



MEETING OF THE
TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION

DATE

APRIL 28, 2026

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Tuesday, April 28, 2026

CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Good morning, everybody.
This meeting is called to order. Uh, Les, is there, uh, anyone
signed up for public comment?

MR. TROBMAN: Good morning, commissioners.
Les Trobman, general counsel. We have two individuals who have
registered for public comment this morning. First, we have
Victoria Flaughner. Ms. Flaughner, if you could unmute yourself
and begin.

VICTORIA FLAUGHER: Thank you, sir. Can you
hear me fine?

MR. TROBMAN: Yes, we can. Go ahead.

VICTORIA FLAUGHER: I appreciate it. Good
morning, commissioners. My name is Vickie Flaughner and I'm a
citizen providing feedback. This question goes out to all of the
attorneys in the room, especially yourselves. If you had an
active motion pending and your client was contacted by TWC by
phone as my loved one repeatedly was last week, and your client
was invited to a customer service check-in with someone quote
sent by the central office, would you advise your client to take
that call? My quest, my guess is you'd say no to TWC, can I
speak to my client off the record while a motion is pending? How
dare you ask. You might say, sure, send it over in writing and
we'll respond. Because you know that that interaction is not
neutral. Getting it in writing is Legal 101. I mean come on,

1 staff advises you [inaudible]. Speaking to a staff member won't
2 reach your case. It's a fantasy and all of TWC knows this. The
3 problem is though claimants don't know. They think you're being
4 nice. They want you to care about their story. They need to be
5 heard. But is this outreach [inaudible]? Are these calls
6 recorded? Will that conversation be included within the research
7 for the motion that's currently on deck? Requesting
8 undocumented actions [inaudible] by anyone, is suspect and
9 inappropriate. Here's what I believe is the quandary. Is the
10 claimant considered not represented or self-represented? It's
11 not the same thing, and you know this because you're attorneys.
12 Despite the confusion around your [inaudible] behavior also
13 attorneys, about whether they're acting as a neutral judge or a
14 prosecutor, they flip between these roles at all of your
15 tribunal hearings without providing notice or informed awareness
16 to the claimants. And now, it appears the process includes TWC
17 conducting misleading outreach at an inappropriate time to
18 petition and trap unwitting claimants in clandestine calls. The
19 optics, at the very least, are horrible. [Inaudible] as you
20 review this motion for a hearing, please consider did this
21 claimant get due process? That is the entire point of why TWC
22 exists is having none of statutorily required evidence from the
23 employer, none, [inaudible] enough to wave off and dismiss a
24 misconduct charge. TWC is told by the employer, a 50-million-
25 dollar benefits management company, they didn't have any

1 evidence and they knew you should rule against them. The problem
2 here is that TWC doesn't seem to know that even though so many
3 of you are attorneys. Our timeline is dystopian. There's the
4 failure of the first meeting scheduling which resulted in a
5 reschedule, lost wages, and evidence record that is not
6 supported by underlying testimony. The subsequent [inaudible]
7 tribunal hearing response to a timely commission review which
8 was never fulfilled. The deliberate ignoring of the law
9 regarding statutorily-required evidence and [inaudible] hearing
10 that no one attended with nothing to base a merits determination
11 except on inaccurately re-summarized clerical notes by TWC
12 support staff reentered due to the original data entry error.
13 There's notes that are inserted as a legitimate legal
14 [inaudible] by unqualified individuals. Conclusions are false
15 and they do not rise to the level of competent evidence to
16 support the burden of proof. Oddly, this is the only instance
17 where attorneys [inaudible] in the mix and the entire case
18 pivots on their unqualified and unsupported legal synopsis. In
19 closing, please grant my loved one's motion to protect his due
20 process, civil rights. Thank you.

21 MR. TROBMAN: Thank you. Our next registrant
22 is Shantwana Johnson. If you could unmute yourself and begin.
23 No. OK, those are the ones that we have this morning. Thank you.

1 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Thanks, Les. Appreciate
2 it. I now turn the meeting over to Commissioner Connett to
3 preside over Agenda Items 3 through 8.

4 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: And the motion passes
5 with the exceptions noted. Uh, that concludes our work on Agenda
6 Items 3 through 8. So, Chairman Esparza, I hand the meeting back
7 over to you.

8 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Good. Thank you,
9 commissioner. Uh, Les, we have a presentation. Do we have props?

10 MR. TROBMAN: Yes.

11 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: We have things.

