trump years, immigrants and immigration became the number one boogeyman and scapegoat," Castro later told Spectrum News. "I think that made it very hard for Republicans really to negotiate."

Avalos and Rinconi said they met with Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, during their visit. The Republican supports targeted legislation that would offer permanent legal status to certain DACA recipients. Cornyn and Sen. Thom Tillis, R-North Carolina, last year sent a letter to the chair



of the Senate Judiciary Committee urging him to consider a bill related to this narrow provision. But Rinconi believes it should go beyond active participants.

“As a person that loves Texas, as [someone] that calls Texas home, that cannot imagine my life outside of Texas, that action is needed now. I cannot live in increments, I cannot live holding my breath for the next renewal. I cannot live for the next moment when DACA is attacked,” Rinconi said. “As much as I feel American, as much as I feel like this is my home, I’m constantly denied to pursue my life further than every two-year renewal period.”

There is a Texas-led challenge to DACA currently making its ways through the courts. A federal judge in Texas last year ruled the Obama administration did not have the authority to create DACA. The State of Texas also argues it is financially burdened by the program. The case is up before the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals in July.

While the state argues the program is costly for Texas, Justin Yancy, the president of the Texas Business Leadership Council, said that could not be further from the truth.

“Ninety-six percent of Dreamers in Texas are either working or in school,” Yancy said. “[They] came here at a young age, at no fault of their own, and are all earning an education, supporting local businesses and participating in the American economy.”

He added that supporting DACA recipients would help address the labor shortage across the country.

“To lose an entire group of people who are skilled, there’s never a good time for that. From an economic perspective, we need Dreamers in Texas to add value to the economy,” Yancy said.

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE VIDEO!](#)



Caller Times

OPINION: WHEN IT COMES TO IMMIGRATION, TEXAS CAN LEAD ON INNOVATIVE ECONOMIC SOLUTIONS

By **Bobby Jenkins**

Caller Times

June 24, 2022

The coronavirus pandemic brought on many challenges to our communities, homes, and businesses. As we continue to face instabilities from ongoing crises both domestically and abroad, there is one thing our elected officials should find common ground on to boost our economic outlook for the foreseeable future: reforming the U.S. immigration system to match workers across all skill sets with available jobs.

Immigrants have long improved Texas industries, making up large shares of our workforce in a variety of sectors, from construction to food production and services to healthcare, and representing nearly a quarter of our overall workforce. They are major economic multipliers, holding an estimated total annual spending power of over \$120 billion, and they contribute to state programs such as transportation, education, and social services through \$40 billion in state and local taxes annually.

However, our nation's antiquated and complex immigration system has rendered it almost impossible for immigrants to fully join the workforce in a meaningful capacity due to a lack of authorization, inaccessible work permits, or uncertainty of what will come next in terms of legal status. Even though about 1.6 million undocumented Texans contribute the same as any other citizen - to the tune of \$6.5 billion in state, local and federal taxes - and are vital to our economic well-being, current policies prevent them from building a stable future.

As Texas Gov. Greg Abbott recently stated during a fireside chat around the state's economy, "The workforce propels businesses; the workforce propels Texas." However, cultivating a stable, balanced workforce with people of all skill levels is a tricky business, and key industries - such as construction and home services, among others - are struggling to hire employees. I have witnessed this firsthand. My company, ABC Home & Commercial Services, is facing difficulties hiring employees of all skill sets. Nationally, 51 percent of small businesses had openings that they could not fill at the end of last year.

While some businesses are starting to take matters into their own hands by leaving the status quo and implementing new operations, leaders at the state level are also working to address labor issues. The Texas Workforce Commission directed nearly \$20 million in funds for programs dedicated

to training workers to fill job openings, and several industries, such as the energy sector, have resorted to upping pay and benefits.

However, more can and must be done to get more workers on the job, and efforts at the federal level must provide innovative and forward-thinking solutions for all Texans. Texas representatives in both the House and Senate must pass immigration reform to recognize the true economic potential of Texas' immigrant community and allow qualified, skilled workers to join our workforce.

If our leaders in Congress do not address this issue soon, we will have to face even greater labor challenges. Today, experienced workers are aging out of the industry, and there are not nearly enough applicants from the younger generations who want to work in laborious fields such as construction, agriculture, and building/grounds maintenance.

What we need are ready and able workers, and the public also agrees, with the majority of Americans supporting a pathway to citizenship.

It is my hope that the conversation around immigration reform continues to shift as more and more leaders and communities recognize the enormous benefits of immigration becoming more apparent than ever. Texas representatives in Congress must see the urgency of this situation and work with their colleagues to pass immigration reform measures such as the Dream Act and Farm Workforce Modernization Act that will help our state to succeed.

As Texans and as the state with the ninth largest economy in the world by GDP, we must bring innovative and forward-thinking solutions to the table. Immigration reform is a good place to start.

Bobby Jenkins is the CEO of ABC Home & Commercial Services and chairman of the Central Texas Regional Mobility Authority.

Austin American-Statesman

COULD ABORTION BAN TARNISH TEXAS' BUSINESS-FRIENDLY IMAGE?

By Bob Sechler

Austin American-Statesman

July 5, 2022

The Texas economy has fueled strong job growth and investment in recent years even as businesses in the state have increasingly found themselves embroiled in culture war issues ranging from vaccine policies to when sports teams must play the national anthem.

But the politics surrounding abortion could challenge that resilience.

Texas has banned most abortions in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision striking down the nationwide right to the procedure — the opposite position of some states from which it has been attracting steady streams of corporate relocations and new workers, such as California, Illinois and New York.

In addition, a number of socially conservative Republican lawmakers in Texas have said they plan to mount efforts during next year's session of the Legislature to punish companies that help their employees obtain out-of-state abortions.

Possible measures include barring "corporations from doing business in the state of Texas if they pay for (out-of-state) elective abortions or reimburse abortion-related expenses" — as state Rep. Briscoe Cain, R-Deer Park, and 13 other state House members outlined in a May letter to ride-hailing service Lyft — to making such companies ineligible for state contracts or publicly funded financial incentives.

It's unclear if any of those efforts will gain sufficient political traction to become law or withstand legal challenges if they do so.

But the state's anti-abortion stance already has put it at odds with many private-sector employers. Dozens of corporations nationwide have announced they back abortion rights and intend to support workers who want to obtain the procedure.

Austin-based companies that have done so include electric automaker Tesla, job search firm Indeed.com and dating app company Bumble. Others with big operations statewide include Facebook parent Meta and Dallas-based AT&T, as well as Lyft and fellow ride-hailing service Uber.

"We are committed to supporting our employees in their

own decisions about their health," Indeed said in a written statement. "Not only will employees be reimbursed for travel expenses for covered medical procedures that are unavailable where they live, but we are also covering their dependents."

'May be a bigger test'

The upshot is likely to be a draw-out controversy with possible legal ramifications for the business community. Some experts said the conflict could dent Texas' business-friendly image and make companies think twice about expanding or moving here as they assess the impact on their employees, investors and public reputations.

"We have had other social issues that have been controversial in the past, and it hasn't slowed (the Texas economy) down, but this may be a bigger test," said [Justin Yancy](#), president of the [Texas Business Leadership Council](#).

"The ruling by the Supreme Court (leaving the legality of abortion up to individual states) certainly has the potential to weigh on a company's decision-making," said [Yancy](#), whose organization hasn't taken a position on Texas' abortion policies. "It remains to be determined" if that will be the case.

Texas is among about half of U.S. states in which abortion bans are either in place or expected to be so eventually in the wake of the Supreme Court's June 24 ruling.

It also has been among the top states nationwide in terms of attracting business investment, recently winning recognition from Site Selection magazine for outpacing all others in 2021 for capital-intensive development — the 10th year in a row for it to receive the award.

That success has been achieved even though businesses in Texas have drawn the ire of conservative state lawmakers as cultural issues have risen in importance within the state's GOP.

"There has been a shift in the Republican Party (in recent years) that suggests an increased willingness to push back against businesses that are perceived as taking positions on politics based on their read of the preferences of either their consumers, their employees or their investors," said Jim Henson, a University of Texas political scientist.

During last year's state legislative session, the shift manifested itself in successful efforts by social conservatives within the GOP-controlled state government to curb the autonomy of individual businesses or punish their behavior when it comes to a number of hot-button

Austin American-Statesman

issues, including gun ownership, climate change, proof of coronavirus vaccinations and the playing of the national anthem.

Lawmakers approved legislation blocking companies from obtaining state contracts if they boycott the fossil fuel sector or the gun industry, or if they require customers to show proof of coronavirus vaccinations. Other such measures include a law requiring professional sports teams in Texas to play the national anthem at the start of home games or risk losing subsidies and other public funding.

So far, the benefits of doing business in Texas — such as the lack of a personal income tax — have continued to tip the scales in the state's favor for most corporate executives weighing expansions and investment here.

