



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

November 20, 2009

Late on Thursday afternoon Speaker Joe Straus released interim committee charges for the Texas House.

The Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence Committee, chaired by Rep. Todd Hunter (R-Corpus Christi), received the following charges:

1. Study current barratry laws in Texas and make recommendations as to their adequacy in protecting citizens from unscrupulous behavior.
2. Study and make recommendations regarding the use of arbitration in Texas and the effect such practices have on state jurisprudence.
3. Review the burden of proof and damage calculation models for certain causes of action to determine appropriate applicability in Texas law.***
4. Study and report on third-party liability issues involving workers' compensation, including the frequency and success rates of third-party litigation, the relationship, if any, between third-party litigation and jobsite safety, the adequacy of compensation and reimbursement to workers, and the economic costs of third-party litigation and equitable and contractual subrogation in construction activities.
Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Business and Industry
5. Study the human and sex trafficking problem in Texas. Make recommendations on best practices in the areas of investigation,

prosecution, and tracking of the victims of these crimes. Study whether victims of these crimes are allowed to adequately recover from their attackers in a civil cause of action. Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Criminal Jurisprudence

6. Review the Texas campaign finance law in judicial races in light of the recent United States Supreme Court decision *Caperton v. Massey*. Joint Interim Charge with House Committee on Elections

7. Monitor the agencies and programs under the committee's jurisdiction.

***We understand that this charge covers at least three topics: causation in mesothelioma asbestos cases, paid or incurred, and liability for the treatment of Lyme's disease.

Senate interim charges should be issued in the coming weeks.

The TADC Legislative Committee has already begun work on preparing materials for the upcoming hearings. We will keep you advised of the committee hearing schedule and TADC's participation in this process.