12 MR. TROBMAN: We have things. Uh, thank you,
13 Chairman. Commissioners, uh, today is Sherri Miller's last
14 commission meeting as she will be retiring from state service at
15 the end of the month. Sherri joined the Texas Workforce
16 Commission in, in 2003 and has served in various critical roles,
17 uh, over the past 23 years including as a hearing officer, a,
18 uh, commission appeals attorney and since 2015, the director of
19 commission appeals. As you all know firsthand, Sherri has guided
20 many commissioners through very complex cases. She has also led
21 her team with thoroughness, efficiency, and grace. I count
22 myself very fortunate to have had the chance to work with and
23 learn from Sherri and am honored to recognize her today on her
24 well-deserved retirement. On April, April 21, 2026, a flag was
25 flown over the Texas Capitol in Sherri's honor and in

1 appreciation of her service to Texas. Sherri, congratulations on
2 your retirement and we can't wait to hear about all the exciting
3 adventures you have to come.

4 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Sherri, thank you, uh, so
5 much. Uh, I, I'm, it's, uh, definitely a privilege to be here
6 and I, I jumped ahead of the commissioners in being able to tell
7 you how, uh, how much we appreciate you. I, we, you know, not
8 being here two years, a little over, uh, coming up, I don't even
9 know when now, uh, just your professionalism, your organization,
10 it's, it's, it's, the profound work that you're able to do to
11 get Texans, you know, where they need to go and, and, and, and
12 get them on their way in, in what is ultimately, you know, a
13 touch spot either way when it comes to labor and employers. You
14 understand that more than anybody and I really appreciate all
15 the dedication and hard work that you've given and not to
16 mention the training and everything that, that your, your team
17 looks to you for so like really congratulations on retirement.
18 Uh, we appreciate all the organization that, that we did at the
19 end of last year I think it was. That, that, that's a lot. It's
20 a lot. You guys don't get to see this because she's facing us
21 but, uh, she has this thing which I, it's, it's so, she has to
22 take a lot of notes and this is very, uh, exact work, wording
23 matters, everything, and she, she takes notes blindly. When
24 she's looking at us, she's taking notes, basically making sure
25 that she gets, she gets the wording right and everything there

1 and it's, it's, it's pretty, it's pretty impressive because
2 again, uh, you, you kind of, uh, really kind of hold me getting
3 started in this and understanding the, your glances and your
4 prompts and all those things that you've done this before and we
5 are but mere mortals in this whole process compared to you and
6 we appreciate everything that you do to help us get, uh, get
7 this right so we appreciate that, and, commissioners, I'll
8 please ask you all to join in if you care to.

9 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Yeah, I just concur
10 with, uh, Chairman Esparza. I mean, uh, it's been a pleasure
11 working for you, uh, and like Chairman said, I mean you guided
12 me personally through this. Uh, it can be daunting especially
13 when we're not familiar with some of the, uh, rules and laws
14 that happen but, uh, your confidence and just with a quick look
15 we know that it's, uh, our turn to say something whether we
16 short form dissent or, uh, have to concur with one of the fellow
17 commissioners but, uh, I thank you for your service and I am so
18 excited for you on this next chapter. I hope you enjoy
19 retirement and, uh, look forward to hearing, uh, all the new
20 stuff that you're going to be doing. Thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: All good.

22 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: Sherri, thank you for
23 your remarkable service and dedication to the state of Texas and
24 to this agency. Selfishly I consider myself very fortunate that
25 I got to be onboarded and introduced to, to this complex subject

1 matter under, under your direction and leadership. You've been
2 an invaluable asset. Your professionalism, your subject matter
3 expertise, your fastidiousness and precision, all that's really
4 very much appreciated. I'm so grateful for you and wish you all
5 the best.

6 MS. MILLER: Thank you. Gentlemen, I'm
7 speechless. I really appreciate your recognition. It makes it
8 all worth it. Uh, I've always been cognizant that the camera
9 only sees the back of my head so I'm, I'm gratified that I've
10 been able to help you perform your jobs better. Uh, it's been a
11 pleasure serving under you and serving you. I really appreciate
12 all the contributions you have made. Thank you very much,
13 gentlemen.

