



SAN ANTONIO

HOTEL & LODGING ASSOCIATION

2017 State Legislative Priorities

The San Antonio Hotel & Lodging Association priorities for the 85th Legislature center around maintaining, growing and protecting the tourism and hospitality industry. This includes remaining vigilant on collection and use of the Hotel Occupancy, in addition to preventing any action that would be considered discriminatory and detrimental to tourism to San Antonio and Texas.

As the face of hospitality to more than 20 million overnight visitors to our great city, and contributor of almost \$80 million dollars to the City from the hotel occupancy tax, we represent more 54% of the hotel rooms in San Antonio. With an economic impact of **\$13.6 billion in 2015** and employing more than **130,000 people (that is one in eight workers)**; the industry is critical to the health and economic viability of the City and State.

On behalf of our hotel and allied members, we look forward to working with members of the Texas Senate and House of Representatives on legislation that will benefit our community, our region and the State of Texas.

The **TOP 5 legislative priorities** for the San Antonio Hotel & Lodging Association:

1. **Oppose State Bills Negatively Impacting Conventions**, to include opposition to any State Legislation that would be considered discriminatory and result in cancellation of convention activity, such as transgender bathroom or religious freedom protection bills, as well as any anti-immigration bills.
2. **Oppose the repeal of the 30 day hotel tax exemption**. Every session, there is an effort from small cities, counties and chambers to eliminate the exemption for guests who stay over 30 days from paying the hotel occupancy tax.
3. **Oppose proposals to use local hotel tax for non-tourism purposes**. Every legislative session there are proposals by individual local governments to use local hotel tax for general government purposes that have little to nothing to do with tourism promotion. These bills have included use of local hotel tax for street repairs, daycare, economic development, job training, education, etc.
4. **Support retention of State tourism Public Improvement District (PID) authority**. Currently, the Dallas is the only city in Texas that has implemented a local tourism PID. This district has had over a \$15 ROI in room nights for every \$1 they have expended in incentives to attract increased convention and group hotel activity.
5. **Support retention of State Event Trust Fund authority**, which provides a source for matching funds for the costs of city wide events that have a substantial tourism impact (e.g.; Super Bowl, Final Four, NASCAR, etc.). The state funding comes from the uptick in state taxes that are directly attributable from these specific events.

ADDITIONAL STATE LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES:

The San Antonio Hotel & Lodging Association will also be working closing with the Texas Hotel & Lodging Association on the following state legislative issues:

1. **Support Retention of Lower Mixed Beverage Tax Rate.** Two legislative sessions ago, THLA partnered with the Texas Restaurant Association to secure a 51 percent reduction of the state mixed beverage tax for Texas hotels.
2. **Oppose Statewide Preemption of Short Term Rental Regulations by Cities:** Opposition to any statewide preemption of STR regulations by local governments. There are over 550,000 STR transactions annually by Airbnb in Texas. Airbnb's growth has doubled year-over-year for the past four years and Airbnb does not currently take responsibility for collecting the state or local hotel tax. Airbnb may propose a duty on STR websites to collect state and local hotel tax along with a state-wide preemption of local governments control.
3. **Pass bill to remove Comptroller website data** so that individual hotel sales data would only be available through a public information request like every other business in Texas.
4. **Pass positive changes to local hotel tax use laws such as** expansion of sporting facilities category to include additional sports activities, requiring cities to create local hotel tax advisory panel with area hoteliers and requiring cities to do a financial feasibility study and statutory compliance review prior to pursuit of new or expanded convention center projects.
5. **Pass positive clarifications on local hotel tax laws** by refining "Primary Usage" wording for convention center to require primary use of facility for conventions and meetings directly promoting hotel activity.
6. **Pass clarifications to State Venue Tax laws to favor reasonable interpretations of existing Venue Tax usage provisions** that use for "other facilities within the city" which only refers to other convention center facilities.
7. **Support retention of full State tourism funding** to protect the following sources for the over \$42 million in state tourism funding annually.
8. **Oppose bills that include unreasonable facility requirements for hotels** with commercial facilities that would be burdensome and costly to implement without sufficient counter benefits.
9. **Oppose bills that include unreasonable personnel requirements for hotels** that apply to staffing of hotels and other businesses that would be burdensome and costly to implement without sufficient counter benefits.

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