

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMPILATION OF PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Submitted to the Committee on Public Education
For Hearing Date: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 8:00 AM
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COMMENTS FOR HB 6 by Leach | et al.

Micaela Lumpkins, Mrs.
Self, Social Work Student
Austin, TX

Good day to the Public Education House Committee and chair, Representative Brad Buckley. Thank you for this opportunity to address the committee via written statement.

I am a master's level social work student at UTA with an undergraduate degree in human development and family studies. My specialty is children and families, and I am especially interested in school discipline and juvenile justice. Given that, I wanted to comment on HB 6.

I'll start with something I am very much in favor of that is part of the bill. It repeals a clause that mandates students be removed to a DAEP for conduct related to e-cigarettes. This is a fantastic change to the code that understands youth's needs when it comes to drug use. We know that discipline does not hinder the use of drugs, but that education and intervention programs do.

Next, I want to address some concerns I have. This bill would expand the reasons that students in 3rd grade or lower as well as students classified as homeless could be suspended to include repeated or significant disruption to the classroom. This is unacceptable. Research shows that exclusion practices, such as suspension and removal to DAEP, are not effective at changing behavior and in fact often lead to increases in the frequency and intensity of misbehavior. It also denies students access to their education. Students who are suspended lose class time, are more likely to have poor academic outcomes and ultimately drop out of school. DAEPs do not have as rigorous of academic standards and remove students from their peer groups and any positive adult relationships they had with certain teachers. A disruption like this negatively impacts both their social and behavioral development and their educational attainment.

Many of the bill's provisions include harsher punishments for violent behavior. Reducing violence in schools is not achieved through harsher punishments, but through preventative measures that include universal screeners for unmet needs of students, social emotional learning, multi-tiered systems of support, restorative practices, equitable school discipline training for teachers and administration, and culturally responsive instructional practices. There are numerous studies that uphold this statement. Schools are safer, both in reality and in perception, when there are fewer suspensions or removals as well as a better school climate. A list of recent sources that report on this issue are included below.

I ask that this committee seriously consider the effectiveness of harsher punishments and exclusionary practices on student conduct as well as the very real negative consequences. Do not increase exclusionary practices for our Texas students. Allow them to have full opportunity for an education.

Thank you.

Sources: 2023: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uta.edu/10.1080/2331186X.2023.2179863>
2023: <https://doi-org.ezproxy.uta.edu/10.1080/1045988X.2023.2236054>
2024: <https://doi.org/10.1111/josh.13485>.
2013: <https://shorturl.at/zd>

Greg Sumpter, Dr.
Grayson County Juvenile Services
Denison, TX

Greetings. Thank you for your service to our great State and to the Human Services Committee. My name is Greg Sumpter. I have served in Juvenile Justice for 30 years, with 29 of those being in the great state of Texas. I am currently the Director of Grayson County Juvenile Services. I'm submitting electronic comments on the bill. This bill has major implications for those counties that operate a Juvenile Justice Alternative Program. On one hand - in Section 3 (a)(1) by removing the requirement for expulsion to be an on school property or school related/sponsored event - this opens the floodgates of eligibility for mandatory expulsions. All JJAEP's that operate with mandatory referrals will likely be dealing with an increased population of students. Interestingly, the inclusion of (f-1) will likely reduce the population of the JJAEP. This makes for planning for a population very unstable for juvenile justice departments. Perhaps there is consideration for (f-1) IF the county doesn't have a JJAEP or if the JJAEP is operating at capacity. Thank you again for your leading out in public education and for considering how to keep schools safe.

Sarai Flores
MASBA School Board Members for Latino Equity
Austin, TX

Good afternoon Members of the House Committee on Public Education,

While we support efforts to create a safe and productive learning environment, we are concerned that HB 6 may not effectively achieve that goal. This bill increases the presence of school-based law enforcement and expands punitive disciplinary measures, which research shows disproportionately impact Black and Latino students. Rather than improving school safety, HB 6 risks deepening racial disparities in discipline, increasing student pushout, and contributing to the school-to-prison pipeline.

Effective Alternatives for Equitable School Discipline

Instead of expanding law enforcement involvement and punitive measures, we urge the committee to consider the following proven alternatives:

Improving Teacher Training on Implicit Bias and Classroom Management

Many discipline disparities stem from racial bias and limited teacher training. Investing in professional development can equip educators with the tools to de-escalate situations and reduce reliance on exclusionary discipline.

Expanding Restorative Justice Programs

Restorative practices encourage conflict resolution, accountability, and relationship-building rather than punitive discipline. Schools implementing these programs have seen reductions in suspensions and improved student outcomes.

Eliminating Zero-Tolerance Policies

These policies disproportionately harm Black and Latino students, leading to unnecessary suspensions and expulsions. Shifting toward a more flexible, case-by-case approach can prevent unnecessary removals from the classroom.

Investing in School Counselors and Mental Health Support

Many student behavioral issues stem from external stressors. Increasing access to school counselors, social workers, and mental health resources can address the root causes of misbehavior rather than just punishing students.

Tracking and Reporting Discipline Data

Transparency is key to addressing disparities. Schools should be required to collect and publicly report disaggregated discipline data to identify patterns and hold districts accountable for disproportionate punishment.

The Bottom Line

HB 6 prioritizes law enforcement and punitive discipline over proven strategies that foster a safe and supportive school environment. Rather than expanding school policing, we encourage the committee to focus on solutions that address the root causes of student behavior and promote equitable outcomes for all students. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to working together on policies that truly support student success and safety.

