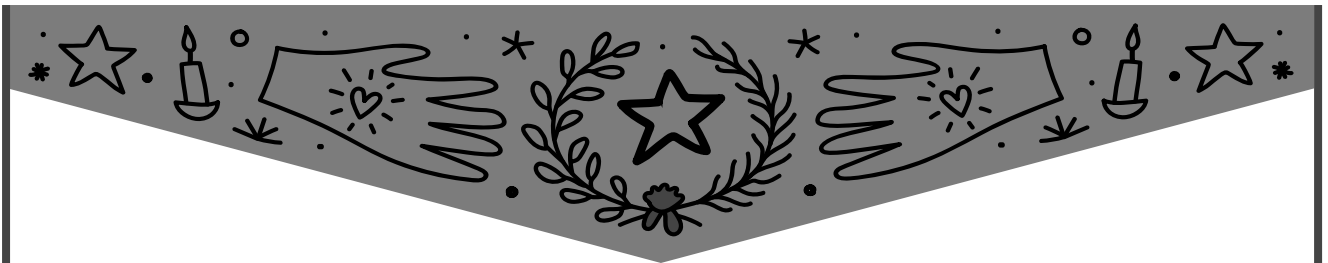


Free, Safe, and
Flourishing
A FAITHFUL VISION FOR TEXAS



★ TEXAS IMPACT

2025-2026 LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

Economic Justice • Human Rights • Climate Justice • Civic Participation

Texas Impact *Leadership*

Rev. Franz Schemmel, Weatherford, Lutheran (ELCA), President
Rev. Paul Klitzke, Dallas, Episcopal Church, Vice-President
Rev. Phil Dieke, Dallas, United Methodist Church, Secretary
Mr. Adrian Shelley, Spring, Presbyterian Church (USA), Treasurer

Rev. Danielle Ayers, Dallas, Baptist
Rev. Ellen Di Giosia, San Antonio, Baptist
Ms. Joanna Vaughn, Austin, Society of Friends (Quaker)
Rev. Dr. Eilene Theilig, Fort Worth, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Rev. Tracey Anderson-Tellado, Corpus Christi, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
Mr. Rick Ertel, Mountain Home, Lutheran (ELCA)
Rev. Jessica Cain, San Marcos, Lutheran (ELCA)
Ms. Dorothy Kraemer, Pflugerville, Lutheran (ELCA)
Rev. Dan Weichart, Granbury, Lutheran (ELCA)
Rev. Ashley Dellagiacoma, Houston, Lutheran (ELCA)
Mr. Don Hill, La Porte, Lutheran (ELCA)
Ms. Simone Talma Flowers, Austin, Episcopal Church
Ms. Andrea Beane, Austin, Society of Friends (Quaker)
Chaplain Usama Malik, Austin, Islam
Ms. Ellen Sable, Austin, Jewish
Rabbi Nancy Kasten, Dallas, Jewish
Rabbi Neil Blumofe, Austin, Jewish
Rev. Amy Moore, Dallas, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Dr. Kyle Walker, Dallas, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Ms. Kyla Hebert, Houston, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Dr. Tim Davenport-Herbst, San Angelo, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Laura Walters, Dallas, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Matt Gaventa, Austin, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Dick Powell, San Marcos, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Dr. Dan De Leon, College Station, United Church of Christ
Rev. Leslie Jackson, Houston, United Church of Christ
Rev. Arlene Infante Turner, San Antonio, United Church of Christ
Rev. LyAnna Johnson, Austin, United Methodist Church
Ms. Darlene Alfred, Salado, United Methodist Church
Ms. Cynthia Rives, Denton, United Methodist Church
Rev. Ashley Anne Sipe, Lewisville, United Methodist Church
Ms. Kim Mabry, Houston, United Methodist Church
Rev. Robert Huie, Beeville, United Methodist Church
Mr. Sid Earnheart, Spring, United Methodist Church
Rev. Nathan Lonsdale Bledsoe, Katy, United Methodist Church
Mr. Abel Vega, San Antonio, United Methodist Church
Rev. Erin Walter, Bastrop, Unitarian Universalist

Bee Moorhead, Executive Director

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★ TEXAS IMPACT

PEOPLE OF FAITH WORKING FOR JUSTICE

Texas Impact exists to advance state public policies that are consistent with the shared values of Texas faith communities, including Christian, Jewish, Muslim, and other faiths. Texas Impact was established in 1973 by the Texas Conference of Churches in response to the Sharpstown scandal. The bishops and other religious leaders who established Texas Impact wrote that the prophetic call to “do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with God” could not be accomplished without working to influence public policy.

