

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Appropriations
For HB 1

Compiled on: Thursday, March 23, 2023 3:05 PM

Note: Comments received by the committee reflect only the view of the individual(s) submitting the comment, who retain sole responsibility for the content of the comment. Neither the committee nor the Texas House of Representatives takes a position on the views expressed in any comment. The committee compiles the comments received for informational purposes only and does not exercise any editorial control over comments.

Hearing Date: March 23, 2023 2:00 PM

Patricia Troell, Ex. Dir.
Kleberg County Pregnancy Resource Center
Kingsville, TX

The Texas Legislature must continue to protect and expand the Alternatives to Abortion program to meet Texans' increased need after the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. As a Pro-Life Texan, I respectfully ask you to sustain this program through the rest of this fiscal year by funding it at \$25 million in the supplemental budget, Senate Bill 30.

Since *Roe* was overturned, the program has seen a 40% increase in services provided to women. Because of this increase, Alternatives to Abortion will run out of money by June 2023. The resources this program provides are critical to ensuring Texas women are not pressured into seeking out-of-state or illegal abortions.

Every single day, pregnancy resource centers, adoption agencies, and maternity homes provide both tangible and social services to truly assist women and children. Texas is Pro-Life and we want women to know they are not alone when they choose Life for their babies. Please fund Alternatives to Abortion at \$25 million in the supplemental budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Adam Revia
College Street Health Care Center
Beaumont, TX

I am writing to ask the House Appropriations Committee to appropriate the necessary funding (appx. \$40 Million GR) in SB 30 to maintain the temporary emergency rate increase for nursing facilities through Fiscal Year 2023 in response to the expiration of the federally approved public health emergency on May 11, 2023.

Unless action is taken to include this request in the supplemental budget, nursing facilities across Texas would lose an estimated \$100 million dollars in revenue between May and August 2023. The rate add-on has become a critical and necessary funding source as the cost of care has increased dramatically since the pandemic, at an average of over \$40 per patient per day. The impact of COVID-19, an unprecedented workforce shortage and record-high inflation have compounded the financial challenges facing our nursing facilities.

We appreciate your acknowledgement of the continued challenges nursing home providers continue to face and the investment in nursing facility care in House Bill 1, the base budget proposals for the next biennium. Considering the expiration of the PHE, it is critical the Texas Legislature appropriate the supplemental funds necessary to maintain the temporary rate add on through Fiscal Year 2023 to ensure financial stability and quality-care.

Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Lloyd Douglas
Conquest Healthcare
Aledo, TX

I am writing to ask the House Appropriations Committee to appropriate the necessary funding (appx. \$40 Million GR) in SB 30 to maintain the temporary emergency rate increase for nursing facilities through Fiscal Year 2023 in response to the expiration of the federally approved public health emergency on May 11, 2023.

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Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Regards,
Lloyd Douglas
CEO
Conquest Healthcare

Ronald Payne, CEO
Southwest LTC Management Services
PLANO, TX

I am CEO and owner of Southwest Longterm Care Management Services LLC. we own and operate 9 skilled nursing centers in Texas. the \$19.63 we have been receiving during the PHE is vital to our ability to staff and provide the highest quality of care to our residents. Please provide funding in the remaining 3 plus months of this biennium to continue to fund these imperative funds needed for our operations. May I suggest using ARPA funds to bridge this gap. thank you for your consideration of this request.
Ron

Karen Kohlleppel, Administrator

Uvalde Healthcare

Uvalde, TX

Dear Committee,

I am writing to ask the House Appropriations Committee to appropriate the necessary funding (appx. \$40 Million GR) in SB 30 to maintain the temporary emergency rate increase for nursing facilities through Fiscal Year 2023 in response to the expiration of the federally approved public health emergency on May 11, 2023.

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Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Karen Kohlleppel, LNHA

Diamantina Ramirez

DAYTON NURSING AND REHAB

Pasadena, TX

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Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Regards,

Diamantina

Charlotte Bairrington, Mrs.

Self as a citizen of the US

Fort Worth, TX

HB 1942 and HJR 97 about gambling and casinos are two bills I am TOTALLY against! These bills are to help allow legal gambling in Texas. I am against gambling and casinos because of the number of people who become addicted and use their needed money to pay bills for their addiction. Individuals and families suffer. It often involves organized crime and money laundering. Money from Sands LV has been pumped into support these bills. Keep them out of Texas! These activities promote crime such as stealing and can be a location of promoting sex trafficking and drug trafficking. This is bad entertainment for our communities and families! Please push for parks and family oriented entertainment to retain the greatness of Texas.

Tammy Villasenor

Self

San Antonio, TX

The Texas Legislature must continue to protect and expand the Alternatives to Abortion program to meet Texans' increased need after the reversal of Roe v. Wade. As a Pro-Life Texan, I respectfully ask you to sustain this program through the rest of this fiscal year by funding it at \$25 million in the supplemental budget, Senate Bill 30.

Since Roe was overturned, the program has seen a 40% increase in services provided to women. Because of this increase, Alternatives to Abortion will run out of money by June 2023. The resources this program provides are critical to ensuring Texas women are not pressured into seeking out-of-state or illegal abortions.