Rory Gesch
Self, Deputy Superintendent, and Alvin ISD
Alvin, TX

Members of the committee, my name is Rory Gesch, Deputy Superintendent for Alvin ISD. With extensive experience in Texas public education, I strongly support HB6 regarding discipline in public schools.

Effective discipline policies are crucial for safe, productive learning environments. Alvin ISD has encountered significant challenges where current measures failed to adequately address severe disruptions threatening student and staff safety. Recently, one of our elementary principals was physically injured by a second grader intent on causing harm. This event deeply impacted the morale of the campus community. Current law prohibited sending this student home, as it would be considered an out-of-school suspension, which is disallowed for students below third grade. Additionally, repeated severe disruptions in our elementary classrooms have substantially impaired learning for other students, diverting teacher attention from instruction to constant classroom management, ultimately hindering academic progress and morale.

HB6 clearly defines criteria, empowering administrators and educators to make appropriate disciplinary decisions. It removes unnecessary bureaucratic barriers, returning authority to campus personnel directly involved with student discipline. HB6 provides a balanced approach, permitting necessary interventions for severe behaviors requiring temporary removal from campus, thus ensuring classroom safety, restoring instructional effectiveness, and reinforcing clear expectations for student behavior.

Furthermore, HB6's provisions for virtual disciplinary alternative education programs offer essential flexibility for districts like Alvin ISD. For example, we recently had a student who continued to harass and bully peers even while enrolled at our Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP). This persistent harassment created ongoing concerns about student safety and well-being, severely limiting traditional disciplinary strategies. Families of affected students expressed frustration and anxiety, highlighting the urgent need for more effective interventions. A virtual option would provide an additional means to manage such cases, ensuring educational continuity while fostering a secure environment.

Additionally, while we recognize the need for strict measures addressing THC-related offenses due to their significant impact on student health and safety, we believe mandatory DAEP placements for all e-cigarette offenses may be an overreach. Providing flexibility and discretion to campuses for handling non-THC e-cigarette incidents would allow for more measured responses, ensuring disciplinary consequences match the severity of the offense.

Alvin ISD appreciates HB6's focus on stronger disciplinary tools, prioritizing safety and educational continuity. We urge passage of HB6 to equip Texas schools with tools essential for student safety, instructional quality, and overall student success.

Thank you.

Merissa McFadden
Self
Dallas, TX

Some parents of special education student such as autistic children rely on school resources and additional programs to provide education to that population of children and may not have those resources at home. How will online alternatives benefit these children?

Linda Litzinger
Texas Parent to Parent -Advocacy and Policy Director
Austin, TX

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments. Texas Parent to Parent is a statewide non-profit serving 15,000 families of children having every type of disability, mental health, and/or special healthcare need. We must respectfully oppose HB6.

It is the wrong approach to enact an out-of-school suspension for this population who has severe autism when we should instead fund and better support their behavior improvements through an ARD meeting and regular updates to their Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP). Texas is not budgeting the funds needed. It is alarming that it was suggested by a committee member that Texas remove these students from their parents and raise them in foster care.

We believe that data is overlooked regarding the number of students who were diagnosed with autism by their physicians, as compared to the lesser number of students receiving the autism label at school. Due to a lack of school funding, students are denied an autism label by their school, thus allowing the school to avoid using the Autism Supplement. Autism occurs in 1 of 36 children, yet many schools are denying FAPE for these students.

Additionally, we have young students who use the Youth Empowerment Services (YES) mental health waiver, but because HHSC was underfunded for YES, children are churned off the waiver for another child to use the slot, thus children who are paired into one slot aren't truly recovering because they oscillate on and off their YES ABA therapy supports. Texas needs to fully fund the YES waiver program instead of the punishments you discuss today.

We also fully support the excellent testimony from Disability Rights Texas and from Mara LaViola, from Texans for Special Education Reform. Thank you.

Anne Sharman
Self, teacher
Houston, TX

As an educator, I strongly oppose this bill. It is an injustice to the children and families with special needs. Our public education system is supposed to serve and support the children of our nation, regardless of learning styles and needs. Young children and children without homes should not be punished with suspensions. Schools are supposed to be safe places for students and this safety is even more needed for those children without a home. Young children are still learning how to develop healthy social and emotional interactions and should not be suspended. It goes against the pedagogy for students of young ages.

Michael Houston
Channelview ISD
League City, TX

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am Michael Houston, the Deputy Superintendent of Channelview ISD. I would like to express my strong support for House Bill 6, which addresses critical challenges we face in our district regarding student discipline, particularly concerning vaping, homeless students, and the limitations on suspension durations.

Over the past two years, we have encountered significant difficulties with the requirement that students caught vaping must attend Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEP). This approach often fails to provide the necessary support for behavioral change. For instance, we had a student who was caught vaping multiple times and sent to DAEP each time. Instead of receiving guidance on making healthier choices, this student returned without the tools needed to address their behavior. HB 6 offers a more flexible approach, allowing us to incorporate restorative practices that can engage students in meaningful discussions about their choices and help them develop healthier habits.

The situation with homeless students presents another pressing issue. While we understand the intent behind not allowing these students to serve out-of-school suspensions, it creates challenges when they exhibit serious behavioral concerns. For example, we recently dealt with a homeless student who repeatedly disrupted classes and engaged in aggressive behavior. Because we could not enforce an out-of-school suspension, the student continued to disrupt the learning environment, impacting both peers and teachers. HB 6 would allow us to create a more tailored approach to discipline that considers the needs of these students while still maintaining a safe and productive environment for all.

