

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

Submitted to the Committee on Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence

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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.

COMMENTS FOR HB 4623 by Little

Patricia Cummings

Self

Lorena, TX

I support this bill.

Stephanie Morris

Self-stay-at-home mom, abuse survivor, and parent

San Antonio, TX

Abuse in various forms has alarmingly increased over the past 20 years, leaving lasting scars on children. Educators must prioritize the safety of their students, yet far too often, abuse is hidden or dismissed. The consequences are serious: children who suffer from abuse face heightened risks of mental health issues, suicide, and substance abuse in their later lives. It is essential that proper support systems are in place to combat these effects, but many children are deprived of that support.

Despite a staggering \$1 billion allocated for school safety, funding for the support and rehabilitation of abuse victims is woefully inadequate. Texas has become a notorious hotspot for educator abuse, and this is unacceptable. Parents should not have to navigate arduous processes or face legal obstacles to seek justice and answers for their children.

We demand accountability from educators for their actions, and we insist that children and parents have access to the rights and resources they deserve. It is imperative to amend the Civil Practices and Remedies Code and Education Code to ensure robust protection for children and to support those who have endured abuse. We will no longer tolerate inaction in the face of such a serious crisis.

We must implement a stricter hiring process to ensure that anyone who has been accused or suspected of abuse is barred from working with children. Consider for a moment what you would demand if it were your child in question. Imagine sending your child off to school each day only to discover that the very people we trust with their care are abusing or mistreating them. When we raise these concerns or seek answers, too often we encounter roadblocks, excuses, and gaslighting. This is completely unacceptable—not just in Texas, but everywhere. We must take action to address the failures in this system and restore trust and safety within Texas schools.

Diane Schexnyder
Self/Retired
ATLANTA, TX

My name is Diane Schexnyder, and I'm a concerned citizen from Atlanta, Cass County, Texas. I'm writing to strongly support HB 4623 by Rep. Little, which holds public schools and employees accountable for sexual misconduct and other injuries to students. This bill is urgently needed due to the rising tide of educator sexual misconduct in Texas over the last five years. It's unacceptable that students suffer while schools hide behind immunity. HB 4623 ensures justice, protects our kids, and delivers consequences for predators. Please advance this bill swiftly to safeguard our children. Thank you!

Andra Haney
CKKC, self
Fair Oaks Ranch, TX

I totally support HB 4623. Please vote in favor of this bill.

Melanie Barrios Jones
Self
Frisco, TX

We are sorely in need of justice for our students who are abused in the public school system and an avenue for families to seek strong judicial outcomes. Our special needs population is also the most vulnerable and protections are necessary and long overdue!

Aimee Boots
Self
Melissa, TX

I strongly support this bill.

Jennifer Smith
Probably Problematic Podcast
Longview, TX

X

Esperanza HOPE Catchpole
Self
Prosper, TX

Protect our children from ISD professionals and all employees from inquiry to children. Children FIRST.

Debbie Wolgemuth, Ms
Self, Accounting
Waco, TX

SUPPORT - It's April 7 and there already been 40 sexual public school predators announced in Texas. This ruins a child for life. Any school employee who injures a child should be accountable and subject to lawsuits.

Ken Kelley
self
Amarillo, TX

Texas students deserve to be protected from sexual predators by all means available. School boards and administrators have the power to keep those students safe and if they fail that mission then there must be consequences.

Asha Petrich
N/A
Temple, TX

I support holding schools and their employees civilly liable for abuse of students. Lawmakers must add harsher consequences for schools and their employees who violate the public's trust and our children's wellbeing. Parents need greater recourse and victims need greater justice. The consequences for such should be so great that predators are deterred, and schools wouldn't even think of concealing or harboring them.

Richie Grant
Arklatex Assessment
Texarkana, TX

Please pass This thru committee. As an educator I am for it

Phil Casali
self
Point, TX

support

Kandi Holmes
Self-Homemaker
Prosper, TX

Adults are the paid responsible party for our children in schools. They should be accountable for protecting them.

Angie Turnbull
Self
Prosper, TX

I support this bill! Thank you, Mitch Little.

Rob Reece
ROB REECE
Irving, TX

I'm in favor of this bill, please vote yes for this bill. Accountability is important!

Deborah Arnett
Precinct 1059 Dallas
Dallas, TX

In Favor. Protecting our children is of the utmost importance.

Shelimetra Davis
Self currently unemployed
Dallas, TX

In favor

Autumn McCall, Precinct Chair #4031
DCRP Precinct Chair #4032
Dallas, TX

Please pass this bill! Children need to be protected from evil people harming them..teachers, staff, or otherwise!!

Melissa Beckett
Self
Longview, TX

Please vote yes for HB4623 making public schools and their employees civically liable for certain injuries to students. Our public schools have proven time and time again that they are not interested in protecting children, they are interested in protecting their reputation which results in coverups and gaslighting of parents/children with legitimate claims of harm/abuse. The education system in Texas should not be a shield for predators or bad actors. The safety of children should always be protected. TEA records show a shocking 6,888 reports of sexual and violent misconduct perpetrated by school employees on students. Historically Texas has stepped up to protect children when their lives are in danger; this is one of those times. Please protect our children from predators and abusive adults. Currently, school districts and their employees enjoy "sovereign" or "governmental immunity" from lawsuits and liability for personal injury caused by their negligence or intentionally harmful acts--a terrible injustice. Parents whose children have been abused and irreparably harmed, are shocked to learn that the state of Texas protects predators and bad actors from being personally liable for abusing school children..Allowing victims of these severe abuses to access civil remedies would significantly deter predators and bad actors from our schools. Without stronger legal deterrents, sexual and physical abuse of students will continue. Please vote Yes to protect children in our public schools.

Kristie Rutledge, Ms.
Self
Rockport, TX

Chairman and Committee Members,

I am writing to support HB 4623 by Rep. Mitch Little because this bill removes governmental immunity from school employees who fail to protect students by timely reporting suspicion of sexual abuse of students. The legislature must pass the strongest legislation possible to end the practice of sweeping sexual abuse of students under the rug. A report by Texas Education 911 details more than 6,600 cases of child abuse in Texas schools were rarely reported to law enforcement. Even worse, many school employees retained their licenses to teach and remained eligible for employment in other school districts. By requiring timely reporting to law enforcement and removing governmental immunity, this creates opportunities for school employees and districts to be held liable. There must be an incentive for school districts to stop the practice of passing the trash to the next school district. School employees who prey on students must be liable and school districts who put more students at risk from known predators must be liable.

Because many school districts contract with family planning clinics, federally qualified health clinics, and invite guest speakers to teach sex education, human trafficking, healthy relationships, substance abuse, and child abuse, this bill should expand the definition in Section 118(2) to include “any contractor, guest speaker, or community health agency”. Because presentations discuss topics of sexual activity, healthy relationships and child abuse, often times students feel they can disclose abuse to the school district’s contractors. School districts must be liable for guest speakers they contract with who serve as non-employee substitute teachers or non-employee health providers.

I strongly support HB 4623 and recommend language to strengthen it and provide further protection for victims of sexual abuse.

Louie Jenkins
self, retired
Dallas, TX

I support this bill to protect our kids!

Sean O'Leary
Self Consultant
Dallas, TX

Can't allow employes to hide behind qualified immunity - personal liability is necessary to deter and punish egregious behavior. Taxpayers should not be liable, however.

Dawn Guerriero
PC 3011
Dallas, TX

In favor

Janie Brittain
Self
Garland, TX

I strongly support HB 4630. Please vote in favor of this bill.

