



## **Austin Landline Report July 2019**

Since the conclusion of the legislative session and the veto period, legislators are now allowed to raise campaign funds again and many are jumping in quickly to take advantage of the end of the moratorium. It is hard to believe, but the primary filing deadline is only a few months away and incumbents are anxious to scare off potential competitors with large war chests. This coming election cycle will be particularly interesting during a presidential year, with the Democrats needing only nine seats to flip control of the Texas House.

On Friday, I will attend an interim joint hearing of the Texas House Homeland Security & Public Safety and the International Relations & Economic Development Committees. The notice for the hearing simply says that there will be invited testimony on, "... on issues related to the increase in asylum-seeking migrant families at the Texas-Mexico border". The notice otherwise states only that the agenda will be available at the hearing, so the "invitees" remain unknown.

Meanwhile, everyone seems to be grappling with interpreting exactly what passed in the final rush of the session and exploring potential unintended consequences. One of the biggest questions remains how the property tax cuts and increased school funding will be sustained in future sessions, especially if there is a downturn in the economy. At least two of our local groundwater districts are trying to interpret some very ambiguous language in HB 722 by Larson, which will partially govern brackish groundwater production. Also, Susan and our Austin team of Eric Opiela and Joe and Charles Maley are already meeting with our Eminent Domain Committee members and potential allies to start preparations on eminent domain reform proposals for next session.

In other news of particular note, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick has already named Senate members of the Senate Redistricting Committee, which will be charged with drawing new legislative district boundaries on the basis of the 2020 census. Luckily, South Texas, which always seems to be at a disadvantage versus the rest of the state, will be represented by Sen. Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa as vice-chairman and Sen. Eddie Lucio as a member.