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87th Texas Legislative Session: The Social Work Perspective

The 87th Texas Legislative Session was 140 days of challenges and triumphs for social workers and the clients we serve. It was a unique session for many reasons. The session began after nearly a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, with Texans seeking relief from financial burdens, alleviation of barriers to healthcare access, and with an eye to racial justice. Many legislators were ready to fight for social issues that divided the legislature, rather than bi-partisan legislation needed by Texans. Shortly into the session, in mid-February, Winter Storm Uri hit, leaving millions of Texans without power and water. Winter Storm Uri disproportionately impacted Texans in poverty. The storm also left the Legislature unable to meet for a week, impacting the flow of the session which has strict deadlines for legislation. In fact, all these factors combined made it extremely difficult to pass bills compared to any other session in history. Only 1073 bills passed (compared to over 4,000 bills last session) and 21 were vetoed by Governor Greg Abbott.

Nevertheless, NASW/TX was engaged in advocacy every step of the way. By strongly advocating all session for social work priorities such as social work licensure improvements, telehealth, and social justice while helping to fight against discriminatory bills.

NASW/TX's biggest win was securing additional funding for the Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC) to hire four full-time employees, gain tech infrastructure, and take a part-time accountant to full-time hours. This additional funding will help the Texas State Board of Social Work Examiners (TSBSWE), housed within BHEC, to process licensing applications faster and have more bandwidth for personal communication with potential licensees and licensed social workers. This was a huge win!

We worked with partners to move legislation forward that would create a more equitable Texas for all who live within the state. We supported legislation to improve mental health systems and services, make COVID-19 telehealth flexibilities permanent, improve the child welfare system, support children and families, expand comprehensive health coverage to address the state's uninsured rate, and more.

While some positive legislative solutions passed successfully, there were many bills that would negatively impact Texans. Legislators chose to focus on legislation that would make it harder to vote, allowing Texans to carry handguns without a license, restrict teachers' ability to teach about racial history, punish cities that diverted any funding from law enforcement budgets, statewide criminalization of people experiencing homelessness, and restrict abortions. Bills that would negatively impact LGBTQ+ Texans were also a focus of some legislators this session, with more anti-LGBTQ+ bills filed in Texas than any other state. Texas also made no movement on expanding Medicaid to address the uninsured rate in Texas. In the end, NASW/TX held true to social work values and represented social worker ethics, despite the political challenges.

During the 87th regular legislative session NASW/TX testified publicly on 10 bills and registered in support or opposition of over 150 bills. Social work advocates sent over 2,800 emails to their legislators using our Advocacy Alerts through the Voter Voice platform.

Note: this document is meant to be a broad summary of legislative action relevant to social workers and the clients we serve. Not all topics or bills are covered. Further, we included some bills that NASW/TX did not weigh in on for a variety of reasons but felt was important to include in the summary.

NASW/TX Led Bills

NASW/TX works with legislative champions of social workers and the clients we serve to advance social work priorities in the Capitol. Using our legislative priorities, the following bills were our lead bills during the 87th Regular Session. While some bills are historical priorities for us, like defining school social work services and increasing reimbursement rates in Medicaid, we had new bills based on the needs of our membership. HB 2670 (Guillen), which would have added licensed social workers to the Homes for Texas Heroes down payment assistance program, advanced the farthest of our bills this session with a successful vote out of the House. However, the bill ran out of time before a vote was possible in the Senate. HB 706 (Moody) was the other NASW/TX bill with the most success. The bill would have increased reimbursement rates in Medicaid for psychotherapy and allow LMSWs to bill. The bill had a hearing in House Human Services but ran out of time before it could be voted out of committee. We increased our focus on telehealth due to the COVID-19 pandemic and were successful in our collaboration with other mental health stakeholders to advance legislation allowing for audio-only services to continue in Medicaid. We promoted racial equity by focusing on legislation for mental health crisis supports that would help Texans get supports they need without unnecessary police intervention.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
HB 226/SB 253	Bernal/Menendez	Support	Would define school social work services in the Education Code	Did Not Pass
HB 702	Gonzalez, Mary	Support	Would require four-year degrees for CPS caseworkers; codify preference on hiring social workers	Did Not Pass
HB 706/SB 909	Moody/Guillen/Powell	Support	Would have required all mental health professionals to be paid the same reimbursement rate for Medicaid psychotherapy; would have allowed LMSWs to bill for psychotherapy	Did Not Pass <i>*Heard in House Human Services; was not voted out*</i>
HB 1050/SB 539	Romero Jr./Morales/Blanco	Support	Would have required a study of mental health crisis response programs across the state, with an emphasis on outcomes for Texans in crisis	Did Not Pass
HB 2670/SB 1024	Guillen/Johnson J./Lucio	Support	Would have added licensed social workers to the existing Homes for Texas Heroes down payment assistance program	Did Not Pass <i>*Voted out of the House; did not have</i>

