

TEXAS COUNSELING ASSOCIATION
Advocacy Action Alert
March 3, 2017
Call to Action and Weekly Update

CALL TO ACTION: SB 6 (Kolkhurst) will be heard in the [Senate State Affairs Committee](#) on Tuesday, March 7, 2017 at 8 am in E1.012. SB 6 would require that individuals use bathrooms that align with the gender listed on their birth certificates. TCA OPPOSES SB 6. The sponsor promotes this bill as protecting privacy and preventing sexual assault in public restrooms. Not true. This bill discriminates against transgender people and is more likely to hurt than help anyone. Scores of cities and states that protect transgender people from discrimination in public accommodations have reported no problems with privacy and sexual assault in public restrooms. CALL EACH MEMBER OF THE SENATE STATE AFFAIRS NOW. Contact [your State Senator](#) and ask them to oppose SB 6 should it reach the Senate floor.

WEEKLY UPDATE

Overview: Seven weeks into the 85th Legislative Session, House committees are finally organized. The Senate got organized faster but until the House appointed its committees not much could happen. TCA members will receive a **Weekly Update** on legislation that aligns with our [2017 Public Policy Agenda](#). **Call to Action Alerts** will be sent as bills are heard in Committee or on the House or Senate floor.

It is a pretty short walk between the House and Senate sides of the Capitol, but this session they are philosophically miles apart. Your active participation is essential. Your Legislator needs to know how YOU feel about the bills that they will consider. It is easy for bills to “hitch a ride” on legislation that is moving during sessions like this. Vigilance and engagement are the keys to our success. Don’t wait for TCA to ask you to call. If you see legislation that you support or bills that you oppose, reach out NOW!

What Can You Do?

- IDENTIFY [who represents you](#) and load the 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. 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.

Committee Meetings (as of 3/2/2017)

- Monday, March 6, 2017
 - [House Human Services Committee](#), 8:30 am, E2.030 to hear, among other bills, HB 482 (Walle) to establish goals for caseload limits for child and adult protective services.
 - [House Business & Industry Committee](#), 11 am, E2.016 to hear, among other bills, HB 88 (Martinez) to require employers to allow employees to use leave time to care for their foster children.
- Tuesday, March 7, 2017
 - [Senate State Affairs Committee](#), 8:30 am, E1.012 to hear SB 6 (see above Call to Action).

TCA's Watch List: The TCA [Weekly Tracking Report](#) lists all the legislation being tracked by TCA. It will be updated weekly. March 10th is the last day for regular bill filing.

Listed below are some of the key bills that TCA is monitoring. To read the complete bill, go to www.capitol.state.tx.us.

- SB 6 (Kolkhorst) – see above. Oppose.
- SB 196 (Garcia, S) – requires public and charter schools to post notice if there is no school counselor, nurse, or librarian assigned to a campus. Amend and Support.
- SB 242 (Burton) – modifies the requirements for educators to release student records to parents. Oppose
- SB 490 (Lucio) – requires each school district to report through PEIMS the number of school counselors at each campus. Support.
- SB 777 (Rodriguez, J) – requires each middle, junior and high school campus to hire a school counselor using funds appropriated for that purpose. Support.
- SB 651 (Perry) – prohibits all licensing boards from adopting any rule, regulation, or policy or imposing any penalty that burdens an applicant's or licensee's free exercise of religion, freedom of speech based on religion or membership in any religious organization, including penalties. Oppose.
- SB 892 (Perry) – prohibits governmental entities from taking any adverse action against a child welfare service provider who declines to deliver or provide access to services for their clients based on the provider's "sincerely held religious beliefs" including penalties. Oppose.
- SB 1022 (Nelson) – converts the licensing boards for LPCs, LMFTs and SWs to advisory committees housed at the Texas Dept. of Licensing and Regulation. Oppose.
- HB 179 (Lucio III) – requires schools with enrollments of 300 students or more to employ a full-time school counselor. Support.
- HB 181 (Lucio III) – limits to 10% the amount of time a school counselor can spend on non-counseling duties. Support.
- HB 569 (Israel) – subjects to discipline by a licensing or regulatory board any health or mental health professional who attempts to change the sexual orientation of a child. Support.
- HB 1488 (Price) – amends and potentially expands the Mental Health Professional Loan Repayment Program. Support.
- HCR 81 (Clardy) – commends mental health professionals in May on the occasion of National Mental Health Month. Support.

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.