

PUBLIC COMMENTS

SB 14

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE AFFAIRS

Hearing Date: May 7, 2021 12:00 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Jennifer Xia

Self - student

Plano, TX

Workers deserve basic rights and protections, such as fair hiring and humane working conditions, especially more vulnerable women, people of color, youth and immigrant workers.

Lee Shed

Local union 154

OAKWOOD, TX

Please, Please don't let this bill pass it will hurt some many working family. I strongly oppose SB 14, Thanks.

Savannah Norton

Self, Account Support SME

Austin, TX

We do not stand for free governance if you only allow counties to deregulate and never to regulate. I'm completely opposed to strangling localities interested in protecting the benefits of workers. Texas workers power our economy and deserve support from their legislators. SB 14 is un-Texan and un-American.

Tina Harris

CONST & GENERAL LAB UNION 154

Arlington, TX

Texas elected officials have categorized construction workers as essential workers, but have failed to provide them the essential protections they deserve during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SB14 would eliminate basic worker rights that Workers Defense has fought to secure over the last decade including water breaks on the job, fair chance hiring, and increased benefits like paid sick leave.

Essential workers, low-wage workers and immigrants deserve essential protections. Our state leaders deem certain workers essential workers, like construction workers, yet at the same time they are wanting to strip away the basic worker protections these workers have.

COVID-19 has made the workplace a more dangerous place. Over the last year, Texas elected officials have left frontline workers to fend for themselves. We must say NO to SB 14 to keep basic workers' protections in place.

Securing basic protections for construction workers has been a long haul. However, all the success in securing worker protections could be undone by SB 14.

Workers Died and more workers will continue to die if SB 14 passes

Samantha De La Torre

Self, instructor

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Austin, TX

Our essential workers who have been pulling us through this disastrous pandemic have been lauded as heroes, and now we are trying to take their rights away?! Texans need more protections on the job, not less. We see it time and again, people are the backbone of our state, not companies.

Darwin Hamilton

Reentry Advocacy Project, Self

Pflugerville, TX

Dear House members of State Affairs Committee,

I'm offering public comment in behalf of myself and for all the men and women who would be adversely affected by this this bill; for those who're unaware of its potential harm, and for those who may not have the wherewithal about how to participate in this process to advocate for themselves. I'm in opposition to SB14 and bills like this because I don't believe they're drafted with good intentions and ideas towards solutions, to the issues that local ordinances attempt to address, like paid sick leave, minimum or livable wages and ban the box/fair chance hiring opportunities for people with justice involvement.

Rather, they're intended to reverse, block and dismantle the progress and solutions set forth by local governments. It is intended to preserve, conserve, sustain and maintain the status quo of current bad practices that harm marginalized people. Meanwhile, those closest to the problems are closest to the solutions, but all too often the furthest away from power - the decision making in our government. Therefore, I ask that you all vote no on SB14.

Respectfully,

Darwin Hamilton

Co-founder, Reentry Advocacy Project

Hearing Date: May 6, 2021 8:00 AM

Nabila Mansoor, Executive Director

Emgage Texas

Houston, TX

Emgage Action opposes SB14 as it opposes any bill that erodes an end to discrimination. Our mission is to promote just policy guided by our faith and reflective of our Muslim American identity. SB14 is not just policy in that it limits the role local governments can play in advancing equity and inclusion of groups historically marginalized in the workplace. We urge you to oppose SB 14.

Local governments can play an important role in protecting individuals from employment discrimination by passing policies that expand protections not outlined by the federal government. SB14 curtails that right by prohibiting city and county governments in enacting anti-discrimination ordinances that help ensure the safety, respect and equal opportunity of all Texans in the workplace.

In the past, city and county governments enacted and enforced anti-discrimination policies as an acknowledgement of disparities that existed in the workplace. Local governments are the frontline witnesses of these policies and as such, they are best able to identify inequities and develop regulation to combat them. Our current structure allows local governments to reflect the shared value of their community by quickly implementing ordinances to protect community members from discrimination. SB 14 disallows such an impetus and provides a barrier to creating communities free of discrimination.