				<i>a Senate hearing*</i>
HB 3396/SB 1275	Meza/Gullien/West	Support	Would have requires coverage of audio-only behavioral health services through Medicaid	Did Not Pass <i>*Similar language included in HB 4*</i>
HB 3553	Neave/Rose	Support	Would have created a matching grant program through HHSC to create or expand existing mobile crisis outreach teams	Did Not Pass

Social Work Workforce: Licensure Recruitment, and Retention

While many legislators acknowledged the need for mental health care in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there was little to no focus on building up the workforce that would provide those services for Texans in need. The Behavioral Health Workforce Workgroup was created in 2019 by the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and is chaired by NASW/TX. Together the collective group of multidisciplinary members drafted a report highlighting key policy measures to enhance the behavioral health workforce. While several bills were filed that aligned with the report, most of the movement was for telehealth and telemedicine-related legislation. The Workgroup continues to work toward the report's goals during the interim and beyond. Other efforts included HB 3626 (Romero) which would have streamlined reciprocity for out-of-state social workers, along with other mental health professionals, but the bill did not pass.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
SB 1	Nelson/Bonnen	Support	Statewide budget for fiscal year 2022-2023; about \$450,000 in additional allocated funding for the BHEC was included for four full-time employees, infrastructure improvements, and technology upgrades.	Passed
HB 3626	Romero, Jr./Zaffirini	Support	Would have streamlined out-of-state licensure reciprocity for licensed social workers, licensed professional counselors, and licensed marriage and family therapists.	Did Not Pass

Child Welfare

Child welfare was not one of the top issues on legislators' minds this session, as had been in the 2017 and 2019 sessions. However, there were efforts to create policy changes to keep children and families from involvement in the child welfare system. Bills ranged from changing how we report and conduct child abuse cases to diverting foster youth from the juvenile justice system. NASW/TX actively participated in the Child Protection Roundtable meetings, drafted and signed support letters, and opposed harmful legislation that would have redefined child abuse to include lifesaving, gender-affirming care for LGBTQ+ youth. NASW/TX continues to work with partners on supporting LGBTQ+ youth in care and opposing any efforts to criminalize gender-affirming care as child abuse.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
HB 702	Gonzalez, Mary	Support	Would require four-year degrees for CPS caseworkers; codify preference on hiring social workers	Did Not Pass
HB 80	Johnson, Jarvis/ Whitmore	Support	Would require judges to prescribe community service in place of fines and court fees for Class C Misdemeanors for defendants in the foster care system	Passed
HB 567	Frank/Hughes	Neutral	Would redefine “neglect” in the Family Code and makes changes to administrative processes related to the removal of a child due to neglect and abuse	Passed
HB 1098/ SB 2033	Gates/Hall	Oppose	Would change the way abuse and neglect cases are reported and conducted.	Did Not Pass
HB 2821/ SB 2085	White/ Menendez	Support	Would divert certain youth from the juvenile justice system, including through emergency behavior intervention services.	Did Not Pass
HB 2058/ SB 52	Klick/Zaffirini	Support	Would promote age-appropriate normalcy activities for children in the care of the state.	Passed
HB 700	Johnson/ Zaffirini	Support	Would ensure that foster youth who complete the standardized curriculum for the Preparation for Adult Living Program would be eligible to receive college credit	Passed
HB 1387	Harris/Birdwell	Oppose	Would allow firearms and ammunition to be stored together in the same locked location in certain foster homes.	Passed
HB 3493/ SB 1528	Parker/Paxton	Support	“ACES Bill”, would improve delivery of prevention and early intervention services by the DFPS.	Did Not pass
HB 4371	Allen	Support	Relating to juvenile justice reform, including the age of a child at which a juvenile court may exercise jurisdiction over the child and the age of criminal responsibility.	Did Not pass
HB 1237	White	Support	Relating to adverse disproportionalities within the child protective services system.	Did Not pass
SB 1646/ HB 4014	Perry/Hefner	Opposed	Would have redefined child abuse to include gender-affirming care, including mental health professionals.	Did Not Pass