Furthermore, the limitations on the number of days for school suspensions pose challenges when dealing with severe behavioral issues, such as fighting or bullying. We had an incident where students were involved in a physical altercation that endangered others. However, the current policy restricted us from imposing a suspension that matched the severity of the behavior. This often leads to a cycle of repeated offenses, as students return to the classroom without adequate consequences or interventions. HB 6 would provide us with the ability to address such behaviors more effectively, ensuring that students understand the seriousness of their actions while still receiving the necessary support to improve.

In conclusion, I strongly urge the committee to support HB 6. This bill represents a necessary shift towards more effective and compassionate disciplinary practices that not only maintain the integrity of our educational environment but also support the diverse needs of our students. By adopting a more flexible approach, we can foster a culture of accountability and growth, ultimately benefiting all students.

Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.

Tanya Arriaga, Ms
Deafblind Community of Texas
Kingwood, TX

As a DeafBlind individual, I strongly advocate for the passage of the co-navigator bill, which is essential for providing equitable access to services and improving the quality of life for the DeafBlind community. This bill directly impacts my autonomy and independence, offering me the support I need to navigate daily activities, medical appointments, educational settings, and more.

The co-navigator role has already transformed the lives of many DeafBlind individuals, including myself. Co-navigators, who are trained specifically to assist those of us with both hearing and vision loss, serve as an essential link between us and the world around us. They empower us to engage with our environment in ways that were previously inaccessible, allowing us to make informed decisions and interact meaningfully in various aspects of life.

In Texas, we have successfully trained many interpreters and co-navigators from within the DeafBlind community. We recognize their potential and how crucial their work is in supporting the independence of individuals like me. Just as Deaf individuals rely on interpreters to access critical services—whether at doctor’s appointments, in court, or in educational settings—we, the DeafBlind, need co-navigators to ensure that we have the same level of access.

Access to co-navigators helps me understand my surroundings, communicate effectively, and maintain control over my life decisions. This level of autonomy is fundamental, as it allows me to live independently, make choices about my own care, and participate fully in society without depending on others to speak or act for me.

The passage of this bill would ensure that more DeafBlind individuals receive the necessary support to lead fulfilling lives. It would recognize our right to access the world in ways that are tailored to our unique needs, just as other groups are provided with the resources and assistance they require. By passing the co-navigator bill, lawmakers will affirm the value of our independence and help secure the future of equitable access for the DeafBlind community.

Zenobia C. Joseph, Educational Consultant/Policy Analyst
Self - Educational Consultant/Policy Analyst, A+ WRITERS Consulting
Austin, TX

1. Federal Law: Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 “is a Federal statute and provides that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance” (FTA C 4702.1B, 2012).

2. Legislative History: October 30, 2012 82nd Senate Committee on Education (Joint Charge with Senate Committee on Criminal Justice). Invited Testimony: Dr. Tony Fabelo, Dir., Research Div., Council of State Governments.

- Bottom Line: Kill HB 6 in Committee. Conduct a Joint Criminal Justice Interim Hearing.

3. Research: Fabelo et al. (2011) found, “Of the nearly 1 million [Texas] students studied, ... African-American students and those with particular educational disabilities were disproportionately likely to be removed from the classroom for disciplinary reasons. The great majority of African- American male students had at least one discretionary violation (83 percent)” (p. x).

3. Proactive Solution: Joseph, Z. C. (2009). "I-35 Divide" Conundrum: Can a True Community-University Partnership Grant Austin's Gifted/Talented K-12 African-American Males Access to College? Harvard Journal of African American Public Policy, XV, 9-35. ~Reward: I noted a Grade 5 Black male awarded a college scholarship.

4. Teacher Training: HB 6 fails to address “curriculum delivery and instruction” problems (February 25, 2025 Commissioner Mike Morath). See Lortie (1975) Apprenticeship of Observation & collect disaggregated teacher discipline referral data.

Sec. 1: Indefinite in-school suspension fails to close achievement gaps. ~Require virtual instruction from core subject teachers with differentiation and culturally-relevant pedagogy documentation.

- Lines 12-13: “An in-school suspension ... is not subject to any time limit” (p. 1). See TEC 29.081, Compensatory/Accelerated Education.
- 23-24: Too subjective - “(3) conduct that results in repeated or significant disruption to the classroom” (p. 1).

Sec. 3: Differentiation (Interim Study). Create a proactive virtual Morehouse/HBCU Pilot to curtail Black male discipline referrals.

- 14-17: “A school district may place a student ... in a virtual in-person disciplinary alternative education program” (p. 9). Justification: Use strict scrutiny and Texas’ “Breaking Schools’ Rules” longitudinal data to justify Morehouse/HBCU Pilot.

Sec. 8: Special Education School-to-Prison Pipeline. Patton (2001) found “many of these learners find their way into special education by the mere fact of not having been taught” (“ain’t been taught”).

- Require Texas Education Agency to create Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs Assessment for the first 30 days. Review differentiation input with “threat assessment.”
 - Intake: Document compensatory education (IEP noncompliance) + HB 1416 (30-60 tutoring hours).
 - 21-23: Against “civil action for injunctive relief,” impacting Black males most. ~zjc
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Stephanie Holdren
Texas PTA
Austin, TX

My name is Stephanie Holdren, and I am here on behalf of Texas PTA, representing nearly half a million members—families, educators, and community members across the state. We are happy to hear the mention of parent engagement and involvement as that is a key aspect of PTA. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 6.

Families want schools to be safe, welcoming places where all students can learn and succeed. Texas PTA recognizes that clear and consistent discipline policies are an important part of creating a productive classroom environment and supporting teacher retention—one of our top priorities.

When teachers have the tools and support to manage student behavior effectively, they can focus on instruction, which benefits both students and educators. A safe and supportive school environment may also encourage better attendance, as students are more likely to come to school when they feel secure and valued.