Every single day, pregnancy resource centers, adoption agencies, and maternity homes provide both tangible and social services to truly assist women and children. Texas is Pro-Life and we want women to know they are not alone when they choose Life for their babies. Please fund Alternatives to Abortion at \$25 million in the supplemental budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sue Wilson, LMSW

Texas Silver-Haired Legislature - Chair of Legislative Action Committee

Austin, TX

HB1 - Article II Riders 24 and 25

I write in support of maintaining the total reimbursement rate listed in HB1 Article II Riders 24 and 25 for long-stay nursing facility services in the Medicaid Program. The Patient Driven Payment Model (PDPM) fully funded should incentivize client care and quality of services to improve staff-to-client ratio's, staff training and education, and wages for direct care staffing.

The 19th Texas Silver-Haired Legislature urges the 88th Legislature to increase funds paid to Medicaid-certified nursing homes, combined with a payment methodology that ensures stable and sufficient funding including quality-based financial incentives and accountability by managed-care organizations and providers to Medicaid residents, focuses regulations on resident care and maintains needed access to nursing home care.

Lastly, we support continued funding of the Covid-19 Add-on payment through the end of August. These supplemental funds have helped address the significant underfunding which makes it impossible for providers to offer adequate wages and benefits to attract and retain needed staffing levels, provide ongoing professional development to optimize outcomes for residents and career paths for staff; encourage a culture of full engagement for residents, employers, and resident family members; upgrade medical equipment; reneve existing homes; and test and implement new models of resident care.

Sue Wilson, LMSW

Texas Silver-Haired Legislature - Chair, Legislative Action Committee

Austin, TX

The 19th Texas Silver-Haired Legislature urges the 88th Texas legislature to increase the level of funding to the Lifespan Respite Care Program (TLRCP) to bring the resource in line with the level of need and enable family members to continue to support their loved one at home for as long as appropriate. The respite-care program's annual budget has not been increased from \$500,000 since the initiative began in 2009, yet the number of Texans ages 65 to 84 continues to increase. It makes sense for the State to invest in respite care for a larger number of unpaid family caregivers due to the fact that these family caregivers provide a positive economic impact to Texas, and family caregivers help keep loved ones at home and out of costly institutions. An increase would give more caregivers a desperately needed break to take care of themselves, recharge, and continue their most important job of caring for their loved one. It is important to note that the TLRCP currently offers short-term respite care resources to approximately 600 unpaid family caregivers who do not receive respite care through other programs and who care for a person of any age living with a chronic health condition or disability, providing them a brief period of relief or rest targeted to the need of the caregiver.

Sarah Matthews

self retired

Friendswood, TX

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Steve May

Self / Retired

Houston, TX

There should be no appropriations to fund solar or wind power projects. These forms of energy production are unreliable and make the state dependent on Chinese battery production. The solid waste from the wind turbine blades is voluminous and non biodegradable. The waste from the solar cells and batteries is hazardous. The state should not subsidize this technology. Defund Green Energy in Texas!!!

Shawntal Brown

Self and Educator

AUSTIN, TX

It would be very disheartening if representatives of the state of Texas support the restriction of DEI funds from Texas institutions. These institutions support students, staff, and faculty from multiple backgrounds from rural, veteran, first-generation, low SES, and more. The budget for DEI offices and programs would be removed, it would be a misstep. I have mentioned previously how DEI offices are underfunded at the institution, which is a larger issue at hand, and by removing any funding provided by the state, I would be very disappointed in our representatives and moving forward with such an act. I hope the representatives oppose this action and be considerate of all of their constituents.

Marcus Mercer, Mr.
Marbridge Foundation
Manchaca, TX

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Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Kelly Solis
Self
Austin, TX

Good afternoon, my name is Kelly Solis and I am a junior at the University of Texas here in Austin. I am writing to express my disapproval of this bill and its impacts on students such as myself. Growing up in a military family, I learned early on about the power and importance of freedom. My father is a veteran who served in the United States Marine Corps and as a kid he always told my siblings and I, "in this house we do not tolerate liars or thieves, and if you lie then you are a thief since you are robbing someone of the truth." He and my mom raised me to value the freedom we as people have, and instilled in me the desire to seek out honesty and truth. I chose to study at the University of Texas because of its various degree options and the plethora of ways I could become active in campus activities. UT gave me the freedom to chose my path. I decided to take classes in the department of Mexican American and Latino Studies because I wanted to learn more about Mexican American's and their history and contributions to Texas, and the country as a whole. It would not have been possible for me to take these classes and seek out this history, without DEI policies that helped departmentalize Latino Studies. By supporting this bill, you are limiting my freedom as a student to decide my own degree plan. By banning DEI in higher education, you are robbing me of the opportunity to make impactful relationships with other students, faculty, and staff. By passing HB 1, you state representatives are saying you do not share the same value that I and my veteran father have regarding truth, honesty, and freedom. I ask each of you to vote against this bill so that I may be able to continue my path here at UT and beyond and so that the progress we as a country have made towards freedom will not be for nothing .Thank you.

