



**NATHAN JOHNSON**  
STATE SENATOR • DISTRICT 16

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**SEN. NATHAN JOHNSON FILES LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES  
FOR THE 87TH TEXAS LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

AUSTIN – Over the past few weeks, Senator Nathan Johnson introduced several measures to improve public health and worker productivity, while building on the vital strength of the Texas economy. The cornerstone of Senator Johnson's agenda is SB 117, the ***Live Well Texas Program***, a non-partisan proposal to expand Medicaid in Texas while preserving state control over funds and generating positive net revenue for the state. Like SB 117, the Senator's suite of other pre-filed bills – addressing criminal justice, taxation, business and the environment, good government and effective democracy, impediments to social progress, and a wide range of health initiatives – represent the product of a practical approach to government, guided by the desire for people to succeed, and informed by research and consultation with advocates, experts, and industry leaders.

"We've learned through experience a great deal about what works and what doesn't," said Johnson. "I want people to succeed. So let's do what works and fix what doesn't."

***A selection of Senator Johnson's pre-filed legislation***

**A healthier and more productive Texas, lower costs:**

- **Senate Bill 117 – the *Live Well Texas Program* – expands access to state Medicaid health insurance coverage to around 1.5 million uninsured Texans.** Drawing upon a 90/10 federal match to state funding, SB 117 is expected to have a net positive effect on the state budget – in the first biennium. It brings home billions in Texas tax dollars, stimulates the state economy, and creates thousands of quality jobs. The plan incentivizes healthy behaviors, helps individuals transition to private employee-sponsored insurance, and alleviates pressure on local property taxes that currently offset uncompensated care costs at hospitals.
- **Senate Bill 191 accelerates the use of social determinants of health** ("SDoH", e.g., nutrition, housing, transportation, and interpersonal violence). In Texas, private sector Managed Care Organizations (MCOs) are already partnering with the social service sector to improve individual health and lower healthcare costs by addressing SDoH. SB 191 elevates the importance of those initiatives through the award of state Medicaid MCO contracts.
- **Senate Bill 120 aims to lower private health insurance costs** by establishing a high-risk reinsurance pool to attract more competition into the private insurance market. Similar efforts by other states have succeeded in that aim.
- **Senate Bill 124 launches a state effort to improve consumer health literacy.** Bringing down healthcare



costs depends in part upon the ability of Texans to make sound, beneficial decisions about their own health and healthcare consumption.

**With special attention to Texas youth:**

- **Senate Bill 216 regulates e-cigarettes the way we regulate tobacco.** The measure requires retailers of vape products to obtain permits, which will be revoked as a penalty for selling e-cigarettes to minors. Vape products themselves will be subject to taxes at parity with those on cigarettes.
- **Senate Bill 138 removes a demonstrated barrier to higher education enrollment** – particularly among those bound for community college. SB 138 ensures that high school students receive the mandatory meningitis booster, and, where needed, the cost of the vaccine is covered by a federally funded program known as Texas Vaccines for Children.

**A more just, rational, and effective criminal justice system:**

- **Senate Bill 181 and Senate Concurrent Resolution 1 reverse the disastrous policy of mandatory driver's license suspension** for anyone convicted of any drug crime, no matter how small. This ill-conceived measure imposes insurmountable practical and financial obstacles to the efforts of people to lead responsible lives after a criminal conviction.
- **Senate Bill 151 aligns criminal penalties for cannabis oil to parity with marijuana**, preventing absurdly unjust results. No longer would a teenager be facing serious time in state prison for baking a batch of marijuana brownies using hash oil in place of the marijuana plant.

**Finding common ground between industry and the environment:**

- **Senate Bill 126 patches a regulatory hole that exempts large, aboveground petrochemical storage tanks from any state safety regulations.** The legislation authorizes and directs the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality to regulate those tanks, with input from industry experts, with the aim of preventing catastrophes like last year's 64-hour tank fire in Deer Park, which shut down the Houston Ship Channel and caused over \$1 billion in economic losses.
- **Senate Bill 125 phases out the use of hydrofluorocarbon refrigerants**, often referred to as "super greenhouse gasses". The US Chamber of Commerce supports the phase-out of HFCs, as the transition will leverage America's competitive advantage in post-HFC refrigerant manufacturing.

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