We must evaluate our role in doing what is right and discover the barriers that still exist to create a just and equitable community. Local anti-discrimination laws allow us to examine roadblocks to progress and help protect vulnerable communities. Any attempt to limit such laws is to limit the end of discrimination.

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We urge you to join us in opposing SB 14.

Sincerely,

Nabila Mansoor
Executive Director, Emgage Action (Texas)

Piper Nelson
self
Austin, TX

I STRONGLY OPPOSE this bill. The devastating impact that COVID 19 has had on working people means that they need more and not fewer workplace protections. And we know that marginalized communities (Black workers, Brown workers, young workers, LGBTQIA workers, women workers, etc) are most likely to face discrimination, abuse, little to no sick time, and unsafe working conditions. Please vote against this bill.

Kristian Caballero
Texas Appleseed
Austin, TX

SB 14 would threaten basic rights in Texas cities such as water breaks on the job, Fair Chance hiring, and would take away Texas cities' ability to expand non-discrimination protections. Essential workers deserve essential protections. COVID-19 has made the workplace a more dangerous place. Workers died and more workers will continue to die if SB 14 passes. I urge you to not support or pass SB 14.

Nick Wertsch
self
Houston, TX

SB 14 is a threat to local democracy. If passed, the bill would impact Texas workers belonging to many marginalized groups including immigrant, women, LGBTQIA+, Black, Brown and younger workers. SB 14 does not explicitly or fully exempt non-discrimination ordinances (NDOs). It is a threat to Texas cities' capacity to expand NDO's. SB 14 also undermines a broad variety of local policies for city and county employees, including living wage rules, medical and parental leave policies, and health insurance benefits. These protections are important, and the entirety of the implications of SB14 have not been discussed or considered fully by the Legislature. Local control and local democracy are important to Texas voters. I urge our representatives to vote NO on SB 14.

Jeremiah Hendricks
LIUNA-self
Austin, TX

Representatives of the House State Affairs Committee,

I am deeply concerned that SB 14 will threaten our local communities and their ability to serve and represent the interests of local Texans. This bill will undermine local control and represents an enormous overreach of state government power to try to control how we make policies in our local communities. Texas has a long tradition of respecting the right of local communities to oversee their own business. SB 14 breaks with that tradition by taking away our ability to set any local policy that differs from state policy on employment issues. Not only does SB 14 rob local officials of the power they need to make policies for their communities - it even interferes with local governments' ability to set policies for their own employees that differ in any way with

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state policies.

This heavy handed approach is oppressive, restricts our freedom in our local communities, and even risks triggering unnecessary litigation for local governments that must reevaluate how they manage their own employees. I ask that you oppose this bill in your State Affairs Committee hearings and protect the ability of local officials to handle local matters.

- Texas is the most dangerous state for construction workers. SB 14 would wipe out worker safety advances such as rest break ordinances guaranteeing access to water and restrooms for workers, OSHA 10 safety requirements that give basic safety training to workers to ensure they return home safely to their families, and training/apprenticeship requirements allowing workers to gain valuable skills and build a family supporting career.
- SB 14 would hamstring local communities from taking measures during this and future pandemics to protect EMS, fire fighters, police, and other frontline and essential workers who deserve better.
- SB 14 also undermines a broad variety of local policies for city and county employees, including living wage rules, medical and parental leave policies, and health insurance benefits. These protections are important, and the entirety of the implications of SB14 have not been discussed or considered fully by the Legislature.

Local control and local democracy are important to Texas voters, so thank you for standing with Texas workers in stopping SB 14! Thank you and take care.