Lincoln Achilli
Self
Dallas, TX

With each passing day it seems that a new headline about faculty being involved in inappropriate sexual relations with students, or passivity when students are being assaulted by other students. When parents bring these issues to the attention of the school boards, in some cases the school boards shield employees or cover up the harms. Schools should be places of safety for students, yet increasingly appears as though the students encounter more violence in schools, especially public schools, then they do on the street. This is unacceptable given the size of the check tax payers have to write to keep these institutions open. No public employee who covers up or participates in such activity should ever be shielded from liability simply because the entity permitting or committing crimes against student happens to be a school district. School districts are currently some of the least publicly accountable entities in our state. Our tax payers deserve the ability to see accountability and, where appropriate, justice from actions brought by parents against districts, faculty, and administrators when their negligence leads to harm of their child. I recommend passage of this bill.

Kristen Bickham, Mrs.
None
Carrollton, TX

Dear Representatives,

I'm writing to respectfully urge you to support HB 4623 by Rep. Mitch Little. This bill is essential to holding schools accountable when they fail to report or respond to abuse. Every child deserves to be safe in the classroom—and every family deserves justice when they are failed by the system.

Thank you for joining us in this fight. Let's make sure no child slips through the cracks.

Sincerely,

Kristen J. Bickham
Dallas GOP
Precinct Chair #2410

Janelle Davis
Self/Attorney
Celina, TX

This bill is essential to protect children in Texas public schools. As the law stands now, if a child is abused by an adult, they have civil remedies to try to seek justice and some accountability to address the irreparable harm done to the child UNLESS the person who abuses them is an employee of a Texas public school. If a child is abused by an employee of a school, there is no due process, no accountability, and no justice. These individuals are protected by several legal immunities that make it nearly impossible for the victim to seek justice. Schools know this and they have refused to shore up their hiring practices through stronger background checks, better training, and swift action when abuse does happen. Instead, they investigate themselves, allow the perpetrators to resign in lieu of termination, and handle the matter internally without transparency to the public. Prosper ISD is a perfect example of this. They did not even notify parents whose children had been in close contact with a known pedophile for an entire year. There must be justice for these victims and HB4623 is a common sense solution to a growing problem in Texas public schools. This bill should receive unanimous bipartisan support.

Ally Raskin, Mrs
Self
Dallas, TX

This is a common sense bill to protect our children

Sharon Clark
Self
Coppell, TX

We need to eliminate the immunity for schools and prosecute those who failed to report abuse!

Laura Giles
Self
Lucas, TX

Today school districts suffer no consequences of bad hires. This bill will bring consequences to individuals who choose to harm children. I fully support this bill!

Kayla Sollars, Mrs.
Self-Homemaker
McKinney, TX

Please vote in favor of HB4623. My son (who has numerous special needs) was abused by school staff, including principals and teachers, and they have hid behind their "sovereign immunity" and tried to hide documentation from myself and my husband, and were less than forthcoming with McKinney Police. McKinney police detective did send two of the assaults on our special needs son to the grand jury, yet the school district maintains "no bullying occurred" and there werent any incidents for us to be notified about. Our son, who is high functioning autistic/ADHD/etc sustained a concussion, was denied medical care at school, and was denied the ability to call me, his mother after he asked to do so 3 times. The retaliation our family incurred due to me filing grievances on these outrageous behaviors has been even more appalling. Sadly, the school districts seem to enjoy inflicting pain on any parent or student who stands up for the truth that the district would rather hide. This needs to end NOW. Every single child deserves to be able to attend school without being assaulted, the fear of being assaulted, being denied medical care, or special needs services, etc. There MUST be accountability. We pay way too much in property taxes for our public schools to be failing this badly, not just in terms of academics, but in the fact that there is no transparency. Just in McKinney ISD in the past two years, a convicted sex offender was intentionally allowed into my younger son's kindergarten graduation against his parole and state law, my oldest son was assaulted and denied medical care, and then searched and berated/humiliated by principals in front of peers because of his disabilities, a school bus "went off course" with a bus load of children from McKinney to Allen, TX with a bus driver with numerous aliases potentially kidnapping students and trying to downplay the incident, a little girl was sexual assaulted by a school bus driver in neighboring Prosper, TX, and now a sexual assault on the boys soccer team at McKinney Boyd High school is also being downplayed by the school board. Student safety is the last thing on the school board's minds and parents are left with nowhere to find justice for their children who have been abused by school district personnel. This is absolutely unacceptable. Why are we not doing everything in our power to protect our children!? There MUST be accountability for those who harm innocent children, including school personnel. I fear that the way the current school environment is, that schools have become soft targets to abuse children, as school employees know that they can get away with pretty much anything at this point, thanks to the law being the way it currently is. This must change immediately to keep our children safe and deter horrible human beings who want to hurt children from being in close contact with innocent, vulnerable children at a place where they should feel safe, and SHOULD be able to trust the adults-SCHOOL!

Kelli Kell
Kayla Sollars
Weatherford, TX

Schools should be held to the same disciplinary actions as anyone else under investigation for abuse!

Summer Elliott
self
Azle, TX

As a mom of 2 Texas students, I strongly support HB 4623. Parents deserve the right to hold schools accountable when our children are harmed due to negligence. Protecting students must be the priority—not shielding institutions from responsibility.

Rachael Abell
Texas PTA
Grapevine, TX

Texas PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. HB 4623 undermines that mission by diverting critical resources away from classrooms and into courtrooms.

HB 4623 would expose school districts—and, by extension, local taxpayers—to costly litigation, even in cases where the district followed all policies and took appropriate action. It removes long standing legal protections that currently allow schools to dismiss unfounded claims early in the legal process. As a result, districts may be forced to spend millions defending against lawsuits instead of investing in student learning and support.

Misconduct by individuals is already subject to both civil and criminal penalties. Schools are already held accountable when they are deliberately indifferent. This bill goes further—making taxpayers liable for actions no one knew about or had the opportunity to prevent.

HB 4623 does not add new protections for students. It simply shifts the burden to local communities, threatening educational resources and doing nothing to prevent misconduct. For these reasons, Texas PTA opposes HB 4623.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mary Alexander
Self (Parent/Registered Nurse, MSN Clinical Nurse Educator)
Collinsville, TX

Countless children and families have been harmed both physically and emotionally by teachers and school administrative staff in the State of Texas. My own daughter was groomed and brainwashed by one of her male high school teachers in Tioga ISD over the course of at least two years around her 16th birthday without our knowledge. Our daughter ran away from home 36hours after her high school graduation and moved in with the teacher. Since then, she has estranged herself from me, my husband her stepfather and our extended family. To this day, she refuses our phone calls and other attempts to communicate. Unfortunately, after seeking legal counsel and going through a painfully long and expensive Grievance Process where evidence was presented to the school board of directors and the Superintendent and Principal that proved the teacher violated multiple ethical and behavioral standards, Administration at the school refused to fire said teacher because it would have been too expensive for them (\$30,000); concurrently, the District was going through major financial challenges and had received multiple annual "F" scores from TEA for their financial performance. Ultimately, the teacher resigned. We have no recourse other than to sue the teacher civilly. The teacher and the Administrators at the school who were aware of the situation while it was ongoing and who failed to inform me, her mother, have gotten away scott free even with having filed complaints against them with the TEA. Due to Texas teachers and administrators having Sovereign Immunity, there is nothing we can do. I have to live with the fact that I may never see my daughter, my one and only child, again due to the grooming behavior of the teacher and the absolute failure of the school staff and administrators to report the teacher to CPS, TEA and to me. This has been the absolute WORST experience of my and my husband's lives and I pray no one else ever has to endure the pain, suffering and mental anguish that I, my husband and the rest of our family has been through. Please pass this bill. School districts, teachers and admin staff MUST be held accountable or their injurious acts will only continue. That should include EMOTIONAL injuries in addition to physical. Thank you.

