



August 31, 2020

Chairman Chris Turner
Members of the Committee
Texas House Higher Education Committee
Texas Capitol Station
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, TX 78768

Re: Comments on Interim Charge 3 Review progress towards the goals of the Texas 60X30 plan

Dear Chairman Turner and Members of the House Higher Education Committee:

I write to you on behalf of the Greater Houston Partnership and the business community we represent, which spans the 11-county greater Houston region. I appreciate the opportunity to submit comments regarding the Committee's Interim Charge 3, reviewing progress towards the goals of the Texas 60X30 plan.

The Partnership strongly supports the Tri-Agency initiatives aimed at increasing enrollment in credential and degree-granting programs and the re-engagement of students to complete their degrees. In the Houston region, the latter amounts to more than one million students who have started college but have not completed their degree. You well know the consequences, as those with college degrees or credentials earn higher wages, are more likely to be employed and more resilient to changes in the workforce. Engaging individuals and helping them to complete their degrees is necessary to achieve the Texas 60X30 goals.

The Partnership is currently working with the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to launch the GradTX 2.0 initiative through a Houston pilot. A priority of this pilot program is to re-engage those who have yet to complete their degrees and remove barriers to completion. A component of the 60X30 plan is intended to track the adult population holding a post-secondary credential or degree and match them with metrics informed by long-term state and regional talent needs. GradTX supports that work through student tracking with the goal to increase the percentage of adults earning their degrees in the Gulf Coast region. We hope the Legislature will continue to support valuable programs such as the GradTX initiative as we continue to work towards the 60X30 plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments and for your work to improve higher education enrollment and outcomes. Please feel free to contact Ben Melson, Director of Public Policy, via email bmelson@houston.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Bob Harvey' in a cursive script.

Bob Harvey
President and CEO