Sincerely,
Jeremy B. Hendricks
Travis County Resident

Lyn Nance
LIUNA Local 1095
Austin, TX

Guarantee construction workers OSHA-10 safety training.
Guarantee workers the right to paid sick time.
Establish wages and benefits, like vacation, sick time, and parental leave, for public employees

Linda Rivas Vazquez, MFA
Infrarrealista Review
san marcos, TX

This bill in its totalitarian and obvious objective benefits a minority of citizens, large employers and companies, and threatens the health of workers.

Working class citizens are a vulnerable population and should be protected by their government, not used as mere hands to save companies a few dollars.

It is out of an Orwell novel to have to take minutes of the day to explain to my government that they should NOT act against the people holding the country together, that they should care for them so the country could continue to progress. It's clear that politicians, like Creighton, are only after self-interest and led by greed rather than by the good of the common people.

I urge you not to pass this bill.

Thank you for your time.

Matthew Gonzales
Laborers' Local 1095
Elgin, TX

SB 14 would threaten basic rights in Texas cities such as water breaks on the job, fair chance hiring, increased benefits, and

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would take away Texas cities' ability to expand non-discrimination protections. Other local protections that would be undone include policies that:

Guarantee construction workers OSHA-10 safety training.

Guarantee workers the right to paid sick time.

Establish wages and benefits, like vacation, sick time, and parental leave, for public employees

I ask you to oppose this legislation and improve the lives of working class families.

Bobby Olveda

LiUNA! Local#1095

San Antonio, TX

Hello My name is Bobby Olveda, I am reaching out regarding the concerning SB 14 up for review soon, I would like to share with you my position of opposition to this Bill in hopes that you would do what is fair and right for all Texas workers.

Texas elected officials have categorized construction workers as essential workers, but have failed to provide them the essential protections they deserve during the COVID-19 pandemic. SB14 would eliminate basic worker rights that Workers Defense has fought to secure over the last decade including water breaks on the job, fair chance hiring, and increased benefits like paid sick leave. Essential workers, low-wage workers and immigrants deserve essential protections. Our state leaders deem certain workers essential workers, like construction workers, yet at the same time they are wanting to strip away the basic worker protections these workers have. COVID-19 has made the workplace a more dangerous place. Over the last year, Texas elected officials have left frontline workers to fend for themselves. We must say NO to SB 14 to keep basic workers' protections in place. Securing basic protections for construction workers has been a long haul. However, all the success in securing worker protections could be undone by SB 14.

Workers Died and more workers will continue to die if SB 14 passes. In closing I hope that you can vote on behalf of Texas workers basic rights and against SB 14. Thank you.

Sincerely, an active constituent and voter.

Marty Troyer, Pastor

Houston Mennonite Church

Houston, TX

This is a dangerous bill for workers. It would prohibit cities and counties from ensuring workers are safe and treated fairly at work.

SB 14 needs to be defeated for the sake of people.

People are more important than profits. It is a moral imperative to allow regulation of policy for the safety of workers. Pastor Marty Troyer

Traci Dunlap

Self, Teacher

Austin, TX

My name is Traci Dunlap, and I am writing in opposition to SB 14.

SB 14 would threaten basic rights in Texas cities such as water breaks on the job, fair chance hiring, earned paid sick leave, and would take away Texas cities' ability to expand non-discrimination protections. SB 14 also undermines a broad variety of local policies for city and county employees, including living wage rules, medical and parental leave policies, and health insurance benefits. These protections are important, and the entirety of the implications of SB14 have not been discussed or considered fully by the Legislature.

These rights are important for all workers, but they're especially critical for women, young people, immigrants, LGBTQIA+ Texans, and workers of color. I oppose SB 14 because Texans need more protections on the job, not fewer.

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SB 14 is a threat to local democracy. Local control and local democracy are important to Texas voters. If you truly want to protect working families in Texas, then I urge you to vote NO on SB 14 instead of providing a dangerous vehicle for the erosion of NDOs and stripping away local worker protections.