But Henson, director of the Texas Politics Project at UT, said the calculus could change.

"These kinds of laws that are limiting who the state does business with or how businesses operate, they are getting directly involved in corporate governance and corporate strategy," he said. "They certainly increase the negative side of the ledger."

As for the budding efforts by some state lawmakers to retaliate against companies that help employees obtain out-of-state abortions, Henson said it's unclear at this point if they will have enough support to win approval.

But he also said the political appetite to enact those measures could end up having an inverse relationship to the number of businesses involved. That's because the more companies that opt to take such actions to support their employees, the greater the potential for "negative economic blowback" on Texas if the state government tries to stop them, he said.

Unfazed by 'doomsday predictions'

A spokeswoman for Texas House Speaker Dade Phelan, R-Beaumont, said he had no comment on the issue, while representatives of Gov. Greg Abbott and Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick didn't respond to messages seeking comment. All three of those Republican state leaders applauded the recent Supreme Court decision overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the 49-year-old ruling that had established the nationwide right to abortion.

John Seago, president of the anti-abortion group Texas Right to Life, said the angst surrounding the potential economic impact of the state's abortion ban is merely par-for-the-course hand-wringing that happens whenever

social conservatives score legislative victories.

Seago also voiced support for the effort to prevent companies from providing aid for their employees to go outside the state for abortions, although he said his organization has other priorities, such as making sure the in-state ban is enforced and trying to increase resources for pregnant women.

"We hear this every legislative session when we do something bold in terms of social policies," he said of the economic concerns. "None of those (predictions) have come true — none of those big economic doomsday predictions have even come close to coming true" after past legislative gains.

"I don't think (the abortion ban) is going to have that effect, and thankfully the political party in charge right now is not concerned about that either," Seago said, referring to the Republican Party.

Waco economist Ray Perryman is among those who said it should be.

"In essence, the recent Supreme Court decision, among its many other effects, has made reproductive rights a more significant point of differentiation among states with regard to the competition for economic development, and one which will work to the long-term disadvantage of Texas," Perryman said.



Office of the Texas Governor | Greg Abbott

GOVERNOR ABBOTT NAMES HOLLUB CHAIR, APPOINTS TBLC'S FRANCIS, HOLT, PLUS SEVEN BUSINESS LEADERS TO TXEDC BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Office of the Texas Governor
July 6, 2022

Governor Abbott has made nine appointments to the Texas Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors for terms set to expire at the pleasure of the Governor. Additionally, the Governor has named Vicki Hollub as Chair. The corporation is the private side of a public-private partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development & Tourism tasked with marketing Texas, domestically and globally, as the best state for business.

Vicki Hollub of Galveston has served on the Texas Economic Development Corporation Board of Directors since April 2019 and previously served as Vice Chair. She is President and CEO of Occidental, an international oil and gas exploration and production company that is one of the largest U.S. oil and gas companies based on equity market capitalization. She joined Occidental's Board of Directors in 2015 and has been with Occidental for over 35 years. She has extensive operations and leadership experience, and most recently was President and COO, overseeing oil and gas, chemical, and midstream operations. Hollub serves on the boards of Lockheed Martin and the American Petroleum Institute. She is Chair of the World Economic Forum's Oil and Gas Community and a member of the Oil and Gas Climate Initiative. Additionally, she is the former Chair of the Bear Bryant Awards Campaign for the American Heart Association. Hollub received a Bachelor of Science in Mineral Engineering from the University of Alabama. She was inducted into the University of Alabama College of Engineering 2016 Class of Distinguished Engineering Fellows.

Arun Agarwal of Dallas is the CEO of Nextt and has business interests in textiles, cotton trading, and real estate. He is Chair of the India American CEO Council and President of the Dallas Parks & Recreation Board. Additionally, he is a board member of the U.S. India Friendship Council, Executive Board UT Dallas, Texas Tech Innovation HUB at Research Park, Big Brothers Big Sisters International, and MD Anderson Board of Visitors. He is also a volunteer for CHETNA and the Living Dreams Foundation. Agarwal received a Master's in Business Administration from IMT - Ghaziabad, a Master's in Computer Information Systems from Southern New Hampshire University, and an Advanced Certificate in International Business from Harvard University.

Adrian Cannady of Temple is President and CEO of Temple Economic Development Corporation. He is a member and Treasurer of the Texas Economic Development Council and a member of the International Economic Development Council. Additionally, he is a member and former Chairman of Team Texas. He attended the United States Military Academy at West Point and received an Honorable Discharge from the United States Army. Cannady received a Bachelor of Science in Mathematical Sciences and a Master of Science in Economic Development and Entrepreneurship from the University of Houston - Victoria and is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute.

S. David Deanda, Jr. of Mission is President and Director of Lonestar National Bank. Deanda's career spans over 38 years. He has spent the past 28 years as an instrumental component in Lone Star National Bank's transformation into one of the largest independent banks in the state of Texas with over \$3.06 billion in total assets and 35 full-service banking centers across the Rio Grande Valley and San Antonio. In addition to serving on the Board of Directors of Lone Star National Bank, Deanda is a member of the Board of Managers of Doctors Hospital at Renaissance. He also actively serves the community as a member of the Board of Directors of the Valley Alliance of Mentors for Opportunity and Scholarships (VAMOS) and Chairman of the Hidalgo County Regional Mobility Authority. He is a member of the Hidalgo County Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Texas A&M University Kingsville Foundation Board of Trustees, the Board of the Bauer College of Business for the University of Houston, the Minority Depository Institutions Advisory Council, and the Dallas Fed Community Depository Institutions Advisory Council. Deanda received a Bachelor of Business Administration from Texas A&M University and is a graduate of the Southwestern Graduate School of Banking at Southern Methodist University.

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GOVERNOR ABBOTT NAMES HOLLUB CHAIR, APPOINTS NINE TO TEXAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

News Provided By Texas Governor
NewsWires EIN
July 07, 2022

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Austin American-Statesman

OPINION: THE TOOLS TO TACKLE TEXAS' LABOR SHORTAGE

By [Justin Yancy](#)

Austin American-Statesman

July 8, 2022

I recently sat down with policy leaders from across the country at a meeting hosted by Business Roundtable in Washington, D.C. As you can imagine, the economy and workforce were top of mind for all of us.

Employers statewide are having varying levels of difficulty finding skilled workers. While there's no one tool that can alleviate this nationwide challenge, there is a toolbox.

Take the Texas Reskilling and Upskilling through Education (TRUE) initiative, for example. This tool was passed by the Texas Legislature in 2021 and focuses on bringing industry and education together to launch or upgrade industry-aligned, high-demand career programs that can be completed in six months or less. Under TRUE, Texas has already directed \$26 million to skills training at 46 colleges and multi-college collaboratives across the state, with \$15 million more recently announced. TRUE also aligns with Texas' Building a Talent Strong Texas strategic plan, which seeks to ensure that, by 2030, 60% of Texans have a postsecondary credential of value, whether that credential is a degree, certificate, or industry-based certification.

Another tool that needs to be highlighted is work-based learning – specifically youth apprenticeships. The Texas Workforce Commission, in conjunction with the Texas Education Agency and the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board, is doing great work in developing and promoting work-based learning programs around the state. These programs allow high school students to receive paid on-the-job training at companies of all types, from manufacturing to finance, that can lead to great jobs and will improve their chances of success. According to the data from the U.S. Department of Labor, as of 2020, well over one-third of Texas' apprenticeships are for those aged 25 and younger. Employers have the opportunity to work with these motivated students while building their own talent pipelines at the same time.

Lucky for Texas, we have motivated organizations such as Educate Texas, regional workforce boards, and the Texas Association of Community Colleges working together with employers – like our members at the [Texas Business Leadership Council](#) – to create certification and career opportunities.

I can't help but mention one last tool we could have in our economic toolbox: a common-sense immigration system.

It is time for Congress to act by embracing sound policy that will allow DACA recipients permanent legal status, and allow for additional agricultural workers and engineers alike, all while doing more to maintain a secure border.

As you can see, my first tools are fairly non-political; unfortunately, immigration and visa policies are always political. What's frustrating is that it doesn't need to be. All we are talking about is establishing legal, transparent and efficient means to improve our workforce and tax base. A tax base which DACA and DACA-eligible recipients paid in an estimated \$244 million to state and local governments in 2018.

The way immigration is discussed is very often at odds with the reality on the ground. The reality is that we need good hard-working people, at all skill levels, to help keep the Texas economic engine running. According to data from the American Immigration Council, immigrants make up almost 20% of transportation workers in the U.S. and more than 13% of health care workers – one of the most in-demand career fields in the country. With Baby Boomers leaving the workforce and using more health care services, immigration is and will continue to be an economic and workforce issue.

Texas cannot prosper on its good looks alone. We are constantly developing new tools to address our educational, workforce and economic challenges, but we need the political will to bridge the gaps. It takes sound public policy, strong implementation of that policy, and all Texans working together to keep us moving forward.