George Shake
Howland Shake Law, LLP
Dallas, TX

For 35 years I have been working with children in a variety of settings, including 15 years as a school psychologist. For the past 12 years, as an attorney I have been representing students. I regularly encounter school administrators who behave as if there will never be any accountability for employees misconduct towards students. It is egregious that a child who is assaulted by a teacher will very rarely receive the support of the school, law enforcement, or courts because of the near total immunity ENJOYED by public schools and their employees in these cases. This cannot stand. Please protect our children. Thank you.

Katherine Winniford
self non-profit administrator
Dallas, TX

Please vote in support of this important bill that will protect children from inappropriate actions by persons in schools and allow parents full access to information that affects their children. Parents should be able to have full trust in the treatment of their precious children by those within the school systems across the State of Texas. Failure to share lapses of proper care constitute guilt by association for failure to report violations with parents and legal authorities. Children are the treasure of families and the future of our nation, and so must be protected. Parents are the ones with the greatest motivation to protect their own children from deviant influences.

Aaron mcgrue, Student
The Jack Brewer Foundation
Grand Prairie, TX

There are laws, and while they serve a purpose, we must not forget that there is a higher moral authority—a God in heaven who observes human life and urges us to embrace empathy. The laws crafted to grant government immunity are fundamentally flawed and disrespectful, as God's law states that no one is above the law, for He is the creator of both law and life.

I urge you to imagine yourself in the shoes of one of these victims, or even as a concerned parent. It's crucial to recognize that these laws have become inadequate, and we must turn back to principles grounded in divine wisdom. We need to champion empathy, accountability, and justice for all individuals on this planet.

We cannot continue to create a tangled web of laws meant to support one another, providing loopholes that serve only to undermine justice. Instead, let us focus on God and the fundamental truths He represents. Before enacting new legislation, we should reflect on our moral compass and ensure it aligns with the values of empathy and justice. Thank you.

Jeanette Nelson
Self
Spring Branch, TX

I am a former teacher. Nothing is worse than a teacher who breaks the moral code with a student. I have a friend whose daughter was solicited through grooming for 2 years. In spite of the parents reporting it to the school district administration, nothing was done. The day she graduated, she vanished and moved in with the teacher and his wife, who appeared to be complicit with the arrangement. After hiring an attorney and appearing in front of the school board, the teacher was finally relieved of his duties and his teacher certificate taken. However, the parents have not heard from this child for two years. Please do all in your power to see that this never happens again to any parent or child.

Corinna Danielson
self homemaker
Anna, TX

It is time for these people to be held accountable when they have done the wrong thing.

Stephen Zarate
Self
Maypearl, TX

In full support of this bill.

Sylvia Coulson
self- Dietitian
Waxahachie, TX

I support this bill. There are way too many children who are victims of sexual abuse by school employees. One is too many. Each life is forever impacted. This evil must be uncovered. Too many times the perp is allowed to move on to another district to harm more children. This must stop!

Carl Kalbfleisch
True Texas Project (TTP@Home Denison Leader)
Denison, TX

Our children are our most precious commodity. Their innocence needs to be protected. In today's world there are so many attacks on children. Many of them are being abused by people they think they can trust. This must stop. It is painful to hear about children being sexually abused in schools. It seems like an almost daily news story of how some teacher violated a child. Teachers and schools need to be held accountable. I am thankful for Rep Little for bringing forth this legislation. Thank you to Chairman Leach for holding this hearing. I am asking that every member of the committee will vote in favor of advancing this important legislation.
Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sharon Tryon, Mrs
Self
Waxahachie, TX

I am for this bill 100%

Michele Wallace, Mrs.
Self
Waxahachie, TX

This is needed to safeguard school children and to hold those responsible accountable.

Bettie Gray
Self
WAXAHACHIE, TX

I support this bill. Public schools, educators and all other staff public school staff should NOT have immunity to civil liability for sexual misconduct with a student.

Melody Allen
Self - Logistics Manager
Waxahachie, TX

I support this bill.

Kathy Turner
Self
McGregor, TX

Support strongly

Melinda Preston
None
Frisco, TX

We must protect our children. Please pass 4623.

Linda Ricks
Self
Midlothian, TX

Dear Members,

A strongly support this bill and ask that you vote it out of committee.

Thank you,
Linda Ricks

Gaylyn DeVine
Self/ Business Owner/SREC SD11
Pearland, TX

Thank you for giving a voice to children abused by teachers, administrators, and professional school employees who are trusted to teach & inspire the best in others. They have been protected for far too long and my hope is school districts will take hiring responsibility a lot more seriously when there are severe consequences for abuse.

Pamela Davigcourt
Self, Home Manager
Austin, TX

Hello, my name is Pamela Davigcourt, and I am a concerned parent from Travis County, Austin. I am writing to strongly support HB 4623 by Rep. Little, which holds public schools and employees accountable for sexual misconduct and other injuries to students. This bill is urgently needed due to the rising tide of educator sexual misconduct in Texas over the last five years. It's unacceptable that students suffer while schools hide behind immunity. H.B. 4623 ensures justice, protects our kids, and delivers consequences for predators. Please advance this bill swiftly to safeguard our children. Thank you!"

aron Fangman
Self
Amarillo, TX

We do not need pedophile or sex offenders in our school systems . When an adult is found guilty their teaching certificate should be revoked permanently. they should not be able to go on to another school to teach Elsewhere, in Texas or another state. These offenders go on to recommit crimes and get a slap on the wrists with probation and little to no jail time. How does this benefit our kids? How would you like it if this was your child's teacher doing this to your children and their friends? I am outraged that schools still hire and allow these people in innocent children's lives.

Kathryn Sartor
Self-advocate
Austin, TX

Chairperson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Kathryn Sartor, and I am the mother of a 6-year-old child who was physically abused by his special education teacher at Bee Cave Elementary in Lake Travis ISD on October 29, 2024.

That morning, I went to the school to pick my son up early for an occupational therapy appointment. I found him in the front office, crying, with a torn and tattered button down shirt and a large bruise and scratch marks on his chest. That bruise was the result of abuse he endured at the hands of his teacher—abuse that was captured on classroom video. And while the evidence was clear, the district allowed that teacher to quietly resign instead of terminating his contract for his actions.

Despite the district administration viewing the footage the following day, the district delayed turning the video footage over to law enforcement until October 31st, obstructing timely investigation.

Although I kept my son home immediately after the incident, he was returned to the same classroom with his abuser for the following two school days. The district knowingly left a child in harm's way.

Lake Travis ISD prioritized legal risk over my child's well-being. They tampered with evidence, withheld public records, denied trauma services, and continue to resist accountability to this day.

House Bill 4623 is essential. It removes governmental and official immunity when school employees commit abuse or fail to protect students. It ensures that both the school and employee can be held jointly liable, and it gives families a clear path to legal remedy when the system fails them.

I urge you to pass this bill. Our children deserve to be safe at school, and parents deserve the right to hold institutions accountable when they are not.

