



Legislative UPDATE

October 23, 2020
Number 42

State and Local Governments Reach Global Settlement with Opioid Company in Bankruptcy

Last week, Attorney General Ken Paxton [announced](#) a globalized settlement agreement with opioid manufacturer Mallinckrodt, the largest generic opioid manufacturer in the United States. Mallinckrodt agreed to a settlement with state attorneys general and local subdivisions for \$1.6 billion. The settlement money will go into a trust for abating the opioid crisis. In addition to states' and local subdivisions' claims, the trust will also benefit valid non-governmental claimants' claims related to Mallinckrodt's role in the opioid crisis.

The parties are still negotiating details about: (1) how much each state will receive; (2) the distribution of the money; and (3) how to administer the trust. The Texas Attorney General [previously entered into an intrastate agreement](#) with counties and cities regarding the opioid crisis. Cities should review [the agreement](#) with their city attorney to determine their interest in any amount the state receives.

Secretary of State Releases Final Voter Registration Numbers

Last week, the Texas Secretary of State announced that voter registration totals for the November 3 election in Texas had reached a new record high totaling 16,955,519. This represents an increase of 1,854,432 million more voters than were registered for the 2016 presidential election. 1.2 million of these voters were registered since the 2018 midterm election.

Hopefully, you are seeing record participation in your communities. Good things happen when more people vote. If you are interested in early voting trends across the state, the Texas Tribune provides a great resource [here](#), as does the [Texas Secretary of State](#).

Legislative Committees Request Information on Interim Charges

Due to the ongoing pandemic and the uncertainty as to scheduling interim hearings, several legislative committees have issued notices of formal “requests for information” (“RFIs”) to which the public, including cities, may respond. The following is a non-exhaustive list of RFIs on city-relevant interim charges, sorted by the deadline for submitting comments. Interested city officials may follow the links associated with each committee for more details about the procedure to submit comments:

October 30, 2020 – [House Licensing and Administrative Procedures Committee](#)

- **Interim Charge 1:** Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - HB 892, which relates to county regulation of game rooms. Monitor the status of counties statewide who have chosen to regulate game rooms and implement their own regulatory structure to combat illegal gambling activity via registration and permitting requirements, fees, disclosure of ownership, inspection schemes, and civil and criminal penalties.
 - HB 1545, which is the sunset legislation for the Texas Alcoholic Beverage Commission. Monitor the implementation of the legislation and the agency's progress in the consolidation, repeal, and creation of certain licenses and permits and the adoption of new fees.

November 13, 2020 – [House Ways and Means Committee](#)

- **Interim Charge 1.1:** Monitor the agencies and programs under the Committee's jurisdiction and oversee the implementation of relevant legislation passed by the 86th Legislature. Conduct active oversight of all associated rulemaking and other governmental actions taken to ensure intended legislative outcome of all legislation, including the following:
 - S.B. 2, which is the Texas Property Tax Reform and Transparency Act of 2019. Monitor the implementation of the legislation, including a review of the tax rates adopted by taxing units in 2019 and 2020, the appraisal review board survey system, and progress in onboarding the tax rate notices and websites. Make recommendations for modifications as necessary and appropriate.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Updates

The Texas Municipal League is open for business. The building is closed to all but essential personnel and most staff is working remotely, but the League remains open for business and is fully ready to serve. Cities are encouraged to call or email for legal assistance, help with ordinances, or for general advice or assistance. Let us know how we can assist you and your city.

Call TML staff at 512-231-7400, or email Bill Longley for legal assistance at bill@tml.org; Rachael Pitts for membership support at RPitts@tml.org; and the training team for questions about conferences and workshops at training@tml.org.

The League has prepared a coronavirus clearinghouse [web page](#) to keep cities updated. In addition, everyone who receives the *Legislative Update* should receive a daily email update each afternoon with information on new developments. The daily email updates will be our primary means of communication during the pandemic. Those emails are being archived [chronologically](#) as well as by [subject matter](#).

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