Texas Impact’s leadership comprises a delegation of representatives from our member faith institutions. The delegation sets Texas Impact’s legislative agenda, approves policy positions, and maintains contact between Texas Impact and our institutional members. The delegation relies on sacred texts; the wisdom of diverse faith traditions; current public policy information; and the experiential knowledge of people of faith to develop its policy positions and goals.

“
He has told you, O mortal, what is good,
and what does the Lord require of you
but to do justice and to love kindness,
and to walk humbly with your God?
—Micah 6:8
”

2025-2026 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Economic Justice pg. 4

- Education
- Health
- Hunger, Housing, & Employment

Flourishing Families pg. 5

Human Rights pg. 6

- Physical Autonomy
- Religious Freedom
- Migration Justice
- Violence Prevention
- Freedom from Persecution

Climate Justice pg. 9

Civic Engagement pg. 10

- Voting Rights

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Economic justice refers to the way we design the systems through which each person earns a living; enters into contracts; exchanges goods and services with others; and otherwise produces a material foundation for their physical sustenance. Economic justice is the area of public policy where tension between **charity** and **justice** is most often apparent. The world’s faith communities share deep commitment both to the charitable alleviation of suffering stemming from imperfect economic systems, and to policy advocacy for realignment of those systems to achieve justice.

Education

- **Support fair, sufficient public education funding**
 - Increase the basic allotment so that Texas per-pupil funding is equal to the national per-pupil average
 - Index the basic allotment to inflation
- **Oppose legislative micromanagement** of elected school boards and the state board of education
- **Oppose subsidizing private education with public funds** through vouchers or other means

“ Our Reformed tradition affirms that growth toward self-determining, responsible, committed persons, concerned for the freedom and stability of their society, is best fostered in the pluralistic and ideologically open setting of public education.

—Presbyterian Church (USA), Loving our Neighbors: Equity and Quality in Public Education

Health

- **Support reproductive health** programs and services
- **Support Medicaid expansion** under the Affordable Care Act
- **Support strengthening enrollment systems for public benefits** so all Texans can receive the benefits for which they are eligible
- **Oppose harmful criminal and civil burdens on health professionals and institutions** where those burdens discourage evidence-based health care
 - Clarify that lethal abnormalities and threats to the life and health of the mother are exceptions to abortion prohibitions
 - Eliminate criminal and civil consequences for doctors who perform abortions they determine meet the legal standard

“ Health is central to our well-being, vital to relationships, and helps us live out our vocations in family, work, and community. Caring for one’s own health is a matter of human necessity and good stewardship. Caring for the health of others expresses both love for our neighbor and responsibility for a just society. As a personal and social responsibility, health care is a shared endeavor.

—Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor

Hunger, Housing, & Employment

- **Support access to healthy food** for all Texans
 - Implement 12-month SNAP certification
 - Fund universal free public-school breakfast and school lunch
- **Support proven strategies to use faith communities’ property** for affordable housing
- **Support increased wages** for home and community-based attendants
- **Support increased childcare funding**

“ Then the king will say to those at his right hand, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world, for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.’

Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food or thirsty and gave you something to drink? And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you or naked and gave you clothing? And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?’ And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it to me.’

—Matthew 25: 34-40



“Everyone should feel supported when caring for their loved ones and growing families. Whether it’s help with day-to-day needs or providing mental health resources, we continue working together to create a bright future for all Texas families.”