Sincerely,
Traci L. Dunlap

Laura Perez-Boston
Workers Defense Project
Houston, TX

SB 14 is a threat to local democracy. If passed, the bill would impact Texas workers belonging to many marginalized groups including immigrant, women, LGBTQIA+, Black, Brown and younger workers. While SB 14 does not explicitly or fully exempt non-discrimination ordinances (NDOs), it is a threat to Texas cities' capacity to expand NDO's. SB 14 also undermines a broad variety of local policies for city and county employees, including living wage rules, medical and parental leave policies, and health insurance benefits. These protections are important, and the entirety of the implications of SB14 have not been discussed or considered fully by the Legislature. Local control and local democracy are important to Texas voters. I urge our representatives to vote NO on SB 14.

Beverly Lazar
Austin Justice Coalition, Grassroots Leadership, Homes not Handcuffs, UWSA
Austin, TX

If this bill becomes a law, it would take away basic workplace rights from hundreds of thousands of Texans. It would undo laws that provide safety on the job, like rules that guarantee water breaks or COVID safety . It would get rid of our Fair Chance Hiring protections and even block our ability to expand our non-discrimination laws. Texas does not need a law that would ban improving wages, benefits, or legal protections on the job across the state. I strongly oppose SB14; instead, I support worker protections like water breaks and people having a fair chance at a job interview. Essential workers who have risked so much during the pandemic, deserve better than SB14. PLEASE take action to stop this terrible bill. Thank you in advance for your kindness and compassion.

Martina Earl
Self
Copperas Cove, TX

I am against this bill.
People like me work hard every day to get something in live and plan for retirem.
You are trying to take everything away again.

adam orman
Good Work Austin
austin, TX

As a small business owner and representative of over 250 Central TX business members in Good Work Austin, I oppose SB 14. Cities need flexibility to address their problems. This bill is overly broad in limiting what individual municipalities can do to provide for their residents. It is the antithesis of local control, bad for public health as it disallows paid sick leave, breaks for construction workers; bad for groups that are historically discriminated against as it pre-empts future NDOs. It is unnecessary and is only good for big businesses with addresses throughout the State.

Lee Shed
Local union 154
OAKWOOD, TX

I oppose SB 14 please don't let this pass

Michael Cantu
SCETTF
San Antonio, TX

My name is Michael Cantu and I am calling as a Texas "constituent/ voter" to urge Representative Chris Paddie to vote NO on Senate Bill 14.

SB 14 would threaten basic rights in Texas cities such as water breaks on the job, Fair Chance hiring, and would take away Texas cities' ability to expand non-discrimination protections. Essential workers deserve essential protections. COVID-19 has made the workplace a more dangerous place. Workers died and more workers will continue to die if SB 14 passes.

If Chris Paddie truly stands with and wants to protect essential workers, then I urge that they vote NO on SB 14 instead of stripping away the basic worker protections that keep workers alive.

Thank you.

Julieta Suarez
Texas Appleseed
Austin, TX

This bill is an appalling attack on labor protections and I firmly believe it should not be passed for the wellbeing of working-class laborers and their families.

Marshall Woodard
Self, Retired Federal Civil Service Regional Labor Advisor for the US Air Force
Universal City, TX

If I have the opportunity to vote for or against any Texas Legislator that votes for Texas Senate Bill 14, I will vote against that person. I'm a registered Texas voter and I never miss the opportunity to vote.

Valerie Ward
Good Work Austin
Austin, TX

Texas is a large and diverse state, encompassing tiny ranching communities and sprawling urban cities. It is a powerhouse of agriculture, technology, health, and education. Some regions rely on the energy industry, others flourish on tourism. Our ecosystems are diverse as well, from the tall pine forests of East Texas to the majestic deserts of the west, with rolling hills, verdant prairies, arid mountains, and gulf coast beaches in between. Our citizens are diverse as well, from those whose ancestors inhabited this land before recorded history, to those whose families settled here generations ago from many different lands, to those who have just arrived, seeking the peace, beauty, and prosperity that Texas promises. In consideration of this strength through Texas's diversity, I am AGAINST SB 14 and any legislation which would pre-empt local control in favor of a one-size-fits-all state solution. Businesses are perfectly capable of operating in different markets with different requirements; and any business which desires to prosper beyond one town must be ready to adapt its marketing, its offerings, even its systems to

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succeed. Cities and towns must have the power to determine what is best for their own communities. Corporations will be able to adjust to these differing policies, just as they do when operating across state lines or internationally. This bill sets a dangerous precedent that threatens to disrupt and homogenize the beautiful variety that makes Texas "a whole other country."

