



Politics Council holds panel discussion on outcome of 84th Legislative session, Partnership Legislative priorities

The Partnership held its quarterly Politics Council on June 9 in the Partnership Board Room. Lilyanne McClean, Executive Vice President, Public Policy and Communications for the Greater Houston Partnership, moderated a lively panel discussion including:

- John Pitts, Founder and Managing Principal, Texas Star Alliance
- Leonard H. O. Spearman, Jr., Director, Texas Southern University Governmental Affairs Office and Director, Center for Government Law, Earl Carl Institute for Legal and Social Policy, Inc., Thurgood Marshall School of Law
- Max Jones, Manager, Public Policy, Greater Houston Partnership
- Alicia Lee, Manager, Public Policy, Greater Houston Partnership
- Ted Geer, Manager, Public Policy, Greater Houston Partnership

The discussion focused on the Partnership's top three legislative priorities during the recently completed Texas Legislative Session: pre-K investment, economic development incentives and transportation funding.

High Quality Pre-K

The Partnership believes that investment in early education will help fuel the start of the Texas workforce pipeline and ensure the region's children are performing at grade level by the end of third grade. HB 4, a bill preserving half-day programs, introducing quality standards and \$130 million in new funding passed the legislature and was signed by the Governor on May 29, 2015.

Economic Development Incentives

The Partnership also supported legislation to strengthen Texas' key economic development incentives. Texas has led the nation in job creation the last decade, and growth incentives such as the Texas Enterprise

Fund contribute to this success. Despite tension between competing House and Senate bills, HB 26 and SB 633 were sent to the Governor on June 1, 2015, and SB 632 was signed by the Governor June 3, 2015.

Transportation Funding

TxDOT requires an additional \$5 billion per year to meet the needs of a growing population. The Partnership supports long-term, sustainable transportation funding sources. After intense negotiations, the Legislature passed SJR 5 that adds approximately \$4 billion a year beginning in 2017 providing voters approve the new referendum in November 2015.