—Texas Governor Greg Abbott

All the world’s faith traditions place special emphasis on families, and many of the policies people of faith support are intended to support families. Texas Impact has identified a set of practical opportunities to Texas families flourish:

1. Improve maternal health outcomes and postpartum support
2. Enroll all eligible children in food and health assistance programs
3. Strengthen child care affordability and access
4. Invest in local partnerships to serve families



Human rights are rights we have merely because we exist as human beings. They are inherent to all people, regardless of nationality, gender identity, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights**, which the United Nations General Assembly adopted in 1948, establishes a modern framework for linking public policy and law to the theological and moral tenets shared across the world's faith traditions.

Physical Autonomy

- **Support personal autonomy** for those seeking reproductive, abortion, or gender-affirming healthcare
 - Allow abortion in cases of rape or incest without requiring confirmation of a crime
 - Protect fertility options including IVF
 - Protect availability of medication abortion
 - Lift bans on hormone replacement therapy
- **Oppose penalties for non-medical assistance** to people seeking health care abortions or gender-affirming care
 - Clarify that “travel bans” adopted by local jurisdictions have no actual legal status and bear no legal consequences

“The topic of abortion evokes strong and varied convictions about the social order, the roles of women and men, human life and human responsibility, freedom and limits, sexual morality, and the significance of children in our lives. It involves powerful feelings that are based on different life experiences and interpretations of Christian faith and life in the world. If we are to take our differences seriously, we must learn how to talk about them in ways that do justice to our diversity.”

—Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Social Statement on Abortion

Religious Freedom

- **Oppose preferential treatment** for specific faiths
 - Reject public school curricula that promotes sectarian religious content and elevates particular religious beliefs while undermining others
 - Protect children from unlicensed chaplains acting as counselors in public schools
 - Ban the teaching and display of the 10 Commandments in public schools
 - Allow higher education institutions to fund and facilitate Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives according to their values and the needs of their students and employees

“Religious liberty requires both protecting the right of individuals to pursue a religious education and keeping the government from advancing religion. As in many religious liberty debates, some advocates fail to distinguish between an individual’s right to freely exercise religion and the government’s responsibility not to advance it.”

—Baptist Joint Committee on Religious Liberty

Migration Justice

- **Support requiring all “Operation Lone Star” spending to be appropriated** as line items within the Texas Department of Public Safety’s appropriation
- **Support limits on executive actions** related to federal immigration laws
 - Prohibit state officials from intervening in immigration cases by inviting or coercing migrants to accept state-funded travel assistance
- **Oppose co-opting providers** of health, education, or human services or faith communities into immigration enforcement

“The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the native-born among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

—Leviticus 19:34

“[Solidarity] is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all.”

—St. John Paul II, On Social Concern (Sollicitudo rei Socialis), no. 38

Violence Prevention

- **Support standards** for responsible gun ownership
 - Licensing
 - Storage
- **Support requiring a study of the costs of gun violence** to state and local taxpayers, businesses, and individuals
- **Support regulation** of gun purchasing
 - Regulations related to age
 - “Red flag” regulations related to evidence that the purchaser poses a threat to themselves or others
- **Support community violence intervention** programs

“**Resolved**, That the 81st General Convention of The Episcopal Church hereby urge Congress and all officials at the national, state, and local levels to work to have gun violence recognized and defined as a public health epidemic and national health crisis; and be it further

Resolved, That the General Convention urge Congress and all officials at the national, state and local levels to work together, to enact legislation and promote policies that protect the rights of all Americans to live in safe environments free from gun violence...

—81st General Convention of the Episcopal Church Resolution D014: Declare Gun Violence a National Health Crisis

”

Freedom from Persecution

- **Support a prohibition on use of personal data collected in the course of general surveillance of individuals** by law enforcement without a warrant
- **Oppose limits on rights to protest** and peaceably assemble
- **Support monitoring and prosecution of hate crimes** and domestic terrorism

“Systemic racism persists as a challenge to our most cherished Jewish values. We are taught not only that all of humanity is created B’tzelem Elohim, in the Divine image, but that humanity began with one person, Adam, so that no one could say to another “My ancestors are greater than yours” (Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5).