Andrea Reyes

Deeds Not Words

Austin, TX

I am against SB 14.

SB 14 would threaten basic rights in Texas cities such as water breaks on the job, fair chance hiring, and would take away Texas cities' ability to expand non-discrimination protections. These rights are important for all workers, but they're especially critical for women, young people, immigrants, LGBTQIA+ Texans, and workers of color. We oppose SB 14 because Texans need more protections on the job, not fewer.

Amanda Cassidy, Reentry Advocacy Fellow

Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable

New Braunfels, TX

I submit this to request you vote No on SB 14.

Chivas Watson, Proprietor, United Consulting

WorkingGroup512/Alliance For A New Justice System/Pure Justice

Austin, TX

Good morning; I'm Chivas Watson, a community organizer and small business owner in the Austin-area. As a felon, I've experienced every hurdle and roadblock to restorative justice, having been denied the core factors of livelihood due to a criminal history.

Even though I'm Justice-involved, I still hold the responsibility of sustaining, growing, and evolving. It's almost impossible to do this, without a job to fuel my ambition or a home to shower and shave. I know whoever listens to this, understands. Released from TDCJ last May 7, I firmly understand that any additional legislation against reentry, restorative justice, and core sustainability -- causes me a pathway of oppression and trauma.

Affiliated with the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, I'm asking that SB14 be suspended and evicted from the Legislative session altogether. We need fairness and equity provided to the concept surrounding SB14, so we can identify key directions in navigating a process inclusive to all Texans.

Joshua Jones

LiUNA 350

Orange, TX

This is not right of fair to do.

Thomas Cummins, Mr.

Self

San Antonio, TX

Please oppose SB 14. Protect worker rights. Workers deserve dignity and respect.

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Shannon Noble
Texas Air Conditioning Contractors Association
Austin, TX

The Texas Air Conditioning Contractors Association supports SB 14.

Thank you.

Matt Simpson
ACLU of Texas
Austin, TX

We write to express our concerns about the harmful and sweeping effects of SB 14 for all workers in Texas. SB 14 could strip away local governments' ability to set policies relating to employment for their own employees and other workers who live in their jurisdiction. If this bill passes into law, every municipality and county in Texas would lose its ability to adopt or enforce policies in employment that "exceed or conflict with federal or state law." This undermines common sense and long-established principles of self-governance in Texas, to the detriment of workers across the state.

- SB14 hurts municipal workers, police, and firefighters. Nearly every municipality has enacted ordinances, rules, and policies designed to benefit and protect workers, including those who work for the municipality itself. Under SB 14, any locally-enacted measure that relates to employment and exceeds or conflicts with federal or state law could be rendered "void and unenforceable." This provision could void local measures related to pensions and retirement funds for police, firefighters, and other public employees.

- SB14 could strip employment protections for vulnerable workers. Many localities enact measures like fair scheduling rules, water breaks, "ban-the-box," and salary history inquiry bans to promote fair hiring and fuel job growth. These protections often exceed federal and state law and therefore could be voided if SB14 is enacted.