At the same time, We do have some concerns, however, we encourage thoughtful implementation must be thoughtful to ensure that special education rights are protected and discipline policies are fair and do not disproportionately impact certain student groups- especially those receiving special education services.

Any changes must help ALL students stay engaged in learning rather than pushing them out of the classroom. Schools must have the flexibility and resources to address behavioral challenges to maintain accountability and opportunity for students.

We also recognize the role of families in supporting positive student behavior, and we encourage efforts that include parents as partners in discipline solutions. When schools and families work together, we can create environments where students thrive.

We appreciate the effort to address this important issue and welcome collaboration to ensure that school discipline policies support student success, teacher retention, and overall school safety.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to working together to support Texas schools.

Daniel Garcia-Prats
Self
HOUSTON, TX

This bill will actively do harm to so many kids including many in my family. This is a betrayal of basic human values to care for all children. How dare our legislature consider abandoning kids instead of making the investments necessary to educate our children and the next generation. This massive divestment from our kids will only have damaging (and expensive) effects in the long term. This is so short sighted and lacks, not only compassion and empathy in any form, but does nothing to improve our education system. Vote no!

Sonya Vinson
Self
Snyder, TX

I worked in the Special Education department in Junior High for 14 years and as an aide in the first and second grade for 2 years. When I think of grown people thinking that suspending early school age children, or suspending homeless children or putting SpEd children in alternative school where they do their school work on computers is a good idea, I wonder at the competency of our leaders.

Rather than suspend children that are acting inappropriately, hire more counselors to help these children; enhance and hire good special education teachers. Show some empathy, these children definitely need help but by only suspending them without supporting them, our school system becomes part of the problem. These children will grow up but what kind of adults will they be?

Sarah McElvain, LMSW

Self; mental health professional and former educator of 15 years

Austin, TX

Texas legislators must VOTE NO to this oppressive and discriminatory bill that would legislate discrimination to children with disabilities and their families. This is not how public education in America works - we work to support all students and we must work to provided better and ADDITIONAL support for our most vulnerable support for both students and training for teachers (whose training is not adequate due to antiquated disciplinary practices that have roots in ABA).

Kea Czempinski

Self

Hutto, TX

Last Tuesday, I waited from 8 a.m. until 1 a.m. to give my testimony. Now, I don't bring this up to complain or divert from the issue that brings us here today but to thank y'all. While many were frustrated, I was captivated. I mention this because I am observant by nature. So for 18 hours, I watched... and watched... and watched—the back and forth, the repeated testimonies filled with regurgitated statistics that I'm sure you've all heard before.

For my testimony today, I want to reframe the conversation so it doesn't get lost in the noise. But let me be clear: I am very much against this bill.

Along with being observant, I have a strong will to learn—an eagerness that was once subdued due to my own experiences in ISS. Fortunately for me (and maybe unfortunately for some of you), I've since honed my research skills. When I heard about HB 6, I didn't want to rely on clickbait or soundbites—I wanted to form my own. So I read it. And from what I see, it's just too broad of a pen stroke, leaving me with some serious questions.

1. What is the goal of having no time limit on ISS?
2. Why does the bill only specify an age limit for OSS (K-2nd grade)? Does this mean seven-year-olds could face unlimited ISS?

I had more questions, but I respect your time—so I researched. And because I know the way you frame a question can influence the results, I made sure to ask the same questions using opposing language to see both sides. Do you know what I found to support school suspension as an effective tool? Nothing. Not a single study. The only sources I could find suggested ISS could be effective—if structured properly. Are we really okay with making policy decisions based on a list of ifs?

What I did find, though, were countless studies on the harm of exclusionary discipline. And do you know which group is most affected? Minorities and economically disadvantaged students. That hits home. My children attend Hutto ISD, where over 43% of students are classified as “economically challenged.” My career is my children.

That's how I met David (not his real name). Last Friday, I had the privilege of driving a car full of kids to the school carnival when I overheard his comment about vodka tasting bad. My first instinct was to judge. But instead of reacting, I was curious. I asked questions. And in that short time, I learned he's had run-ins with Hutto PD and has been in ISS 12–13 times. I know what you're thinking—he sounds like trouble. But the deeper our conversation went, the more I was floored by his ability to analyze, process, and articulate information. You'd never believe this was a student with such a disciplinary record.

Do you know what David's reality is? His primary caregiver is a grandparent. He's watched his parents use controlled substances. During our conversation, David cut in before I could finish my sentence—“If you're about to tell me I'm smart... I've never had someone tell me that before.”

David is an example of the kids that will fall through

Nicole Bartek
self
Pearland, TX

I do not support HB6. The goal of public education is to educate all school aged Texans. Alienating "bad kids" further perpetuates issues with violence and disruption in school. Seeking a solution of safety requires inclusion and funding for all students, not a removal of "bad apples". This bill would impact young children who need more support not less, and has the potential to negatively alter their path leading to more disruption. I worked as a member of the TCHAT program to decrease school violence and can say that these programs and other that provide support are more impactful than "zero tolerance policies". Life is about learning, making amends and trying again, if we don't allow young Texans to try again we are robbing them of a positive future.

Joseph Garcia-Prats
Self
HOUSTON, TX

This is a discriminating bill from a body that should be protecting our most vulnerable children. Reject this HB

Jana Dodd
self
Austin, TX

i AGREE WITH THE TEXAS APPLESEED POSITION IN EVERY SECTION OF THIS BILL.

