

# THE STATE OF WOMEN IN TEXAS LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES 2025



# STRONGWOMEN  
BETTER TEXAS

## OVERVIEW

**89<sup>th</sup>**  
TEXAS  
LEGISLATIVE  
SESSION

Texas Women's Foundation envisions an equitable society in which women and girls can fully participate. In pursuit of that vision and with a commitment to our core values of integrity, intentionality and Inclusivity, we commission biannual research to guide our work in the areas of advocacy, grantmaking, education and leadership training to drive social and economic change for the 14.7 million women and girls who call Texas home.

Released in November, Texas Women's Foundation's 2024 Economic Issues for Women in Texas research report highlights the pivotal role women play in the \$2.4 trillion Texas economy, particularly in the areas of growth and innovation. The report also illuminates the critical need to invest in removing the barriers that stand in the way of women's ability to participate equitably, productively and consistently in the workforce - both today and in the future. By 2040, the population of women is expected to increase by more than 25%, surpassing 18.5 million.

With women representing 46% of the workforce and driving the growth and innovation of the nation's strongest economy, Texas stands at a critical juncture regarding women's economic security. The time to act is NOW to ensure health care access, affordable child care, stable housing, and equal pay for current and future Texas women.

With the 89th Texas Legislative Session underway, Texas Women's Foundation has identified legislative priorities that align with the key findings in our research. We have also identified a series of evidence-based policy recommendations designed to serve as a foundation for action and to provide guidance for policymakers, employers, corporations, and philanthropic organizations. It will take the collective effort of the public and private sectors to drive the change we seek to advance Texas women, girls and families and to unlock our state's full economic potential.

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# 2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES + POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Informed by the key findings of our *2024 Economic Issues for Women In Texas Report*, Texas Women's Foundation has identified two primary focus areas for our advocacy efforts during the 89th Legislative Session: health care access and affordable child care - core challenges to women's economic security.

These areas were chosen based on current, proposed legislation and opportunities for partnership. Three secondary areas of focus were also identified in alignment with key research findings. Priority action will be directed toward our primary focus areas, as we monitor the secondary focus areas.

## TXWF and ADVOCACY

- **Engaging in advocacy, in compliance with Texas Women's Foundation's status as a tax-exempt charitable organization, is an important part of advancing our mission of building #StrongWomenBetterWorld. Through issues-based advocacy, TXWF seeks to:**
- **Drive social change on the key economic issues impacting Texas women and girls**
- **Increase the number and types of voices speaking out for women and girls across the state**
- **Raise awareness for Texas Women's Foundation as a subject matter expert and resource for organizations, associations, agencies, and corporations advocating on behalf of Texas women and girls**



## PRIMARY FOCUS AREAS: HEALTH CARE & AFFORDABLE CHILDCARE

### **The Texas Legislature should use all available tools to improve health outcomes and access for women by:**

- Joining the majority of other states in expanding Medicaid access to adults in the coverage gap making below 138% of the Federal Poverty Level
- Streamlining and simplifying Medicaid and CHIP enrollment for women and their families by fixing policies that create a high administrative burden on the state and often result in incorrect coverage and care denials
- Re-institute funding for qualified enrollment assistance programs to help women navigate the correct health coverage and cost-savings options for their families
- Reinstate automatic enrollment from Medicaid for Pregnant Women into Healthy Texas Women and implement further measures to assist eligible postpartum mothers in retaining Medicaid coverage or moving to private or Affordable Care Act coverage for which they qualify
- Make paid sick leave an earned benefit that is available to more working women, so they can go to the doctor or stay home when they or their children are sick
- Support funding initiatives that ensure uninterrupted access to all contraceptive options



### **Texas lawmakers should encourage policies that support women's full participation in the workforce by addressing systemic barriers, including the high cost of child care by:**

- Fully funded universal Pre-K programs
- Increase child care subsidies for lower income families
- Support home-based providers that offer flexibility and non-traditional schedules
- Incentivize higher quality standards for Universal Subsidized Child Care programs



## SECONDARY FOCUS AREAS: HIGHER EDUCATION, EQUAL PAY, STABLE HOUSING

**State legislators should address college affordability to support women, particularly women of color, who have been burdened by high student loan debts as they enter the workforce by:**

- State legislators should address college affordability by increasing funding of TEXAS Grants and College Promise programs
- Expanding student loan forgiveness programs and canceling a set amount of debt



**Lawmakers can strengthen pay equity laws to ensure women, particularly women of color, are paid fairly across all sectors by:**

- Implementing comprehensive equal pay legislation with enforcement measures
- Increase the state minimum wage to living wage standards or at least allow local municipalities to set standards that meet their community needs
- Enact policies that address systemic barriers and mitigate challenges specific to single mothers and women
- Create incentives for women's participation in declining sectors



**Texas legislators can help increase homeownership for women by creating more affordable housing options and opportunities for economic advancement including:**

- Creating more affordable rental and housing options
- Aiding families seeking property tax relief or facing eviction