- SB14 could limit local enforcement of non-discrimination ordinances. There is no explicit provision in the bill that would protect local rules prohibiting discrimination based on race, religion, veteran status, disability, and other identities of Texas workers. Many local non-discrimination ordinances contain provisions that conflict and/or exceed existing federal and state protections. For example, federal law allows those who have been discriminated against to file complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and then in court. But local ordinances can provide less costly mechanisms for those experiencing discrimination and extend to workers at businesses not explicitly covered by federal and state law. SB14 could

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impede cities and counties in how they enforce local non-discrimination protections, especially for many workers at businesses not fully covered by state and federal law.

- SB14 could open up localities to expensive lawsuits. SB 14 is written in such broad terms that any business or individual could sue a local government for anti-discrimination measures, even for race discrimination, that they argue exceed or conflict with federal/state law. The broad terms of the bill could create a chilling effect for adopting new local measures to prevent discrimination for fear of costly litigation.

In the wake of the pandemic, Texas lawmakers should be incentivizing such common-sense policies to ensure all Texans thrive. But SB 14 undercuts these goals. For these reasons, we urge you to vote against SB 14.

Janet Dudding
Self
Bryan, TX

Oppose.

Susan Zakaib, Dr.
Self, Nonprofit grant writer

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Austin, TX

I am truly disappointed and appalled that the Texas Legislature is considering passing SB 14. Too many Texas workers face wages too low to support themselves and their families, insufficient benefits, and dangerous and deadly working conditions. Thankfully, some municipalities have passed ordinances that provide some measure of protection against these disturbing realities. For example, after a young Dallas-area construction worker died because his employer refused to allow him a water break, the City of Dallas passed a policy requiring construction employers to provide workers with brief paid rest breaks. This measure was required to prevent further unnecessary deaths. I am also proud that Austin and other Texas cities have passed much-needed paid sick time policies, although unfortunately these have not been implemented due to lawsuits. I am unsure why my state's legislators are opposed to basic measures that keep working people safe and ensure that their rights are respected. If the legislature chooses to pass SB 14, I would request that you pursue statewide legislation to protect workers' safety, dignity and economic wellbeing. Otherwise, the consequences for working people could be dire - and I do not wish to see members of my community die unnecessarily on the job. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Susan Zakaib
Austin, TX

Patricia McNeil, Student

Self

Houston, TX

I am opposed to this bill as it would impede on those that have been incarcerated an opportunity to obtain employment. Acquiring employment is an essential element in regaining some semblance of dignity and is necessary. A second chance after incarceration includes this benefit along with housing. Two the most important elements to reintegration back into society.

Beatrice Rangel
LiUNA Local #1095
San Antonio, TX

Hi my name is Beatrice Rangel and I would like to inform the house committee of my position on SB 14, Texas elected officials have categorized construction workers as essential workers, but have failed to provide them the essential protections they deserve during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SB14 would eliminate basic worker rights that Workers Defense has fought to secure over the last decade including water breaks on the job, fair chance hiring, and increased benefits like paid sick leave.

Essential workers, low-wage workers and immigrants deserve essential protections. Our state leaders deem certain workers essential workers, like construction workers, yet at the same time they are wanting to strip away the basic worker protections these workers have.

COVID-19 has made the workplace a more dangerous place. Over the last year, Texas elected officials have left frontline workers to fend for themselves. We must say NO to SB 14 to keep basic workers' protections in place.

Securing basic protections for construction workers has been a long haul. However, all the success in securing worker protections could be undone by SB 14.

Workers Died and more workers will continue to die if SB 14 passes.

In closing, I hope that you and the rest of the committee strongly view this bill of SB 14 and do not consider.

Sarah Berel-Harrop
Self/Seminarian
Farmers Branch, TX

I oppose this bill and hope that the committee will not report it favorably. City officials are MORE accountable to voters than Texas Legislatures, who have larger districts. These officials should be able to enact ordinances in line with their community standards protecting their citizens without the interference of people who don't live in their jurisdictions, have no understanding

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of the issues, and have no accountability to the voters in those jurisdictions. It's offensive for the legislature to swoop in and harm workers and citizens by gutting or setting aside local ordinances. Please vote NO on SB14.

