

Texas Public Policy Foundation

Recovery Agenda

To implement the lessons learned from this unprecedented national emergency, we encourage the following actions by Congress and the Texas Legislature:

Congress should:

Cut the payroll tax.

A payroll tax holiday can be enacted quickly and uniformly with American workers seeing the results in their paychecks almost immediately. It would also reduce costs for employers and give them the confidence they need to weather the crisis—in turn, preserving jobs.

Overhaul the FDA.

Once again, the Food and Drug Administration's bureaucratic approval process has proved outdated for the quick action that a health emergency requires. Congress should make permanent the fast-tracked processes put into place by the administration.

Congress and the Texas Legislature should:

Eliminate regulations not necessary for public health and safety.

Make permanent all the freedoms granted through suspending regulations that hinder economic growth, prevent job creation, limit healthcare access and choice, slow medical and security response times, and harm employer, employee, and consumer freedom. There is no justification at any time, crisis or otherwise, for keeping regulations that negatively affect public health and safety or add to the cost of producing and accessing goods and services.

The Texas Legislature should:

Enforce state property tax reforms.

Texas passed critical property tax relief in the last session, along with measures to protect taxpayers from out of control spending. Families and businesses must not be forced out of their homes or shops because of spikes in taxes and increased costs.

Enable virtual education for K-12.

The state should expand online educational options for K-12 students by allowing districts to innovate, acting quickly to approve backlogged new courses, changing funding mechanisms to reduce delay and bureaucracy, and changing attendance and credit mechanisms to allow students to take more than 3 courses virtually.

Increase telemedicine options.

Texas should work toward expanding the use of telemedicine in Texas, to increase access to high-quality care and to cut down on healthcare costs.

Request a Medicaid waiver to increase health care options.

Texas should request a waiver to use Medicaid funds for expanding the number of choices patients have for receiving care, such as direct primary care. This would directly relieve stress and crowding at hospitals that contribute to the spread of disease and the severity of the pandemic.

Allow physicians to dispense and deliver medication.

Allowing physicians to dispense and deliver medications will shorten the time it takes for patients to receive their prescriptions, improve adherence rates, and potentially lower costs.

Purchase medications at the cash rate.

Many medications are less than \$10 whereas many prescription co-pays are two to three times that amount. Texas should allow patients covered by the state to purchase medications at a cash rate when the price is less than their covered benefit or deductible.

Put a hold on all non-essential government debt.

State and local governments should stop any attempt to put taxpayers deeper in debt. More debt will only slow our ability to recover quickly and saddle future generations with a deeper burden.

Protect individual liberties and prevent the expansion of government.

In times of crisis there are often attempts to restrict basic freedoms and diminish individual rights. We must be vigilant in protecting against the lurch toward consolidating and expanding government power, like what occurred in so many instances following 9/11.

In addition, the State of Texas should immediately consider the following recovery actions:

Taxation:

- **Implement a sales-tax holiday.**
- **Suspend the franchise tax to ensure supply chain continuity.**
- **Suspend fuel-tax collection to keep supply chains running and give Texas consumers a break.**

Education:

- **Allow portability of education funding.**
- **Compel public higher-education institutions offering online courses to make all online content fully viewable by the general public.**

Employment:

- **Adopt universal occupational licensing recognition, so that licensed professionals in other states can immediately work in Texas.**

Security:

- **Texas should shut down all international crossings from Mexico, unless the governor certifies that sufficient public-health information and measures have been undertaken in Mexico.**

Foster care:

- **Expedite reunification for families that have been working on their court-ordered plans and making progress.**

Regulatory:

- **Direct regulatory agencies to identify measures to reduce cost and regulatory burdens.**