Susan Burek

Self: I am a Parent and an advocate for people with disabilities

Austin, TX

Thank you for allowing me to testify regarding HB 1. My name is Sue Burek and I live in Austin, Texas. I'm a parent, an advocate for people with disabilities, and a member of several advocacy organizations that serve families with children with disabilities. Funding for HHSC is very important to us.

I SUPPORT HB 1, the General Appropriations Bill for SFY2024-SFY2025. However, there are several serious errors in the Article 2 budget for HHSC that must be corrected. After corrections, the LBB projections will show additional GR and FMAP available to HHSC, which will allow HHSC to fund several Exceptional Items by adding them to HB 1 or the HHSC Rider.

* Per LBB Budget Presentation on 2/27/2023, Note 4 on pages 6-7:

"The phased out increased FMAP has not been incorporated into the forecasted amounts presented in this packet."

"The LBB projected FMAPs and EFMAPs are higher than those HHSC included in their LAR."

* Per HHSC Budget Presentation on 2/27/2023, page 14: End of Continuous Medicaid Coverage:

HHSC will continue to receive reduced FMAP from 4/1/2023 to 12/31/2023 during 9 months of the unwinding process. This additional FMAP revenue for April-December WAS NOT INCLUDED in the LBB budget projections for HHSC due to the timing of the Consolidated Appropriations Act, passed on 12/29/2022, after the LBB budget calculations were complete.

* Per HHSC testimony on 2/27/2023, the agency will incur a large cost to review 5.9 million Medicaid cases over the next 2 years.

NOTE: HHSC will not have to review all 5.9 million Medicaid cases, because 607,456 of these Medicaid recipients get SSI, and their cases are reviewed by SSA, not by HHSC. Most SSI recipients don't receive Texas Medicaid benefits beyond their Medicaid acute care benefits, so HHSC doesn't need to review their cases. If we assume that about 20% of the SSI recipients receive one or more Texas Medicaid benefits in addition to SSI, then HHSC will only have to review 121,491 of these SSI cases and won't need to review the remaining 80% (485,965), which will reduce HHSC's case review requirements and related costs from 5.9 million cases to 5.4 million cases, a substantial reduction to HHSC's workload and costs.

PLEASE USE THE INCREASED REVENUE AND DECREASED COST FOR HHSC DESCRIBED ABOVE TO INCLUDE THESE EXCEPTIONAL ITEMS AS PART OF HB 1 OR THE HHSC RIDER:

#6: Support for Community-Based Services and Promoting Independence, to fund additional Medicaid Waiver Slots.

#10: Consolidated Rate Request, to increase reimbursement rates for community attendant services.

NOTE: HB 500, the Supplemental Appropriations Bill, includes extra funding for HHSC in Article 3 and several other Articles, but it doesn't include funding for HHSC Exceptional Items #6 or #10.

PLEASE APPROVE HB 1, with the HHSC budget corrections described above, and include funding for Exceptional Items #6 and #10 as part of HB 1 or the HHSC Rider.

Thank you for your consideration of my request.

Nicholas Solis

Self

Houston, TX

I am a veteran and really disagree with this bill.

Ashley Little

Self and The University of Texas School of Law

Austin, TX

As a lifelong Texan who grew up in Dripping Springs, Texas, where diversity was lacking, and then encountered a diverse student body in undergrad and now law school, being around other students with different backgrounds than me enhanced my learning experience tremendously. When diverse experiences are present in an academic setting, I am more engaged with the material and class discussion, and I spend more time being acutely aware of the biases that come to mind from being raised in a mostly white, middle- and upper-class town. If Texas institutions were to remove DEI programs, I would certainly be incentivized to obtain my education elsewhere in knowing my experience would be more informative and more inclusive. Texas is my home and I do not want to see the institutions that have welcomed people from various paths of life deteriorate in quality if they decide to start banning DEI initiatives.

Ian Miller

Self

Austin, TX

I understand that this bill has a rider that cuts DEI initiatives. As a student and Texas resident, I appreciate educational spaces where people from different backgrounds come together. I do not support cutting this funding.

Joseph Mathis, MAJ

Texas Silver Haired Legislature

Gatesville, TX

I firmly request that the Healthcare Expanded & Accessed Locally (HEAL) Texans Act, SB XX, be supported and approved. The HEAL Texans Act will expand much-needed access to more Texans, particularly in rural and other underserved communities, and vastly expand quality health care options across the state. By establishing Full Practice Authority (FPA) for Advanced Practice Registered Nurses (APRNs), this would help alleviate our state's health care workforce shortage and expand quality, local health care options for patients. This is a Texas Silver Haired Resolution R008 and the 9th most supported of 73 proposed resolutions.

Texas has 172 counties classified as non-metropolitan or rural. Census reports indicate multifactor trends are driving the aging of rural communities. Older adults consistently represent an increasing percentage of rural populations over urban populations. The more rural the community, the harder it is to find people of caregiving age, whether family caregivers or paid aides. Thus, older adults face distinct healthcare and other challenges in these underserved areas. In 2017, Texas was ranked 34th healthiest state, and in 2021 that rank dropped to 42nd in health system performance. Studies show that in FPA states, APRNs are more likely to practice in rural and underserved areas and have improved the APRN workforce recruitment while meeting the highest care quality and safety standards. Decades worth of peer-reviewed studies have found that APRNs improve access to healthcare and have similar or better results for the conditions they treat when compared to physicians.