—Union For Reform Judaism, Resolution On Our Community’s Pursuit Of Racial Justice

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Learn more at www.texasimpact.org



Climate change is a meteorological phenomenon, but its policy urgency stems largely from its impacts on human communities. People around the world, including in Texas, already are feeling the impacts of a changing climate. These impacts fall disproportionately on individuals and communities who are least resilient to them, creating imperatives for policies that are rooted in deeply held, widely shared beliefs about our responsibility to each other.

- **Support a comprehensive state climate change resilience plan**
 - Support development of distributed energy resources and microgrids
 - Support adoption of resilient building standards
- **Support funding for air-conditioning** in Texas prisons
- **Support fees and rate structures that prioritize renewable energy development**, including battery storage facilities, and de-emphasize fossil fuel development
 - Add battery storage to incentive programs for dispatchable generation
- **Support energy efficiency incentives** for residential, commercial, and industrial energy users
 - Require Texas’ electric reliability plans to include strong consumer-directed energy conservation measures, structured to provide accountability in their savings to the grid and to consumers
 - Direct state agencies with utility ratemaking authority to set utility rates that account for subsidies for low-income ratepayers and create positive incentives for consumer-side efficiency and conservation
 - Expand financial incentives for demand response to residential customers

“We humans may be distinguished by nationality, religion, race, culture, ethnic, tribal, and family ties, ideology, and politics, but in the beginning and the end we tread the same Earth, breathe the same air and drink the same water. We share one common home, the Earth, and it is the only home we have.

—Al-Mizan: A Covenant for the Earth

”

- **Support robust Texas compliance** with federal methane rules
- **Support increased environmental law enforcement**
 - Restore the “protection of the health and welfare of Texas’ citizens” to the mission statement of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality

“The great lesson that our blessed Lord inculcates here...is that God is in all things, and that we are to see the Creator in the glass of every creature; that we should use and look upon nothing as separate from God...who pervades and actuates the whole created frame, and is, in a true sense, the soul of the universe.

—John Wesley, “Upon Our Lord’s Sermon on the Mount”

”

Learn more at www.texasimpact.org



Free, fair elections, including the right of every citizen to cast a ballot that is duly counted, form the bedrock of American democracy. Voting rights are referred to as “the right preservative of all others,” since only through voting can the people of a community peaceably remove leaders who seek to oppress them. The world’s faith traditions collectively affirm voting as a responsibility both civic and spiritual: through voting, we express our preferences for the circumstances our neighbors will live in.

Voting Rights

- **Support extending early voting** for a longer period
- **Support online voter registration**
- **Support “any location” voting** for all counties
- **Support modernizing vote by mail**
 - Expand ballot tracking to domestic voters
 - Eliminate the need for an excuse
 - Allow the ballot to be hand-delivered to the county any time
 - Switch the ballot receipt deadline to a postmark date
 - Provide voters an opportunity to adjust and resend a rejected ballot
 - Pay postage

“Politics is often taken to be a dirty word, but political processes are simply the way communities organize their common life. For people of faith, public policy is never merely politics. It is a way of living out the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves. It is fitting for local congregations and church structures across the country to develop nonpartisan programs to help the faith community reflect upon the political order.”

—United Church of Christ, Vote With Love

- **Oppose new restrictions or onerous administrative processes** on county election administrators
- **Oppose new requirements or restrictions** for individual voters
- **Support strengthening public engagement practices** at state agencies and legislative bodies
- **Support efforts to increase civic participation** through rank choice voting and other strategies that center voter choice

Learn more at www.texasimpact.org

“Our involvement in political systems is rooted in the Gospel imperative to love our neighbors, to do justice, and to care for the vulnerable. As United Methodists, we acknowledge that love requires responsible political action and engagement aimed at the betterment of society and the promotion of the common good. We acknowledge that such political engagement demands humility and mindfulness of our own complicity in perpetuating injustice. It also necessitates compassion, prayer, and a willingness to discern God’s guidance.”

—United Methodist Social Principles of 2024

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