Sincerely,
Kathryn Sartor

Morgan Collier
Accountability Matters PMA
Talco, TX

H.B. No. 4623 is a commendable but flawed attempt to pierce the veil of governmental immunity. Its limited scope, exploitable loopholes, and failure to fully reject monarchical doctrines fall short of the constitutional mandate to ensure accountability and equal justice. The Texas Legislature must seize this opportunity to enact bold reform, not timid half-measures. By adopting these amendments, you can honor the faith of the people of Texas—pledged in our Constitution to a republican government—and restore our sacred right to hold all public servants accountable, without exception. I urge the following changes:

- Amend Sec. 118.005 to repeal all assertions of governmental immunity across Texas statutes, not just for schools. I contend, as reflected in the Texas Constitution (Article I, Section 2), that we have "the inalienable right to alter, reform or abolish" our government, unimpeded by monarchical doctrines. Partial waivers are insufficient; total repeal is required.

- Revise Sec. 118.001(2) to include all school-affiliated personnel—certified or not, employees or contractors—who interact with students. This ensures no perpetrator escapes liability based on technicalities, honoring the equal justice demanded by our founding documents.

- Strike the exclusion in Sec. 118.002(a)(3) and repeal Penal Code Sec. 9.62 entirely. We view this abused "in loco parentis" defense as having no place in a system accountable to the people. If force causes injury, it must face scrutiny, not blanket justification.

- Clarify "negligent, reckless, knowing, or intentional" in Sec. 118.002(a)(3) with examples (e.g., failure to supervise foreseeably leading to harm) and state that discretionary acts causing injury are not immune. Precision prevents evasion and upholds our Fourteenth Amendment rights.

- Amend Sec. 118.002(b) to permit lawsuits against schools alone when an employee's identity is unknown or institutional failures contribute to harm. This ensures accountability isn't thwarted by procedural gamesmanship, aligning with our right to petition for redress.

- Revise Section 2 to cover ongoing harms or injuries discoverable after September 1, 2025, regardless of when they began. I maintain that no statute of limitations should bar constitutional justice, especially for victims of systemic abuse.

- Add a provision to Sec. 118.002 holding schools liable for reckless or negligent policies (e.g., inadequate hiring or training) that enable student harm. This addresses root causes, not just symptoms, fulfilling our right to reform government comprehensively.

- We propose adding a section requiring all civil claims against public entities to be screened by a grand jury. This restores the people's control over government accountability, as John Adams called juries "the heart and lungs of liberty," ensuring no judge or official can unilaterally dismiss our grievances.

Nidia Heston
self
Austin, TX

I am writing in regard to HB 4623. Our nightmare began in March 2013 when my then 13 yr old son was physically assaulted by his special education teaching assistant who threw a trash can at his face while in a self-contained special education classroom in Austin Independent School District. Imagine my shock the day after his assault when calling over 20 attorneys in Texas and several across the US to be told that in Texas, schools have sovereign immunity, and we would not be able to sue the school district-I was sure that they were mistaken and that I was not properly telling our story. The assault left him with permanent physical injury and lasting mental and emotional injury-a broken front tooth, permanent scar on his lip with both injuries requiring cosmetic surgery and extensive dental intervention that he will need for the rest of his life. The emotional and mental toll are ongoing resulting in PTSD. The same day as the assault, the special education teaching assistant admitted to throwing the trash can I thought there would be not way the school district would deny their liability. She was charged with a first-degree felony and year later she would plead down to a misdemeanor and serve two years probation while working at Goodwill Central Texas where we ran into her while my son was participating in one of their programs. After 8 ½ years, two attorneys, many dismissals and a SCOTUS ruling in Spring 2023 regarding cases similar to ours, our case was referred to federal magistrate in Austin for mediation. Even the judge said it was the longest case she had ever seen. We ended the day in settlement with AISD but it does not touch the monetary amount my son will need to recover physically/mentally/emotionally. Since my son was assaulted, I continue to receive messages and connect with other families who have had a similar experience either physically or sexual assault, it is sickening. It's even worse to tell these families that they have to choose between the expense of fighting for justice when Texas law protects schools and the emotional toll on the family to fight this fight every day knowing that there is no hope. My son has worked so hard to understand the assault and the experience has become part of our family's DNA. Allowing students in these cases to sue school districts would at minimum decrease the trauma of having to live with the stress and feeling of betrayal knowing that essentially, school staff have carte blanche to injure and assault students and the student will never be able to hold the district accountable. Please seriously consider this measure to bring recognition to this problem and closure to students who are hurt by school staff across Texas. Please let us know if we or my son can answer any questions. Link to one of our news stories: <https://www.kvue.com/article/news/investigations/defenders/austin-mom-sues-aisd-under-federal-law-after-state-laws-limit-claims/269-571092007>

Adrian Heston, V
self
Austin, TX

Hello, thank you for addressing this issue. I was a special education student who was treated poorly by Austin ISD and who was physically attacked by a special education teaching assistant when I was in 7th grade. We went to court to be sure that the assistant would not teach in AISD again. We finally settled with AISD eight and a half years later but because of the law of sovereign immunity for schools in Texas, my damages, both physical and mental, will never be reconciled. I hope with HB 4623, the parents of students who are abused and hurt by school staff will not have to experience the dread that looms around their situation for years like my family did. Thank you and please let me know if I or my family can answer any additional questions.

Mellany Lamb
Self
Flower Mound, TX

Support

Charles Cain
Self
Weatherford, TX

In 2019, my son was viciously assaulted by another student in an unprovoked attack as he was sitting in his desk attempting to receive his education. I exercised my right as a parent due to the seriousness of the assault to file charges on the student that assaulted my son. Aledo ISD Police Department refused to give me a report number. 10 days after the Assault, I turned to Social Media to respectfully express my concern with the District. The school gave me a report number, filed the charges, and requested that I get off Social Media. I did not get off Social Media as I was respectful and did not do anything illegal. The school issued me an illegal Criminal Trespass warning. I sued the school. In deposition, the Police Chief Fred Collie testified I did nothing wrong and did not make a threat. He testified he was ordered to give the Criminal Trespass warning by the Superintendent, Susan Bohn. In Deposition, Susan Bohn testified she was an attorney and received training in Probable Cause. She claimed I threatened the school which was the basis for her decision. My attorney asked Bohn how I threatened the school and she could not provide an answer to that question. She further could not provide a definition of a threat. I believe it was intentional that she could not provide the definition of a threat as I never threatened anyone or anything. But yet, this was her contention. My attorney and I filed grievances on Susan Bohn and instead of hearing them, she passed the grievances down to her Assistant Superintendent who was not qualified to override Susan Bohn. A Federal Magistrate granted an Injunction. Between the settlement and attorney fees, it cost the school just shy of 500 thousand dollars. There were numerous lies told in my lawsuit under oath by Susan Bohn and Fred Collie. I am in support of this bill and ask that the Civil Liberties Code and Education Code be amended to create civil liability for schools and their employees. As a Single Parent and a Military Member then, Susan Bohn would not allow me to drop of my child at the front door of the school even when it was raining outside. Not that I made my son walk, but he had to skip alot of school during this lawsuit and it was a long process. I believe this bill would make administrators think twice before making false claims if this bill was implemented. To this day, I have not been able to get an agency to investigate Susan Bohn or the ISD for Official Oppression because of Politics. If this bill was implemented it would create another barrier for Parent's since D.A.'s and Law Enforcement agencies will not investigate schools as they should.