Suzan Slavsky
Self - Educator
Houston, TX

As an early childhood educator, I strongly oppose this bill. We are taught that children learn best from their social environments. By removing children from their environment, we are not giving them an opportunity to learn the skill/strategy that they need support with. Removing children from their environment does not increase school. This bill discriminates against children and families that are different. This bill is specifically targeting underserved families and children who need stability. For some children, school and their teacher are the only consistent things in their life. I ask you to think critically about what this bill means and how this will harm children.

Elisa Galloway
Self
San Antonio, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education,

I strongly oppose House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned parent in San Antonio , Texas, I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions.

Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. This could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion.

I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).

The key to improving school safety is addressing funding, not imposing undefined expulsions. Texas ranks 43rd in per-student funding, and the \$1.7 billion shortfall in special education needs urgent attention. Without proper funding, schools lack resources to support students who need help.

I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Elisa Galloway

James Cox
Self
Cedar Park, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education,

I strongly oppose House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned parent in Cedar Park,Texas, I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions.

Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. This could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion.

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I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
James Cox
5125479686
Cedar Park, TX

Lisa Flores

selff

Austin, TX

I am a non-attorney advocate supporting students with disabilities and their families in Texas public schools. I have attended hundreds of Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) meetings and have seen firsthand how schools often fail to recognize the connection between disability and behavior, even when the child has a behavior plan and IEP. HB6 expands exclusionary discipline without addressing the root issues—lack of funding for special education, failure to implement behavioral supports, and inconsistencies in how Chapter 37 is applied and lack of personnel and training to be able to implement Chapter 37.

The state has not adequately funded special education to provide meaningful behavioral interventions. Instead of investing in supports that keep students in school, HB6 will push more students—especially those with disabilities—into punitive placements that do not meet their needs. You cannot punish away disability. The introduction of virtual disciplinary programs raises serious concerns about Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), as many students require in-person supports that cannot be provided remotely.

HB6 also assumes that parents can "fix" school behaviors. This is not true for students with disabilities, whose behaviors are often a result of their disability, not parenting. Schools must take responsibility for providing legally required supports, not shift the burden to families. There is nowhere to go for help for many families.

Additionally, this bill lacks critical transparency. There must be mandatory PEIMS reporting for all discretionary removals and required annual public reporting from school boards on discipline data to ensure accountability. Schools must also comply with existing law requiring them to post the name and contact information of the Campus Behavior Coordinator, a requirement that is often ignored. Further, Campus Behavior Coordinators must receive robust training in all areas of disability and the behaviors that may be seen in students with disabilities to ensure they are making informed, legally sound disciplinary decisions. Without proper training, students with disabilities will continue to face inappropriate removals and a lack of meaningful support. Without transparency and accountability, discipline policies will continue to disproportionately harm students with disabilities and marginalized groups.

Finally, the bill's language is dangerously vague, particularly in its references to "significant disruption" and "threats to the immediate health and safety of other students in the classroom." These terms are open to broad interpretation and have historically been used to justify removing students with disabilities from their educational environment, even when no real threat exists. Before expanding discipline, the legislature must ensure that Chapter 37 protections are enforced, discipline data is made public.

Autumn Lauener
Self, MSW Student
Houston, TX

I am writing to encourage the outright rejection of or amendment of HB 6 to take more supportive approaches.

HB 6 reinforces harmful disciplinary practices that target students who need support, not punishment. Many young people - especially those with disabilities, neurodivergent students, BIPOC students, and LGBTQ+ students – are already disproportionately disciplined for behaviors rooted in trauma, unmet needs, and systemic oppression. This cycle of harm perpetuates economic injustices and reinforces harmful cycles that further systemic oppression. This bill expands pathways to exclusion rather than ensuring every student has access to education in an environment that meets their needs with dignity and care.

Punitive approaches do not create safer schools – they push the most marginalized students further to the margins, increasing their risk of harm and criminalization while increasing costs to the state in juvenile justice, mental health care, and lost potential of students. Instead of investing in exclusionary discipline, schools should be equipped with resources that address the root causes of challenges students face instead of investing in punishing them for the difficulties that have led them to act out. Solutions such as mental health care, affirming educational supports, and community based solutions have the potential to address behavioral issues while improving the quality of life of students instead of taking punitive measures designed to further harm our youth. Every child deserves to be met with understanding, not punishment. This bill moves in the wrong direction and should not move forward as it stands – our state needs to focus on policies that foster equity, healing, and belonging instead of furthering harm.

Oppose HB 6 as it stands now – amend it to focus on improving outcomes for students or reject the bill in its entirety for the harm it causes to our students.

Christina Baez
Special Education Teacher
Leander, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education,

I strongly oppose House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned teacher in Leander, Texas, I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions.

Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. This could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion.

I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).

The key to improving school safety is addressing funding, not imposing undefined expulsions. Texas ranks 43rd in per-student funding, and the \$1.7 billion shortfall in special education needs urgent attention. Without proper funding, schools lack resources to support students who need help.

I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Christina Baez
Leander, Texas

Amanda Stuart
Self
Cedar Park, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education,

I strongly oppose House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned parent in [City], Texas, I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions.

Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. This could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion.

I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).

The key to improving school safety is addressing funding, not imposing undefined expulsions. Texas ranks 43rd in per-student funding, and the \$1.7 billion shortfall in special education needs urgent attention. Without proper funding, schools lack resources to support students who need help.

I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
(512) 6088528
Cedar Park, Texas

Bryan Hallmark
Sealy ISD
Sealy, TX

My name is Bryan Hallmark and I am the proud Superintendent of Sealy ISD. Sealy is a rural district of 3,000 students located about 20 miles west of the Houston metropolitan area in Austin County.