[Yancy](#) is president of the [Texas Business Leadership Council](#).

The New York Times

WITH ROE OVERTURNED, AUSTIN'S LOSS COULD BE BROOKLYN'S GAIN

By Ginia Bellafante
The New York Times
July 8, 2022

Imagine that you are a young woman setting out on your adult life in the United States of America in 2022. College is behind you; fulfilling personal and professional ambitions in a stimulating place is meant to come next. Ten or 20 years ago, depending on your interests, you might have moved, as if by reflex, to New York or Chicago, to Los Angeles or San Francisco. But those cities have become only more punishingly expensive. The average rental price of an apartment in Brooklyn is now \$3,500, up 12 percent over last year, when we were still lingering in the misguided belief that the pandemic had perhaps changed the city irrevocably toward the softer and more accessible. (In Manhattan, the figure jumped 32 percent to \$4,800.)

In recent years the untenable cost of housing in big cities on the East and West Coasts has sparked demographic shifts that the overturning of *Roe v. Wade*, among ramifications both intimate and systemic, seems poised to upend. In its annual study of where young people are moving, the financial technology firm SmartAsset has been drawing on census data from 180 cities around the country to determine patterns of migration. The most recent edition of the report, arriving last year, looked at prepandemic data and found that people in their 20s and 30s were already leaving the country's largest cities in greater numbers. New York was chief among them with a net loss of 40,000; Chicago, Boston and Los Angeles followed.

Where was everyone going? On the list of top 25 destinations were five cities in Texas (Austin, Houston, San Antonio, Frisco and Dallas) and one in Oklahoma (Lawton, population 94,000) — states where abortion bans are now already in effect. Other places — Nashville, Boise, Phoenix and St. Petersburg, Fla. — are in states where abortion is likely to be prohibited or restricted, all of which leaves women to calculate trade-offs between material comforts and essential reproductive freedoms. Certainly one potential and not insignificant consequence of these new limitations on female autonomy is the undermining of a cultural and economic renaissance that so many smaller cities have experienced over the past decade, a renaissance that has led in turn to more progressive political environments.

Lorraine Hariton, the president and chief executive of Catalyst, a nonprofit that has guided companies toward building more equitable workplaces for women for 60

years, has been thinking about these issues. "We are in a labor shortage and talent is top of mind in business. Women represent over 50 percent of the labor force and over 50 percent of college graduates. The focus on DEI is at an all-time high," she told me. Recruitment is already a challenge. "And changes in legislation will affect the attractiveness of geography for people."

Great local barbecue, a more manageable pace to daily living and reasonably priced midcentury modern furniture are bound to go only so far as the benefits of compromise. "Young women may say, 'I'm not planning on getting an abortion,'" Janice Reals Ellig, the chief executive of a boutique Manhattan headhunting firm, told me, "but I want to be in a state that's friendly to women." Many in Texas are already concerned about the prospect of businesses changing expansion plans in the state or refusing to move there altogether. "We have had other social issues that have been controversial in the past," Justin Yancy, president of the Texas Business Leadership Council, remarked to The Austin American-Statesman earlier this week, "but this may be a bigger test."

It is easy to imagine a scenario in which these disparities in governance only serve to cement the near imperial standing of a few major American cities, corrosively widening the economic and social gulf between them and the rest of the country. Northeastern politicians have already tried to capitalize on the division; New York's mayor, Eric Adams, quickly pointed out that the state's position on social issues, like access to abortion and L.G.B.T.Q. rights, make New York more welcoming than other places.

Last month, Gov. Charlie Baker of Massachusetts went further. He said that the state might "encourage" companies in places that have severely curtailed reproductive rights to relocate to Massachusetts, where access to abortion is readily available. The laws protecting reproductive freedom, in fact, are some of the strongest in the country. Should certain businesses take him up on his offer, they would presumably bring their employees with them.

The danger is not just that Austin, or Nashville, or Lawton, Okla., won't attract certain people; it is also that others will simply choose to leave those places behind. As one concerned friend in Alabama put it to me last week, the threat of the "brain drain is real." The likelihood of superstar cities like New York and Boston only digging deeper into talent hoarding is just as problematic.



NEW RESEARCH SHOWS TEXAS IMMIGRANTS ACCOUNTED FOR OVER 20 PERCENT OF WORKFORCE ACROSS SEVERAL LEADING INDUSTRIES

Authored by Texans for Economic Growth and originally published on americanimmigrationcouncil.org

Texas GOP Vote

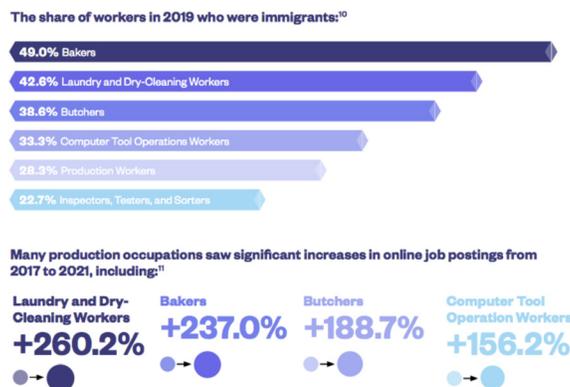
July 14, 2022

AUSTIN, TX - New research on The Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Texas released July 11 by Texans for Economic Growth—a statewide 125+-member business coalition powered by the American Immigration Council—in partnership with the Texas Association of Business and the **Texas Business Leadership Council** underscores the crucial role immigrants in Texas play in some of the state’s fastest growing and most in demand fields.

“Workforce is one of the top issues for businesses across our state. We need to do everything we can to ensure we have the right immigration policies in place so that some of the hardest working people on the planet can come to the U.S. and contribute to our economy,” said Glenn Hamer, president and CEO of the Texas Association of Business. “This report illustrates the tremendous contributions immigrant workers make in Texas and that our economy heavily relies on them.”

Justin Yancy, president of the **Texas Business Leadership Council (TBLC)** added,

“The **TBLC** is proud to partner with the American Immigration Council (the Council) in highlighting the importance of immigration reform, especially as it relates to our state and nation’s economic prosperity. According to the Council, immigrants make up more than 13% of healthcare workers—one of the most in-demand career fields in the country. In Texas, according to this new report, we have seen a 91% increase in job postings for healthcare professionals and a 265% increase in posts requesting bilingual skills. Texas is in critical need of qualified, bilingual healthcare professionals, and immigrants to our country — whether they are holding a visa, are a DACA recipient, or a newly naturalized U.S. citizen — are helping to relieve this labor shortage.”



Key findings:

- Growth in the immigrant population has helped strengthen the Texas labor force. In 2019, immigrants in Texas comprised 17.1 percent of the population, but 21.9 percent of the state’s overall workforce. As of 2021, there were 7.1 million Texans aged 55 and older expected to retire in the next decade.
- The Texas economy continues to expand, with job postings more than doubling from 1.85 million in 2017 to 3.84 million in 2021. Immigrants will be crucial to meeting demand in the sectors that power the Texas economy.
- Manufacturing is a key economic driver in Texas. In 2019, the economic output of the state’s manufacturing sector was larger than the manufacturing GDP of either Russia or Mexico, and of Portugal’s entire national economy. The greatest number of online job postings in 2021 was for production workers; postings tripled from 7,508 to 23,010 in five years. In 2019, immigrants made up 28.3 percent of all production workers in Texas.
- Job postings in the healthcare industry increased by 90.9 percent from 2017 to 2021, and job postings for healthcare occupations that requested bilingual workers grew by 264.6 percent. In 2019 20.4 percent of registered nurses (RNs), 14.5 percent of licensed practical nurses (LPNs), and 28.7 percent of home healthcare aides were immigrants.
- Immigrants play a critical role in easing teacher shortages. From 2017 to 2021, online job postings for teachers and teaching assistants in Texas K-12 schools doubled. During that same period, online job postings for K-12 teachers and educational support occupations that listed bilingual skills grew by 158.1 percent.

The Dallas Morning News



Finger Lakes Times

The Eagle

IMMIGRANTS ACCOUNTED FOR OVER 20% OF TEXAS' WORKFORCE, STUDY FINDS

By Alexandra Skores
The Dallas Morning News
July 15, 2022

Immigrants in Texas account for over 20% of the state's workforce, a new study says.

The Economic Contributions of Immigrants in Texas evaluates the role immigrants in Texas play across many industries. The study was released by Texans for Economic Growth, a statewide coalition of over 125 member businesses created by the American Immigration Council in partnership with the Texas Association of Business and the [Texas Business Leadership Council](#).

The report was compiled from studying job postings from any business on a job board or company website, LinkedIn, Monster.com, Indeed or similar websites. Researchers took the data that was spread across the entire internet and analyzed job postings.