Bryan LaVergne

self, non-attorney representative in disability claims

Houston, TX

The author's statement of intent, as published in the respective Senate committee's bill analysis of SB 14, refers to "local ordinances regulating private employment practices" as "a patchwork of different burdensome regulations across the state." The author proposes that "[t]hese policies are better left to the employer." SB 14 is a response to the paid sick leave ordinances that have been passed in Texas cities. Survey after survey shows that millions of Texans and so many more Americans live paycheck to paycheck. These local ordinances are a proposed solution to a problem where workers, depending on being compensated only for their time, must decide between their tending to their health or paying bills or affording medicine. The right honorable members of the Texas legislature might not realize what it's like to live their whole life depending on a wage to support their loved ones, but being paid by the hour means it's not your work that is being valued but how long it takes to rent you out. SB 14 seeks to spike the solution that paid sick leave ordinances offer with no proposed alternative. SB 14 instead refuses to even allow this small rule in favor of the dignity of workers and instead prioritizes the alleged "burdensome . . . hurdles" this type of policy brings to employers, despite employers all around the country and world being subject to similar policies. Employers are a class of people who are compensated differently, as they get paid when they have to stay home sick.

I think it would be mighty bold of the House to pass this bill. While hospitals close across the state and wage earners struggle to get by, Representatives in the House ought to consider how quickly they want to defend those who are better off and continue to leave behind the majority of Texans who work for a living. The author alleges that preventing these local ordinances would "allow job creators to spend less time fighting through a web of red tape and focus more time investing in their employees." The only reason why cities are turning to these policies to begin with is because employers aren't allowing the bare minimum to their workers. If they didn't want the "red tape," they had plenty of time to act. When firefighters pull up to a burning house but a car is parked in front of the fire hydrant, they break the damn car windows to run the hose through because the idiot shouldn't have put his car in the way. Do you want to be known as the idiot, or do you want to grab a bucket and actually get to work? It's your call as to whether or not you are part of the problem or the solution.

Chrishelle Palay

HOME Coalition

HOUSTON, TX

SB 14 is a threat to local democracy. If passed, the bill would impact Texas workers belonging to many marginalized groups including immigrant, women, LGBTQIA+, Black, Brown and younger workers. SB 14 does not explicitly or fully exempt non-discrimination ordinances (NDOs). It is a threat to Texas cities' capacity to expand NDO's. SB 14 also undermines a broad variety of local policies for city and county employees, including living wage rules, medical and parental leave policies, and health insurance benefits. These protections are important, and the entirety of the implications of SB14 have not been discussed or considered fully by the Legislature. Local control and local democracy are important to Texas voters. I urge our representatives to vote NO on SB 14.

Cyrus Reed

Sierra Club, Lone Star Chapter

Austin, TX

I already signed up against this bill but missed the testimony. I know that Sierra Club is usually not associated with employment law and practices, but we have consistently stood up for the rights of cities to pass ordinances that protect its citizens from discrimination and harsh work conditions. We believe SB 14 is a broad overreach pure and simple. Cities like Austin and Dallas have a right to protect their citizens from discrimination and unfair labor practices, including rest breaks for citizens in the hot sun. Workers have actually died in Dallas and Austin due to our hot sun, and with climate change occurring we can not expect the state to take action. Please vote no on SB 14

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Lisa Humphrey

ADL Texas

Austin, TX

ADL Texas strongly opposes SB 14, a law that would take away basic workplace rights from hundreds of thousands of Texans. SB 14 would block the ability of local jurisdictions across Texas to expand non-discrimination laws. All Texas including essential workers, low-wage workers, and immigrants deserve essential protections. We urge you to vote against SB 14.

James Caldwell, Rev.

Coalition of Community Organizations

Houston, TX

Essential workers sign deserve essential protections Clapping hands sign. COVID-19 made the workplace a more dangerous place. Still, Texas lawmakers are attempting to strip away basic worker protections. #WorkersDied and more workers will continue to die if #SB14 passes.

