

★ TEXAS IMPACT ACTION ALERT

Week of April 24, 2023

Green=Support • **Red**=Oppose • **Tan**=Monitor Closely

“GET A FRIEND TO CALL” WEEK

You’ve made your calls, and now you wonder if there’s any more you can do to advance (or stop) bills you care about...and the answer is, get some friends! Now is the time when the volume of calls to offices really matters, and the most important information is simply “I’m asking Rep/Sen X to support/oppose HB/SB X.” So the more calls you can drive, the more effective your work will be.

More Details (skip if you just want the bill numbers)

On April 24, the Texas House will have 17 days before the deadline for HBs to pass the House. The “season” of the Texas Legislative session has turned from committee activity to floor action. The committees have light agendas as committee clerks rush to finalize the required reports for bills that have passed out of committee. The leadership of both chambers is focused on sending their major initiatives to the other chamber in preparation for “the grand bargain” that happens every session as the presiding officers “horse trade” their competing priorities. Finally, the legislation that is likely to produce major divisions — such as border security, electric grid, school voucher, and election bills — is getting shaped behind the scenes. Since those items are divisive, they usually move late since emotions run hot after the passage of such items, and the resulting frayed relationships make passing major initiatives difficult thereafter.

What the Senate wants is mostly revealed. With only 31 members and a presiding office that is elected statewide, the Senate can move much faster than the House. As a statewide elected official, the Lt. Governor is most responsive to what a majority of those that vote in his party primary want. Most of that agenda is already through the Senate and sitting in the House.

The Speaker of the House, by contrast, has a much harder job because the Speaker is elected by 149 other members of the Texas House. The Speaker must keep a governing coalition happy. Therefore, a number of bills authored by representatives from the minority party that are palatable enough to the majority party are also moving through the House. If history holds true, then most of those bills will die in the Senate, but not before the Speaker can muster enough votes to move his priorities through the chamber and to the Senate.

While the House and Senate are making deals and refining priorities this week, it's a good time for Texans of faith to do a stocktake on our priorities, see where we need to reaffirm our positions, and apply some extra pressure.

Maternal Health

Some bills have passed out of the House and need to keep moving in the Senate; some bills are not through the House and need a nudge to get over to the Senate timely. We are very concerned that, of the dozens of bills that would moderate Texas' extreme abortion ban, not one has been heard in committee.

Call the Speaker, the Chair of House Public Health, and your legislator and ask them to hear HB2215, which would create exemptions in Texas abortion law for the life of the mother and in the case of nonviable pregnancies.

Chair: Rep. Stephanie Klick – (855) 701-2295
Speaker Dade Phelan – (866) 730-0867

House Calendars Committee

Support HB 380 by Bucy. HB 380 would require the Secretary of State to post city and school board elections on its website.

Support HB 381 by Thompson. HB 381 would prohibit the death penalty in cases where the defendant has an intellectual disability.

Support HB 663 by Thierry. HB 663 would improve reporting of maternal mortality information to the state.

Support HB 2055 by Jones. HB 2055 would repeal the criminal offense of homosexual conduct from the Penal Code.

Support HB 2090 by Manuel. HB 2090 would create an elective for high school seniors on community safety, firearm safety, and mental health.

Support HB 663 by Thierry. HB 663 would improve the data collection related to maternal mortality and morbidity in Texas. This bill has been reported from the House committee so it needs a vote on the House floor right away.

Ask House Calendars to set or not set the above bills for floor debate.

Chair: Rep. Dustin Burrows – (855) 767-5441

Vice Chair: Rep. Toni Rose – (855) 704-0851
Rep. David Cook – (866) 596-1702
Rep. Charlie Geren – (866) 629-4776
Rep. Charlie Hefner – (855) 706-0757
Rep. Ana Hernandez – (866) 721-0908
Rep. Ann Johnson – (866) 721-0892
Rep. Jared Patterson – (866) 631-6172
Rep. Shelby Slawson – (866) 516-3108
Rep. James Talarico – (866) 491-0258
Rep. Ed Thompson – (866) 256-4241

Senate Floor

Oppose SB 763 by Middleton. SB 763 would authorize public school districts to use employed or volunteer chaplains as school counselors. Unlike military or hospital programs, “chaplains” under SB 763 would like any sort of requirements for qualifications, oversight, or other guardrails to protect children. The bill would allow for these chaplains to be paid for out of money intended to improve school safety. [Read our one pager](#) outlining the deficiencies in the legislation. SB 763 is on the Intent Calendar, and its companion — HB 3614 — passed out of House Public Education on Friday.

Oppose SB 624 by Kolkhorst. SB 624 would damage the renewable energy sector by imposing onerous permitting requirements not imposed on other industries.

Oppose HB 2127 by Burrows. HB 2127 would take away local cities’ authority to regulate on a wide variety of topics ranging from payday lending to environmental policy to protections for labor to domestic animals. It would also likely trigger numerous lawsuits due to new ambiguities. For those that want to get into the legal weeds, this is [the written testimony from the city attorneys for the City of Houston](#). The bottom line, however, is that city ordinances are enacted by local elected officials. The proper remedy for “bad regulations” that do not conflict with state law is the ballot box. HB 2127 really would preempt local voters.

