

From:
To:
Subject: Indivisible TX Lege Weekly Actions
Date: Monday, February 22, 2021 8:05:05 AM

Hi y'all,

We sure got another curve ball this week. Unfortunately it was a curve ball with [deadly and devastating consequences](#). We hope all of you and your families are on the road to recovery. Please don't hesitate to reach out if there is anything any of us can do to help. Part of your State Legislator's job is constituent services, so don't hesitate to reach out to them if you're having trouble getting the help that you need.

This week's newsletter has just a few of the actions we'll be issuing in response to the blackout event, meaning - more to come! Last week exposed big cracks in our state's infrastructure and the negative consequences of deregulation. Let's be clear, Texas power is [largely reliant on natural gas](#). Natural gas facilities had [major failures due to lack of preparedness](#) for freezing temperatures last week. Many of the [failures could have been avoided](#) if recommendations from a 2011 report had been followed or required by law. Texas seems to pride itself on deregulation, but [the cost has been huge](#), both financially and emotionally. It's time to change our future.

1. Monday morning - call

Call the Governor (512-463-2000), TEA Commissioner Morath (512-463-8985), the [Senate Finance Committee \(512-463-0370\)](#) and [House Appropriation III Subcommittee members](#) and your State Rep & Senator urging them to keep schools adequately funded in response to last week's freeze. This call to action is an update of a [previous action to extend the "hold harmless" period past February to keep schools funded](#) regardless of drops in attendance due to COVID. Now that the freeze made in-person attendance impossible last week and for weeks to come at some school buildings that have damage, serious funding problems will happen if "hold harmless" is not extended.

Say: "Hi, I'm a constituent/concerned resident of Texas. I'm calling today regarding school funding. Along with many advocacy groups, I urge you to ensure that school districts' funding is not cut due to lower student attendance caused by the COVID pandemic or by the widespread power outages of February 2021. As soon as possible, the TEA should extend the enrollment-based 'hold harmless' through this school year so schools aren't penalized for events outside of their control. School districts need continued state aid to provide our students with an adequate education, especially those facing challenges brought about by the pandemic and freeze-related problems. Thank you. My zip code is ____."

Provide Testimony: If you can make it to the Capitol by noon on Monday, 2/22, consider providing testimony at the [Senate Finance Committee hearing](#)

2. On or before Thursday - call and write

Call the [State Affairs](#) (512-463-0814) and [Energy Resources](#) (512-463-0774) Committees and your State Representative and Senator to share your freeze experience, provide written testimony, and push for public testimony at their hearing on Thursday. Speaker Phelan called for a joint committee hearing this Thursday, 2/25 at 9 am with the State Affairs and Energy Resources Committees. Your input is vital to helping the committees understand the widespread impact of the power outages. Right now, the hearing is only allowing invited testimony. If you have expertise in the energy sector, you can contact the committees and request to be invited. We can also push the committees to open up the hearings to public testimony. You have a few ways to provide comments before the hearing begins. We encourage you to use them all!

Provide Public Comment: [House Public Comment Form](#)

When calling committees to push for public testimony, say: "Hi, I'm a resident of Texas and I'm calling today to request the committee open its hearing to public testimony. The people of Texas were impacted severely by the power outage event last week, and our legislators need to hear from us so they can reach a better solution for our state. [tell your story here] Thank you for your time. My zip code is _____."

When calling your Rep and Senator: "Hi, I'm a constituent and am calling today to help you understand my experience last week so you can better inform your work in the coming weeks and months. [tell your story here] So much of last week's blackout was avoidable. Please push for common sense measures to be put in place so Texans never again have to go through what we went through. Thank you for putting your constituents first. My zip code is _____."

For more: [The Texas Standard: Joint Committee Hearing Called to Investigate Why Power Outages Happened](#)

3. Share

Share your story, photos, and videos on social media using the hashtag

#DeadlyDeregulation. Any time there is a widespread event, it's easy to get caught up in numbers and statistics and lose sight of the human impact. We need your help to highlight all of the ways in which Texans were negatively impacted last week. From health impacts, to lost wages, to burst pipes, and more, share your story so we can keep the human toll of this event in front of our legislators. We must keep the pressure on our government until actionable change has been made. You can also send your story directly to us at invisibletxlege@gmail.com.

4. Protect yourself

Turn off utility bill autopay and file a complaint with the PUC. Since our energy infrastructure is deregulated, pricing works on basic supply and demand fundamentals. If the demand outstrips supply, prices go up. In times of crisis, this structure can lead to astronomical prices for consumers. Turn off your utility bill autopay so you can monitor charges. If you suspect price gouging and are unable to resolve it with your energy provider,

file a complaint with the Public Utility Commission. Make sure you let your State Rep and State Senator know what you're being charged too.

For more: [WFAA.com: Attorney Says to Turn Off Auto Pay and Protest Surging Electric Bills](#)

File: [PUC Texas Complaint](#)

Stay tuned in to our [twitter](#), [facebook page](#), and [website](#) to get new CTAs as they're rolled out this week. Take care of yourselves, and let's keep working towards a government that works to take care of us too.

Much love,
Marieke
Indivisible TX Lege

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