Thank you, Chairman Buckley and members of the Education Committee for allowing me the opportunity to testify; Thank you, Chairman Leach and other members, for bringing this bill forward.

I am here on behalf of our students, staff, and parents to testify for House Bill 6. A safe, orderly, and engaging classroom environment is what all students deserve. We owe to teachers to give them the means and support to create such an environment. When we conduct exit interviews, seek feedback via climate and culture surveys, or simply have conversations with students about their classrooms, student discipline, and disruptive classroom behaviors are consistently identified as a challenge among students, staff, and parents.

House Bill 6 gives our teachers and administrators more flexibility to address misbehaviors in the classroom. Additionally, House Bill 6 gives us more tools to navigate unique student discipline challenges in a way that meets the needs of all students and respects our staff. I want to share a situation with you that could have been better addressed under House Bill 6.

Section 3 on page 9 provides for removal to a virtual disciplinary setting when a student would otherwise be expelled to the streets. Austin County does not meet the population requirement for a county Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program (or JJAEP). When we have mandatory expulsions 99% of the time we serve students in our local DAEP because we believe that is better for the student than expelling them to the streets. This past fall we had a student make a serious threat to students at one of our campuses. I have a responsibility to keep our kids safe. In this case, the student was expelled to the streets because I believed serving him at DAEP could have compromised the safety of other students and our staff. That is a decision that I do not take lightly. I worry about what will happen to this young man after his expulsion. Will he continue to get an education? Is he supervised? If he doesn't get an education how will this impact him and our community long term? A virtual placement option would have at least ensured the student continued to progress academically.

Thank you for your time and consideration

Catherine M Garcia-Prats

Self

Houston, TX

We should be helping these children not creating challenges that hurt them. Our children, all children, deserve to be treated with the love, respect and dignity that is their zigs given right.

David Kossey

Self, previous educator of 7 years, spouse of 17+ year educator, HD87 resident against HB3

Stinnett, TX

Chairman Buckley, you feel public schools need to know information about what students do off campus for safety. Do private schools have to have this same required notification? Are mandatory expulsions applicable to private schools?

We know they won't be, nor would they likely need to be due to the difference in support private schools receive and the rules they live under. Not only can they return students to the public school who are disciplinary problems, they likely won't accept them if they have been disciplinary issues in the past.

Applying discipline in a school setting related to what happens outside of school hours, is a failure of law enforcement, courts, and other groups. If a student is a threat to a public school due to their behavior out side of school and now off campus, why are they in public to begin with?

I oppose that portion of HB6, as in, these failures need to be addressed in public law and fixes on behavior issues fixed by policing and courts.

"We've had failures in policing" time and time and time again (Buckley says), so let's pile more problems to be fixed by school districts instead of fix policing and public policy through court systems. This statement and realization alone shows why the Legislature is out of touch with public schools. What happens at 9pm in a child's home or at the city park, isn't a disciplinary action needing to be taken by the district. I'm starting to see clearly why recently graduated 18 year olds take aim at previous school districts in their destructive ways, that may have been the only structure they experienced throughout their childhood. Now, let's add a punishment from the same system when it wasn't even related to the school? How does that even make sense. I suppose it makes sense when someone thinks private gated communities, I mean private schools are the only solution to school's issues. But yet, here you are again, attempting to add more responsibilities to the school.

Public schools are already strapped, with over 80% of U.S. districts reporting staff shortages last year. Now they're supposed to play cop too?

Private schools can just say 'no thanks' to troublemakers, while public schools are legally stuck taking everyone—then get blamed when the system fails. Fair much?

Statewide, Texas has 5.5 million public school students. If we ballpark the per-student funding gap at \$2,700 (inflation loss plus COVID funds drying up), that's \$14.85 billion missing just to keep pace with 2019 levels.

We need discipline, but this bill falls drastically short on how to fix it, and when to fix it with the underfunded, understaffed, underappreciated schools.

Since 2019:

Schools: \$14B-\$17B underfunded since 2019. Biggest hit—static allotments, lost federal cash, and unfunded rules.

Police: \$1B-\$2B short. Increases happened, but inflation and staffing lag behind. Less systemic than schools.

Courts: \$200M-\$400M short. Low priority, low data, low disruption.

MADELINE STEUBING
MYSELF
DEVINE, TX

This bill does not fix the issue of reversing the PBIS and restorative discipline that was in place. Our Elementary kids need to be at recess 2x a day plus lunch recess and PE everyday. This will correct behavior problems. That is proper child development guidelines. Please restructure education to what it was 30 years ago.

Erin Mills
Parent Advocacy
Cuero, TX

My name is Erin Mills, and I am writing to you as both a parent and an advocate for children with disabilities. I want to share my family's story—not just for my son, but for the countless other students across Texas who face similar injustices.

A year ago, my son—an excellent student, football team leader, and respected community member—borrowed my car for morning practice. Later that day, a drug-sniffing dog detected half of a Xanax pill in the vehicle. My son had no idea it was there. It was my legally prescribed medication. But none of that mattered to the school. Without a true investigation, without considering the facts or my son's disability, they had already decided his fate—placement in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP).

This was a child with no prior discipline issues, yet he suddenly faced potential felony charges. Instead of a fair process, the school conducted a Manifestation Determination Review (MDR) that was a mere formality. The decision had been made before we even entered the room. They ignored my son's documented PTSD—caused by abuse in a classroom as a young child. They ignored the evidence, including the prescription proving the medication was legally mine. They ignored common sense.

With no choice, we pulled our son out of school and filed for expedited due process. After six months of fighting, our case was finally heard. The evidence was undeniable, and the decision was overturned. My son was allowed to return to school.

