

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Youth Health & Safety, Select
For HB 1819

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Hearing Date: March 27, 2023 2:30 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Taylor Trevino
self (organizer)
Austin, TX

I urge the legislature to support this bill. This bill would reduce the harmful criminalization of Texas children. Additionally, curfews tend to disproportionately target Black and brown youth, perpetuating the system of discrimination, criminalization, and marginalization that they face. There are many other solutions for child safety that are more effective, that don't result in fines for minors and their families and that keep children out of the criminal justice system. Please support Texas youth by supporting this bill.

Anne Gebhart
Self -- Homemaker
Bedford, TX

I'm Anne Gebhart. I'm writing in favor of HB1819. I'm representing myself.

I am a member of the SREC, & have been a political activist since 2008 when I began leading efforts against juvenile curfews.

This bill corrects an unacceptable restriction of liberty on our youth, & restores the rights of parents to direct their kids' activities.

This bill recognizes & addresses the problems with Juvenile Curfews, which make the act of being in public a crime equivalent to other Class C Misdemeanors such as public intoxication, shoplifting, simple assault, & indecent exposure.

Juvenile curfews instantly criminalize a large portion of the population whose only "crime" is being (or looking) young and being out of the house, and they are an end-run around due process by making the very act of being out in public a crime, even if there is no evidence that crime has been committed, is being committed, or will soon will be committed. The crime is being in public.

Curfews distract officers from real crimes by making every juvenile out in public a possible suspect. An officer only has to establish that 1) an individual looks young and 2) he is out in public. No real crime has to be committed other than the crime of being outside the house.

There are already laws on the books that deal with actual crimes, and we should use our law enforcement resources to target actual criminals with the laws that we have in place.

Curfews have come under fire for being vaguely worded, overly broad, and often have a host of "defenses to prosecution." Most juveniles in public are not outside for the purpose of committing crimes, and we shouldn't use a broad law such as a curfew to penalize a community of good kids to go after a few bad actors.

Two articles which make my points:

"Effectiveness of Juvenile Curfews at Crime Prevention," "An analysis of 10 empirical studies of the impact of curfew laws failed to support the argument that curfews reduce crime and criminal victimization. The studies consistently found no change in crime linked to curfews."

"The Truth About the Curfew Myth", by the National League of Cities states, "A voluminous body of research has cast strong doubts on the claims that juvenile curfew laws prevent victimization or reduce juvenile crime, but these findings have received scant attention from policy makers or police."

"Cities Keep Enforcing Curfews for Teens, Despite Evidence They Don't Stop Crime," (time.com) states, "While it may sound like a common sense idea to get kids home and off the streets at night, researchers say that there is no evidence that curfews reduce crime. And community leaders worry that increasing police contact with teens from disadvantaged communities, especially Black teens could lead to more arrests—and more kids being roped into the criminal justice system for minor infractions."

Do you believe that every youth out in public is a potential trouble-maker?
If your answer is "no", please support HB 1819.

Katy Jackson, Councilperson
City of Rockport
Rockport, TX

I am against HB1819. The City of Rockport recently voted in a continuance of the Juvenile Curfew Ordinance in Rockport, TX with two public hearings with one dissenting opinion from the public and 5-0 voting by the Council on the first and second reading.

Truancy is defined, in short, as 10 or more days or parts of days of unexcused absences in a six month period in the same school year.

Repealing juvenile curfews during school hours seems to remove a valuable tool from police, school districts and parents/guardians.

An objective of a policing entity is to stop behavior which may lead to worse behavior. A habitual daytime curfew offender may be expelled from school with all the ramifications of not completing school, but early intervention may have stopped the behavior before expulsion could have occurred.

If a child, who is supposed to be attending school is out and about, a curfew violation may be just the thing to stop future curfew violations or worse, keep the child in school and, most importantly, alert the child's parents or guardian so corrective action can be taken at home. If it becomes known the child is skipping school because of abuse at home, other mechanisms come into play and a child may be removed from an abusive situation, receive the help the child desperately needs and the offender may be charged and, hopefully, convicted of a form of child abuse.

We have all heard stories of children who have been arrested and booked for some criminal violation who then have the most important "ah ha" moment of their life, change their ways and become upstanding citizens. A majority of these stories are true! This come to Jesus moment is not only for school age children. I used it many times while serving in the United States Navy to save a Sailor from being called to Captain's Mast or Court Martial.

The Rockport Police Department and the Rockport-Fulton Independent School District work together to make sure our children are in school or another approved activity during school hours.

Why remove a valuable tool from the hands of law enforcement, school districts and parents or guardians? Early intervention can lead to a model citizen instead of child who goes down the slippery slope to being a criminal.

The City Council of Rockport, TX is opposed to the prohibition of juvenile curfews and HB1819.