

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Homeland Security & Public Safety  
For HB 2650

Compiled on: Tuesday, April 11, 2023 6:46 PM

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Hearing Date: April 11, 2023 2:00 PM - or upon final adjourn./recess or bill referral if permission granted

Melissa Prentice  
Self/Bay Area Turning Point  
Webster, TX

Thank you Members of the House Homeland Security and Public Safety Committee for hearing testimony on the subject continuing the Sexual Assault Survivors' Task Force (SASTF) and establishing a mandatory training program for Texas peace officers. My name is Melissa Prentice. I am the Outreach, Education, and Prevention Manager for Bay Area Turning Point in Webster, TX, a member of the Texas Association Against Sexual Assault (TAASA) Survivor and Advisory Board, member of the Safety Planning Working Group for the SASTF, and Chairperson for the Survivor-Centered Working Group for the SASTF. I am also a survivor of sexual assault urging you to support House Bill 2650 continuing the SASTF providing Texas law enforcement the tools necessary to understand the unique dynamics that exist in child sexual abuse and adult sexual assault investigations. The SASTF has made impactful policy recommendations to strengthen laws on sexual violence. In the 87th legislative session, the SASTF made 11 policy recommendations, all of which were passed. The task force must be continued in order to further enhance sexual assault legislation to protect survivors and hold accountable offenders and systems working with survivors. Currently, 2 out of 3 sexual assaults go unreported. Texas is in the process of strengthening legislation to increase sexual assault reports and holding offenders accountable by creating more trauma-informed and survivor-centered policies. This bill would require law enforcement officers to participate in a trauma-informed training regarding child and adult sexual violence cases in order to employ best practices when working these sensitive and unique cases. This section of the Basic Peace Officer training has been reviewed and revised by survivors and other professionals in the field to make the investigation process less traumatizing for the survivors. This training reduces the likelihood of victim-blaming which is a major reason survivors do not want to report sexual assaults. The training program includes best practices and trauma-informed response techniques to recognize, investigate, and document child and adult sexual abuse cases.

Thank you for hearing my testimony. Please reach out to me with any questions. I can be reached at [mprentice@bayareeturningpoint.com](mailto:mprentice@bayareeturningpoint.com) or 281-338-7600 ext 2131.

Sincerely,  
Melissa Prentice  
Outreach, Education, and Prevention Manager  
Bay Area Turning Point, Inc.

Jessica Trudeau  
Center for Transforming Lives  
Fort Worth, TX

Public Comment  
Jessica Trudeau, MPH  
Center for Transforming Lives Chief Transformation Officer

I am writing in support of HB2650. As a provider of services for elevated risk children and families, we find that children and adults who are responded to after experiencing sexual assault are often retraumatized. This bill will support children and adults in healing from assault.