NASW RIO GRANDE BRANCH:
RESPONSE TO THE REVISION OF THE TEXAS SOCIAL WORK CODE OF
CONDUCT

The Texas Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Rio Grande Branch is incensed that the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners (TSBSWE) accepted the policy change of the Governor of Texas to remove protections against discrimination for disability, sexual orientation, and gender identity and gender expression from the Social Work Code of Conduct (RULE §781.201). The Governor’s office justifies this change by suggesting that the board’s nondiscrimination clause went beyond the state’s policy on social work.

Conversely, the TSBSWE has the explicit legal authority to propose and adopt rules regarding: “the scope of practice of and standards of care and ethical practice for social work.” The Code of Conduct is the guide which serves as the foundation for the profession. This includes defining anti-discrimination protections under the Code of Conduct to ensure ethical treatment of all clients. The Code of Conduct, also holds social workers accountable for their actions and ensures consequences for those who do not hold these standards. The six core values of the social work profession are service, social justice, dignity and worth of a person, importance of human relationships, integrity and competence. This new policy opens the door to the degradation of social work practice and discrimination of personal values.

As a community, we are significantly alarmed that the removal of disability protections violates the law, and could potentially be putting already vulnerable disabled and LGBTQ+ individuals at greater risk. Titles I, II, III, and V of the original law are codified in Title 42, chapter 126, of the United States Code beginning at section 12101. This act prevents discrimination of a person with a defined disability as defined in Title 42, Chapter 126, Section 12101, Subsection 12111. Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which prohibits workplace discrimination based on religion, national origin, race, color, gender, or sexual orientation. As Social Workers engage in practice, it is indispensable in which disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression should receive protected status.
We are calling on the Governor to rescind his overreach into the Code of Conduct for social workers, and encourages the Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC), the agency that houses the TSBSWE, to work with the board to reinstate these protections.