Access to Services: Telehealth

Telehealth was one of Governor Greg Abbott’s priorities leading up to this legislative session. During the COVID-19 pandemic, telehealth and telemedicine services grew in popularity for both clients and providers. Use of telehealth and telemedicine, as well as the desire for more freedom from restrictive policies has

skyrocketed. One of NASW/TX's main goals this session was to improve access to healthcare via telehealth and telemedicine services for both Medicaid Managed Care Programs and Texas Department of Insurance (TDI). Providers were concerned about keeping COVID-19 flexibilities in place, especially allowance of audio-only telephone for Medicaid, and payment parity to ensure that payment for telehealth was the same as in-person services. However, only one major bill related to telehealth and telemedicine passed this session, HB 4 (Price/Buckingham). While HB 4 included our priority of audio-only telephone services for Medicaid, it did not require payment parity for telehealth and in-person services for TDI services (HB 980). However, NASW/TX coordinated over 700 advocacy emails to be sent supporting HB 980 and will continue to advocate for payment parity in the future.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
HB 980/SB 228	Fierro/ Goodwin/Blanco	Support	Would have amended the Insurance Code to include mental health in the definition of "health professional" and require payment parity for telehealth and telemedicine services and in-person services for TDI-regulated plans	Did Not Pass
HB 4/SB 412	Price/Buckingham	Support	A comprehensive telehealth and telemedicine Medicaid bill, including requiring coverage of behavioral health services via telehealth using audio-only telephone, a current Medicaid COVID-19 flexibility.	Passed
HB 3396/SB 1275	Meza/Guillen/ West	Support	Provision of behavioral health services under Medicaid using audio-only technology and reimbursement for those services.	Did Not Pass <i>*Similar language included in HB 4*</i>
HB 5	Ashby/Nichols	Support	Relating to the expansion of broadband services to certain areas.	Passed

Mental Health System Improvements

Texans with serious and untreated behavioral health conditions often encounter barriers that prevent them from receiving the right services before a crisis, including students in our public school system. While there has been a positive focus on mental health and substance use treatment at the Texas legislature, more is needed. Texans still lack access to needed crisis support, including mobile crisis teams. Among the barriers to supporting those in crisis are a lack of alternatives in dispatching law enforcement personnel in response to behavioral health crises. HB 1050/SB 539 (Romero/Blanco) would have studied current mental health crisis response and made statewide recommendations. HB 3553 (Neave) would have created a matching grant program to expand or create new mobile crisis outreach teams. However, none of these bills received hearings. Further, students in Texas public schools continue to bear the weight of the COVID-19 pandemic and related stress. School social workers are one way to support students' mental health and wellbeing. HB 226 would have defined school social work services in the Texas Education Code, but the bill did not get a hearing this session. NASW/TX understands that inaction in response to behavioral health crises threatens lives and worked diligently this session to prioritize effective behavioral health services in Texas.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
HB 226/ SB 253	Bernal/Menendez	Support	Would have defined “social work services” in the Texas Education Code and allowed social workers to provide these services to students and schools.	Did Not Pass
HB 1050/ SB 539	Romero Jr./Morales, E/Blanco	Support	Would require Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) to conduct a study that evaluates the use of mental health professionals and mental health response teams assisting law enforcement in reducing the number of incarcerations	Did Not Pass
HB 3553	Neave/Rose	Support	Would establish a grant program to implement mental health and substance use crisis programs or expand existing programs to address crises in the community in collaboration with law enforcement and local mental health authorities.	Did Not Pass
SB 279	Hinojosa/Bucy	Support	Would add suicide prevention hotline information on certain student identification cards issued by public school or public institution of higher education.	Passed
HB 140	Rose	Support	Would safeguard the lives of Texans with severe mental illness from receiving an unjust sentence of capital punishment	Did Not Pass
HB 4257	Shaw	Support	Would require a public-school district's trauma-informed care policy to address a public school district's plan for providing support to students, teachers, and district staff in the event of a crisis	Did Not Pass
SB 642	West/Hinojosa	Support	Prohibits the HHSC from requiring the (DFPS) to conduct a child abuse or neglect investigation before allowing a child to participate in the relinquishment avoidance program unless there is an allegation of abuse or neglect of the child.	Passed
HB 2595	Price/Nelson	Support	Relating to a parity complaint portal and educational materials and parity law training regarding benefits for mental health conditions and substance use disorders to be made available through a portal; designating October as mental health condition and substance use parity awareness month.	Passed
HB 4074	Hunter/ Menendez	Support	Would require the Statewide Behavioral Health Coordinating Council to include	Passed

			statewide suicide prevention efforts in its five-year statewide behavioral health strategic plan.	
SB 1921	Lucio/Guillen	Support	Reimburse public or private healthcare providers for behavioral health or physical health services prior to individuals' enrollment in Medicaid through a fee-for-service delivery model and ensure reimbursement through a managed care model after confirmation of individuals' enrollment into Medicaid.	Passed
HB 1694	Raney/Schwertner	Support	Defense to prosecution in certain cases for people who call 911 for a possible overdose.	Passed

