

# Texas State Policy Agenda



## 2025 Texas State Policy Agenda

Young adults in Texas are navigating a unique period of political and social tension. We face a perfect storm of challenges, with mounting pressures in education, healthcare, and basic living costs. Rising tuition and fees make higher education less attainable, while restrictive healthcare policies and attacks on campus free speech threaten both physical and intellectual well-being. At the same time, the erosion of immigration systems and skyrocketing inflation on everyday expenses compound the uncertainty for a generation striving to establish themselves in adulthood.

Instead of focusing on solutions that would help ease hardships felt across the state, like critical infrastructure, education, and health care systems, our leadership has focused on social issues that disproportionately affect vulnerable populations. As a result, young adults are stepping up to help reshape the political landscape in Texas, ensuring that the state's future reflects the needs of all its residents.

As our generation navigates these challenges, we realize the profound impact policy has on our lives and the barriers that keep the average citizen, especially young adults, excluded from meaningful participation in shaping those policies. This shift, from being undervalued and dismissed in the political process to actively challenging systems and advocating for change, marks a rising wave of young adults reclaiming their power and threatening the status quo of democracy.

This shift reminds us that advocacy is not just a tool to have voices heard— it is a transformative force for change. Now, more than ever, we must leverage advocacy as a powerful vehicle to amplify the needs of historically marginalized groups: LGBTQ+ youth, young parents, immigrant communities, and students from diverse racial and socioeconomic backgrounds. These communities are not only disproportionately impacted by system inequities but are also at the forefront of reshaping the political landscape in Texas.

Through advocacy, testimony, and coalition-building, we will lift the voices of young adults who reject any agenda that seeks to define their futures or marginalize their communities’ potential. This year, Young Invincibles’ Texas policy agenda focuses on addressing young adults’ demands for structural change while advancing immediate, practical actions to build a better future for Texas.

## Healthcare

### Ensure Access to Health Insurance:

- Continue to streamline and improve the enrollment process for Texans seeking health insurance.
- Invest in and modernize the state’s outdated Medicaid and SNAP enrollment systems.

### Secure Medicaid Access in Texas:

- Protect Medicaid funding and access for low-income families, ensuring state contributions remain intact to maintain coverage and prevent stricter eligibility requirements.
- Increase the eligibility thresholds for Medicaid and other health programs for low-income Texans.
- Expand Medicaid in Texas to help reduce the healthcare coverage gap and cover more low-income adults.

### Reduce Maternal Mortality:

- Make sure HB 12 is well-implemented and ensure coverage is more widely accessible.
- Take bold action to end Texas’ maternal mortality crisis by addressing racial disparities.

### Healthcare Transparency and Affordability:

- Focus on making health care transparent, removing barriers to providing quality patient information, and reducing out-of-pocket costs for vulnerable populations.
- Explore ways to expand access to mental health and essential programs.

### Healthcare Literacy:

- Invest in healthcare literacy initiatives to help Texans better understand their healthcare options, navigate insurance programs, and make informed decisions about their healthcare.
- Assist in creating strategies and supports for improving patient outcomes and reducing healthcare costs, while improving communication between Texas patients and healthcare providers for empowering individuals to be stronger advocates for themselves in medical settings.

### Contraception and Reproductive Health

- Ensure that contraception, including emergency contraception (Plan B), remains accessible to all Texans.
- Ensure that reimbursement for emergency contraception is available, particularly for those in need.
- Address barriers to reproductive autonomy.

## Higher Education

### Postsecondary Readiness and Completion

- Strengthen alignment across K-12, community colleges, and universities to ensure students are effectively prepared for postsecondary education and can maximize opportunities for credentials.
- Streamline pathways to credentials by expanding access to programs like FAST, R-PEP, and P-TECH, which provide students with clear routes to certifications and degrees tied to sustainable careers.
- Expand the definition of “economically disadvantaged” students to better reflect diverse, low-income populations, and incentivize the attainment of credentials of value that strengthen Texas’ workforce.

### Outcomes Based Funding and Dual Credit

- Continue to support and fund the outcomes-based funding model established by House Bill 8, the state’s dynamic, outcomes-based funding formula for community colleges, ensuring it remains effective in increasing postsecondary access and completion rates.
- Improve dual credit completion rates and simplify the transfer process to provide clear, cost-effective pathways to transfer, making it easier for students to earn credentials without unnecessary delays or fees.
- Expand opportunities for students to transfer credits between community colleges and four-year institutions, including private institutions.
- Ensure stackability of credentials and strengthen credentials of value.