Adam Lampert, CEO of Cambridge Caregivers and Manchester Care Homes, said the state is growing and needs to start embracing immigrant workers. Cambridge Caregivers and Manchester Care Homes is a member of Texans for Economic Growth.

"We cannot have growth and we cannot avoid inflation without embracing immigrants in our state," he said.

The labor shortage has rippled through the country as a result of the pandemic and the subsequent growth of the economy. Legal immigration was also hurt by changing immigration policies and the pandemic.

Cambridge Caregivers offers services to seniors in their own homes and at Manchester Care Homes, and 80% of the company's workforce identify as immigrant employees, Lampert said. He said immigrant workers have filled the gaps during the labor shortage.

Immigrant populations strengthen the Texas workforce, according to the research. In 2019, immigrants in Texas made up 17.1% of the population but 21.9% of the state's overall workforce.

[Justin Yancy](#), president of the [Texas Business Leadership Council](#), said immigrants make up more than 13% of health care workers, according to the research.

"Texas is in critical need of qualified, bilingual health care professionals, and immigrants to our country —whether they are holding a visa, are a DACA recipient or a newly naturalized U.S. citizen — are helping to relieve this labor shortage," [Yancy](#) said.

Manufacturing is a key economic driver in the state, and immigrants made up 28.3% of all production workers in Texas in 2019, according to the study.

Dallas-Fort Worth added 294,700 jobs in the 12 months ended in May, roughly three times more than the typical annual gain before the pandemic, according to Bureau of Labor Statistics data. America's employers made 372,000 hires in June.

Glenn Hamer, president and CEO of the Texas Association of Business, said the state needs to continue to invest in the growing workforce.

"We need to do everything we can to ensure we have the right immigration policies in place so that some of the hardest-working people on the planet can come to the U.S. and contribute to our economy," Hamer said.



INMIGRANTES REPRESENTAN MÁS DEL 20% DE LA FUERZA LABORAL DE TEXAS, SEGÚN UN ESTUDIO

By Alexandra Skores

Al Dia Dallas

July 15, 2022

Los inmigrantes en Texas representan más del 20% de la fuerza laboral del estado, según un nuevo estudio.

Las contribuciones económicas de los inmigrantes en Texas evalúa el papel que juegan los inmigrantes en Texas en muchas industrias.

El estudio fue publicado por Texans for Economic Growth, una coalición estatal de más de 125 empresas creada por el American Immigration Council en colaboración con la Texas Association of Business y el Texas Business Leadership Council.

El informe se compiló a partir del estudio de las ofertas de trabajo en sitios digitales como LinkedIn, Monster.com, Indeed y otros.

Los investigadores tomaron los datos que se extendieron por todo Internet y analizaron las ofertas de trabajo.

Adam Lampert, director ejecutivo de Cambridge Caregivers y Manchester Care Homes, dijo que Texas está creciendo y necesita comenzar a acoger a los trabajadores inmigrantes.

“No podemos tener crecimiento y no podemos evitar la inflación sin acoger a los inmigrantes en nuestro estado”, dijo.

La escasez de mano de obra se ha extendido por todo el país como resultado de la pandemia y el posterior crecimiento de la economía.

La inmigración legal también se vio afectada por los cambios en las políticas de inmigración y la pandemia.

Las poblaciones inmigrantes fortalecen la fuerza laboral de Texas, según la investigación.

En 2019, los inmigrantes en Texas constituían el 17.1 % de la población, pero el 21.9 % de la fuerza laboral general del estado.

Austin American-Statesman

'SMOKE AND MIRRORS' OR LONG-RANGE PLANNING? POSSIBLE SAMSUNG TAX BREAKS STIR DEBATE

By Bob Sechler

Austin American-Statesman

July 22, 2022

Corporate tax breaks often draw criticism based on concerns that they might reward companies for actions they were going to take anyway and that the forgone tax revenue might hurt local communities financially.

When it comes to Samsung, a new objection can be added to that litany.

The technology company is seeking to lock in publicly funded incentives from the Manor and Taylor school districts for 11 prospective semiconductor fabrication plants that it doesn't expect to be operational for more than 10 years — and in some cases two decades — if it goes forward with them at all.

That's prompting questions about how the incentive applications can be properly assessed when the agreements wouldn't take effect until so far into the future, as well as the propriety of binding future residents to such deals.

"It's fiction," said Trenton Henrichson, a computer engineer and a leader of Central Texas Interfaith, a group that is opposed to the incentives. "If you're talking about (fabrication plants) 10 years in the future like you know what they're going to be, you're just making stuff up."

South Korea-based Samsung's applications for tax breaks from the Manor and Taylor districts outline a staggering amount of potential investment in the region — totaling about \$192 billion across the 11 possible fabrication plants over the next two decades.

The applications — which haven't been approved by the school districts — were filed under the state's controversial Chapter 313 incentive program that empowers school districts to grant tax breaks in exchange for development within their boundaries. They were posted this week to the Texas comptroller's website.

The Chapter 313 program is set to expire at the end of this year, but incentive deals reached before then will be allowed to proceed. That has prompted a flood of applications from companies attempting to get in under the wire — more than 400 applications have already been filed statewide in 2022, almost three times the previous full-year high of about 150, according to the comptroller's office.

If Samsung's applications are approved and it opts to make all of the massive investment outlined in them, two of the plants would be built in Austin, where the company already has manufacturing facilities, and nine would be built in Taylor, a small town about 25 miles northeast of Austin where it's in the process of building a \$17 billion plant announced last year. The 11 new plants would become operational on a staggered basis from 2034 to 2042, the company's Chapter 313 applications indicate.

Meanwhile, the potential tax breaks would be huge, totaling \$4.8 billion over the life of the agreements if all 11 plants are completed as described in the applications, according to an analysis by the American-Statesman. That figure assumes no change in tax rates far into the future, however, meaning the sum could go up if property tax rates rise.

Samsung has said it's merely considering the possibility of making the investments in the Austin area as part of its long-range strategizing.

"We currently do not have specific plans to build at this time, however, the Chapter 313 applications to the state of Texas are part of a long-term planning process of Samsung to evaluate the viability of potentially building additional fabrication plants in the United States," Samsung spokesperson Michele Glaze said.

Taking a flier?

Critics contend that means the company is just taking a flier as the Chapter 313 deadline closes in, joining the rush to secure such deals for tax breaks on the off chance it might opt to use them someday. A number of other corporations have also filed applications for deals around the state that wouldn't go into effect for about two decades, including fellow chipmaker Texas Instruments in the Dallas area.

"It's clear that they're gaming (the Chapter 313 program) to lock in these incentives," said Nathan Jensen, a University of Texas professor who studies taxpayer-funded incentives to corporations.

"It's terrible public policy" if the applications are approved, Jensen said. "I don't think anyone with a straight face can say we know what the tax rates are going to be (a decade or two into the future), or the laws and the school finance system," or other changes that might happen.

But [Justin Yancy](#), president of the [Texas Business Leadership Council](#), said he doesn't consider the flood of applications for Chapter 313 deals statewide to be nefarious or surprising. Companies are simply realizing "they need to beat the clock" before the Chapter 313

Austin American-Statesman

program expires, he said, because the availability of tax breaks is an important consideration when it comes to expansions and relocations.

Yancy and many other business leaders and economic development officials in Texas have said the expiration of Chapter 313, which is among the state's top incentive programs, will hurt its ability to compete for projects. They intend to lobby state lawmakers to enact a replacement during next year's legislative session.

"Texas needs to have effective tools in our economic development tool box to continue to be competitive with other states that are doing all that they can" to lure big-ticket corporate expansions and relocations, Yancy said.

As for the spate of Chapter 313 applications for projects that won't happen for a decade or two, Yancy said they might make sense for companies doing long-range planning that aren't certain what Texas' policy regarding incentives will be once the Chapter 313 program goes away.

Still, he said the exceptionally long time horizons mean "a lot of stars would have to align for (a company's) needs to still be the same that far out."

Leaders of Central Texas Interfaith called such applications "smoke and mirrors," saying the plans are fuzzy and local officials have no way to evaluate them. The organization helped lobby against renewal of the Chapter 313 program during last year's session of the state Legislature, saying the corporate tax breaks granted under it have decreased the amount of money available for public education in the state.

Dick Lavine, senior fiscal analyst with the public policy group Every Texan, raised another issue — future leaders of the Taylor and Manor school districts, as well as residents of the areas, might not appreciate being forced to abide by deals made 10 or 20 years earlier.

"They may rue the day this open invitation was extended (to Samsung) to come at their convenience" if the applications are approved, Lavine said.

"Taylor is a nice little town with good barbecue," he said. "In 20 years, (its residents) may be tired of all these semiconductor plants causing traffic jams, pushing up housing prices and making Taylor just an extension of downtown Austin."

Representatives of the Taylor and Manor school districts didn't immediately respond to requests for comment.