Health & Wellbeing of All Texans

This session NASW/TX was committed to advocating for the health and wellbeing of all Texans through supporting Medicaid expansion legislation. NASW/TX collaborated with other stakeholders to encourage improved health care coverage for Medicaid enrollees. Unfortunately, Texas has not reached a point where Medicaid expansion is supported by most members of the legislature.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
HB 133	Rose/Kolkhorst	Support	Provides Medicaid coverage for pregnant and birthing people, extended from 2 months to 12 months postpartum.	Passed
HB 290	Cortez/Kolkhorst	Support	Would provide a period of continuous eligibility coverage for children under the age of 19 who are enrolled in Medicaid.	Did Not Pass <i>*Language was amended on to HB 2658*</i>
HB 4139	Coleman	Support	Would ensure that the commission works with stakeholders to implement health initiatives to promote health equality by decreasing or eliminating health access disparities.	Did Not Pass <i>*DSHS announced in June 2021 they will work on this issue using a federal grant*</i>
SB 69	Miles/White		Bans chokeholds or other neck restraints while detaining an individual.	Passed

HB 88/SB 161	Thompson, Senfronia/West	Support	George Floyd Act: Would reform policing and hold officers liable for those interactions.	Did Not Pass
HB 1535	Klick/Schwertner	Neutral	Expands the Texas Compassionate Use Program to include PTSD, cancer, and other conditions. Also increases the cap on THC to 1%.	Passed
HB1, Amendment 54	Bonnen	Support	Bipartisan amendment which would have allowed Texas to develop a plan specifically for the state which Texas could utilize available federal funds to reduce the uninsured/increase coverage.	Did Not Pass

Equity Issues

Education and Youth

While the nation grappled to come to terms with our history of racial oppression in the wake of the murder of George Floyd and countless other Black, Indigenous, and People of Color, Texas refused to make meaningful change towards teaching racial justice. Instead, the legislators passed bans on teaching the truth of our history, and increased stress on already vulnerable young people. HB 3979 (Toth/Creighton) successfully passed and will restrict what educators can teach related to history and race. This continues to be an active issue, with the Governor adding similar issues to the special session agenda.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
HB 3979	Toth/Creighton	Opposed	Restricts educators' ability to teach on certain topics; bans teaching of "critical race theory," as well as the NYT 1619 Project, and educators cannot be "compelled" to discuss current events.	Passed

LGBTQIA+ Rights

Texas filed more anti-LGBTQ+ bills than any other state legislature, with 30% of the nation's anti-LGBTQ+ bills. While there were many good bills seeking to update outdated laws and protect LGBTQ+ folks from discrimination in housing and other areas, the amount of harmful, specifically anti-trans, legislation filed was overwhelming. Advocates fought hard this session to protect trans youth and all LGBTQ+ Texans. Ultimately, none of the anti-LGBTQ+ bills passed both the Senate and the House in the regular session, but the Governor has added these issues to the agenda for special sessions. More information on the developments of the special sessions are at the end of this document.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
HB 1399	Krause	Opposed	Bans transition-related healthcare for minors and strips medical professionals' liability insurance if they provide this care	Did Not Pass
HB 1424	Oliverson	Opposed	Would allow any medical professional to object to any medical procedure that	Did Not Pass

			violates their “ethical, moral, or religious beliefs”	
HB 4042/ SB 29	Hefner/Perry	Opposed	Would deny K-12 transgender youth access to participating in UIL sports by requiring participation based on sex assigned at birth	Did Not Pass
HB 198 / SB 1832	Gonzalez, Mary/Eckhardt	Support	Would update the Romeo and Juliet clause related to age differences in sexual interactions to also include same sex interactions	Did Not Pass

