Criminal Justice
House Bill 3016
Signed by the Governor 6/15/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
This bill grants an automatic order of non-disclosure (OND) for first time offenders with Class C misdemeanors and expands who is eligible for an OND to include certain low level DWI convictions. These offenders must have completed their sentence and cannot have committed a violent or sexual offense.

House Bill 351
Signed by the Governor 6/15/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
This bill amends the Code of Criminal Procedure to allow a judge to order a defendant who is unable to pay a fine or costs to discharge all or part of that fine or costs by performing community service instead.

House Bill 557
Signed by the Governor 6/15/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
Under current statute, the attorney of the state can only request an expunction for a defendant if that individual did not have an attorney during the trial, placing the burden on the acquitted individual to seek the expunction. This bill allows the attorney of the state, with trial court consent of the acquitted person, to request an order of expunction within 30 days of an acquittal. The legislation would also allow a judge, at his or her own discretion, to return some or all of the fees relating to the successful expunction of a crime.

Affordable Housing
House Bill 3574
Signed by the Governor 6/15/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
Currently, Educational Quality in Low Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) applications is pushing affordable housing developments out of the densely populated, urban areas that need affordable housing with access to transportation and employment because it is considered in three different parts of the application process. This bill puts the consideration of Educational Quality at the forefront of the LIHTC application process administered by the Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs (TDHCA) and ensures that education is considered while still allowing for development in areas that need it the most.

Tax Code
House Bill 217
Signed by the Governor 6/18/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
This bill amends the tax code to include "disabled veterans" who qualified for a residential homestead exemption to be permitted to defer collection of property taxes, abate a suit to collect a delinquent tax, or to abate a sale to foreclose a tax lien.

School Suspensions
House Bill 674
Signed by the Governor 6/2/2017, Effective Immediately
This bill prohibits out-of-school suspensions for students younger than six years old in all but the most extreme cases. Instead, activities like social and emotional learning and referrals for counseling services are to be pursued.

Employee Leave
House Bill 88
Signed by Governor 5/26/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
Under current law, employer leave policies are not required to treat foster or children in the same manner as biological or adopted minor children. This bill makes it unlawful for employers to administer leave policies that do not permit employees to use leave to care for the foster child.

Human Trafficking
House Bill 29
Signed by the Governor 6/12/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
This bill implements measures from the Task Force on Human Trafficking including stiffer penalties for promoting trafficking, lifetime registration for offenders and training for law enforcement as well as commercial drivers who are likely to witness such actions. The bill also raises the age in which healthcare professionals may report suspected behavior to 14 without violating patient privilege.

Public Health
House Bill 1036
Signed by the Governor 6/15/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
This bill amends the insurance code to require certain health benefit plans to cover 3D mammography screenings for women over 35. Such screening is vital in the effort to detect breast cancer while it is in a more curable stage.

House Bill 3152
Signed by the Governor 6/15/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
This bill requires facilities that cannot conduct forensic exams to provide sexual assault survivors information about the benefits of a forensic exam along with a list of facilities that can conduct those exams.

House Bill 3292
Signed by the Governor 6/15/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
This bill requires the Health and Human Services Commission to continue to provide Medicaid services to individuals with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDD) for up to 90 days if he or she has a temporary increase in income which might cause them to be kicked off the program.

House Bill 1486
Signed by the Governor 6/15/17, Effective Immediately
This bill establishes a board and gives direction to the Executive Director of the Health and Human Services Commission to implement a peer services program in Medicaid. This Medicaid program can provide highly trained "peer counselors" who have themselves survived trauma, overcome addiction, or otherwise faced the mental health challenges of those they are trained to help.

House Bill 337
Effective on 9/1/17
This bill provides an avenue for those receiving Medicaid to have their benefits suspended, instead of outright terminated, while he or she is confined in a county jail. Presently, there are more than 600,000 people entering a county jail who would still be eligible for Medicaid benefits upon their release. Many of these individuals need continuous medical or mental health care upon their release which will likely reduce recidivism to jail or costly visits to the emergency room. Uncompensated care puts an increasing burden on tax payers; in 2016 alone Tarrant County expended more than $7 million to cover such individuals who could not afford treatment.

House Bill 1566
Signed by Governor 5/23/2017, Effective on 9/1/17
This bill amends the Insurance Code relating to balanced billing mediation. The out of network claim dispute process will be expanded to include the Teacher Retirement System as well as those entities who provide emergency care and be administered by the Texas Department of Insurance. Ultimately, this bill was passed as Senate Bill 507.
Child Welfare
House Bill 7
Signed by the Governor 5/31/2017, Effective on 9/1/2017
This bill provides over $508 million for new funding to the Department of Family and Protective Services and amends the CPS system by shortening the time period for placement hearings, requiring faster medical and mental health screening, prioritizing familial placement and making numerous other fixes to a program that must oversee the wellbeing of our most vulnerable Texans.