States that restrict or reduce APRNs' ability to practice according to their abilities through limiting licensure authority are more closely associated with geographic healthcare disparities, higher chronic disease burden, primary care shortages, higher costs of care, and lower standing on national health rankings. Removing barriers, such as delegation agreements with physicians, will allow APRNs to take on the challenge, work as respected and valued members of the healthcare team with physicians, and ease some of the many stresses of the healthcare system; and, WHEREAS, nearly half the United States, as well as the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and all branches of the military, have permanently done away with this requirement.

Michael Bloom, P.E.

Texas Section - American Society of Civil Engineers

Houston, TX

The Texas Section of the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE TX) supports a substantial increase in funding to the Flood Infrastructure Fund (FIF) along with substantial increases in the staffing levels for the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB), above their current 401 person full time equivalent staffing cap. We also support increased funding to help TWDB increase staff salaries.

We applaud the 86th Legislature's creation of the statewide flood planning process and the FIF along with the appropriation of \$793 million to the FIF during the last biennium. Those efforts resulted in the first-ever statewide flood plan which has identified \$37.5 billion in flood mitigation needs.

We appreciate the \$400 million in supplemental appropriations noted in Section 17.17 of House Bill 1; however, much more support is warranted given the statewide need, the current budget surplus, and the limits to project financing facing Texas communities.

Because there is no revenue stream associated with avoided future damages, flood risk mitigation projects cannot be debt-financed using revenue bonds. Flood mitigation funding must come from general revenues (sales or property taxes) or from partnership funding with the state or federal government. This makes state support for flood mitigation so vital.

We urge you to support revisions to House Bill 1 to provide substantially more funding to the Flood Infrastructure Fund, to substantially increase the TWDB staffing level cap so the Board has the capacity to support the anticipated work volume, and increase salary funding for the TWDB.

Additionally, we urge you to support a mechanism to provide ongoing funding to the FIF, outside of the regular appropriations process, like that proposed by Senator Creighton in Senate Bill 1366.

Thank you very much considering this request. Please contact us at office@texasce.org or (512) 472-8905 if there are follow up questions.

Henry Shao

self, software engineer

Allen, TX

It's been brought to my attention that under this budget bill, there is a rider that will negatively impact Texans through measures that would impact diversity and inclusion. Diversity is important to a society because it brings additional viewpoints to topics. A society that isn't diverse will be limited to just what they can see. Additionally, many people choose to be in diverse spaces because they can find new friends and broaden their horizons there. No one is being forced into diverse spaces.

Additionally, diversity is good for the state as well. A reputation for acceptance brings more visitors and cash flow to the state. There will be more immigration into the state and bolster the economy. Diversity corresponds with a good education for reasons mentioned above (more open-mindedness).

In conclusion, I believe that the rider bills that will negatively impact diversity, equality, and inclusion should be removed and the HB 1 Budget bill revised to reflect the change.

Joseph Mathis
Texas Silver Haired Legislature
Gatesville, TX

Comments concerning Improved Access to Healthcare in Rural Texas for Older Texans

Access to Healthcare in rural Texas and in the counties supported by Central Texas Area Agency on Aging (AAA), we have three counties without 24/7 support. They must be transported out of county to receive medical treatment. The Texas Silver Haired Legislature (TSHL) Resolution R037 as the 8th most important resolution of the 73 brought up.

Over 100 rural hospitals having closed nationwide since 2010 and hundreds more at risk of shutting their doors in the near future. Our Milam County had to close its two small hospitals in the last couple of years.

The closure rate has, for the most part, been in a steep rise since 2010. The Chartis Center for Rural Health report said that of the 1,844 rural hospitals still in operation nationwide, 453 of them, or nearly one in four, are “vulnerable” to closure; and with COVID-19, the patient market size will be smaller, reimbursement lower, and competition greater in the future.

Twenty-five percent of Americans live in rural areas, while only about 10 percent of doctors practice in rural areas; fewer primary care offices may be needed as care shifts to virtual models, but health systems must be able to provide coexisting systems of care for the COVID-19 and non-COVID19 patients they will simultaneously serve.

States are approaching the problem from a variety of different angles. According to LexisNexis State Net’s legislative tracking system, at least a dozen states have introduced legislation in the recent sessions that would provide funding for rural healthcare facilities and services. At least ten states have introduced bills that would provide incentives, such as income tax deductions and education loan forgiveness, for physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals that practice in rural locations.

An aspect of obtaining care that rural Texas faces is the availability and cost of connectivity infrastructure from internet service providers to customers. It is common across homes in rural Texas not to have broadband availability or, if they do, to cost disproportionately higher than in urban and suburban parts of the State. Sen Charles Perry has filed SB 377 to help address the overall funding challenge of the cost of expanding rural connectivity services.