Voting Rights & Access

Legislators arrived in Austin with renewed attention to voting and election processes at the state and local level after a tumultuous national election cycle. Numerous bills were focused on the prevention of voter fraud with resulting policy changes that would create barriers for citizens to exercise their right to vote, particularly elderly Texans and people with disabilities. NASW/TX understands the importance of each and every Texan to participate in elections free from disparities and worked eagerly to protect individuals' right to vote.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
HB 6/SB 7	Cain/Hughes	Oppose	Comprehensive voting reform bill, including restrictions on voting hours, main-in ballot policies, and curb-side voting	Did Not Pass
HB 22	Swanson		Relating to accommodating a voter unable to enter a polling place.	Did Not Pass
HB 76/SB 95	Meza/Menéndez		Relating to early voting by mail by any qualified voter.	Did Not Pass
HB 93/SB 342	Hinojosa/West		Relating to the designation of polling place locations on the campuses of certain institutions of higher education	Did not Pass
HB 704	Dutton		Would require that the county jail in a county with at least 3.3 million people must serve as a polling place for inmates who have not been finally convicted of the offense for which they are in custody	Did not pass
HB 1465	Hinojosa		Would allow individuals who are caretakers of individuals with certain disabilities to be eligible for early voting	Did not pass
SB 187/HB 161/HB 595	Eckhardt/Thompson/Sherman		Restore re-registration and the right to vote for an individual upon release from incarceration	Did not pass
HB 1463	Goodwin	Support	Would allow for a voter giving birth or expecting to give birth within nine months of election day to be eligible for early voting.	Did not pass

Police Reform & Criminal Justice Reform

This session some Texas legislators have taken actions to address police brutality in the wake of the ongoing violence against Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. NASW/TX has heard and recognizes the voices of those affected by police brutality and therefore has advocated for legislative change to ensure the safety of those interacting with law enforcement.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
HB 2011/ SB 68	Reynolds/Miles	Support	Would require officers to intervene if another officer uses excessive force.	Did not pass
HB 346/ HB 418/ HB 1784/ SB 69	Rose/ Sherman/ Thierry/ Miles	Support	Bans chokeholds or other neck restraints while detaining an individual.	Passed
HB 88/ SB 161	Thompson/West	Support	“George Floyd Act” Would reform policing and hold officers liable for those interactions.	Did not pass
HB 929/ SB 380	Sherman/West		Clarifies ‘castle doctrine,’ and issues clarification on police officers wearing body cameras	Passed
SB 2212	West		Requires officers to call for medical help and render aid themselves to a person injured in the course of detention	Passed
HB 54/ SB 223	Talarico/Whitmire		Javier Ambler Law: Prevents reality TV shows from partnering with Texas law enforcement.	Passed
HB 569/SB 192	Sanford/West		Requires judges to credit defendants for back time if they incurred fines or warrants before or during incarceration. Removes a barrier to re-entry for formerly incarcerated people.	Passed
SB 24	Huffman		Allows hiring police departments to review the prior employment records of officers moving between agencies.	Passed
HB 1900	Goldman/ Huffman	Oppose	Bans municipalities from ‘defunding’ police departments.	Passed

Reproductive Health

This legislative session there were many anti-abortion bills which threatened the reproductive rights of Texans. In an effort to advocate for those Texans, NASW/TX worked with partners to show opposition to bills which would result in infringement on one's reproductive rights or cause harm to the individual seeking reproductive healthcare. However, the session passed SB 8, or “The Heartbeat Bill”, one of the most restrictive abortion measures in the country. SB 8 went into effect on September 1, 2021.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
SB 8/HB 1515	Hughes/Slawson	Oppose	Prohibits abortions from being performed or induced after detection of a “fetal heartbeat”. Authorizes private civil right of action against any person who performs an abortion in violation of applicable state law or knowingly engages in conduct that aids or abets the performance or inducement of the abortion. Grants no exception for rape or incest. Allows anyone in Texas to be sued for 'aiding and abetting' in abortion care, including doctors, abortion funds, social workers, and even a patient's loved one.	Passed
HB 1171	Sanford		Would provide authorization for courts to appoint an attorney ad litem or guardian ad litem to advocate for the unborn child's interests under certain circumstances.	Did not pass
HB 1280/SB 9	Capriglione	Oppose	Prohibition of abortion; providing a civil penalty; creating a criminal offense;	Passed
HB 2313/SB 802	Leach/Paxton		Requires all patients seeking abortion to get counseling from a crisis pregnancy center.	Did not pass
HB 2337/SB 394	Klick/Lucio		Restricts the availability of medication abortion to 7 weeks (currently allowed up to 10 weeks)	Did not pass
HB 3218/SB 1173	Schaefer/Hancock		Removes the exception for abortion care after 20 weeks for non-viable pregnancies.	Did not pass
HB 3760/SB 1647	Oliverson/Perry		Combines 6-week ban, removal of exception for non-viable pregnancies, and requires patients speak to crisis pregnancy centers (CPC).	Did not pass
HB 321	Howard	Support	Provides tax exemption for certain feminine hygiene products.	Did not pass

