

## **Senate moves on eminent domain**

### **MADD pushes sobriety checkpoints.**

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### **Senate moves forward on eminent domain**

The state Senate took the lead Tuesday on the politically touchy issue of changing the state's eminent domain laws.

Sen. Craig Estes, R-Wichita Falls, filed Senate Bill 18, which would forbid governmental entities from taking property away from citizens solely to benefit private individuals. It also aims to ensure that fair compensation and certain moving expenses are paid to people whose land is seized.

Estes and Lt. Gov. David Dewhurst said the provisions of SB 18 are similar to House Bill 2006, which was passed by lawmakers two years ago and vetoed by Gov. Rick Perry.

### **Perry campaign sets up anti-bailout Web site**

Gov. Rick Perry's campaign has created a Web site blasting the pending \$800 billion-plus package sought by the Obama administration to juice the economy.

On the "No Government Bailouts" site (at [www.nogovernmentbailouts.com](http://www.nogovernmentbailouts.com)), foes can sign up and register opposition.

Perry spokesman Mark Miner said the campaign will pass along signees' names to Washington, though Perry won't be making a personal delivery. Both Texas U.S. senators are poised to vote against the package.

### **MADD, officials pushing for sobriety checkpoints**

Mothers Against Drunk Driving and law enforcement agencies are pushing lawmakers to help them crack down on offenders by allowing sobriety checkpoints and requiring ignition locks for everyone convicted of driving drunk.

Texas is one of 11 states that don't allow sobriety checkpoints, and MADD says the checkpoints could drastically reduce the number of fatalities in drunken driving crashes.

Texas led the nation in 2007 with 1,292 people killed in crashes involving drunken drivers.

A study by the Centers for Disease Control found that drunken driving fatalities dropped as much as 24 percent in states that allow the checkpoints.

### **State slow on payments to some nursing homes**

Some nursing homes have seen a delay in getting reimbursed by the state for caring for Medicaid recipients, state officials said Tuesday.

The issue came up at a hearing of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services when state Sen. Royce West, D-Dallas, said that a nursing home in his district "is on the brink of closing because it can't get paid ... from the state."

Addie Horn, commissioner of the Department of Aging and Disability Services, told West that because the state moved to a new payment system last year, some nursing homes have had a "delay in their payment."

She did not say how many, but her spokeswoman, Cecilia Fedorov, later said that "the vast majority of the providers are being paid. It's just a small handful of providers that are having issues."

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