SB 14 is a threat to local democracy. If passed, the bill would impact Texas workers belonging to many marginalized groups including immigrant, women, LGBTQIA+, Black, Brown and younger workers. SB 14 does not explicitly or fully exempt non-discrimination ordinances (NDOs). It is a threat to Texas cities' capacity to expand NDO's. SB 14 also undermines a broad variety of local policies for city and county employees, including living wage rules, medical and parental leave policies, and health insurance benefits. These protections are important, and the entirety of the implications of SB14 have not been discussed or considered fully by the Legislature. Local control and local democracy are important to Texas voters. Texas is not a one-size-fits-all state. Just as we elect you to make decisions at the state level, we have elected our local city and county representatives to pass laws that meet the needs of our community.

Rather than banning local governments from ensuring their communities are more equitable and fair for working families, state leaders should be working to pass stronger statewide protections for Texans. These statewide protections should serve as a floor or set of minimum standard protections across the state. Local voters and elected officials should be allowed to expand those protections to reflect the needs and values of their communities. Texans don't want the State dictating policies that require local solutions.

Vote NO on SB 14. Let us make the decisions for our community. #TXDeservesBetter, therefore, I strongly reiterate and urge our representatives to vote NO on SB 14.

Video <https://twitter.com/ThatMialbarra/status/1390304702953267212?s=20>

Ed Lopez

IBC Bank

San Antonio, TX

Registering in support of SB 14

Neesha Dave, Ms.

Lilith Fund

TX, TX

We OPPOSE SB 14. We urge the committee to oppose the bill. Local governments should have the ability to create policies to ensure the health and safety of their communities, including creating opportunities for workers to earn paid sick days and ensuring that workers have safe working conditions.

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Everyone gets sick-- but not everyone in our community can afford the time it requires to get better. All workers, regardless of background, wage level and occupation, should have the ability to earn paid sick days. According to the Institute for Women's Policy Research, about forty percent of Austin workers are at risk of losing wages or being fired if they stay home when sick or need to care for a seriously ill child or family member. Basic protections like paid sick days are essential to ensuring people's families can live safe and healthy lives.

Local governments should also have the ability to create non-discrimination ordinances to ensure that their residents are protected from discrimination on the basis of sexuality, gender, and more. For all of these reasons, please oppose SB 14.

Carisa Lopez

Texas Freedom Network

Austin, TX

I'm Carisa Lopez, Political Director for Texas Freedom Network, an organization of more than 170,000 religious and community leaders and young people who support equality and social justice. I'm here today to speak against Senate Bill 14.

SB 14 fails Texas workers and their families by preventing counties and city governments from passing policies that set minimum employment standards, if they exceed state and federal standards, no matter what the local needs are. The bill would also undo existing county and city employment policies designed to recruit a talented workforce, ensure worker health and safety, and provide civil rights protections. It also impacts fair chance hiring.

Frankly, this Legislature should be laser-focused on addressing critical problems like the COVID pandemic, which has killed 50,000 Texans, and fixing a fragile power grid that left millions of Texans shivering in the dark, or dying, just three months ago. The last thing it should do is handcuff local elected officials who are working hard to find effective solutions to crises and other serious problems in their communities.

Each community's voters choose local leaders in local elections and give them the responsibility to pass and enforce laws that most accurately reflect the unique views, values and needs of the people who live there. State lawmakers should be partners with these leaders in finding solutions to problems rather than interfering in local democracy and targeting policies they disagree with.

I urge you to oppose SB 14.

David King

self

Austin, TX

Honorable Members of the House State Affairs Committee, Please do not support SB 14. The bill repeals existing local employee benefits ordinances that require family leave, sick leave, and other employment benefits that support hundreds of thousands of low-income and workforce families. Please do not deny these families of basic employment benefits they need to survive and thrive! Please do not support SB 14! Thank you for considering my comments and for your service. Respectfully, David King.