Miscellaneous

There were other bills that were discussed during this session that were of interest to NASW/TX. These bills included provisions on gun laws, use of physical or chemical restraints, and more.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
HB 1927	Schaefer/ Schwertner	Oppose	Permit-less/Constitutional Carry; made it legal for individuals who are 21 years of age or older and who can legally possess a firearm to carry a handgun without first obtaining a special license.	Passed
HB 2975	Hull/Allen	Support	Would prohibit a peace officer performing law enforcement duties or school security personnel performing security-related duties on the property of a public school district or at a school-sponsored or school-related activity from restraining or using a chemical irritant spray on a student 10 years of age or younger unless the student poses a serious risk of harm to the student or another person.	Did not pass

In Texas each legislative session is only 140 days. Only the Governor may call a Special Session, which lasts 30 days and has different procedural rules than a regular session. During a Special Session the legislature can only pass bills on the Governor's call list and bills on other topics are not procedurally able to pass. This limits advocacy efforts to focus only on the topics covered in each special session.

87th Legislative Session: Special Session 1

NASW/TX registered in support or opposition of five bills, testified publicly on one bill, and submitted written testimony on one bill.

The First Special Session started off with a flurry of momentum in the Senate as the members met quickly to move legislative priorities for the Governor, including voting rights, transgender student participation in UIL sports, abortion medication access, "critical race theory" in Texas schools, foster care rates, and more. The Senate held hearings for several key bills before the House Democrats left the state in order to prevent a controversial voting bill from passing. Without the Democrats, the House did not have enough voting members present to hold legislative hearings, leaving bills unable to move. No bills were passed during the Special Session due to the quorum break.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
SB 3	Hughes	Oppose	Known as the "Critical Race Theory" bill. Relating to certain curriculum in public schools; instituted an expensive training	Did Not Pass

			program for educator compliance and repealed many important historical, diverse figures from learning standards in the prior CRT bill	
SB 1	Hughes	Oppose	Would have changed Texas's voting laws by increasing criminal penalties; creating criminal offenses; providing civil penalties to protect election integrity and security by preventing fraud during elections in the state	Did Not Pass
SB 2	Perry	Oppose	Would have denied K-12 transgender youth access to participating in UIL sports by requiring participation based on sex assigned at birth	Did Not Pass
SB 4	Lucio	Oppose	Would restrict access to certain abortion medications in the state	Did Not Pass

87th Legislative Session: Special Session 2

NASW/TX registered in support or opposition of six bills, testified publicly on one bill, and submitted written testimony on one bill.

The second special session included some monumental actions for our state after the return of enough Democrats to make quorum and allow bills to receive votes in the House. The focus of the Second Special Session was similar to the First Special Session with a heightened focus on COVID-19 and education. However, notable bills that eventually passed included a budget bill to increase foster care rates and restore funding for Article X, which funds over 2,000 legislative and state staff. Concerning legislation that passed included a controversial tightening of state's voting laws, further restricting educational curriculum on historical events, \$2 billion of state funds for border security, and eliminating access to abortion medication. The bill limiting transgender students from participating in school sports did not pass but could return in future sessions. Further, no legislative action was taken to require mask mandates in Texas schools or to prohibit such mandates.

We anticipate another special session taking place this fall to discuss redrawing political maps after the 2020 census and allocation of \$16 billion in federal funds for COVID-19 relief.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
SB 3	Hughes/Huberty	Oppose	Relating to certain curriculum in public schools; institutes an expensive training program for educator compliance and repeals many important historical, diverse figures from learning standards in the prior CRT bill	Passed
SB 1	Hughes/Murr	Oppose	Amended Texas's voting laws by increasing criminal penalties; creating criminal offenses; providing civil penalties to protect election integrity and security by preventing fraud during elections in the state.	Passed

