

PUBLIC COMMENTS

HB 1315

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON JUVENILE JUSTICE & FAMILY ISSUES

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Hearing Date: March 29, 2021 10:00 AM

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Kate Murphy, Senior Child Welfare Policy Associate

Texans Care for Children

Austin, TX

We support HB 1315 because it requires the continuation of a guardian ad litem or attorney ad litem for each child after parental rights are terminated for as long as the child remains in foster care. Every child has a guardian ad litem and attorney ad litem before parental rights are terminated, but many lose these advocates once they enter the permanent custody of the state. Requiring continuous representation will assure children will have someone who can advocate for their interests and rights throughout their time in the foster care system.

Patricia Hogue, Esq.

Self/attorney ad litem to parents and children/ Texas Lawyers for Children

Dallas, TX

I am an attorney ad litem for parents and children in the child protection courts. I also work for Texas Lawyers for Children a non profit that provides resources for judges and attorneys who handle child protection cases. I support HB 1315 because it is essential that every child in the PMC of DFPS have an advocate for the duration of the child's time in care. Children in care have continuing legal rights and best interest needs that must be brought to the attention of the courts and addressed. Children in PMC are too often exposed to continuing harm and poor outcomes due to the absence of consistent monitoring. Continuing representation by an Attorney ad litem an an GAL significantly improves positive outcomes for the child including school success and permanency and adoption. It is my firm belief that the child should have representation for both best interest and expressed interest and the system must continue to move in that direction. In the meantime, HB 1315 provides a solution until that can be accomplished. Please pass HB1315.

Barbara Sargent

Self Retired

El Paso, TX

HB 1515: 6-Week Ban

This bill is an unconstitutional, near total ban on abortion that creates a civil cause of action that allows anyone, regardless of whether or not they were connected to the abortion patient, to sue an abortion provider and anyone who helped a person get an abortion for a perceived violation of any abortion restriction.

HB 1515 is an extreme and dangerous bill that would outright ban abortion in the state before many Texans even know they are pregnant, as early as six weeks into a pregnancy. Most abortions can't even happen at 6-weeks gestation because of the time it typically takes a person to become aware of a potential pregnancy, confirm the pregnancy, consider their options, schedule the medical procedure and comply with the numerous existing restrictions, including a 24 hour waiting period, on abortion in Texas. HB 1515 creates frivolous and harassing lawsuits against doctors and anyone who helps patients access care by creating a cause of action that would allow anyone to sue both a doctor who performs an abortion and also anyone who "aids or abets" the performance of an abortion.

HB 1515 is unconstitutional and has been struck down in every state where it was passed. Zero states are currently enforcing similar 6-week bans, because of court challenges. This bill will open our state up to expensive and time consuming legal challenges.

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Medical experts, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists oppose 6-week abortion bans.