Emma Jane Hopper
self, student
Austin, TX

I am a student at the University of Texas School of Law and a 6th generation Texas native. I'm opposed to the anti-DEI rider included in this bill that would cut funding to diversity initiatives in public higher education.

Diversity is incredibly important in higher education. The studies show that learning in diverse environments promote critical thinking, leading to better education and faster innovation. Exposure to the views and experiences of people from different cultures encourages empathy and emotional intelligence, both crucial to a functioning society. We would be moving in the wrong direction by defunding diversity initiatives. As someone who wants to stay in Texas and practice here after I graduate, I want more of my tax dollars going toward initiatives like these. The science shows it's the best move for our economy, the intelligence of the State, and the mental health of the people. This State should be dedicating far more resources to diversity initiatives in all forms of education, and I can tell you I wouldn't have developed enough critical thinking to make it to law school if I weren't exposed to a diverse range of cultural experiences different from my own throughout my education.

Jennifer Troell
Self, Company Administrator
New Braunfels, TX

Honorable Legislators:

I am commenting in support of the inclusion of funding for climate control in Texas prisons in HB 1. This is a humane and worthy consideration.

Thank you,
Jennifer Troell

Alice Min

Texas Students for DEI

Austin, TX

Hi! My name is Alice Min; I'm a Texas resident and I can against the anti-DEI rider on HB 1. I think the state should absolutely fund diversity and inclusion initiatives in education. I came to Texas to go to school at the University of Texas Law School because of the diverse communities in Texas. I want to learn from classmates with different backgrounds—people who grew up in rural areas or of different socio-economic statuses—and with different beliefs—of different religion. Cutting funding for diversity would mean that my classmates of different backgrounds—first generation law students and students with disabilities—would lose their support system. I have also spoken with students who are considering UT Law. They are concerned by the anti-DEI bills and anti-CRT bills. They want to learn in a state and at a public university that has academic freedom and a diverse student body. This rider will give us a second class education and cause people to leave Texas to search for better opportunities.

Caelan Mitchell-Bennett

Self/Law Student

Austin, TX

As a native Texan from the border and a current law student, I am extremely concerned with the implications of the anti-DEI stipulations present in this bill. Diversity initiatives at institutions of higher education are absolutely critical to what makes those institutions great. There is overwhelming evidence that diversity initiatives—like the ones this bill would cut—promote better learning. As a law student at Texas Law, I know that the study of law absolutely hinges on the collaboration and presence of a variety of viewpoints, backgrounds, and political orientations. Moreover, I have learned so much from students and teachers who have different beliefs, cultural backgrounds, and viewpoints than me. Texas Law is one of the best law schools in the country, mainly because it draws so many different viewpoints and hosts professors from many different backgrounds. That is why I decided to stay in my own state for law school. By cutting DEI initiatives at my university, you would cripple that which makes it great, and drive future students away. Texas is supposed to be the “land of the free.” But all I have seen recently is the Texas government cutting and banning things that make it great. The anti-DEI portions of this bill do just that.

Catherine Byrne

Texas Students for DEI

Austin, TX

Rider 186 would undercut a critical component of higher education. DEI programs provide resources for all students to understand their roles in fostering their future communities and careers. The programs create a framework for promoting fair treatment and participation by students of all backgrounds. In addition, these programs provide unique and important resources for students with backgrounds historically underrepresented in those institutions, including veterans, first generation student people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, women, low-income students, LGBTQIA students, religious minorities, and immigrants. The program is under the protections of the 14th Amendment and the US Constitution and its benefits far outweigh any costs found by this House.

Academic freedom is the freedom of faculty and students to pursue their work and studies without censorship, interference, or retaliation. This freedom is inherently threatened by Rider 186, as are the many benefits and resources provided by DEI programs. Act now to preserve these protections and the diversity of our higher education institutions.

James Cross

Self / retired teacher

CANYON LAKE, TX

House Appropriations Committee Hearing, March 23, 2023

Comments for HB 1 Bonnen

Article III

Public Education:

Due to the largest budget surplus in Texas history, The 88th Texas Legislature has the historic opportunity to fund public education as required by the Texas Constitution. The future of Texas depends on educating the future 21st century workforce in Texas. The Texas Legislature must prioritize funding for public education with a bold plan, Invest in Texas Children. The Invest in Texas Children Plan, if enacted, will help address some of the most critical problems facing our state's underfunded and under respected public education system by:

properly funding each student's education,
bolstering school safety and facilities,
reducing teacher shortages and recruiting new teachers to the profession,
raising teacher pay,
and ensuring we're treating our retired teachers with the respect and dignity they earned and deserve
The INVEST in TEXAS CHILDREN plan must include a 15 Billion Investment in 2024/2025 biannual budget:

Raise the Basic Student Allotment to Match Inflation to \$7,500 by 2025

Funding Public Education By Enrollment provides public school districts more financial certainty during the budget planning process

Respect Educators As Professionals Through Raising Salaries and Benefits:

1. \$7,000 pay raise in 2024
2. \$10,000 pay raise in 2025
3. No Increase Contributions to TRS from the current 8% contribution rate
4. Honor Commitment to Retired Educators through \$1 billion additional investment in TRS to improve HB 600 and a COLA of 6%, 4%, and 2% depending on their retirement year.