SB 2	Perry	Oppose	Would have denied K-12 transgender youth access to participating in UIL sports by requiring participation based on sex assigned at birth	Did Not Pass
SB 4	Lucio/Klick	Oppose	Would restrict access to certain abortion medications in the state	Passed
HB 5	Bonnen/Nelson	Support	Relating to making supplemental appropriations and giving direction regarding appropriations.	Passed
HB 9	Bonnen/Nelson	Oppose	Allocated \$2 billion state funds for border security, including a border wall	Passed

87th Legislative Session: Special Session 3

The Third special session included some monumental legislation with a focus on redrawing the state Senate and House district maps after the 2020 census, known as “Redistricting”, the appropriation of \$16 billion in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal funds, and LGBTQ+ issues. We did not weigh in on the process of redistricting but created an informational video and guidance for our members on why redistricting is important to social workers. Through ARPA funding, we advocated for the addition of an amendment to increase the Mental Health Loan Repayment plan and provide more funding for Communities in Schools (CIS) to ensure more mental health services to Texas students amongst the aftermath and continuance of COVID-19. However, we were unsuccessful in adding either amendment to SB 8.

Concerning legislation that passed included a controversial bill that does not allow transgender students to participate in UIL sports by requiring participation based on sex assigned at birth. As both of our interns testified in person to the House committee, we advocated for LGBTQ+ rights in opposition of bill. We continued to emphasize the negative impacts on transgender youth mental health from the legislation. However, the bill passed in the House and the Senate and was signed by Governor Abbott. Other topics like COVID-19 vaccines, property taxes, and voting rules were considered in the special session but no bills were passed.

Bill Number	Author	NASW/TX position	Brief Description	Bill Outcome
SB 8	Nelson/Bonnen	Support	Appropriated funding from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) <i>*Detailed analysis in the appendix</i>	Passed
SB 6	Huffman/Hunter	Neutral	Redrawing or “redistricting” for all state Senate and House districts	Passed
HB 25	Swanson/Perry	Oppose	Prohibits K-12 transgender youth access to participating in UIL sports by requiring participation based on sex assigned at birth	Did Not Pass

The NASW/TX 87th Legislative Session Summary is focused on the legislative session and is not meant to be an exhaustive list of all topics and bills passed. If you think we missed anything or see any mistakes, please email the Government Relations Director Alison Mohr Boleware, LMSW, at aboleware.naswtx@socialworkers.org.

ARPA ALLOCATION BREAKDOWN



1. UNEMPLOYMENT COMPENSATION

\$7,245,419,946 for unemployment fund

2. TOURISM, TRAVEL, HOSPITALITY RECOVERY

\$180,000,000 for recovery

3. CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY ★

\$1,200,000 for information technology case management system improvements

4. DEPT. OF HEALTH COVID-19 SERVICES ★

\$2,000,000,00 for surge staffing at state/local hospitals, long-term care, psychiatric hospitals, and nursing facilities.

5. BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE

\$500,475,163

6. DEPT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMPENSATION

\$359,673,191 to pay public safety agency employees

7. FOOD BANKS ★

\$495,000,000

8. TEXAS CHILD MENTAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM ★

\$113,082,887 for expansion of Texas Child Mental Health Initiatives for children, pregnant women, and women who are up to one year postpartum.

- \$420,578,442 for expansion of Child Psychiatry Access Network

- \$56, 218, 976 for enhancements and expansion

- \$32, 991, 791 for adolescent mental health workforce

- \$3, 293, 676 for administration expenses

- \$3,293,676 for Higher Education Coordinating Board transfer

9. STATE OPERATIONS CENTER

\$300,000,000 for land & construction of state operations center

10. UNIVERSITY CONSTRUCTION

\$325,000,000 relating to the issuance of tuition revenue bonds

11. DALLAS STATE HOSPITAL ★

\$237,800,000 to construct a state psychiatric hospital in Dallas

12. RURAL HOSPITALS

\$75,000,000 for funding for grants to support rural hospitals affected by COVID-19

13. INTERNET PORTAL ★

\$20,000,000 for creation of a consolidated internet portal for Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Program medical services provider

14. TECHNOLOGY UPDATES ★

\$5,000,000 for technology updated to Medicaid eligibility system

15. TEXAS CIVIL COMMITMENT OFFICE ★

\$14,250 for COVID supply and travel costs

16. HEALTH LAB IN STARR COUNTY

\$16,700,000

17. TEXAS EPIDEMIC PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE

\$40,000,000

18. TEXAS RESKILLING/UPSKILLING THROUGH EDUCATION TRUE PROGRAM

\$15,000,000

19. PERFORMANCE-BASED FUNDING FOR AT-RISK STUDENTS AT REGIONAL UNIVERSITIES

\$20,000,000 to each eligible institution

20. HOME DELIVERED MEALS ★

\$5,000,000

21. TEXAS STATE VETERANS HOMES

\$35,000,000 for providing HVAC upgrades, moving HEPA air filtration and negative pressure COVID-19 wards