14 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Sherri, well deserved.
15 Uh, thank you again. Uh, we'll take a, we'll take a picture here
16 in a little bit, uh, whenever Julio gets back and, uh, we
17 appreciate this and, and, and again, like I said, there, it's a
18 huge, huge hole to fill but it, we know, we know it's happening
19 because you don't leave anything undone so thank you for, for
20 all the work that you're doing [inaudible]. We appreciate it.
21 We're going to go ahead and take a quick, quick break for the
22 shuffle and, uh, we'll take a picture up here at the dais and
23 then we'll, uh, move, uh, move to the next items. Thanks,
24 Sherri. OK, go ahead and start back up on Agenda Item 9

1 regarding consideration, possible action for public comment,
2 Government Code 2001.039. Hi, Reed.

3 REED O'BRIEN: Hello, good morning, uh,
4 excuse me, Chairman Esparza, Commissioner Treviño, Commissioner
5 Connett, and Mr. Pier. For the record, I'm Reed O'Brien with the
6 Office of General Counsel. Texas Government Code Chapter 2001
7 requires state agencies to review their rules every four years
8 to determine if the rules should be readopted, revised or
9 repealed, and whether the original reasons for adopting those
10 rules continue to exist. This process also ensures that our
11 rules are not obsolete, that they remain aligned with current
12 law and policy, and continue to reflect the commission's
13 policies and procedures. The following five chapters are due for
14 their four-year reviews: Chapter 808, Youth Driver Education
15 Funding Program; Chapter 821, Texas Payday Rules; Chapter 835,
16 Self-Sufficiency Fund; Chapter 849, Employment and Training
17 Services for Dislocated Workers Eligible for Trade Benefits; and
18 Chapter 850, Vocational Rehabilitation Services Administrative
19 Rules and Procedures. Before you today for your consideration is
20 TWC's notice of intent to review the rules in those chapters.
21 Staff requests the commission's approval to submit the notice
22 for publication in the Texas Register for a 30-day public
23 comment period, and once that comment period ends staff will
24 return to present our findings from the reviews and any
25

1 recommendations. This concludes my presentation. I'm available
2 to answer any questions.

3 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Great. Thank you, Reed.
4 Commissioners, any comments or questions?

5 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Uh, nothing here.

6 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: None here.

7 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: I have no questions
8 either. Uh, yeah, applaud housecleaning when it comes to rules.
9 Uh, appreciate all the work that everybody's doing to keep, keep
10 an eye on those, uh, and even, you know, on the calendar but
11 also, uh, just kind of in general when it comes to interior,
12 interior cleaning. Uh, is there a motion?

13 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Uh, Chairman, I move
14 that we approve the proposed rule reviews for 40 Texas
15 Administrative Code Chapters 808, 821, 835, 849, and 850 for
16 publication for public comment as recommended today by staff.

17 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: Second.

18 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: I also vote yes. The
19 motion passes. Thank you, Reed.

20 REED O'BRIEN: All right, thank you.

21 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: One and done, huh? There
22 you go. OK. Uh, Agenda Item 10 regarding consideration, possible
23 action U.S. Department of Labor waivers, uh, in WIOA. Hey,
24 Shirley.

25

1 SHIRLEY JONES: Good morning, Chairman,
2 commissioners, Mr. Pier. For the record, I'm Shirley Jones with
3 the Workforce Development Division. Commissioners, before you
4 today for your consideration and adoption are five requests for
5 waivers of provisions of the Workforce Innovation and
6 Opportunity Act. The waivers are related to migrant and seasonal
7 farmworker geographically targeted outreach, migrant and
8 seasonal farmworker part-time outreach workers, youth incentives
9 ex, expansion, non-WIOA training services, and Pell eligibility
10 exemption. The youth incentive and training-related waivers were
11 developed in coordination with local Workforce Development
12 Boards, and all of the waivers were developed in court,
13 accordance with federal regulation and guidance. This morning
14 staff recommends adoption of the waiver requests included in
15 your meeting [inaudible] materials for submission to the U.S.
16 Department of Labor. That concludes my comments and I'm
17 available to answer any questions you may have.

18 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Thanks, Shirley. Uh,
19 commissioners, any comments or questions?

20 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Uh, nothing here.

21 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: No, thank you.

22 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Is there a motion?

23 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Chairman, I move that
24 we approve the waiver requests requirements within Section 134
25 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and federal

1 regulation requirements within 20 CFR Sections 653.107, 680.210,
2 and 681.640 for submission to the U.S. Department of Labor as
3 described in the discussion paper and recommended today by
4 staff.

5 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: I second that motion.

6 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: I also vote yes. The
7 motion passes. Thanks, Shirley.