Chapter 313 incentive agreements, which are named for a section of the state's tax code, allow school districts in Texas to give significant property tax breaks to companies in exchange for projects that will create jobs and other investments in their areas.

Local tax revenue that school districts waive under Chapter 313 agreements is substantially replaced by the state through its school funding formula, leading to criticism that school officials have no reason not to approve them regardless of a project's worthiness.

San Antonio Express-News

EDITORIAL: STATE OFFICIALS CAN BOOST THE BENEFITS THE CHIPS ACT BRINGS TO TEXAS

By **John Dickson**

San Antonio Express-News

August 2, 2022

Semiconductors are crucial components of many everyday items. From vehicles to devices, countless products need these chips to function. When the pandemic disrupted supply chains, consumers became aware of how vital semiconductors are to their daily lives. As chip shortages strained manufacturers, it made new products tough to find and prices for used products skyrocketed. Just look at the market for vehicles.

In the 1990s, the U.S. manufactured 37 percent of the global semiconductor supply, but that has fallen to 12 percent. While consumers have recently been inconvenienced with delays and higher prices, the semiconductor shortage poses national security risks. Two firms in Asia produce 70 percent of the global semiconductor supply. With China's saber-rattling, the time is now for the U.S. to invest in American ingenuity.

The U.S. House recently passed the CHIPS and Science Act. This legislation couldn't have come at a better time. The bill has Texas roots as Sen. John Cornyn led in the Senate on a CHIPS Act, which this broader legislative package incorporates.

Texas is already seeing the benefits of this initiative. New plants have been announced in Austin and Sherman, and Samsung is considering another exponential expansion in the Austin area, with the potential for a \$197 billion investment in 11 new plants and 10,000 good jobs.

For Texas to take full advantage of this opportunity and solidify itself as the global leader in tech manufacturing, cybersecurity and innovation, leaders in Austin should restructure an economic development package that benefits the communities where these businesses break ground. They then should ensure we have the talent pipeline to staff these facilities with the right STEM employees.

Arguably our most successful economic tool, Chapter 313 was not renewed last legislative session. States are courting businesses looking to relocate, and those businesses owe it to their boards and stakeholders to get the best deal. Texas is already attractive, boasting a low cost of living and no state income tax, but if Texas doesn't have any offer on the table, it will lose.

The state's strategic higher education plan has a goal of 60 percent of our workforce obtaining a postsecondary

credential by 2030. As of 2018, the state sat at just over 43 percent attainment. There is a movement gaining traction to create opportunities for Texans to "earn and learn," while finishing high school in some cases. The beauty of this work — especially in localities where semiconductor plants are being built — is that it creates opportunities for students to succeed in high-demand career fields while creating an educated labor pool for the company to produce in-demand products, like chips.

These talent pipelines take time to develop. In the meantime, a firm needs to hire its STEM talent from somewhere — overseas if need be. In recent years, there has been an influx of high-skilled STEM talent seeking to join the American workforce, but limits on green cards and temporary visas are inhibiting too many bright minds from remaining here. I had hoped to see a provision in the final CHIPS bill that would have included visa and immigration provisions.

The CHIPS and Science Act is a great accomplishment. If Texas can find a way to multiply its benefits to businesses and job seekers, we have a real opportunity to supercharge the Texas Miracle so the Lone Star State grows more globally competitive for decades.

John Dickson is a cybersecurity entrepreneur, former intelligence officer with the U.S. Air Force and member of the **Texas Business Leadership Council**.

Austin American-Statesman

AUSTIN ECONOMY FORGES AHEAD AS RECESSION FEARS LOOM NATIONALLY

Bob Sechler

Austin American-Statesman

August 8, 2022

If you're looking for evidence that the U.S. economic slowdown is having an impact locally, you won't find it at **Bobby Jenkins'** company, ABC Home & Commercial Services.

ABC's revenue in July climbed nearly 17% compared with the same month a year ago, and **Jenkins** said he's trying to fill about three dozen open positions to keep up with demand.

But that doesn't mean he's not monitoring the weakening national outlook.

"I'm definitely worried about it," said **Jenkins**, owner of Austin-based ABC. "But while I am concerned about the big picture, I can tell you currently in Austin, business is very good and demand is still high."

It's a common refrain in the Austin business community. Local economic indicators remain strong for the most part, despite wariness about the possibility that a broad nationwide downturn could put a damper on activity in the metro area.

National economy struggling

By one widespread definition of a recession — two consecutive quarters of negative growth — the United States is already in one after the gross domestic product slipped in both the first and second quarters this year. Still, Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell has said he doesn't think a recession has begun because of other economic data that's more positive, and the National Bureau of Economic Research, the organization that officially makes the call, has yet to weigh in.

There's little doubt the national economy is struggling, however.

High inflation has increased costs for food and fuel, and the Fed's effort to tame it by raising interest rates has made it more expensive to borrow money and cooled housing markets. Meanwhile, the stock market has fallen substantially this year, and a number of big-name companies nationally have begun laying off workers, including retail giant Walmart, automaker Ford Motor Co. and software company Oracle, which is based in Austin.

Luis Torres, a senior business economist with the Federal

Reserve Bank of Dallas, said he won't be surprised if economic activity in the Austin area decelerates as the U.S. economy loses steam overall. Given how strong the local economy has been, however, he said he expects it to be a far cry from an actual downturn.

The goal of the interest rate increases by the Central Bank "is to slow the economy (and thus bring down inflation) without sending it into a recession," said Torres, who is based in San Antonio.

If it's successful, "Austin would still be strong, just growing at a slower rate," Torres said. "Austin will definitely continue to do well" and probably outperform the national economy, buoyed by a flood of companies that have been relocating or expanding in the area.

Just within the past few days, aerospace and defense technology company BAE Systems said it's moving portions of a major division here. The announcement is the latest in what has been a string of economic development wins for the Austin area before and during the coronavirus pandemic, including big projects by electric automaker Tesla and technology giants Samsung and Apple.

Austin bucking the trend

So far at least, the upshot is that business activity in Austin has shown few signs of cooling, even though the hot local housing market — which has been notching sales records for months — is retrenching somewhat and cracks have begun to emerge in the Texas economy overall.

A key barometer of the Austin area devised by the Dallas Fed, called the Austin business-cycle index, actually signaled acceleration in June, the most recent figure available, after slowing a bit in May.

In addition, the unemployment rate in the Austin metro area came in at a seasonally adjusted 2.9% in June — tying its pandemic-era low. Employment in the area grew at an annualized pace of 11%, a big increase from 1.9% in May, and average hourly wages were up 7.6% compared with June 2021, outpacing year-over-year gains of 5.1% nationally and 4.5% statewide, according to the Dallas Fed.

Ellen Wood, CEO of Austin-based vcfo, said she is "definitely paying attention" to the trends in the national economy but isn't seeing a slowdown in her own business or those of her clients. **Wood's** company, which has about 200 clients, provides finance and human resources services to mainly small- and medium-sized firms.

"We have been ahead of plan all year," she said. "We are only limited by the talent that we can onboard onto our

Austin American-Statesman

team” because of what has been a tight labor market.

Still, **Wood** said some early stage startups have been having more difficulty obtaining funding lately or are having to adhere to tighter expense controls imposed by their venture backers, and she also said she’s aware of acquisition talks that have been put on hold. Overall, however, “we are not seeing a significant impact or overwhelming concern (among vcfo’s clients) about the impact on Austin of the national discussion around a recession,” she said.

Even if that changes and the national troubles begin to reverberate more in the Austin area, **Wood** said the local economy “could slow down from red-hot and still be in a really good spot.”

Jason Schenker, president of Prestige Economics in Austin, said he isn’t certain it would stop there, however,

‘Things could get challenging’

While the region’s economy is insulated somewhat by the substantial presence here of state government and the University of Texas, **Schenker** said, the local housing market could fall farther than elsewhere because it has been so strong — depending on how much the Federal Reserve raises interest rates — and the big local technology sector could be vulnerable if a tech downturn accelerates nationally.

Housing prices in the Austin area have been hitting records and remain high, but a new report from Realtor.com recently ranked the region the No. 2 metro area in the nation in terms of percentage of price cuts for homes on the market.

In addition, housing inventories in the Austin metro area now exceed a two-month supply for the first time since November 2019, according to the Austin Board of Realtors. That’s still an extremely tight level of inventory and indicates it remains very much a seller’s market, but it signals a slowdown for Austin nonetheless.

“Austin is exposed to housing (and) Austin is exposed to tech — and those are two areas under pressure right now,” **Schenker** said.

He also noted that recent reports on the Texas economy overall have been worrisome. According to the Dallas Fed, statewide job growth in June and July was solid but the economy expanded at a slower pace than earlier in the year, led by weakening demand in manufacturing.

“I think with so many projects in the works (in Austin) and so many companies and people moving here, that puts us in an advantaged position” relative to many other metro areas across the state and nation, **Schenker** said. “If the Fed is close to done raising interest rates, then Austin would probably barely miss a beat.”