22. SUNRISE CANYON HOSPITAL ★

\$15,000,000 expansion of capacity of psychiatric hospital

23. WASHINGTON-ON-THE-BRAZOS CAPITAL PLAN PROJECT

\$20,000,000 for historic site

24. VICTIMS OF CRIME

\$160,000,000 funding for grants for victims of crime

25. CYBERSECURITY PROJECTS

\$200,000,000 for cybersecurity projects and must receive approval for projects from Joint Oversight Committee

26. PERMIAN BASIN BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER ★

\$40,000,000 for 10-bed center

27. SEXUAL ASSAULT PROGRAM

\$52,277,114 for victims of sexual assault

28. CRIME VICTIMS

\$54,756,000

29. SHORTFALL IN COURT FEES

1. Comptroller of Public Accounts, visiting Judiciary: \$7,000,000
2. Court Admin Judiciary: \$3,000,000; \$13,942,466 for fair defense
3. Office of Forensic Writs: \$200,000
4. Law Enforcement: \$5,800,000

30. NEXT GENERATION 9-1-1 SERVICE FUND

\$150,000,000

31. PRESIDIO CUSTOMS INSPECTION STATION

\$15,500,000

32. TEACHER RETIREMENT TRS CARE AND TRS-ACTIVE CARE

\$286,337,761 to not increase insurance policies

33. STAFFING NEEDS ★

\$378,300,000 for grants for staffing needs for health care workers including nursing home facilities, home health disabilities facilities

34. FEDERALLY QUALIFIED HEALTH CENTER INCUBATOR PROGRAM

\$20,000,000

35. EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

\$21,700,000 for staffing needs

36. PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT: EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

\$40,000,000

37. BRAZORIA COUNTY BEACH AND DUNE MAINTENANCE

\$5,000,000

38. ANALYSIS OF COASTAL TEXAS STUDY DESIGN ELEMENTS

\$300,000

39. DISASTER RESILIENT TEXAS

\$1,150,000; TAMU-Galveston flood risk and office space

40. INSTITUTIONAL ENHANCEMENTS

\$50,000,000 for each institution enhancements

41. TEXAS SAFE KEEPING TRUST FUND

\$100,000,000

42. TEXAS STATE AQUARIUM CENTER

\$3,000,000

43. MARINE SCIENCE INSTITUTE

\$3,000,00 student housing replacement

44. TEXAS EDUCATION PROGRAM ENHANCEMENTS

\$3,000,000 funding for Big Brother and Big sister program

45. UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AUSTIN BRISCOE GARNER MUSEUM

\$235,000

46. HIGHER ED RURAL VETERINARIAN GRANT

\$1,000,000 for rural veterinarians

47. MAINTENANCE AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

\$25,000,000

48. FEDERAL FUNDS FOR HOSPITALS

54. ADDITIONAL MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENTS FOR CERTAIN SPECIALITY PROVIDERS

\$100,000 for reimbursements

55. TEXAS BOARD OF PHARMACY PRESCRIPTION MONITORING PROGRAM

\$2,520,750

56. DFPS: NURSE-FAMILY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM ★

\$1,375,500 total

1. \$1,241,500 for client or nurse material or technological supports.

Telehealth platform, client equipment, and educational materials

2. 134,000 may be used for nurse salaries fro hero bonuses and staff sign-on and retention bonuses

57. TEXAS WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT COACHING AND JOB READINESS

\$1,000,000

58. DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE WORKERS COMPENSATION DEATH BENEFITS

\$50,000,000 for distributing money to political subdivisions and pools

59. DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE ONE-TIME RETENTION BONUSES

\$200,000,000 to provide retention bonuses to each employee

60. JUSTICE OF THE PEACE AND CONSTABLE TRAINING

\$1,047,000 for funding and training for justices

61. HEALTH AND ECONOMIC RECOVERY OMNIBUS EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS ACT

\$600,000,000 for certain agency employees who have a lower annual salary

62. PROGRAM OF ALL-INCLUSIVE CARE FOR THE ELDERLY

Money will be transferred under subsection but cannot exceed \$1,403,651

63. DISABLED VETERAN ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

\$1,000,000