8 SHIRLEY JONES: Thank you.

9 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Agenda Item 11 concerning
10 JET, uh, JET grants. Matt, come on up.

11 MATT SNIADECKI: Good morning, Chairman,
12 commissioners, Director Pier. Uh, for the record, Matt
13 Sniadecki, uh, manager of the Education Outreach Program. The
14 FY26 JET program request for applications was issued on October
15 31, 2025. Eligible applicants for this RFA included public
16 junior colleges, technical institutes, and state colleges, open-
17 enrollment charter schools and school districts. The RFA
18 received in total 181 applications including 41 applications
19 from institutions of higher education, and 140 applications from
20 open-enrollment charter schools and school districts. On April
21 13, 2026, the JET Advisory Board made the following
22 recommendations to the commission regarding FY2026 JET awards.
23 To recommend the commission direct staff to move forward with
24 awarding grants based on the final evaluation score with ability
25 to move down the list 60 points and above should additional

1 funds become available during the contracting phase. Staff
2 recommends approval of the FY2026 JET grant program awards as
3 recommended by the JET Advisory Board. That concludes my remarks
4 and I'm happy to answer any questions.

5 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: All right, thank you,
6 Matt. Uh, commissioners, any comments or questions?

7 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Nothing here.

8 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: No, none here. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: That's great. Matt, thank
11 you, uh. We had a very, very good, uh, presentation during the
12 JET present, uh, during our JET Advisory Board, uh, a couple
13 weeks ago.

14 MATT SNIADECKI: Yes, sir.

15 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Two week ago, uh, very,
16 you know, great representation from organizations and, uh,
17 having to go through these awards, congratulate the, to the
18 award winners that were going to be, uh, that these will be
19 presented to. It's doing a lot of good all across the state, uh,
20 especially in rural communities, uh, where we need it most and
21 we appreciate the work that, uh, our team is doing to support
22 the advisory committee.

23 MATT SNIADECKI: Yes, sir.

24 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: [Inaudible] too so good
25 job [inaudible].

1 MATT SNIADOCKI: Thank you.

2 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Uh, hang on, wait, uh, no
3 comments or questions. Is there a motion?

4 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Chairman, I move that
5 we approve the fiscal year 2026 Jobs and Education for Texans
6 grant program awards as recommended by the JET grant Advisory
7 Board.

8 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: Second.

9 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: I vote yes. The motion
10 passes. Thank you, Matt.

11 MATT SNIADOCKI: Thank you.

12 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Appreciate it. Uh, Agenda
13 Item 12, uh, concerning revisions to the Military to Civilian
14 Employment program. Bob Gear.

15 BOB GEAR: Good morning, Chairman Esparza,
16 Commissioner Treviño, Commissioner Connett, Mr. Pier. For the
17 record, I'm Bob Gear, director of the Texas Veterans Leadership
18 Program, Workforce Division. As you all already know, Texas has
19 multiple military installations and we get about 22,000, uh,
20 returning veterans to this, returning transition members to,
21 from the state or those who remain here. In 2024, TWC created
22 the military to civilian, uh, program, employment program and
23 that was to provide much needed training, employment, and
24 supportive services to transitioning service members, recently
25 separated veterans, and military spouses. In FY, for FY25 TWC

1 allocated three million dollars, and for FY26 they allocated,
2 uh, three million dollars. All 28 Workforce Boards have had an
3 opportunity and can still participate in this grant. To date
4 we've had seven boards who applied and been awarded funding. The
5 other thing we recognize is a maximum award of \$250,000, uh. It,
6 it, for board areas with large transition service populations,
7 they run out of funds, insufficient funds to fund the need. So
8 coming off of Chairman Esparza's direction from the March 10th
9 commission meeting, uh, staff went back and looked at it and has
10 the follow recommendations. One, we start a board, uh, a
11 distribution of boards, uh, which we take two million those 10
12 boards, distribution papers, this is on page two of the
13 discussion paper. The methodology and how we came up with that
14 is also at the top of that. Boards have to opt in. They must opt
15 in to support to do this. If they do not, that funding and any,
16 or if they request a lower amount, will go back and be held in
17 reserve for boards with dedicated performance. The second part
18 of this is boards who do not have military installations in
19 their area, \$500,000 set aside for \$100,000 grants or grants for
20 initial grant award. Uh, through this everything will be in
21 working Texas, all the performance measures, and will go with
22 WIOA standard performance measures. I brought up those, uh, the
23 numbers for the budget and this is per staff recommendation.
24 Staff recommends TWC restructures the existing program using the
25 program's available balance and adding \$249,948 in additional

1 WIOA statewide funds for FY26 for a total of 2.5 million to
2 support the Military to Civilian Employment Program using the
3 methodology described above. This concludes my presentation and
4 happy to answer any questions you may have.