But the damage was done. It was his senior year. Because the district failed to follow IDEA and the MDR process, my son missed his senior events, his last football season, and memories he can never get back. His future was thrown into chaos, not because of his actions, but because the school ignored the very protections that IDEA provides for students with disabilities.

The MDR process is not a technicality—it is a vital safeguard. It ensures that schools consider a child's disability before imposing life-changing punishments. If my son—an athlete, a role model—could have his future jeopardized so easily, what happens to children who lack the resources to fight back?

You make decisions that impact every child in Texas. If this were your child, your grandchild, your niece, nephew, or sibling—wouldn't you want them to have a fair review before their education was taken away? Wouldn't you want their disability considered before being placed in a system that often fails vulnerable students?

I urge you to protect the rights of students with disabilities and ensure the MDR process remains a key safeguard in our education system. Every child deserves a fair chance. Every child deserves an education.

Thank you.

Jordan Pacelli Everett
Prevention Institute
Houston, TX

My name is Jordan Pacelli Everett. I'm a licensed social worker in the state of Texas, and live in Houston. I work for Prevention Institute, a national public health organization. We coordinate the Houston-region based Communities of Care initiative which brings together community members to address a wide range of needs related to mental health and wellbeing for children. I am writing to oppose multiple provisions in House Bill 6.

School districts need limits on in-school suspensions. Not putting a limit on in-school suspensions will cause students to fall behind academically and create disconnection from their teachers and peers. This bill section should be amended to include a 10-day limit.

A preschooler should never be suspended. Suspending children as young as pre-school - second grade (children ages 3-7) will do nothing but cause long-term mental and behavioral health challenges for these young learners. Disruptiveness is a normal part of development for very young children. Teachers need access to high quality training for supporting their students as well as more social workers in schools to help with students who need more hands-on support/who can help address the underlying causes of the behavior.

Virtual DAEP will not work. We have well-documented research on the impact of virtual DAEP and its failures from virtual school during the COVID-19 pandemic. The learning losses from the days of virtual classrooms have lingered on years later. Additionally, behavioral issues arose when students returned from home-learning to the classroom, so it would be ineffective to send students struggling with those issues into a virtual setting.

Teachers need our support. The state must equip teachers with professional development opportunities to empower them to prevent and resolve issues in the classroom from escalating in serious matters rather than the "solution" being classroom removal. Black and Brown students and students with disabilities are overrepresented in suspensions, arrests, expulsions, and other exclusionary discipline practices across Texas. At Houston ISD, only 25% of the student population is Black, but Black students make up nearly 50% of out-of-school suspensions and 43% of referrals to DAEP. 87% of disciplinary actions were due to Code of Conduct violations, NOT fights or drug-related incidents.

I support Section 2 provision to repeal mandatory DAEP for vaping. Charging students criminally and sending them to DAEP because they vaped on campus does nothing to address the issue. Students must be provided with mental health support to address why they are turning to vaping and other substances.

Enduring harsh disciplinary action not only puts students behind in school, it has devastating, long-term impacts on their mental health and ability to thrive in society. Texas must do right by our students. I appreciate your consideration.

Jordan Pacelli Everett, jordan@preventioninstitute.org

Rodney Casey, Mr
Shackelford County Republican chairman
Albany, TX

This applies to HB610 not HB6.

ISD superintendent receive a generous salary compared to a lot of taxpayers. six months severance pay is sufficient.

Kristen Holland Shear, Mrs.
Self, Communications Director
Richardson, TX

Disruptive students must not be allowed to continuously disrupt the learning of other students or risk the safety of teachers, students or other staff members. Schools must be permitted to implement immediate intervention in situations where a student's presence in the classroom causes substantial risk of harm to students or teachers. Thank you for championing this legislation to modify the TEC Chapter 37 so that local school districts can more effectively handle student discipline.

Sara Reeves
Self
Round Rock, TX

I oppose HB6 in its current form. Many provisions of this bill are not in the best interest of students, families, or teachers.

In particular, I am concerned that this bill adds a disruption exception for out-of-school suspension for students as young as pre-Kindergarten. Children in these early grades are still actively building their brain structure. For young children, building executive function skills and self regulation is literally what school is for. In this classroom setting with the support of a well-trained teacher, young children learn how to sit still, express their emotions, interact with their peers, etc. While learning these skills, they may stumble. Out-of-school suspension is not the solution. In fact, more instruction is needed. For some students, that additional instruction may rise to the level of special education or other services that the school can provide.

The issue being resolved is not the “disruption” caused by these young children; rather this a bandaid on underfunded schools with too-high student-to-teacher ratios. Many of these young children would thrive in smaller classrooms with well-trained and experienced teachers. Increased funding for public schools is a solution. Out-of-school suspension for children is not.

In addition to this change to public school disciplinary measures, I would like to highlight these other problem changes in this bill:

- Unlimited in-school suspension is dangerous. Without limits, students can be kept away from a learning environment, falling further behind academically. These students are more likely to disengage from academics and are more likely to drop-out.
- More off-campus offenses resulting in mandatory removal to DAEP. Students can find themselves punished at school for an alleged offense they did not commit. Off-campus offenses are adjudicated through the juvenile justice system and schools should leave the response to these situations to that system.
- Virtual DAEPs. Pandemic-era virtual schooling has resulted in documented learning loss and behavioral challenges from which we have not rebounded. Virtual learning during a global pandemic was unavoidable; virtual DAEPs are entirely avoidable. It makes no sense to send children with documented behavioral issues to a form of learning documented to result in detrimental outcomes, particularly for behavior challenges.