CHERYL LAYNE
SELF
WHITEHOUSE, TX

H.B. No. 4623 is a commendable but flawed attempt to pierce the veil of governmental immunity. Its limited scope, exploitable loopholes, and failure to fully reject monarchical doctrines fall short of the constitutional mandate to ensure accountability and equal justice. The Texas Legislature must seize this opportunity to enact bold reform, not timid half-measures. By adopting these amendments, you can honor the faith of the people of Texas—pledged in our Constitution to a republican government—and restore our sacred right to hold all public servants accountable, without exception. I urge the following changes: - Amend Sec. 118.005 to repeal all assertions of governmental immunity across Texas statutes, not just for schools. I contend, as reflected in the Texas Constitution (Article I, Section 2), that we have "the inalienable right to alter, reform or abolish" our government, unimpeded by monarchical doctrines. Partial waivers are insufficient; total repeal is required. - Revise Sec. 118.001(2) to include all school-affiliated personnel—certified or not, employees or contractors—who interact with students. This ensures no perpetrator escapes liability based on technicalities, honoring the equal justice demanded by our founding documents. - Strike the exclusion in Sec. 118.002(a)(3) and repeal Penal Code Sec. 9.62 entirely. We view this abused "in loco parentis" defense as having no place in a system accountable to the people. If force causes injury, it must face scrutiny, not blanket justification. - Clarify "negligent, reckless, knowing, or intentional" in Sec. 118.002(a)(3) with examples (e.g., failure to supervise foreseeably leading to harm) and state that discretionary acts causing injury are not immune. Precision prevents evasion and upholds our Fourteenth Amendment rights. - Amend Sec. 118.002(b) to permit lawsuits against schools alone when an employee's identity is unknown or institutional failures contribute to harm. This ensures accountability isn't thwarted by procedural gamesmanship, aligning with our right to petition for redress. - Revise Section 2 to cover ongoing harms or injuries discoverable after September 1, 2025, regardless of when they began. I maintain that no statute of limitations should bar constitutional justice, especially for victims of systemic abuse. - Add a provision to Sec. 118.002 holding schools liable for reckless or negligent policies (e.g., inadequate hiring or training) that enable student harm. This addresses root causes, not just symptoms, fulfilling our right to reform government comprehensively. - We propose adding a section requiring all civil claims against public entities to be screened by a grand jury. This restores the people's control over government accountability, as John Adams called juries "the heart and lungs of liberty," ensuring no judge or official can unilaterally dismiss our grievances.

Deron Robinson, Dr.
self
Lantana, TX

This bill will cost taxpayers millions of dollars. And not necessarily for valid claims. But districts will now have to defend false claims instead of getting things dismissed under qualified immunity.

This punishes taxpayers for individual actions that could happen no matter how strong the school districts policies and practices are. This will not reduce these incidents by bad actors, but will instead just require local communities to divert millions of dollars away from education to these claims.

Sexual misconduct is already illegal. Schools are already liable for sexual misconduct if they are deliberately indifferent, meaning if they knew about it and failed to take appropriate reasonable action. This would make taxpayers liable for the wrongdoing of an individual without anyone's knowledge or opportunity to intervene.

Failure to report child abuse already carries criminal penalties and stiff civil penalties for licensed professionals, including administrators and educators.

Individuals who engage in negligence outside the scope of their duties are already subject to liability. Bad actors may engage in negligent or intentional conduct that creates liability for themselves and recourse for the victims, but this should not extend to taxpayers for something out of their control.

This bill would do nothing to curb any wrongdoing but place a greater burden on taxpayers and draw funds out of the classroom.

Jaco Booyens
JBM
Arlington, TX

In favor of

Lisa Burroughs
Self
Dallas, TX

IN FAVOR

Mary Binning
Srlf
Dallas, TX

In favor!!!!

Shannon OBrien
Self
Houstony, TX

IN FAVOR

Jennie Gilchrist
Dallas Eagle Forum
Dallas, TX

In favor

Melanie Jennings
Self/accountant
Dallas, TX

In favor

Preeti Malladi
Self
Richardson, TX

I am writing in support of this bill. We need to protect the children in schools. I urge you to vote yes on this bill.

Elizabeth Hurley
Self
Dallas, TX

In Favor

Linda Ward
Self
Dallas, TX

I am in favor of this Bill to protect our children in school.

Linda Gunter
Self
El Paso, TX

In favor

Janet Mariani
Self
Dallas, TX

Let's stand united to protect our children, hold institutions accountable, and ensure that silence is no longer the standard response to abuse. Thank you for standing with us ...for truth for Justice and for every child still waiting to be protected.

Sandra Morgan
Self
Dallas, TX

"Dear Representative,

I'm writing to respectfully urge you to support HB 4623 by Rep. Mitch Little. This bill is essential to holding schools accountable when they fail to report or respond to abuse. Every child deserves to be safe in the classroom—and every family deserves justice when they are failed by the system."

Thank you for joining me in this fight. Let's make sure no child slips through the cracks.

Renee Lange
Self
Houston, TX

I am in favor of HB 4623 and protecting children , holding institutions accountable and ensuring that silence is no longer the standard response to abuse.

David Anderson
Self
Dallas, TX

Please stand united. To protect our children, hold institutions accountable and ensure that silence is no longer the standard response to abuse!!!! Thank you for standing with us-for truth, for Justice, and for every child still waiting to be protected...thank you.

Amy Beneski
Texas Association of School Administrators
Austin, TX

April 9, 2025

House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence
Texas House of Representatives
P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78711

RE: HB 4623 relating to liability of public schools and professional school employees for certain injuries to students.

Dear Chairman Leach and members of the House Committee on Judiciary and Civil Jurisprudence:

The safety and security of Texas schoolchildren are of utmost importance to the members of the Texas Association of School Administrators (TASA). Schools must serve as safe spaces for both students and educators.

Under current law, school employees and school districts can be held liable for sexual misconduct against a student, or for failing to report suspected child abuse or neglect. We support both provisions of current law. We recommend that proposed TEC 118.001(3) be more narrowly tailored, as the language filed is broad and could lead to unnecessary litigation and increased costs in liability insurance for school employees. For example, school employees may hesitate to respond to an incident involving students if they are unsure whether that action would meet the definition of “reckless” and subject them to liability. Vagueness can also lead to unnecessary litigation against school districts, costing taxpayers money for actions that may have been accidental or unintentional. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input on HB 4623 and are happy to collaborate with your office to clarify the language, reducing unnecessary and unintended consequences. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,
Amy Beneski
Deputy Executive Director, Governmental Relations
Texas Association of School Administrators

Christy Mesec
Self
Dallas, TX

I'm writing to respectfully urge you to support HB 4623 by Rep. Mitch Little. This bill is essential to holding schools accountable when they fail to report or respond to abuse. Every child deserves to be safe in the classroom—and every family deserves justice when they are failed by the system.”
Thank you for joining me in this fight. Let's make sure no child slips through the cracks.

Barbara Walsted
self
Lancaster, TX

Hello, my name is Barbara, and I'm a concerned parent, citizen, and EDUCATOR! I'm calling/writing to strongly support HB 4623 by Rep. Little, which holds public schools and employees accountable for sexual misconduct and other injuries to students. This bill is urgently needed due to the rising tide of educator sexual misconduct in Texas over the last five years. It's unacceptable that students suffer while schools hide behind immunity. HB 4623 ensures justice, protects our kids, and delivers consequences for predators. Please advance this bill SWIFTLY to safeguard our children. Thank you!

Lisa Healy
Self
Midlothian, TX

I support this bill. Please vote it out of committee. Thank you for your consideration.