Support HB 12 by Rose. HB 12 would extend postpartum medicaid coverage to 12 months. This bill has passed the House, so next stop is the Senate Health and Human Services Committee.

[Call your Senator](#)

House Floor

Support HB 386 by Gonzalez. HB 386 would make it easier for a person with a disability to vote in person.

Support HB 390 by Howard. HB 390 would require state agencies to livestream their open meetings on the internet.

Support HB 357 by Bucy. HB 357 would improve the state's mail in ballot tracker.

[Call your Representative.](#)

House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety

Monday, April 24

Support HB 3263 by Howard. HB 3263 would include firearm safety into the health curriculum in public schools.

Call the House Select Committee on Youth Health & Safety

Chair: Rep. Senfronia Thompson – (866) 721-0903

Vice Chair: Rep. Lacey Hull – (866) 721-0897

Rep. Steve Allison – (866) 695-0633

Rep. Giovanni Capriglione – (855) 918-1296

Rep. Harold V. Dutton, Jr. – (866) 721-0905

Rep. Ann Johnson – (866) 721-0892

Rep. Tracy O. King – (855) 796-6983

Rep. J.M. Lozano – (866) 486-7133

House Select Committee on Community Safety

Tuesday, April 18

Support HB 2744 by King. HB 2744 would raise the age limit to 21 for the purchase of a semi-automatic rifle. **This is the “Uvalde bill.”** The committee needs to report this bill favorable right away.

Call the House Select Committee on Community Safety

Chair: Rep. Ryan Guillen – (855) 737-9013

Vice Chair: Rep. Jarvis Johnson – (855) 738-4981

Rep. Rhetta Andrews Bowers – (855) 739-2182

Rep. Terry Canales – (855) 768-3031

Rep. Mark Dorazio – (855) 769-0800

Rep. Vikki Goodwin – (855) 772-2323

Rep. Sam Harless - (855) 685-2930
Rep. Justin Holland - (855) 774-9591
Rep. Ellen Troxclair - (855) 918-1293
Rep. Dustin Burrows - (855) 767-5441
Rep. Tracy O. King - (855) 796-6983
Rep. Brooks Landgraf - (855) 799-2437
Rep. Joe Moody - (855) 893-7425

House State Affairs

Wednesday, April 19

Oppose HB 7 by Guillen. HB 7 would create a separate state court program for all border related crime

Oppose HB 20 by Schaefer. HB 20 would create a state border police unit with the power to deputize volunteer citizens dedicated to arresting and expelling migrants from Texas at the discretion of the governor

Oppose HB 1600 by Hefner. HB 1600 would label cartels as terrorist organizations and create a state offense for illegal entry into the US

Under no circumstances should these bills be reported out of committee.

Call the House State Affairs Committee

Chair: Rep. Todd Hunter - (866) 419-0102

Vice Chair: Rep. Ana Hernandez - (866) 721-0908

Rep. Rafael Anchía - (866) 631-6169

Rep. Jay Dean - (855) 921-1362

Rep. Charlie Geren - (866) 629-4776

Rep. Ryan Guillen - (855) 737-9013

Rep. Will Metcalf - (855) 921-1374

Rep. Richard Peña Raymond - (855) 729-6257

Rep. Shelby Slawson - (866) 516-3108

Rep. John T. Smithee - (866) 554-6284

Rep. David Spiller - (866) 535-0914

Rep. Senfronia Thompson - (866) 721-0903

Rep. Chris Turner - (855) 736-6906

TAKE ACTION!

NOTE: We have set up toll-free numbers for all members of the Texas House and Senate. We ask that you use those numbers and save them in your phones. Dialing this number allows us to track the volume of calls to each office. If the number stops working, please let us know so we can set up a new number.

If you do not have time to make all of the calls on the weekly Action Alert, unless stated otherwise, please prioritize them based on:

1. Your representative if they are on any of the committees listed
2. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the committees listed
3. Any issues you have particular interest or expertise

Find your elected officials via the “Who Represents Me” page at <http://www.fyi.legis.state.tx.us/Home.aspx>

Please email scott@texasimpact.org if you learn anything from your calls.

Rapid Response Action Alert Sample Script

Sample Script

Hello, my name is _____ and I live in _____. I am calling to thank Representative/Senator _____ for his/her service this Legislative Session.

As a person of faith (or clergy) I want to be constructive in working with Representative/Senator _____ and hope they will support/oppose Bill number.

Feel free to use any of the bullet points in the Action Alert above. If your congregation has a special connection to the issue area you are referencing, feel free to briefly reference that connection. Don't forget to thank the staff member you are talking to at the end of the call, even if you disagree with their boss on the issue or bill—they are working hard and appreciate being appreciated!

In the past, legislative offices occasionally have blocked our toll free number

because of high call volume from people of faith. If you call twice and receive busy signals, email engagement@texasimpact.org and we will update the number.

For updated information, visit www.texasimpact.org, follow us on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#) or contact engagement@texasimpact.org To join the Texas Impact Rapid Response Team and receive updated Texas Impact Action Alerts or a Legislative Engagement Group to be connected with other members in your district, visit:

<https://texasimpact.org/take-action-2/>

Texas Impact is a membership organization. Join Texas Impact and be part of Texas' oldest and largest interfaith action network! For more information, visit:

<https://texasimpact.org/join-2022-2023/>