Fully funding the Invest in Texas Children Plan would finally increase funding for:

Teacher pay raise—to keep teachers in the education profession and recruit new teachers into the profession

School safety—enough with school shootings and unacceptable school buildings

Hiring more counselors—mental well being of students and career planning instead of counselors being responsible for STAAR tests

Smaller classes mean more personalized, targeted learning advancement, and developing positive teacher/student/parent professional relationships

Improving school facilities for the 21st century

Alejandra Martorell, Ms.

self

Austin, TX

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is a framework [not an ideology and not a bias]. It promotes fair treatment and full participation for everyone within institutions. DEI programs create unique resources for those from backgrounds historically underrepresented in those institutions, including: veterans, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities [together not a minority at all], women, first generation college students, working class or poor people, religious minorities, LGBTQIA+ folks, and immigrants. DEI programs also provide resources for all to understand their roles in fostering inclusive institutions for everyone and function under the protection of the 14th Amendment to the US Constitution. It is imperative we protect and continue to uphold the principles and objectives of DEI.

Lily Odekirk

Self, Graduate Student at UT Austin

Austin, TX

As an educator and graduate student at UT Austin, I believe deeply that Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion are critical to maintaining academic freedom and safety for all students. It creates a community where individuals can learn, express themselves, and engage with a wide range of perspectives.

Caley Chase

Self

Austin, TX

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is a framework for promoting fair treatment and full participation for all within institutions. DEI programs provide resources for all to understand their roles in fostering inclusive institutions for everyone and function under the protection of the 14th amendment.

SCOTT CALLAWAY

SELF/RETIRED

New Braunfels, TX

If you are going to be radical, don't follow Gov. Abbott's lead down the rat hole; be radical for the good of the kids in public education. Pay the teachers more, provide better facilities, ensure adequate funding for retired teachers' pensions, don't bleed the public system dry so that so-called private entrepreneurial education "experts" take taxpayer dollars and put them in their private pockets instead of into the education of our children. We have seen that happen in other states and in some cases here in Texas. Incentivize good education that every parent can be proud to send their kids to; don't weaponize the Republican Party's culture war to ruin Texas public education.

Emma Watkins

self

Austin, TX

As a graduate student and educator at the University of Texas at Austin, I believe firmly that Diversity, Equity and Inclusion is an essential framework for promoting fair treatment and full participation for all within institutions. DEI programs create unique resources for those from backgrounds historically underrepresented in those institutions, including veterans, people with disabilities, racial and ethnic minorities, LGBTQIA+ folks, working class or poor people, women, first generation college students, and immigrants. DEI programs are essential to provide resources for everyone to understand their role in fostering inclusive environments.

Renita James

Myself

Austin, TX

As a student of the University of Texas, I find it egregious that my education (at a highly competitive R1 University) is being jeopardized because of few politicians playing games. There is no harm in creating an opportunity for everyone to learn about each other. We deserve the freedom of education (all education), we deserve to see ourselves and our history reflecting in education, and we deserve the freedom of discourse.

Milda Scott

Self, retired

Cibolo, TX

Right now we have the historic chance to better fund public education for our kids and the future of Texas. The Texas Constitution requires this, and we call on you to no longer shirk your responsibility to fully provide a free and full public education for our students. Why bother enticing businesses to set up shop in Texas if we do not prepare our children well to compete for the best jobs those businesses bring? Why can't the huge Texas economy support public schools that prepare our own children to take part in it? It's embarrassing that our schools are not among the highest funded in the country! The Texas Legislature must prioritize funding for public education and address some of the most critical problems facing our state's underfunded public education system by:

properly funding each student's education,

reducing teacher shortages and recruiting new teachers to the profession by respecting their education and craft,

raising teacher pay,

and ensuring we're treating our retired teachers with the dignity they earned

I believe in the INVEST in TEXAS CHILDREN plan, which calls for a 15 Billion Investment in 2024/2025 biannual budget:

Raise the Basic Student Allotment to Match Inflation to \$7,500 by 2025

Funding Public Education By Enrollment provides public school districts more financial certainty during the budget planning process

Respect Educators As Professionals Through Raising Salaries and Benefits:

1. \$7,000 pay raise in 2024

2. \$10,000 pay raise in 2025

3. No Increase Contributions to TRS from the current 8% contribution rate

4. Honor Commitment to Retired Educators through \$1 billion additional investment in TRS to improve HB 600 and a COLA of 6%, 4%, and 2% depending on their retirement year.

Fully funding the Invest in Texas Children Plan would finally increase funding for:

Teacher pay raise-to keep teachers in the education profession and recruit new teachers into the profession

Hiring more counselors—mental well being of students and career planning instead of counselors being responsible for STAAR tests

Smaller classes mean more personalized, targeted learning advancement, and developing positive teacher/student/parent professional relationships

Improving school facilities for the 21st century

Thank you for your consideration.

