

TEXAS COUNSELING ASSOCIATION
85th Legislative Session – March 17, 2017
WEEKLY UPDATE

CALL TO ACTION: Call [Senate Education Committee](#) members and ask them to favorably report SB 490 as quickly as possible. SB 490 (Lucio) would direct TEA to provide data on the number of school counselors on each campus.

What Happened This Week: The pace is certainly picking up, as both the House and Senate can now begin to vote on bills that were not designated as “emergency items” by the Governor. While some committees are holding marathon hearings (see House Public Education) other committees appear to continue their meandering through the session. (As bills move through the process, sponsors often offer “committee substitutes.” As this happens, bill numbers change from HB and SB to CSHB and CSSB. This is important to ensure you are reviewing the most recent version of a bill.)

School counselors were well represented at the Senate Education Committee on Thursday, 3/16/17. TSCA and TCA leaders Sharon Bey, Megan Guidry, Betty White and Carrie Proctor testified in support of SB 490 at a very early meeting of the Senate Education Committee. Their [engaging and positive dialogue](#) with the committee laid the groundwork for a quick report out of the bill. **SB 490** was left pending which is the process this committee follows. Your calls will help move that bill out of committee quickly and onto the Senate floor. See Call to Action Above.

On a vote of 21 to 10, **SB 6** was passed by the Senate and is headed to the House which, up to this point, has not expressed much interest in this legislation.

What’s Ahead:

TCA Advocacy Day, Tuesday, March 21st 8 am in Capitol Cafeteria, located on E1 of the Capitol Extension – [Register](#) by noon on Monday to ensure we have enough food and materials for you! TCA serves you breakfast, gives you an orientation, arms you with talking points and supports you all the way! If you can’t make it to Austin, you can help with **Virtual Advocacy!** Call and email YOUR state representative and senator. Let them know your colleagues are there for you! Advocacy resources will be posted to our Advocacy Page by Monday evening.

Committee Meetings (as of 3/17/2017) - Go to www.capitol.state.tx.us to read complete bills.

- Monday, March 20, 2017
 - [House Human Services Committee](#), 8:30 am, E2.030 to hear 5 bills, including **HB 1520** (Munoz) relating to transparency in the rate-setting processes for the Medicaid managed care and child health plan programs.
 - [House Licensing and Administrative Procedures Committee](#), 2 pm or upon adjournment, E2.026 to hear 8 bills, including **HB 442** (Martinez, A) to prohibit licensing boards from publishing the home addresses of LPCs, LCDCs and SWs; and **HB 1055** (Burkett) to prohibit licensing boards from increasing license fees above the rates in effect as of 1/1/2017.
- Tuesday, March 21, 2017 – TCA ADVOCACY DAY
 - [House Public Health Committee](#), 8 am, E2.012 to hear 8 bills, including **HB 1486** (Price) to establish certification standards and Medicaid billing options for peer specialists.

- [Senate Education Committee](#), 9 am, E1.028 to hear **SB 3** (Taylor), a 33-page complex bill to create a process for parents of all students born after 1/1/2012 to enroll their students in an education savings account to cover expenses for educational programs and services that are not delivered by a public school or state agency. Allotments would range from 60 to 90 percent of the state allotment to public schools, depending on family income. TCA does not support legislation that moves public dollars from public schools. The House, up to this point, has not expressed much interest in this legislation.
- [House Public Education Committee](#), Noon or upon adjournment of the House, E2.036 to hear **HB 22** (Huberty) to modify the school accountability system and 21 other bills associated with assessments and accountability.
- [Senate Criminal Justice Committee](#), 1:30 pm or upon adjournment, E1.016 to hear 11 bills, including **SB 613** (Whitmire) related to mental health services for violent sex offenders.
- Wednesday, March 22, 2017
 - House Higher Education Committee, 10:30 am or upon adjournment, E2.030 to hear 3 bills including **HB 16** (Lozano) relating to sexual assault, family violence, and stalking at public and private postsecondary educational institutions.
 - [House Juvenile Justice Committee](#), 10:30 am or upon adjournment, E2.016 to hear 8 bills, including **HB 1501** (Thompson) to establish indemnity from civil damages for child custody evaluators among other procedural changes to child custody evaluations and **HB 1663** (Dutton) relating to certain statutory changes to reflect and address same-sex marriages and parenting relationships.

TCA's Watch List: The TCA [Weekly Tracking Report](#) includes only those bills we have been able to review following the overwhelming number of bills filed last week. The Report will indicate the latest action on each bill that TCA is tracking. To read the entire bill go to www.capitol.state.tx.us and enter the bill number.

What Can You Do?

- IDENTIFY [who represents you](#) and load their contact information into your phone or computer.
 - ACT on every alert that you receive. A call is better than an email; a visit is better than a call.
 - SHARE the Weekly Update and Call to Action Alerts across your networks and social media. Please acknowledge TCA as your source when you share.
 - REVIEW bills that interest you and let jan@txca.org know what you think about them. Set up a personal tracking system at www.capitol.state.tx.us.
 - WATCH the TCA Advocacy Video on the [TCA YouTube Channel](#) to hone your advocacy skills.
 - ATTEND at least one TCA Advocacy Day. Register at www.txca.org/advocacydays. Bring a friend.
- TCA membership is encouraged but not required.

Thank you for all you do to support professional counselors, your students and your clients. Contact jan@txca.org with questions or requests for additional information.



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