But “if interest rates keep rising, things could get challenging,” he said.

Jenkins, whose company provides a wide range of services to homeowners and businesses including pest control, air conditioner repair, and lawn and pool care, said he’s watching how those dynamics play out. In the interim, however, he said business is booming.

“We are having a great year,” **Jenkins** said. “To grow at the rate that we are growing at the size that we are growing, I would say it has never been better.”

AUSTIN BUSINESS JOURNAL

ADVERTISING MAVEN GAY GADDIS TO BE HONORED FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT

By Will Anderson
Austin Business Journal
September 9, 2022

Eighty-four chief executives and local leaders have been nominated for the 2022 Best CEO Awards, and **Gay Gaddis**, founder and former head of advertising agency T3, has been named this year's Legacy Award recipient.

Gaddis is an advertising and marketing luminary. After stints in communications and consulting, she worked at the William Lacy Agency in Austin in the early 1980s. She famously cashed out her IRA to start T3 in 1989 and grew it into the largest independent, female-owned ad agency in the United States before stepping down as CEO in 2019, when the company was acquired by LRW Group, now known as Material.

In addition to her marketing influence and entrepreneurial renown, **Gaddis** is known for supporting her alma mater, the University of Texas at Austin, where she serves on the board of the Texas Exes alumni group and on the Dean's Advisory Council for the McCombs School of Business. She also runs the Women Who Mean Business program at the McCombs School and was inducted into the McCombs School Hall of Fame in 2020.

Gaddis was the first female chair of the **Texas Business Leadership Council** and remains on the board of the Texas Cultural Trust. In 2020, she won the Liz Carpenter Lifetime Achievement Award from Women Communicators of Austin that "recognizes professional communicators who have reached the highest levels of personal and professional achievement."

An artist and an author, **Gaddis** penned "Cowgirl Power: How to Kick A** in Business & Life" and has been highlighted for her painting by Texas Monthly.

And in 2011, **Gaddis** won an ABJ Best CEO Award in the program's inaugural year.

Gaddis joins past Legacy Award recipients such as Tyson Tuttle, Gary Keller and John Paul DeJoria.

Austin Business Journal will present the awards in a private ceremony on Oct. 6. Winners will be crowned based on size and type of organization. The judging is done by a committee of past winners, based on nominees' track record of innovation" and "outstanding performance," in business as well in philanthropy and other community services.

The awards were open to the CEO or top executive officer of a company, as well as business owners and market leaders — the top local executive of a company based elsewhere. Nominees must live and work in Travis, Williamson, Hays, Burnet, Caldwell or Bastrop counties.

Check out the alphabetical list of nominees below, and look for coverage of the winners in early October in print and online.

2022 Best CEO nominees

- Tamara Atkinson, CEO, Workforce Solutions Capital Area
- **Kyndel Bennett**, CEO, Cayetano Development, LLC
- Eric Bernstein, president, LendFriend Home Loans
- Vinay Bhagat, CEO, TrustRadius
- Bret Biggart, CEO, Freedom Solar
- Bjorn Billhardt, CEO, Abilitie
- Alan Blake, CEO, Nuclein LLC
- Paula Bookidis, CEO, Girl Scouts of Central Texas
- Matthew Briggs, CEO, Four Hands
- Cory Brymer, CEO, BryComm LLC
- Bryan Burkhart, CEO, Worksmith Inc.
- Tabatha Callaway, CEO, MSB School Services
- Stephanie Collins, CEO, Austin Retina Associates
- Mark Cordell Jr., CEO, Environments Plus Inc.
- David Dawson, CEO, Winstead PC
- Jim Donnelly, CEO, Restore Hyper Wellness
- Joyce Durst, CEO, Growth Acceleration Partners
- Nad Elias, CEO, recruitAbility
- Evan Erdberg, CEO, Proximity Learning Inc.
- Jessica Ewing, CEO, Literati
- Stan Finch, CEO, Berry Aviation
- Blake Garrett, CEO, Aceable
- Kendall Garrison, CEO, Amplify Credit Union
- Razat Gaurav, CEO, Planview Inc.
- Jason Giulietti, president, Greater San Marcos Partnership
- Gary Grief, executive director, Texas Lottery Commission
- Craig Haley, president, Smokey Mo's BBQ
- Jeana Harrington, CEO, Mighty Swell Spiked Seltzer
- Steve Hickman, CEO, Clear Measure Inc.
- Kelly Hill, CEO, FriendlyForce Technology Inc.
- Char Hu, CEO, The Helper Bees
- Matthew Iommi, CEO, Fetii
- Ali Khataw, CEO, Encotech Engineering Consultants Inc.
- Alan Knitowski, CEO, Phunware
- Jason Krieg, owner, Alamo Austin Air
- Richard Lebovitz, CEO, LeanDNA
- Robert Lee, CEO, Pearlstone Partners
- Blanca Lesmes, CEO, BB Imaging - TeleScan
- Michael Lezam, CEO, Lezam Insurance
- Kana LiVolsi, CEO, Dos Mundos Creative

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- Kathleen Lucente, CEO, Red Fan Communications
- Brianna McKinney, CEO, Bloom Communications
- Greg Mercer, CEO, Jungle Scout
- Ahmed Moledina, CEO, SOAL Technologies
- Clint Muhlenberg, CEO, Level - Virtual Specialists
- Chelle Neff, CEO, Urban Betty
- Mike Nellis, CEO, Austin Community Foundation
- Jack Nelson, CEO, Skimmer Inc.
- Antti Nivala, CEO, M-Files
- Tom Nolan, CEO, Kendra Scott
- Jon Olsen, CEO, Vaask
- Jenna Oltersdorf, CEO, Snackbox
- Jeffrey Palermo, CEO, ShoWorks Cloud, LLC.
- Wendy Papasan, owner, Her Best Life
- Travis Penfield, CEO, 49 Financial
- Anthony Precourt, owner, Austin FC
- Stephen Raffaele, CEO, American Bank
- Sabari Raja, CEO, Nepris
- Alfredo Ramirez, CEO, Vyopta Inc.
- Ashley Rose, CEO, Living Security
- Ted Ross, CEO, SpyCloud
- Jinous Marie Rouhani, CEO, Austin Area Obstetrics, Gynecology & Fertility
- Neha Sampat, CEO, Contentstack
- Bree Sarlati, CEO, Peak Performers
- Justin Satterfield, owner, Norwood
- James Scherer, owner, Austin Pallet Company
- Chris Seals, CEO, Still Austin Whiskey Co
- Reed Seaton, CEO, Hellas Construction
- Yassin Sibai, CEO, Afia
- Kevin Smartt, CEO, TXB
- Emerson Smith, CEO, Pushnami
- Larry Talley, CEO, Everyware
- Eric Thurston, CEO, TCP Software
- Sherri Turpin, CEO, ZVRS and Purple Communications
- Christa Tuttle, CEO, Launch Marketing
- Paige Velasquez Budde, CEO, Zilker Media
- Jeff Wilkinson, CEO, Keystone Bank
- John Winner, CEO, Kizen
- Matt Wursta, CEO, Wursta
- Barry Wurzel, president, Wurzel Builders
- Robin Wurzel, manager, 1st Home & Commercial Service
- Will Young, CEO, Sana Benefits
- Lamine Zarrad, CEO, StellarFi
- Lourdes Zuniga, executive director, Financial Health Pathways

TEXAS MUTUAL CEO TO RETIRE IN 2023 AFTER 40 YEARS IN INSURANCE

By Bethan Moorcraft
Insurance Business America
October 5, 2022

Texas Mutual president and CEO, **Richard "Rich" Gergasko**, has announced his intention to retire in early 2023, after 40 years in the insurance industry.

Gergasko joined Texas Mutual, the leading state workers' compensation provider, in 2013. In the following decade, he built up the company's financial strength, provided stable leadership through the COVID-19 pandemic, and championed various initiatives to keep employees and policyholders safe – including a "no-use-while-driving" cell phone policy for all employees.

"We're grateful to **Rich** for his steadfast leadership, especially during the last few years when our employees, agents and policyholders looked to him for stability during the COVID-19 pandemic," said Ron Simmons, chairman, Texas Mutual Board of Directors. "Rich's accomplishments during his tenure at Texas Mutual are numerous. I'm particularly proud of the excellent financial foundation he has built that is recognized through an A rating from AM Best. I also appreciate his work to create a stronger, safer Texas and am confident his efforts will have a lasting impact across our state and the industry."

Upon announcing his retirement, **Gergasko** said: "When I think about the last 10 years at Texas Mutual, there's a lot to be proud of. The consistent theme throughout has been our commitment to being a stable force for good across the state of Texas. Texas Mutual's philanthropic program is second-to-none, making a difference in communities across the state with safety awards, scholarships, philanthropic grants and safety training grants. In 2022 alone, we are investing \$12 million in philanthropic funding across Texas."