Ashley Langley
Self
HJouston, TX

In favor

Melissa Katz, Mrs.
Self / Volunteer
Dallas, TX

For too long in public schools, teachers and/or Administrators who have committed or have knowledge of harmful behavior, physically or mentally against a student, the perpetrator has not had consequences or been held accountable for their actions. HB 4623 will change this. It's important to hold these people accountable. It also gives the victim(s) the opportunity to face their abuser(s) and observe justice. This is critical for victims healing. Respectfully, every God-fearing person should vote YES in support of HB 4623. Thank you for your consideration.
With gratitude and blessings,
Melissa Katz

Lauren Greer
Tami Brown Rodrigues
Dallas, TX

In favor!

Terrie Bryan
Self
Dallas, TX

Every child deserves to be safe in the classroom.

Barry Wernick
Wernick For Texas
Dallas, TX

We strongly support HB 4623.
Let's stand united to protect our children, hold institutions accountable, and ensure that silence is no longer the standard response to abuse.
Thank you for standing with us—for truth, for justice, and for every child still waiting to be protected.

Dee Holley, Exec Director
Self
Dallas, TX

It is CRITICAL that we protect our kids. Enough is enough of this nonsense.

Linda Dodd
Self
Dallas, TX

Let's stand united to protect our children, hold institutions accountable, and ensure that silence is no longer the standard response to abuse.

Thank you for standing with us—for truth, for justice, and for every child still waiting to be protected.

With appreciation.

Linda Schlueter
Self
San Antonio, TX

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

I cannot attend the Wednesday hearing, but I want to express my strong support for HB 4623. I hope my comments will be helpful to you.

Since 1997, I have worked statewide with parents with children in public school. This has included materials on their parental rights and responsibilities, speaking at the Texas Bar School Law Conference, writing an article in the St. Mary's Law Journal on parental rights and the situation in public schools, and speaking on parental rights at school board member training programs.

The Problem: Over the years, I have witnessed an increase of child abuse cases in public schools and a decline in protections for our most vulnerable --- our children. I expect that when children go to school that they will be safe and not abused by the very people to whom parents entrust their children.

Unfortunately, this is not the case and has become an increasing problem. Using the TEA's own statistics from case codes 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, and 10, there were 6,888 reports of physical and sexual offenses against students from September 2021 to July 2024. Equally alarming is that a majority of these reports are not being investigated. The TEA has listed the disposition as "Did Not Open," which means that the TEA never opened an investigation even though school districts considered these reports serious enough to report it to the TEA. If the report is never opened, then educator misconduct is not punished or steps taken to prevent it. It is important to emphasize, that this is only what is being reported. One can only wonder how many cases are not being reported if the end result is that the TEA will not even investigate the allegations. Parents are left with trying to deal with the abuse and injury to their children with no recourse or remedy.

HB 4623: This is why HB 4623 is so important. Parents need recourse and a remedy to protect their children. If perpetrators and schools know that there is liability for misconduct, it will help to provide a deterrent for such serious misconduct. Under current law, a parent's recourse is impossible due to sovereign immunity.

The waiver under HB 4623 is limited and only pertains to the most serious violations. This matter is not frivolous and the Legislature should provide this kind of help to parents when the schools, school districts, or TEA fail to protect the children who are in their care for most of the day. I urge the Committee to pass HB 4623 out of committee.

Eric Kidder
My self and other concerned Texas parents
Mesquite, TX

Please vote in favor to protect our children

Ross Garison
self - educator
DENTON, TX

Please reconsider section 118.005 of this bill. By removing governmental immunity from a school district in cases like these, you are effectively saying that a school district's taxpayers should pay the bills for the actions of the perpetrators of these awful crimes. Should a law-abiding community really have to pay the legal bills of an individual that made a horrible choice on their own? I don't believe I should have to pay for a school district employee's crimes just because they were employed by a school district.

Lola Hurt, Mrs
True Texas Project
Addison, TX

Strongly In Favor

Gloria Orteiz
self
DENTON, TX

Please oppose this bill.

Cristina Williams
Self
Corsicana, TX

As it stands, our laws support secrecy in the face of sexual violence towards a child. Who are we as a people when the law of our land supports child abuse. Please stand not for predators or pedophiles but instead, for the children growing up in our system.

It's disgusting what we are hiding in plain sight. Right now, the behavior is being normalized. Protect the ones that never seem to get protected. Why would any righteous state sculpt laws to make sure men don't get in trouble when they try to have sex with children? Can you do better? Will you?

Elyce Mouskondis
Self
Dallas, TX

I'm in favor of this bill and would like to see y'all vote for this bill.

Valerie Turnbow
Self
Lucas, TX

Please vote FOR this bill. I support the school districts are liable for injuries to children because they are not doing enough to protect them. This bill will
Ensure they are liable which will make them act to keep kids safe. I support HB 4623

Reagan Glenn
Self - Assistant Principal
Lake Dallas, TX

Please oppose HB4623. This would not improve student safety or education, but would force school districts to fight lawsuits, even when they've done nothing wrong. HB 4623 eliminates key legal protections and holds entire communities financially responsible for the actions of individuals — even when no one in the district had any knowledge of the misconduct. This bill won't prevent misconduct, but it will make it harder for schools to invest in safety, support, and instruction. We all want safe, accountable schools, but HB 4623 doesn't accomplish that — it simply places a greater burden on schools and taxpayers without solving the problem.

Nancy Byrne
Self
Corinth, TX

Relating to liability of public schools and professional school employees for certain injuries to students, I 100% support HB 4623. We need to protect our children!

Jamie Haynes
Texans Wake Up
Canyon, TX

My name is Jamie Haynes with Texans Wake Up and I am commenting FOR HB 4623 because no section of the government should have immunity from the law especially when it comes to harm being done to children. Parents should be allowed to seek relief. I am hopeful this bill will reduce child harm by seating non-reporting consequences and bring about a heightened level of safety in the classroom for children and educators alike. I have deep remorse that Texans must be forced to evaluate a bill such as this one, but we can no longer ignore the increasing number of children being harmed. Thank you Representative Little for protecting children. Let us continue to build strong children, for they are our future.

Christina Resendez, Executive Assistant
self
Richmond, TX

Christina Resendez – Public Comments for HB 4623
House Judiciary & Civil Jurisprudence Committee
April 9, 2025

Chair Leach and members of the committee,

My name is Christina Resendez, and I am testifying today in support of HB 4623. I am representing myself as a concern, citizen who believes deeply in the need for accountability and justice for survivors of harm caused within our public school system.

HB 4623 is a vital piece of legislation that will hold public schools, accountable for acts or omissions that can cause harm to individuals under their care by passing this bill we ensure the public schools cannot evade responsibility when their actions or lack thereof cause significant harm of students, staff and others in the school community. This legislation will promote fairness and help survivors heal by providing them with the tools needed to seek justice. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kim Horton
Self retired teacher
Weatherford, TX

Dear Committee Members,

Please pass HB 4623 to protect our children in public schools and expose those public school employees who are causing great harm to Texas children. Those who are receiving our tax dollars and who are employed by public schools should fall under great accountability and liability for sexually abusing children or causing great harm to the vulnerable while in the care of a public school ISD employees. Also these public school employees should not be allowed to work with children or allowed to seek employment at any other public school ISD as well.

Just recently in Millsap ISD a disabled boy suffered abuse in his classroom under his teachers in an elementary classroom by those teachers over his classroom. It was filmed and given to the proper authorities of that elementary school. The incident was kept quiet and the parent was not notified until nearly a month later! The 2 teachers involved were allowed to resign and sought a job at Weatherford ISD in my district! Someone had to show the authorities in Weatherford ISD the video for them to be let go from Weatherford ISD.

Let's expose instead of hide those who harm Texas children. Do the right thing by keeping our Texas children safe from these types employees! This is not the type of teachers that should be allowed to be in authority over Texas children and then be allowed go to seek employment in another ISD or even any job involving children. Please pass HB 4623.