House Bill 4
Signed by the Governor 5/31/2017, Effective on 9/1/2017
This bill would require a monthly payment of up to 50 percent of the daily basic foster care rate for relatives of the foster child with income at or below 300 percent of the federal poverty line ($28,780 for a family of 5) to help them with ongoing costs of caring for young relatives who have been mistreated. Payments would continue until the earlier of the third anniversary of being awarded permanent managing conservatorship or the child's 18th birthday.

Senate Bill 11
Signed by the Governor 5/31/2017, Effective on 9/1/2017
This bill shifts Texas to a "community-based care" model for handling some endangered children and allowing contracted organizations, in addition to the state, to monitor children in foster care and foster care adoptive home program. The bill also creates a pilot program for nonprofit organizations to handle behavioral health care for children and require managed care organizations to be notified of a child's placement change within 24 hours. Children under conservatorship would have to have medical exams within three days of entering into the system.

Sanctuary Cities
Senate Bill 4
Signed by the Governor 5/31/2017, Effective on 9/1/2017
This bill mandates a law enforcement agency (LEA) to inquire into the legal status of an individual who has been detained. The LEA that has custody of a person subject to a detainer request issued by United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to 1) must comply with, honor, and fulfill any request made in the detainer request provided by the federal government; and 2) inform the person that the person is being held pursuant to a detainer request issued by ICE.

Public School Ratings
House Bill 22
Signed by the Governor 6/15/2017, Effective immediately
This bill revises the Public School Accountability system from the A-F current rating system and implements a more detailed system that better measures the performance of the school as opposed to the student. The new system raises three key performance indicators, like student performance on statewide tests, student improvements and ethnic and racial gap performance known as "domains" which can be used to identify improvements necessary on campuses.

Voter ID
Senate Bill 5
Signed by the Governor 6/30/2017, Effective 1/1/2018
This bill allows registered voters who lack a photo ID to cast a ballot after showing a voter registration certificate, utility bill, bank statement, government check or work paycheck. Such voters will have to sign a "declaration of reasonable impediment" stating that they could not acquire a photo ID due to a lack of transportation, lack of a birth certificate, work schedule, disability, illness, family responsibility or lost or stolen ID. Additionally, this bill provides an avenue for the Texas secretary of state (SOS) to provide election identification certificates.

Straight Party Voting
House Bill 25
Signed by the Governor 6/15/2017, Effective 9/1/2017
This bill eliminates one-party voting and requires the voter registration of each county that maintains a website to provide notice of certain identification requirements for voting and that straight ticket voting has been eliminated.

Teacher Retirement
House Bill 3976
Signed by the Governor 6/14/2017, Effective on 9/1/2017
This bill helps secure the solvency of the Teacher Retirement System going forward. The State increased contributions of $416 million to shore up the retired teachers' health benefit packages while increasing the contributions from active teachers to be determined by TFRS. Current retirees should not see premium increases but future retirees will be phased into a Medicare advantage plan. Without these changes the system would have run out of funds within just a few years.

Weather Damage Insurance
House Bill 1774
Signed by the Governor 5/26/2017, Effective on 9/1/2017
This bill discourages property owners from suing insurers over weather-related claims, reduces consumer protections and insulates large companies from punishment when they fail to uphold their responsibilities.

Texting While Driving
House Bill 62
Signed by the Governor 6/3/2017, Effective on 9/1/2017
This bill creates a statewide texting-while-driving ban. Texting and driving has been shown in some cases to be even more dangerous than drunk driving, creating a serious public safety concern.

Ride Hailing
House Bill 100
Signed by the Governor 5/29/2017, Effective immediately
This bill establishes a uniform statewide framework for regulating transportation network companies (TNCs), enabling TNCs to help provide Texans with greater mobility options, earning opportunities, and increased public safety. This bill also amends current law relating to the regulation of transportation network companies, requires an occupational permit, and authorizes a fee.

The Sandra Bland Act
Senate Bill 1849
Signed by the Governor 6/15/2017, Effective 9/1/2017
This bill requires the Commission on Jail Standards to develop guidelines to direct offenders with mental health and substance abuse issues toward treatment facilities if appropriate. This bill also increases officer training in general de-escalation and mental health de-escalation tactics. This bill also creates a more uniform system to ensure officer discipline is more transparent.

Lunch Shaming
Senate Bill 1566
Signed by the Governor 9/1/2017, Effective 9/1/2017
This bill enforces civil penalties of up to $1,000 per day on local law enforcement agencies that fail to report police shootings to the state within 30 days after the officer-involved injury or death.

Criminal Justice
House Bill 245
Signed by the Governor 9/1/2017, Effective 9/1/2017
This bill creates a grace period policy to allow students to continue to receive meals when their lunch accounts have insufficient funds. The bill ends the practice of so called "lunch shaming" in which the student's meals are taken from them in line if they do not have money in their account.

Senate Bill 1913
Signed by the Governor 9/15/2017, Effective 9/1/2017
This bill enacts jail time for those with insufficient funds to pay only offenses. This bill works to correct a justice system that, too often, resembles the "debtor's prison" of the past.