While supporting Texas Mutual's philanthropic program from the top down, **Gergasko** has also served in various leadership positions for non-profit and industry organizations. He was chair of the American Heart Association Board of Directors in Austin; chair of the Austin Heart and Stroke Walk; member of United Way for Greater Austin's Campaign Cabinet, founding organizer of Texas Mutual's cycling team for the MS 150, Executive Committee member of the **Texas Business Leadership Council**, member of the Insurance Industry Charitable Foundation, and more.

Texas Mutual will explore external and internal options for its new CEO, with the help of executive search and leadership advisory firm Russell Reynolds Associates.



TEXAS BUSINESS LEADERS URGE CONGRESS TO PROVIDE PERMANENT PROTECTIONS FOR DREAMERS

FOLLOWING YESTERDAY'S 5TH CIRCUIT COURT OF APPEALS RULING, LEADING TEXAS VOICES HIGHLIGHT DACA PROGRAM'S ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY BENEFITS, URGE ACTION

By TexasGOPVote

TexasGOP Vote

October 6, 2022

AUSTIN, TX — Texas business leaders - including the Texas Association of Business, [Texas Business Leadership Council](#), Texas Restaurant Association, Texas Retailers Association, Texas Nursery & Landscaping Association, Rio Grande Valley Partnership, San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, North Texas Commission, and the Greater Houston Partnership - issued the following joint statement after the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruling in State of Texas v. USA finding the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program illegal:

"Yesterday's ruling by the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals will leave a devastating impact on Texas' workforce, economy, and communities without a permanent legislative solution from Congress that allows Dreamers to continue living, working, and studying in the Lone Star State and nation as a whole. Since DACA was enacted a decade ago, more than 100,000 Texas immigrants have launched businesses, established careers, and built families that help our communities and state succeed. While this decision allows the current policy and renewals for existing DACA recipients to remain, it is another step closer to the termination of the DACA policy altogether. Further, it draws out uncertainty for hundreds of thousands of DACA recipients while failing to support the future generation of Dreamers.

"We have witnessed the vital role Dreamers play in our state's key industries as workers, leaders, and entrepreneurs who have helped shape Texas' society, culture, and the economy into the global leader we are today. During an already challenging time for Texas' workforce and economy, Texas businesses can't afford any further setbacks to building a robust workforce. We urge Congress to establish a permanent legislative solution for Dreamers to allow these immigrants to live free of fear and continue contributing to our state's prosperity."

Additional Background

Since the DACA policy went into effect a decade ago, more than 100,000 Texas immigrants have been able to benefit from temporary deportation protections and work authorization. The DACA-eligible population in Texas has contributed \$963.4 million in annual federal, state, and local taxes. Without a permanent legislative solution in place, Texas could lose \$8 billion in annual GDP and about \$78 million in state and local taxes each year - and the hundreds of thousands of immigrants who have called Texas home since childhood face deportation to countries most don't remember.

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**5TH CIRCUIT HANDS TEXAS ANOTHER
WIN ON IMMIGRATION, RULING DACA IS
UNCONSTITUTIONAL**

By Bethany Blankley
The Center Square
October 6, 2022

(The Center Square) – The Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld a Texas federal judge’s ruling that the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program is unconstitutional.

The program, created by a Department of Homeland Security memo in 2012, prevents some foreign nationals who were illegally brought into the U.S. as children from being deported. It initially applied to roughly 800,000 individuals. Those in the program were given U.S. Social Security numbers, even though they aren’t U.S. citizens, work authorization, and the ability to renew their DACA status every two years, shielding them from deportation.

“Texas wins big against the lawless, open-borders Biden Administration at the 5th Circuit,” Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton tweeted after the Wednesday ruling. “The appeals court just AFFIRMED my team’s trial court win. DACA – part of Dems’ program to flood our country with aliens – is illegal and will stay enjoined. Huge victory for the Rule of Law in America!”

In 2017, President Donald Trump unsuccessfully tried to rescind DACA. In 2018, Texas and other states sued, arguing the program is unconstitutional.

Last July, U.S. District Judge Andrew Hanen ruled in favor of Texas, affirming that DACA is unconstitutional because immigration law and oversight of deportation is established by Congress, not by a federal agency secretary in the executive branch.

In his ruling, Hanen allowed current DACA recipients to remain in the U.S. but blocked DACA from being applied to minors who continue to be brought into the U.S. illegally.

In upholding Hanen’s ruling, the appeals court also allowed current DACA recipients to remain in the U.S.

It also sent the case back to Hanen to review a new federal rule change proposed by Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and determine its legality. Mayorkas’ proposal codifies existing DACA policy as a federal regulation. Unless halted, it’s set to go into effect Oct. 31.

Chief Judge Priscilla Richman of the 5th Circuit of Appeals lauded Hanen’s earlier ruling, arguing, “The district court’s excellent opinion correctly identified fundamental substantive defects in the program. The DACA memorandum contracts significant parts of the [Immigration and Naturalization Act].

“DACA creates a new class of otherwise removable aliens who may obtain lawful presence, work authorization, and associated benefits. Congress determined which aliens can receive these benefits, and it did not include DACA recipients among them.”

The court concluded, “We agree with the district court’s reasoning and its conclusions that the DACA Memorandum contravenes comprehensive statutory schemes for removal, allocation of lawful presence, and allocation of work authorization.”

On sending the case back to the lower court, she added, “A district court is in the best position to review the administrative record in the rulemaking proceeding and determine whether our holdings as to the 2012 DACA Memorandum fully resolve issues concerning the Final Rule.”

The Justice Department is expected to appeal the ruling, setting the case to be heard before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Many Texas industries that have historically relied on illegal immigrants, legal migrants, and DACA recipients for

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labor have lobbied for permanent legal status for DACA recipients. They've also expressed opposition to the ruling. Represented by several associations, some Texas employers are urging Congress to establish a permanent solution for DACA recipients, whom they call "Dreamers."

The Texas Association of Business, **Texas Business Leadership Council**, Texas Restaurant Association, Texas Retailers Association, Texas Nursery & Landscaping Association, Rio Grande Valley Partnership, San Antonio Chamber of Commerce, North Texas Commission, and the Greater Houston Partnership issued a joint statement saying the ruling will have "a devastating impact on Texas' workforce, economy, and communities without a permanent legislative solution from Congress that allows Dreamers to continue living, working, and studying in the Lone Star State and nation as a whole. Since DACA was enacted a decade ago, more than 100,000 Texas immigrants have launched businesses, established careers, and built families that help our communities and state succeed."

In August, total nonfarm employment reached a record 13.5 million people employed in Texas, according to state data. DACA recipients represent 0.74% of Texas' total workforce.

The groups argue the decision "is another step closer to the termination of the DACA policy altogether" and "draws out uncertainty for hundreds of thousands of DACA recipients while failing to support the future generation of Dreamers."

"During an already challenging time for Texas' workforce and economy," the groups add, "Texas businesses can't afford any further setbacks to building a robust workforce. We urge Congress to establish a permanent legislative solution for Dreamers to allow these immigrants to live free of fear and continue contributing to our state's prosperity."

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The Dallas Morning News

The Charlotte Observer

CONGRESS MUST ACT TO PROTECT DREAMERS WE NEED A PERMANENT BIPARTISAN SOLUTION NOW

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McConnell, and Leader McCarthy:

We write on behalf of thousands of U.S. businesses, large and small, that represent every major sector of the U.S. economy and more than half of America's private sector workers. Collectively, we represent the backbone of an American economy facing tremendous workforce challenges as a result of the pandemic. We face another crisis if Congress fails to act on an issue that has strong bipartisan support from the American people.

Since 2012, the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy has provided work authorization and protections from deportation for young immigrants who came to this country as children. They grew up here, were educated here, and have built the entirety of their lives here. Many of them have built successful careers as teachers, small business owners, health care workers, and entrepreneurs across a host of industries. They are our friends, our neighbors, and our coworkers.

The recent ruling by the U.S. 5th Circuit Court of Appeals declaring DACA illegal puts all of these individuals, their families, and their employers at risk. Each DACA recipient will soon face the threat of losing their work authorization and protection from deportation, while our businesses face the threat of losing critical employees.

The worker shortage will get worse for the United States if hundreds of thousands of critical workers are stripped of their legal ability to support themselves and their families. That is the situation we currently face if this ruling becomes final, and it is the reason for our request today.

Given that DACA applications and renewals were granted on a rolling basis, the end to this program means that an estimated 22,000 jobs would be lost every month for two years. That is roughly 1,000 job losses per business day at a time when the U.S. economy already faces significant workforce shortages.

