



Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops

THE PUBLIC POLICY VOICE OF THE CHURCH

Priority Legislation for 89th Texas Legislature

These bills are priority consideration on April 1, Catholic Advocacy Day.

For a full list of positions being taken by the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops for the 89th Texas Legislature, visit www.txcatholic.org.



HB 2 (Rep. Brad Buckley) provides teacher pay raises, increased public school funding targeted towards teachers & students and incorporates the special

education commission recommendations to greater serve special needs students. The TCCB supports this bill to increase funding and support for public school teachers and students.

SB 2 | HB 3 (Sen. Brandon Creighton and Rep. Brad Buckley) establishes a universal education savings account that prioritizes access for the poor and students with disabilities while protecting the religious liberty of participants. The TCCB supports this bill to provide a parental choice program which prioritizes the poor and vulnerable and has strong accountability through accreditation requirements for private schools.

HB 3347 (Rep. Candy Noble) closes the loophole that excludes non-certified school employees from the Do Not Hire Registry. The TCCB supports this bill to include everyone found guilty of misconduct with a child on the Do Not Hire Registry.

SB 571 (Sen. Paul Bettencourt) closes the loophole in the Do Not Hire Registry that allows contracts to evade placement on the registry. The TCCB supports this bill to expand child protection in schools.

“The Life of the Mother” bill HB 44 | SB 31 (Rep. Charlie Geren and Sen. Bryan Hughes) clarifies the civil liability statues to ensure



medical professionals are not hesitant to provide appropriate care for mothers with pregnancy complications. The TCCB supports this bill so women receive the necessary care when facing life-threatening pregnancy complications.

SB 1388 (Sen. Kolkhorst) amends the Thriving Texas Families Program by requiring HHSC ensure that service providers are not associated with abortion service providers and do not provide, refer, advocate for, or promote abortion services. It excludes from TTF funding government entities, hospitals, and providers who primarily function as medical, behavioral health, or mental health providers. The TCCB supports this bill to reinforce the Thriving Texas Families Program as a pro-life, pro-woman, pro-family initiative.

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“Second Look” HB 200 (Rep. Brad Buckley) requires inmates serving a sentence for a felony



offense committed when they were younger than 18 become eligible for parole the earlier of the date the inmate's actual calendar time equals 20 years or the date the inmate would

otherwise be eligible for parole. It also requires additional parole considerations for inmates who were younger than 18 years old at the time of the offense including the diminished culpability of juveniles, the hallmark features of youth, and the greater capacity of juveniles for change. The TCCB supports this bill to allow inmates a second look at long sentences for offenses committed in their youth.

“Raising the Age” HB 2234 | SB 1306 (Rep. Harold Dutton and Sen. Molly Cook) changes the age of criminal responsibility, from 17 to 18. Specifically, it amends definitions in the Family Code and Penal Code, indicating that a child is now defined as being between 10 and 18 years of age. Additionally, individuals aged 18 to 20, who committed offenses before turning 18, may still fall under juvenile court jurisdiction for specific purposes. The TCCB supports this bill to improve the likelihood of rehabilitating juvenile offenders.



HB 371 | HB 4707 (Rep. Ben Bumgarner and Rep. Andy Hopper)

prohibits undocumented immigrants from enrolling in Texas public K-12 schools unless the school board

has an agreement for the US government to pay the state for the cost of educating the students. The TCCB **opposes** this bill which would remove access to education from children in Texas.

HB 1400 | SB 718 (Rep. Cody Harris and Sen. Lois Kolkhorst)

creates a new funding mechanism for groundwater districts to better analyze their quality and quantity. The TCCB supports this legislation to improve water quality in Texas.



HB 2816 | SB 619 (Rep. Tom Oliverson and Sen. Kevin Sparks)

allows medical professionals to decline to participate in a healthcare service for reasons of conscience.

The TCCB supports this bill for the protection of health care professionals' conscience.

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Please co-sponsor the Housing Affordability Bill Package



HB 24 | SB 844 (Rep. Angela Orr and Sen. Bryan Hughes) reduces minimum lot size requirements. The TCCB supports this legislation to reduce the requirements for lot size to increase homeownership opportunities, reduce housing costs, and reduce homelessness.

HB 3172 | SB 854 (Rep. Gary Gates and Sen. Mayes Middleton) improve permitting processes for affordable housing for religious entities who build affordable housing on their property. The TCCB supports this legislation to more efficiently convert property owned by churches and other faith-based entities to affordable housing.

HB 3404 | SB 840 (Rep. Cole Hefner and Sen. Bryan Hughes) expand residential options in commercial zones. The TCCB supports this legislation to allow housing to be built in areas zoned for commercial use or office space, creating much-needed housing options, especially in areas with high demand.

HB 3919 | SB 15 (Rep. Gary Gates and Sen. Paul Bettencourt) sets forth specific size and density regulations for residential lots in Texas municipalities with populations exceeding 90,000 situated in counties above 300,000 residents. Municipalities are restricted from enforcing ordinances that require residential lots to exceed 1,400 square feet, have setbacks larger than five feet, or maintain a density lower than 31.1 units per acre. The TCCB supports this legislation to increase homeownership opportunities, lower housing costs and reduce homelessness.

HB 5187 | SB 2477 (Rep. Jared Patterson and Sen. Paul Bettencourt) streamline the conversion of empty or underutilized commercial properties into residential or mixed-use development including allowing residential in office zones without zoning changes. The TCCB supports this legislation to increase housing affordability.

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