Gwynn Marotta

Self

Austin, TX

I am strongly against the anti DEI rider attached to HB 1. Diversity in education has benefitted me in many ways. Having professors and classmates that were from different backgrounds than myself helped me to approach topics from different perspectives and led to a more representative and complete learning environment. I believe that diversity in education helps everyone to become more thoughtful and empathetic people.

Anngail Smith

Self retired

New Braunfels, TX

Our children, 44 year old twins, attended public schools and Texas colleges (UT/TAMU). They received outstanding educations. This must be allowed to continue and- due to the largest budget surplus in Texas history, we have the historic opportunity to fund public education full and completely, not just buildings but teachers! There is no doubt that future of Texas depends on educating the future 21st century workforce in Texas. The Texas Legislature must prioritize funding for public education with a bold plan, Invest in Texas Children. The Invest in Texas Children Plan, if enacted, will help address some of the most critical problems facing our state's underfunded and under respected public education system by:

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Annalee Jeffress

Self

Austin, TX

I am a lifelong Texan and I am currently a student at a public university in Texas. I am writing to oppose the anti-DEI rider in this bill that would cut funding to diversity initiatives in public higher education institutions. Diversity was something that was important to me when deciding between universities I wanted to attend. Having diverse experiences and backgrounds among my professors and peers has only enhanced my education. A lack of diversity was unattractive when I was looking at prospective educational institutions. Diversity among faculty and my peers has helped prepare me for the professional world in which I will encounter and interact with people who differ from myself. A lack of diversity within a higher education institution does not help prepare students for the professional world they will be in beyond graduation. Cutting funding to diversity initiatives would be to the detriment of Texas students and public higher education in the state.

Becky Stich

self

NEW BRAUNFELS, TX

House Appropriations Committee Hearing, March 23, 2023

Comments for HB 1 Bonnen

Article III

Public Education:

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Improving school facilities for the 21st century

Laura Cannon

self-retired teacher-grandparent of child in public school

New Braunfels, TX

I am a retired teacher who taught for 41 years in public schools in Texas. I am currently tutoring in a public school and I have a grandchild in public school. I believe in public schools and their importance to the future of Texas!

Due to the largest budget surplus in Texas history, The 88th Texas Legislature has the historic opportunity to fund public education as required by the Texas Constitution. The future of Texas depends on educating the future 21st century workforce in Texas. The Texas Legislature must prioritize funding for public education with a bold plan, Invest in Texas Children. The Invest in Texas Children Plan, if enacted, will help address some of the most critical problems facing our state's underfunded and under respected public education system by:

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Improving school facilities for the 21st century

There is a crisis brewing with a teacher shortage in Texas and this needs to be addressed NOW! Laura Cannon

Kim Farlow

Self, Retired Public School Teacher

New Braunfels, TX

Honorable House Appropriations Committee Members:

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Sincerely,

Kim Farlow,

Retired Teacher

Comal ISD

Sue Wilson, LMSW

Texas Silver-Haired Legislature, Chair of Legislative Action Committee

Austin, TX

The 19th Texas Silver-Haired Legislature urges the 88th Texas Legislature to continue funding the D K Royal TX ALZHEIMER'S INITIATIVE at its current or at an increased level for the biennial budget.

The DKR Texas Alzheimer's Research and Caring Consortium (TARCC) Initiative, a special funded item under the University of Texas at Austin is an important collaborative research effort that includes Baylor College of Medicine, Texas Tech University Health Science Center, University of North Texas Health Science Center, University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston, University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston, University of Texas Dell Medical Center, Texas A&M Health Science Center, and the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley.

The well characterized TARCC research cohort contains longitudinal clinical neuropsychiatric, neuropsychological, genetic, and blood biomarker data on more than 3600 participants diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease (AD), mild cognitive impairment (MCI) and healthy aging controls. This rich data enables TARCC investigators to study a wide array of topics including disease models, biomarkers that may aid in diagnosis, model changes in cognitive function over time, allow identification of factors that affect not only risk but also disease progression in a demographically diverse sample, study caregiver support, and conduct valuable proteomic studies of dementia.

The state funded effort, named in honor and memory of iconic Texas football coach, Darrell K Royal, is unique in the nation and has greatly increased Texas' capacity to advance research and discovery to improve early diagnosis, treatment, and prevention of Alzheimer's disease.

Linda Montgomery

Self

Canyon Lake, TX

House Appropriations Committee Hearing, March 23, 2023

Comments for HB 1 Bonnen

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•

Improving school facilities for the 21st century

James Keown

Self

Garden Ridge, TX

Texas does not lead the nation in public education. The actions being taken by this committee will only drive Texas further down. You need to step up and adequately fund public schools. Providing vouchers to fund private schools will take away from public schools. I am like most folks and don't particularly like more taxes, however, I realize that if our society and state is to progress, the funding of our schools is necessary. The governor brags about how business friendly this state is. However, many businesses before they relocate their employees look at the state of public education.

I wish for once you would do the right thing instead of the popular thing for a few people.