Thank you so much for your time in reading this comment.
Have a very blessed day!

Sincerely,
Kim Horton

Amy Lee
Self Pharmacist
Dallas, TX

In Favor

Danielle Kading
Self
Corint, TX

Oppose! HB 4623 does not create new protections for students. It just makes it easier to sue schools, draining critical resources and punishing communities for actions outside their control. This bill won't prevent misconduct, but it will make it harder for schools to invest in safety, support, and instruction. We all want safe, accountable schools. But HB 4623 doesn't accomplish that it simply places a greater burden on schools and taxpayers without solving the problem.

Daniel Elizondo
self
Denton, TX

I am writing as both a public educator and a parent, and I share the goal of reducing abuse and neglect in our schools. However, HB 4623 goes too far by exposing our educators and schools to extensive liability, which could lead to expensive legal battles that drain resources away from vital educational programs and support services. This is not the solution—our children deserve an environment focused on learning and safety, not on litigation. Rather than imposing additional burdens that may have unintended negative effects on students and staff, we should pursue alternatives like increasing funding for schools, mandating more comprehensive training for staff, and establishing thorough investigatory and auditing processes to proactively address concerns. Please join me in urging our representatives to oppose HB 4623 while supporting more balanced, constructive reforms.

Beth Biesel, VP
Texas Eagle Forum
Dallas, TX

Our kids deserve justice—not silence.
If a child is abused in a Texas public school, too often the system protects itself—not the victim.
HB 4623 by @MitchLittleTX finally holds schools accountable.
It removes government immunity when schools fail to report, investigate, or respond to abuse.
Saying “you can’t sue a school district” is a disgrace.
?? Support HB 4623.

Perla Hopkins
Self/Education Advocate
Leander, TX

As an educator and parent, I strongly support HB 4623 by Representative Little. Educators are mandated reporters and safeguarding children should be the top priority in schools. Educators & Staff must follow the Code of Ethics at all times, and in cases of criminal activity, they must be held accountable, immediately.
Please support HB 4623, as we must protect students and eradicate the sexualization and exploitation of children in TX schools, thank you.

cyrena nolan
self
dallas, TX

in favor of

Casey Khoury
Self - Teacher/Parent/Community Member
Corinth, TX

As both a parent and a public educator, I strongly oppose HB 4623. While I fully support efforts to reduce abuse and neglect in our schools, this bill risks siphoning vital resources into costly litigation. We must protect our students without punishing educators and diverting funds from the classroom. Instead, I urge legislators to invest in increased funding, mandate more thorough training, and implement robust investigatory and auditing processes to prevent abuse and neglect effectively. Please stand with me against HB 4623.

Mansour Khoury

Self - Parent/Community Member/Former Teacher

Denton, TX

I am writing as both a former public educator and a parent, and I share the goal of reducing abuse and neglect in our schools. However, HB 4623 goes too far by exposing our educators and schools to extensive liability, which could lead to expensive legal battles that drain resources away from vital educational programs and support services. This is not the solution—our children deserve an environment focused on learning and safety, not on litigation. Rather than imposing additional burdens that may have unintended negative effects on students and staff, we should pursue alternatives like increasing funding for schools, mandating more comprehensive training for staff, and establishing thorough investigatory and auditing processes to proactively address concerns. Please join me in urging our representatives to oppose HB 4623 while supporting more balanced, constructive reforms.

Christie Inge

Self

Argyle, TX

I strongly support that schools should be civilly and criminally liable for the actions their employees and visitors invited by the school that harm children. Id like to add that abuse, physical and mental should apply to this as well as grooming the victim thru any school chat rooms, extra curricular activities, sporting events etc. That the school should also cover all the victims legal fees and medical expenses related to the incident(s) as a mandatory requirement and that settlement outside of court should also bear with it the medical expenses of the child outside the settlement amount and not included with.

Ally Raskin

self

Dallas, TX

We MUST protect our children! Fully support this bill.

Ian McPherson, Mr.

Self

Carrollton, TX

Thank you for doing what you do for the state of Texas and its citizens. I strongly back HB4623 and ask that you do the same.

Upholding right has suffered a precipitous decline in this country, with concern for the poor perpetrator taking precedence over the rights of law-abiding citizens. This is wrong, particularly when it involves sex crimes against minors.

HB4623 makes it particularly important for those who are charged with the safekeeping of our children in school to be held to a higher standard, and for there to be no sovereign immunity for perpetrating or failing to report crimes against those children.

I hope this bill will pass with 100% approval as I can imagine no credible opposition to it.

Melissa Epley

Self-homemaker

Houston, TX

We need to protect our children

Teri Bates
Self
Corsicana, TX

I am in favor of this bill to hold schools responsible and liable for sexual assault of children.

Susan LUCAS, Ms
Self
Bryan, TX

Support

Barbara Morgan
Texas Ed 911
Rockwall, TX

"Hello, I am concerned citizen and I strongly support HB 4623 by Rep. Little, which holds public schools and employees accountable for sexual misconduct and other injuries to students. This bill is urgently needed due to the rising tide of educator sexual misconduct in Texas over the last five years. It's unacceptable that students suffer while schools hide behind immunity. HB 4623 ensures justice, protects our kids, and delivers consequences for predators. Please advance this bill swiftly to safeguard our children. Thank you!"

There is nothing more important than protecting Texas kids! Please take action to help pass HB 4623

Debbie Georgatos
Self. Host, AmericaCanWeTalk.
Celina, TX

We must ensure that silence is not an acceptable response to abuse, and protect our children, and hold institutions responsible.

Julie Green
Self
Houston, TX

In favor

Laurie Horner, Ms
Self
Houston, TX

I am in favor

Alexandra Schilling
Myself
Garwood, TX

Please vote in favor of this out of committee. Thank you!

Frank E Alfaro
Alamo Heights ISD
San Antonio, TX

This bill would cost taxpayers millions of dollars—not necessarily for valid claims, but to defend against potentially false allegations that school districts would no longer be able to dismiss under qualified immunity. It unfairly penalizes taxpayers for the actions of individuals, even when school districts have strong policies and practices in place. Rather than reducing incidents involving bad actors, the bill would simply force local communities to divert substantial funding away from classrooms and toward legal costs. Sexual misconduct is already illegal, and schools are currently held liable if they demonstrate deliberate indifference—meaning they knew of the misconduct and failed to take appropriate action. This bill, however, would make taxpayers financially responsible for the actions of individuals, even when no one had prior knowledge or opportunity to intervene. Additionally, failure to report child abuse already carries both criminal and civil penalties for licensed school administrators. Individuals who act negligently outside the scope of their duties can already be held personally liable. While victims deserve justice, extending liability to taxpayers for actions beyond the control of the school system is misguided. This bill would not deter misconduct. Instead, it would increase the financial burden on taxpayers and divert critical resources away from education.

Leigh Crow
Gilliland Properties
Dallas, TX

Protect our children

Daniel Hunt, SREC Committeeman SD3
Self
Athens, TX

My name is Daniel Hunt. I am the Senate District 3 Committeeman to the State Republican Executive Committee. I also serve as the Republican County Chairman in Henderson County. Today, I come before you as a private citizen testifying for myself in favor of HB 4623.

I served the State of Texas as an Assistant District Attorney for 14 years. I have not handled civil cases, and am not nearly as articulate in that regard as Representative Little. In my position as a criminal prosecutor, I prosecuted every kind of crime from traffic tickets to Aggravated Assault with a Deadly Weapon. I never prosecuted a Murder case. However, I prosecuted cases that are worse. Sexual Assault of a Child.