5 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Thank you, Bob. Uh,
6 commissioners, any comments or questions?

7 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Uh, nothing here but
8 appreciate all the work that you did to inform us of all the,
9 uh, the requirements on this. Thank you, Bob.

10 BOB GEAR: Thank you, Commissioner Treviño.

11 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: Yeah, and on my part
12 just a thank you, Mr. Gear. This is, uh, this is really
13 exciting. Uh, restructuring seems like a much smarter and more
14 efficient way to serve a, a critically important population,
15 much, much more effective and efficient, right, sounds like for
16 TWC staff and the board staff so thanks for your great work on
17 this.

18 BOB GEAR: Thank you, Commissioner Connett.

19 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Yeah, thanks for staying
20 on it, Bob. Appreciate it. Uh, any, is there a motion?

21 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Uh, Chairman, I move
22 that we approve the restructuring of the program funding
23 distribution methodology and adding \$249,948 in additional
24 fiscal year 2026 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act
25 statewide funds to support Military to Civilian Employment

1 grants as described in the discussion paper and recommended
2 today by staff.

3 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: Second.

4 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: If I could vote yes, I
5 would, uh. The motion passes. Thank you, Bob. Appreciate it.

6 BOB GEAR: Thank you, Chairman.

7 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Thank you very much for
8 getting that change.

9 BOB GEAR: Thank you.

10 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Agenda Item 13, uh,
11 discussion, consideration, possible action regarding approval,
12 oh, yep, local Workforce Development Board nominees. Kara, come
13 on up.

14 KARA LEVY: Good morning, Chairman,
15 commissioners, and Mr. Pier. Uh, for the record, Kara Levy,
16 Workforce Development Division. Today for your consideration we
17 have Workforce Board nominations for the following boards:
18 Workforce Solutions Deep East Texas; Workforce Solutions, uh,
19 North Central Texas; Workforce Solutions Panhandle; and
20 Workforce Solutions Rural Capital Area. We present these
21 nominations for your consideration. I'm happy to answer any
22 questions you have.

23 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Thank you so much.
24 Commissioners, uh, any comments or questions?

25 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Uh, nothing here.

1 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: No, none here.

2 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Is there a motion?

3 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Chairman, I move that
4 we approve the local Workforce Development Board nominees
5 presented today for the following: Workforce Solutions Deep East
6 Texas; North Central Texas; Panhandle; and Rural Capital Area.

7 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: Second.

8 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: I also vote yes. The
9 motion, uh, the motion passes. Thank you very much, Kara. Any
10 reports? No reports. Are you sure, Michael? Don't want to come
11 up, cool. Uh, executive director, Steve, any reports from you?
12 Nothing going on? Very good. Well, I have something to say. I
13 want to introduce, uh, Naomi Howze. Naomi is joining us as one
14 of our attorneys to help us with our CAs. This is her second day
15 on the job and first day of appeals. I'm glad, I'm glad you got
16 to meet Sherri for, for, before, you know, before she retired
17 just for a little bit. Glad we could get you in the picture to
18 memorialize that, uh, and thank you again for everybody that
19 came up for that, that, that big picture. I, she's going to love
20 it. Uh, we're going, we'll send it out to everybody. I think
21 it's great to treasure people like Sherri for doing everything
22 she's done and again, it's great to have all of you doing the
23 same amount of work when it comes down to it, all in the right
24 direction, and that's all from me but thank you, Naomi. We're

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1 excited. It's a fun time up here so glad you're here

2 [inaudible]. Commissioners, anything else?

3 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: No, just a lot of
4 retirements happening—

5 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: Yeah.

6 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: But good to see new,
7 uh, faces come in. We, I met Noemi yesterday and, uh, welcome
8 you to, uh, TWC. You're going to have a fabulous time.

9 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: Welcome.

10 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: With that I will
11 entertain a motion to adjourn if we have one.

12 COMMISSIONER TREVIÑO: Uh, Chairman, I move
13 to adjourn.

14 COMMISSIONER CONNETT: Second.

15 CHAIRMAN ESPARZA: I also vote yes. We are
16 adjourned.

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