Theresa Regan

Self - retired IT professional

New Braunfels, TX

I am a mother of two adults who were educated in Texas public schools, and I am grateful for their education. Public education is hugely important, and a foundational principle of citizen-building in the U.S. and in Texas. With the budget surplus that Texas has right now, the time is right to start improving public schools in the state. Higher salaries for teachers are needed in order to keep good teachers and encourage young people to consider teaching a viable career choice in the future. We need a greater allotment per child to keep up with increased costs due to inflationary pressures on everything, including infrastructure maintenance.

Neglecting the education of our children does a disservice to all employers in the state who need well-educated employees. Shifting the burden of educating children to their parents via private school tuition, or to for-profit charter schools via vouchers will only weaken the public school system and advantage wealthier Texans over those of lower means. One of the best features of public schools is that it gives equal chances to children of all backgrounds.

Please pass this bill.

Thanks,
Theresa Regan

Emmaleigh Toto
Self, Classroom Teacher
San Marcos, TX

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Improving school facilities for the 21st century.

Hearing Date: March 23, 2023 8:00 AM

Dora Ibarra, RN

Nursing Home: Veranda Rehabilitation and Healthcare

Weslaco, TX

am writing to ask the House Appropriations Committee to appropriate the necessary funding (appx. \$40 Million GR) in SB 30 to maintain the temporary emergency rate increase for nursing facilities through Fiscal Year 2023 in response to the expiration of the federally approved public health emergency on May 11, 2023.

Unless action is taken to include this request in the supplemental budget, nursing facilities across Texas would lose an estimated \$100 million dollars in revenue between May and August 2023. The rate add-on has become a critical and necessary funding source as the cost of care has increased dramatically since the pandemic, at an average of over \$40 per patient per day. The impact of COVID-19, an unprecedented workforce shortage and record-high inflation have compounded the financial challenges facing our nursing facilities.

Patricia Stankovich

Self

Anna, TX

The Texas Legislature must continue to protect and expand the Alternatives to Abortion program to meet Texans' increased need after the reversal of Roe v. Wade. As a Pro-Life Texan, I respectfully ask you to sustain this program through the rest of this fiscal year by funding it at \$25 million in the supplemental budget, Senate Bill 30.

Since Roe was overturned, the program has seen a 40% increase in services provided to women. Because of this increase, Alternatives to Abortion will run out of money by June 2023. The resources this program provides are critical to ensuring Texas women are not pressured into seeking out-of-state or illegal abortions.

Every single day, pregnancy resource centers, adoption agencies, and maternity homes provide both tangible and social services to truly assist women and children. Texas is Pro-Life and we want women to know they are not alone when they choose Life for their babies. Please fund Alternatives to Abortion at \$25 million in the supplemental budget.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Michele Herrera

Self

Universal City, TX

I am 51 year old Latina and native Texan. Texas has always been a place where minorities felt a sense of belonging due to the diversity. If Texas does not support DEI, then the future minorities will lose a chance for young minorities to feel welcomed in Texas

Izabella De la Garza

Self

Austin, TX

As a Government and Mexican American and Latina/o Studies undergraduate student involved with the Multicultural Engagement Center at UT Austin, I could not disagree with the proposal to ban using state funds for DEI programs more. I am Latina and these programs have made me feel more comfortable in college. College in Austin was a different environment for me and I found solace in DEI programs, which welcomed me. Prohibiting state funding would limit what they can do and the beneficial impact they have for marginalized people on college campuses. I am asking you to please reconsider this, and consider the consequences of not having DEI programs instead. Losing DEI will not be worth it. It will do more harm than good. If you care about the experiences of marginalized people on campuses, you will not ban funding for DEI programs nor use funding to harm them. Thank you.

Jason Herrera

Self

Universal City, TX

Our country is built on diversity, equity, and inclusion so why would our state want to take funding away from higher ed DEI?? This is not acceptable to those programs who rely on such funding to advocate for their beliefs. All Texans have should have rights to advocate and speak up for what they believe in. We cannot take away the advocacy and sharing of information from all Texans at public higher ed. Keep the funding for DEI in higher ed.

Gary Meier

Meier and Associates

Spring, TX

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Patti Brockman
Self
Colleyville, TX

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mary Spivey, Administrator/Nurse
Legacy at Town Creek SWLTC
Athens, TX

Nursing facilities are still facing Staffing crisis created as a result of the recommendations,for safety and regulations imposed during the pandemic. Additional expenses for ppe & wages, in addition to bonuses & Agency staffing costs have resulted in a huge financial burden in NF. All future appropriation considerations should factor in those remaining burdens and the impact on care and services to the vulnerable demographic we are charged with caring for.

It is our duty to consider the ongoing impact to ensure the safety and not cause a regressing of the quality measures we have gained in long term care over the past 20 years. We cannot go backwards to the Nursing Homes of the past and to ensure we can maintain and improve we must have the funding to do so.

Virginia Losoya, Mrs.
Self
San Antonio, TX

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Thank you for your time and consideration.

Melanie Mooney
Self - Certified Dietary Manager
Palestine, TX

**OUR SENIORS NEED DAILY HEALTH CARE AVAILABLE
OUR COMMUNITIES NEED JOBS AFFORDED BY LONG TERM HEALTH CARE**