You may wonder how that could be worse than Murder. It is worse because in a murder, the victim doesn't have to live with the lasting effects of the crime.

HB4623 is brilliant in its simplicity, as well as its comprehensive nature. This bill not only eliminates governmental immunity for teachers who commit this horrible act against a child, but also the school administrators who cover up the crime.

We see these cases in the news, it seems, on a daily basis. It appears the possible criminal prosecution is not enough to prevent the crime. It is time these people, who we trust our children with, face civil penalties for committing or covering up these acts.

This bill is, unfortunately, necessary. Please vote in favor of HB4623.

Angie Wagner
self and my disabled son
Austin, TX

As the parent of a intellectually disabled child who was 17 years old when he was assaulted ON CAMERA by his teacher, I appreciate this bill. I had notified the school of our concerns of abuse and safety for several months before this assault. We withdrew our son from the school district and filed due process with AISD. In order to settle our case, we were required to withdraw the SBEC complaints we filed against the two TAs that were sitting right next to our son (messing around on their cell phones) while our son was assaulted inches from them and they did nothing. We also filed an SBEC complaint against the Principal as she had not taken our concerns seriously. Because of the timing of the assault (spring 2019) and covid, it took almost 4 years for the case to make it to court. The high school hired back the TA that was by his side. Our settlement required that we withdraw the SBEC complaints against everyone except the teacher that assaulted our son, which we did. We were later informed they were trying to preserve the principal's retirement and that they had relocated her to an administrative position in the Waco ISD. The TA is still teaching as far as I know. My point is, there should be liability on the part of staff and administrators in cases where there is obvious neglect and failure to protect vulnerable populations.

Please approve this bill.

Diana Richards
Self / Retired Insurance Agent
Sherman, TX

Support - I'm thankful for this bill, since we have seen testimony after testimony this Session exposing that the TEA/SBEC, grievance process, and School Districts/Entities have failed TX children who have been sexually/physically abused by a school district employee. The State Board of Education today had to sit through a PowerPoint presentation in the meeting of the Full Board where Commissioner Morath attempted to save face for the TEA. Most of the questions from SBOE members were answered with "word salad". Some were answered honestly when he'd say "we don't have jurisdiction" or "we don't investigate if there is another investigation going on by the ISD or local law enforcement" or "out of 1,738 (FY2024) reports involving allegations of solicitation or sexual misconduct with students, 1/3 are involving Uncertified Employees" (uncertified teachers or other employees like bus drivers, janitors, or tutors). Please pass this bill favorably out of Committee to be voted for by the Full House. Thank you for your hard work and dedication to protecting TX children.

Lauren Heitmann
self
Houston, TX

I support HB4623. Please protect our children! Thank you

Louisa Harrington
Self
Dallas, TX

Child abuse

Amanda Mazzella
self
Lantana, TX

I have too much to comment related to this bill. Would love to explain more. Please reach out to me. All I can say is Denton ISD is negligent in many ways; both experienced by two children in different grades attending the same school. The district is hiding so much info from parents and even staff members and kids are getting hurt daily. Parent should have more say to hold these leaders accountable.

Kathy Ponce
Self
Maypearl, TX

I support this bill

Mackie Gillette
Self ,for my son , nanny, melinda Preston has been a great help and great resource for us
Aubrey, TX

My son was brutally assaulted his sr year on Dec 1 2022 and put in icu from a Denton isd hs it was done inside the school by a know student who has a violent record and to have 2 adults on campus at all times he walked in school a saw hoss friend and assailant yelling loudly back and forth just after I dropped hom off and walked over told both of them to stop or they'd be in trouble the assailant then demanded my son to fight as my son is a child on the spectrum and is a sped child he thought he could talk to the boy in the restroom and was when the boy punched my son forcefully and caused him to be disoriented and bc it didn't take him out he punched 2 other times and as he went to the ground the kid then kicked his face resulting in 2 large brain bleeds , head concussion . My son spent 14 days in icu and today April 2025 still has on going medical problems with a severed nerve he can't work hard to do basic things like hang clothes up etc the kid dos get sent to Davis and was allowed back early due to Davis kicking him out for a fight the assailant started . My sin could talk give statement for a while. The sro put it under mutual agreement according to the assailant and another kid however my son only went to the bathroom to reason w him not fight. We went to the senton pd to give a statement and was denied due to the sro on campus who was there. Which told me my son got what was coming to him for getting in his friends business bc my son always tried to make peace between people. Prior to his assault in oct the assailant was making death threats to some kids my son knew the kids told the same sro of the threats and admins in the office but said they needed proof not just here say ,the assailant still made verbal threats to the kids that he'd go to their homes and kill them and the families . Again the school and denton isd knows the kids trouble didn't even care about the medical reports from the hospital. Crime scene came took pics of my son .my parents and I learned that the district had the case closed at the time my son was not able to speak and give a statement within the 14 days of being in icu. Under multiple pain meds bc it was so severe for the 1 yr I had to give med around the clock for pain and seizures due to the trauma to the brain. When I and parents kept asking questions the school district DA said if we wanted to pursue charges they would charge my son and assailant with Disorderly Conduct we didn't know what to do who to turn to to fight this and no attorneys would touch the case my son was 18 and the assailant was a minor . The assailant also took a gun to school at the end of 9th grade same school and he came back in oct 2022 along w another kid and he was mad bc he was caught . Why did the district or school allow a kid in school like this. When the kid ret to school my son struggled and still does w ptsd from what happened. My son I had removed early and his sr yr was robbed by a dangerous kid

Paula Hilliard
self
San Antonio, TX

The in-hearing testimony for this bill covered just about everything I would want to say. It would be pretty hard for a commenter to oppose this bill without revealing what it is they love. It's human nature to protect that which you love. Opposition might love money more, I suppose. But, let's hope this is a common ground bill that makes it clear that Texans loves its children and will protect them!

This bill - along with other needed fixes in pub ed - will go a long way to inspire DOING THINGS BETTER, and will help deter bad actors, whether the perpetrators or their enablers, from finding safehaven in our public schools.

If you support pub ed, and if you want children better protected, please support this bill. THANK YOU!!!!

Lee Spiller
Citizens Commission on Human Rights-Texas
Austin, TX

This is important legislation that helps parents hold schools accountable in situations of abuse. While most of the testimony on the bill involved sexual abuse, it is important to point out that the bill also addresses other knowing, negligent, or reckless acts including those that cause bodily harm. This is important because students have died in restraints at schools that were supposed to be safe. In short, we support this bill and appreciate the committee's support for the witnesses who testified today.

Carlos Phoenix
Self
Milford, TX

Agree

Charlotte Hickey
Self
Houston, TX

In Favor

Faith Colson
self, survivor advocate
Quitman, TX

As a survivor of educator sexual abuse and assault, I can speak to the long term damage this violation does to victims. The abuse suffered by a trusted school adult is the first harm inflicted, but often we suffer a second harm, that of institutional betrayal. Though some schools respond correctly to allegations of abuse, taking prompt steps to help the student and protect other students, others may ignore warning signs or try to investigate internally before reporting out of the school. This inflicts a second wound in which we not only were harmed by one abuser but essentially ignored by our entire community, who was supposed to keep us safe. It's important for people to be held accountable if they shield abusers or protect the school instead of the students. Most educators want to protect kids, and responding appropriately to educator abuse can mitigate the harm done; however, enablers who do not protect victims can inflict further harm, and that wrong needs to be acknowledged.