When the last DACA recipient's work permit expires, the U.S. will have lost more than 500,000 jobs, and the U.S. economy will lose as much as \$11.7 billion annually - or roughly \$1 billion monthly - in wages from previously employed DACA recipients. (To put this into perspective, in Texas alone, 400 healthcare workers and 300 teachers will be forced out of their jobs each month.)

For the last several years, this coalition has called upon Congress to act by passing a permanent, bipartisan legislative solution that would enable Dreamers who are currently living, working, and contributing to our communities to continue doing so. Poll after poll has shown strong majorities of Americans in both political parties, including 71 percent of "conservatives," support protecting Dreamers.

The 5th Circuit Court's ruling makes it clear that Congress cannot afford to ignore this issue any longer. Bipartisan measures have already been introduced in the U.S. House and Senate. We urge you to swiftly pass legislation this year that will help Dreamers, American businesses, and our country.

Respectfully,

The Coalition for the American Dream

PUBLISHED BY:

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. The Dallas Morning News The Charlotte Observer



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North Texas e-News

LAKE RALPH HALL WELCOMES HIGH-PROFILE VISITORS

By Media Release
North Texas e-News
Nov 11, 2022

Fannin County, Texas — Upper Trinity Regional Water District recently welcomed State Senator Charles Perry, Texas Water Development Board Chairwoman Brooke Paup, [Texas Business Leadership Council President Justin Yancy](#) and others at the Lake Ralph Hall site.

Our visitors were able to see the nearly complete Highway 34 bridge and the construction work on the emergency spillway and embankment for the Leon Hurse Dam.



(L-R) Upper Trinity Regional Water District Executive Director Larry Patterson, Texas Water Development Board Chairwoman Brooke Paup, State Senator Charles Perry, [Texas Business Leadership Council President Justin Yancy](#).

Austin American-Statesman

yahoo!

OPINION: MORE BIG TECH IS COMING TO TEXAS, BUT WHO WILL FILL THE JOBS?

By Glenn Hamer and Justin Yancy

Published By: Austin American-Statesman and Yahoo
November 27, 2022

Recently, the CEO of a prominent biomedical company in Brownsville shared a cautionary tale: One of his top employees had left Texas due to the state's poor treatment of immigrants. The young man was a DACA recipient with a valid work permit, but without long-term security in the United States, he could be deported at any time if DACA ended. As anti-immigrant rhetoric from national and state leaders increased, he worried that his home near the border put him at risk. He's now working at a company in Chicago.

The Texas business community can't afford to lose young people like this. The number of online job postings in Texas more than doubled from 2017 to 2021, according to a recent report from the American Immigration Council. Yet many companies are struggling to fill positions. The latest data shows more than 10 million job openings in the U.S. — but only around 6 million unemployed workers. Now, with global companies like Samsung, Tesla, and Google opening locations here, we need to address workforce constraints and perhaps more importantly, change our messaging around immigration. Without welcoming policies or leaders who are willing to engage in practical immigration reform, the workers we need will go elsewhere.

Congress recently passed the CHIPS and Science Act to boost domestic chip manufacturing and scientific research, aimed at increasing U.S. competitiveness against China. Many of these companies will be locating in Texas, including Samsung's \$17 billion computer chip plant outside of Austin that will create some 2,000 high tech jobs. That is great news for our state. But where will the workforce come from to staff these new ventures? STEM workers are particularly challenging to find. In 2020, there were 1.36 million job openings for computer-related roles, in an industry with a 1.9 percent unemployment rate. And according to a survey by recruiting company Liniun, 82 percent of employers struggle to fill engineering positions.

Immigrants are critical to meeting this demand. Despite making up just 17.1 percent of Texas' population, they comprise 21.9 percent of the workforce. Among these

workers are Texas Dreamers, young adults who were brought to the U.S. as children and grew up here. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program was launched ten years ago, giving temporary legal and work authorization to 800,000 of these young people, but last year a Texas federal judge ruled against the program, putting a stop to any new applications. Now, more than 100,000 undocumented immigrants are graduating high school without the ability to apply for legal status. That's a huge untapped resource.

In addition, we can recapture unused visas to increase the number of STEM workers living and working in our country. Major semiconductor companies like Intel, GlobalFoundries, ASML US and Samsung Semiconductor Inc. have called on Congress to allow more highly skilled workers to remain in the U.S. Due to bureaucratic inefficiencies and funding shortfalls, we now have a backlog of 9 million green cards. We must clear this backlog so hardworking individuals who have been waiting in line for decades can remain in the country they call home.

During the recent midterm election campaigns, some politicians used anti-immigrant messaging. Of course we need a safe and secure border for the sake of both businesses and Texas families. But we also need a growing, skilled workforce. We can and should have immigration policies that achieve both goals. When anti-immigrant rhetoric is used, it creates a culture that's not friendly toward business. If we want our state to continue to serve as a top destination for business, we've got to change the way we talk about foreign-born workers and reform our immigration policies.

Glenn Hamer is president and CEO of the Texas Association of Business and was formerly the CEO of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Justin Yancy is president of the Texas Business Leadership Council and has served in the administrations of Governors George W. Bush and Rick Perry.

The Dallas Morning News

TED CRUZ UNITES WITH BERNIE SANDERS BEHIND FAILED PUSH FOR RAIL WORKER SICK LEAVE

By Joseph Morton

The Dallas Morning News

December 1, 2022

WASHINGTON — Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, doesn't often find himself in the same camp as the most left-leaning members of the Senate, including Sen. Bernie Sanders, the self-described Democratic Socialist from Vermont.

But Cruz was among a half dozen Senate Republicans who backed Sanders' push Thursday to award seven days of sick leave to rail workers as part of a federally mandated labor agreement intended to avoid an economy-crippling strike.

The 52-43 tally on the sick leave proposal fell well short of the 60 votes required for adoption. It had the support of nearly all Senate Democrats and the opposition of most Senate Republicans.

But the support from Cruz and a few other conservative Republicans demonstrates how the party's newfound populism has at least blurred some traditional political lines.

Cruz described this week as an illustration of how the GOP is becoming the party of blue collar workers.

"That is an important shift of the last decade, that the people we are fighting for every day are rail workers and truck drivers and steel workers and cops and firefighters and the Democrat Party more and more is becoming a party of urban elites," Cruz said as he left the Capitol following the vote.

The rail labor dispute threatened massive negative repercussions for Texas, as everyone from agricultural producers to chemical manufacturers in the state rely on trains to move their supplies and finished products.

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and a large coalition of business groups wrote a letter earlier this week pleading with lawmakers to take action to avert a strike.

Among the signatories: the Texas Ag Industries Association, Texas Association of Business, [Texas Business Leadership Council](#), Texas Grain and Feed Association and the Texas Trucking Association.

"While a voluntary agreement with the four holdout unions is the best outcome, the risks to America's economy

and communities simply make a national rail strike unacceptable," the groups wrote. "Therefore, absent a voluntary agreement, we call on you to take immediate steps to prevent a national rail strike and the certain economic destruction that would follow."

But Cruz objected to the mandated settlement as the government forcing a deal down rail workers' throats.

The Senate took three votes Thursday related to the rail labor impasse and on each one Cruz came down on the opposite side of his home-state Republican colleague Sen. John Cornyn.

Cruz first supported a proposal for an additional cooling off period to allow more time for negotiation between the railroads and their workers, a proposal that failed on a 25-70 vote.

He then voted for the sick leave proposal and against the underlying mandated settlement, which was approved 80-15.

The settlement includes a 24 percent pay boost in the coming years along with other provisions to benefit the workers. But several of the unions involved have rejected it over concerns about work attendance policies such as sick leave.

Cruz said it became clear the proposed cooling off period was doomed and the inevitable outcome would be approval of the forced settlement.

"I don't think that makes sense," Cruz said. "I don't think it was fair. I thought the rail workers' demands were quite reasonable."

Cornyn had previously expressed sympathy for the sick leave issue but voted against that amendment Thursday before supporting the underlying settlement.

"You start thinking about what this means for Congress getting involved in every collective bargaining agreement or labor dispute, and I just think it's a bad precedent," Cornyn told reporters ahead of the votes.

When a strike seemed imminent back in September, Cornyn was among those calling on President Joe Biden to do whatever it took to avert a work stoppage that would have had dire economic consequences.

At that time, Cornyn referred to the 24 percent pay boost as "pretty extravagant" and accused Democrats of putting the needs of labor unions ahead of American consumers.

The Dallas Morning News

Cruz this week has defended the rail workers and downplayed the size of the pay increases they're receiving relative to inflation. He said their concerns about having access to sick leave are reasonable.

"Just about every other job, if you get sick you don't have to put in multiple days ahead of time before you get sick . . . you typically don't know ahead of time if you're going to get sick," Cruz said, echoing progressive champions of the sick leave proposal.

Cruz said he and Sanders had a chuckle on the Senate floor over their odd couple pairing.

"I told him on the floor that I just voted with him and I said, 'Bernie, I don't know if that hurts you more or me more,'" Cruz said.