

Abbott promises special session announcement "later this week"

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BY PATRICK SVITEK MAY 29, 2017 10 AM



At an outdoor bill-signing ceremony in Austin, Gov. Greg Abbott tells reporters he'll make an announcement on a special session later this week.

📷 Bob Daemmrich for The Texas Tribune

Gov. [Greg Abbott](#) on Monday promised to make an announcement "later this week" on whether he will call a special session.

"I can tell you this, and that is when it gets to a special session, the time and the topics are solely up to the governor of the state of Texas, and we will be, if we have a special session, convening only on the topics that I choose at the time of my choosing," Abbott told reporters after a bill-signing ceremony in Austin.

Monday is the last day of the regular session. Lawmakers still have not come to an agreement on property taxes and a "bathroom bill" that would regulate which restroom transgender Texans can use. Abbott and Lt. Gov. [Dan Patrick](#) had named those issues priorities in the homestretch, and Patrick has pushed for a special session on them.

Asked how much pressure he felt from Patrick to call a special session, Abbott replied, "none."

On Sunday, the House and Senate descended into finger-pointing over inaction on critical legislation needed to keep some state agencies from shuttering. Patrick has threatened to hold hostage the measure, known as a sunset safety net bill, if he does not get his way on property taxes and the bathroom issue.

"My biggest disappointment, of course, is the sunset bill did not pass," Abbott said Monday. "This is something that is incredibly easy to achieve that members could've very easily gotten together and agreed upon but simply was not done."

Abbott has long had an aversion to special sessions, arguing taxpayers deserve representatives who do their work on time. A special session could last up to 30 days, and the governor can call back lawmakers as many times as he wants.

As recently as Friday morning, Abbott had appeared optimistic legislators would hammer out a deal on the two big remaining issues. But those hopes dimmed over the weekend as intra-chamber tensions spiked, with both side holding dueling news conferences twice in three days.