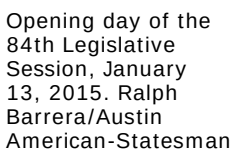
What to Expect When You're Expecting...Session!

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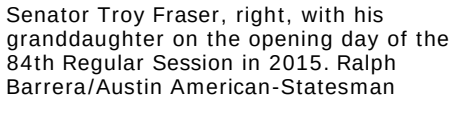
The first day of the Regular Session is filled with activity and ceremony, and follows a schedule similar to first days past. The House and Senate journal entries for previous first days can be found on the library's website, and offer a glimpse into what to expect on January 10, 2017, when the 85th Texas Legislature convenes at noon.



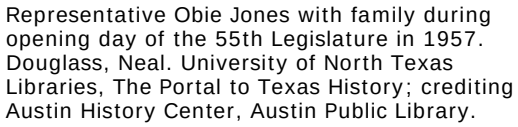
Opening day of the 84th Legislative Session, January 13, 2015. Ralph Barrera/Austin American-Statesman

83rd Texas Legislative Session on Opening Day: A Timelapse from texastribune on Vimeo.

In the Senate, the first day of session is called to order by the Lieutenant Governor, while in the House the Secretary of State acts as Master of Ceremonies until the Speaker is elected. In both chambers, a roll call of members is taken to establish a quorum, and an invocation is offered. Members-elect will also take the oath of office. For information about members of the Texas Legislature, please visit our Texas Legislators: Past & Present page.



Senator Troy Fraser, right, with his granddaughter on the opening day of the 84th Regular Session in 2015. Ralph Barrera/Austin American-Statesman



Representative Obie Jones with family during opening day of the 55th Legislature in 1957. Douglass, Neal. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

In the House, an important piece of business on opening day is the election of the Speaker. Because the Speaker is elected before the permanent rules of the House are adopted for the current session, a motion is usually adopted to temporarily use the rules of procedure from the previous session. Current and historical rules of the House and the Senate can be found on the library's website. Procedures for nomination and election of the Speaker are passed via resolution. In many past sessions, nominating speeches were not to exceed 5 minutes and seconding speeches were not to exceed 4 minutes. The nominating and seconding speeches as well as the final vote tally are often recorded in the House Journal, and the library has compiled these documents on its website.

Learn more about Speakers of the Texas House, 1846 - present.

In turn, the Senate elects the President Pro Tempore. Nominating and seconding speeches are also allowed for this election. Traditionally, the senator with the most seniority who hasn't previously served as President Pro Tempore would serve as the next President Pro Tempore. After the election, a committee is appointed to escort the President Pro Tempore-elect to the podium to take the oath of office and to address the Senate.

Learn more about Lt. Governors and Senate Presidents Pro Tempore, 1846 - present

At the beginning of session each chamber passes a resolution to spell out operational details. In the House, this is called the Housekeeping Resolution, and in the Senate, the Senate Caucus Report. Each chamber notifies the opposite chamber and the governor when their proceedings are concluded, organized, and ready to transact the business of Texas.

If you are unable to join us here in Austin, you can watch a live broadcast of the day's proceedings online at the House and Senate websites.

Thomas Reuben Bonner, Speaker of the Texas House during the 15th Legislature (1876).

Richard Bennett Hubbard Jr., Lt. Governor during the 15th Legislature (1876).