

2021



# GREATER HOUSTON PARTNERSHIP STATE LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

## EXECUTIVE PRIORITIES

### ACCESS

The Partnership believes our people are our greatest asset, and all Texans should have equitable access to the institutions that power a strong, diverse economy and create true opportunity for all.

**Public Education** A strong public education system is vital for the long-term prosperity of our region and state. In 2019, House Bill 3 significantly increased the state's investment in public education and directed some of that funding toward transformational initiatives. It is critical to protect a well-funded, accountable and equitable public education system that serves all children and strengthens our talent pipeline.

**Higher Education** The Partnership supports policies that protect higher education funding and innovative programming options in the Houston region while increasing educational attainment rates, particularly in high-demand fields, with appropriate recognition of the impacts of COVID-19. The Partnership will also pursue policies that lead to more equitable access and attainment across the higher education ecosystem in Houston.

**Racial and Social Equity** While the issues of racial inequity and systemic racism are not unique to Houston, the Partnership recognizes our responsibility to reform our broken criminal justice systems, strengthen trust within our communities, and offer support towards removing barriers to inclusivity and success. These issues will include policies related to criminal jurisprudence, criminal justice and equitable access to pillars of our society such as public education and health care.

### ENERGY COMPETITIVENESS

The Partnership is committed to ensuring that Houston plays a key role in the global energy transition to a more efficient and sustainable, lower-carbon future and to accommodate global demand growth. Permitting, regulatory and energy infrastructure solutions are needed to strengthen Texas' energy competitiveness. To advance the energy transition, legislation should position the Houston region to lead the development of carbon capture, use, and storage (CCUS).

**Permitting** It is important to Texas' competitive advantage that the state address permitting issues hindering private investment in the energy economy.

**Regulation** The Partnership supports legislation to strengthen regulatory certainty and attract economic development in the industry, including policies related to CCUS projects on state-owned lands.

**Energy Infrastructure** The Partnership supports policies that position Houston to develop technology and construct the infrastructure needed to advance the region's position as the Energy Capital of the World.

### ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Partnership believes competitive economic development tools, including the Chapter 313 property tax abatement program, are critical to bringing new businesses to the region and growing our economy and should be reauthorized.

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Qualified and skilled workers are vital to the success of Houston's industries. The Partnership supports reskilling or upskilling workers and improving access to the workforce for Texans without a college degree.

### FLOOD RESILIENCE

The Partnership supports the state's ongoing role in improving Texas' flood resilience, leveraging the \$2 billion appropriation made during the 2019 legislative session towards Hurricane Harvey recovery and future flood mitigation.

### TRANSPORTATION

Economic prosperity relies upon the ability to efficiently move goods and people. The Partnership believes in maintaining transportation funding options.

### HEALTH CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

Following COVID-19 and in recognition of the lessons learned in combating the pandemic, sustainable policies protecting our health care safety net, increasing patient resources and access to care are needed to build a healthier Houston.

### EMINENT DOMAIN

The Partnership supports an agreement on eminent domain statutes that respects the rights of private landowners while meeting the infrastructure needs of the Texas energy industry.

### LEGAL LIABILITY PROTECTIONS

The Partnership supports policies to address the concerns many business owners and health care professionals have about operating in a COVID-19 environment without appropriate legal liability protections.

### METHANE EMISSIONS

The Partnership supports developing industry-led solutions for addressing the flaring of methane.