### Data and Transparency

- Ensure transparent, timely access to data from the FAST program, and continue supporting cross-agency efforts to improve data sharing between the TWC, THECB, and other agencies.
- Support the tri-agency workforce initiative, and promote accountability systems to track job placements and wage outcomes for community college graduates.
- Strengthen data-driven approaches to improve student outcomes, ensuring that the education system aligns with future workforce needs.

## Financial Aid

- Establish a sustainable funding source for emergency aid programs, allowing public institutions to use a portion of tuition set-aside revenue for institutional emergency funds.
- Prohibit higher education institutions from withholding transcripts due to unpaid debts.
- Promote transparency in transcript withholding policies by collecting and reporting data on transcript withholding practices, including the number of students affected, demographic information, and the nature and age of debts.
- Increase investment in state financial aid programs like the TEXAS Grant and TEOG to support low-income students, particularly those transferring from community colleges.
- Align the Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) standards for financial aid with federal Pell Grant requirements, lowering the Grade Point Average (GPA) threshold from 2.5 to 2.0.
- Explore the feasibility of converting the Texas Public Education Grant (TPEG) “emergency loan” set-aside into emergency grants to support students facing unforeseen financial hardship.

## Mental Health

- Support Mental Health Services for Students:
  - » Continue to invest in and expand access to mental health services for community college students.
  - » Ensure that services are accessible to students pursuing non-traditional higher education pathways, including part-time and workforce program students.
  - » Advocate for increased awareness around mental health, including making resources readily available through fliers, educational campaigns, and community outreach efforts.
- Promote Mental Health Days:
  - » Support the adoption of mental health days in schools and workplaces as a vital tool for improving Texans’ mental well-being. Ensure that awareness campaigns, such as through the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB), encourage institutions to embrace these days as part of a holistic approach to personal wellness.

## Basic Needs + Parenting Students

- Provide educational institutions with clear guidance on how to accurately calculate and report non-tuition costs, such as housing, food, transportation, and childcare, to better reflect the true cost of attendance.
- Continue to support House Bill 1361, the parenting student liaison bill, and similar initiatives that assist parenting students. Provide guidance to ensure that the data collection efforts are being done effectively and can inform future policy solutions and resources to support these students.
- Implement long-term solutions to improve access to affordable, high-quality childcare services across the state. Ensure that childcare programs are well-regulated, accessible, and capable of meeting the diverse needs of Texas families.
- Add the children of parenting students to the state’s priority groups for access to childcare services.
- Collect data on childcare access and affordability to identify gaps and improve the state’s understanding of challenges in this area. Use this data to create more effective policies and solutions for Texas families.

### Voting Access

- Ensure all Texans have access to polling locations, including institutions of higher education.
- Support efforts to maintain accurate voter registration lists.
- Support efforts to allow Student IDs to vote in elections.

### Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

- Protect academic freedom in Texas institutions, ensuring that policies aimed at curbing “unnecessary” or “harmful” content do not inadvertently harm academic autonomy and access to diverse viewpoints.
- Ensure that campuses can continue to create an environment where all students can thrive and feel supported in their educational journeys.
- Ensure that LGBTQ+ Texans can live openly without fear and ensure they can access critical resources, such as mutual aid programs.



# Workforce

## Workforce Education Grants and Programs

- Support State Workforce Education Grants:
  - » Continue the state’s support for workforce education grant programs such as TRUE, Lone Star Workforce for the Future, Skills Development Fund, and JET (Jobs and Education for Texans). These programs should be expanded to support a larger number of community college students pursuing career-focused educational paths that lead to direct employment.
- Increase Workforce Credentials in High School:
  - » Significantly increase the number of workforce credentials earned by high school students through partnerships between schools, community colleges, and employers.
  - » Expand opportunities for dual-credit courses, apprenticeships, and career-based education programs to help students enter the workforce with valuable skills upon graduation.

## Workforce Shortages

- Address Workforce Shortages in Essential Fields:
  - » Develop targeted strategies to address workforce shortages in critical areas like healthcare, mental health, and other essential services.
  - » Support Paid Parental Leave and Childcare for Workers.

## Wages and Workforce Inclusion

- Focus on Family-Sustaining Wages
- Develop strategies to improve workforce inclusion for specific populations with unique needs, including adult learners, veterans, people with disabilities, and parenting students.

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