Eve Margolis
Self
Austin, TX

This bill doesn't offer a solution for discipline issues, it creates more problems. Addressing behaviors that can have a variety of causes such as: maturity, family problems often stemming from economic issues, societally driven problems, and health issues including hunger, issues that are exacerbated by decisions made by this same body will make the school to prison pipeline begin at 4 years old. If this is the only path to addressing discipline you have, you aren't asking the experts. Absolute no!

Travis Motal, Chief if Schools Liberty Hill ISD
TASA / Liberty Hill ISD
Liberty Hill, TX

I am in favor of this bill. Specifically I am in favor of allowing schools to assign more than 3 days of ISS for an offense. I am in favor to allowing schools schools to give school consequences for felonies that occur off campus. I am in favor of allowing schools to OSS student below 3rd grade for more serious offenses. I am in favor to set up a process for the courts to give schools relief when special education students behavior is so severe. This bill will greatly help schools assign better consequences to protect the safety and learning environment for those students and staff who are there to learn and teach. Thank you.

Desaray Granzow
Self - Stay At Home Mom
Leander, TX

Dear Committee on Public Education Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned parent in Leander, Texas, I believe this bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language and overreaching discipline policies.

The provision in Section 1., (c), (3), which allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption," lacks clear definitions for "disruption" and "significant," putting students as young as 5-8 years old at risk. Such vague terms can lead to punitive actions against children who are still developing their behavior and may not account for underlying disabilities.

Moreover, HB6 risks violating the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) by failing to properly address the needs of students with disabilities, who are often diagnosed during the K-2 years. Behavioral issues at these ages can be early signs of such needs, not reasons for expulsion. And students of all ages who have an IEP should have their ARD Committee review appropriate supports and ensure their IEP is being followed in any instance where discipline is at question.

I speak from experience when I tell you this is a huge factor and risk. Not following a child's IEP is a key factor in spiking behaviors. But when teachers lack resources that proper funding would provide, these mistakes occur at a higher rate. When Public Schools are underfunded so significantly, securing the skilled workforce is harder and harder.

Improving safety - for teachers AND students - lies in 2 areas: 1. Funding and 2. Informed, supported environments. 1. Texas must address both the basic allotment funding as Texas is 43rd in the nation in per student funding and the \$1.7 billion annual shortfall in special education funding, which has been neglected for years. Without proper funding, schools are left with larger class sizes, higher ratios in all areas, and fewer resources to support students who need help. 2. Having informed practices where students are taught regulation skills, and teachers are educated on responsiveness both in recognizing basic, emotional, or disability needs proactively reduces unwanted behaviors. Having protected recess times and lunch times is also key. These are polar opposite the logic that harsh discipline equals compliance. The reality is, behavior is communication of needs. You can accelerate expulsions, but those needs will continue to increase exponentially the more neglected public schools and our teachers and students in them are.

I urge the committee to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and address funding shortfalls in public education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Desaray Granzow

Bill King
Self. Retired Juvenile Court Judge
Austin, TX

I am a retired judge. I presided over Juvenile Court cases for over 20 years, involving tens of thousands of juveniles.

Here is the problem with most of this bill. I do not know the heartfelt intent of the author, but I do know that, in practice, bills like this always end up disproportionately affecting poor kids and minority kids. It was extremely rare (almost nonexistent) for a white, middle-class/rich kid to show up in Juvenile Court for a school related offense.

On the flip side, making non-school related behavior subject to school discipline repeats the same problem. Wealthier families can pay for the shoplifted or damaged property or pay for private treatment for drug/behavior issues. This bill would allow, even require, that poor kids be shuttled to the justice system where they can suffer long term lost opportunity consequences and be subjected to restrictions of their freedom not warranted by the behavior. And all of this unnecessary intervention is paid for by Texas taxpayers.

Better to let the schools control their environment and the justice system handle community misbehavior.

Robyn Honig
Self
Austin, TX

I oppose HB 6. This bill targets special-ed, low-income, and Black and brown children, who already tend to be given the harshest penalties for their behavior at school, making it easier for them to not receive an education (while also defunding their schools, which receive money based on attendance). It would make restorative justice harder for those who just need guidance. Do the bill's sponsors understand how under-educating and criminalizing their neighbors' children would harm our society as a whole?

Lisa Meysembourg, Mrs.
Woodville ISD
Woodville, TX

I strongly support this bill and its efforts to ensure safe classrooms for all students. As a superintendent in a small rural school district, we are seeing increasing numbers of students with social, emotional, and behavioral issues at younger ages. While schools are tasked with doing more and more, we are unfortunately losing sight of our purpose -which is educating students. Disruptive, aggressive and violent behaviors cannot be tolerated in classrooms as it not only inteferes with the learning of others, it puts our students and staff at risk. We allow the "rights" of such students to override the right of all students to a quality education in a safe learning environment. Educators are trained in classroom management and pedagogy but are not licensed behavioral specialsists. Districts need funding support to hir specialists and provide intervention supports and programs for behavior management. As a small district in a small rural county, we do not have a JJAEP or any other resources to support our most severe behavioral students other than DAEP. This is not appropriate as we are putting students with lesser infractions, such as vaping with violent, aggressive students who endanger themselves and others and yet expulsion to the streets would be our only other option. This cannot continue as we cannot continue to put our staff and students in harms way. And parent accountability and involvement in these types of situations must be improved. While we encourage parents to be partners in their child's educational process, they also have a responsibility to ensure their child is appropriately and productively participating and yet schools are being blamed more and more for not doing enough or even "causing" these behaviors - which is not true. It is time to hold parents more accountable for their child's behavior and attendance. Therefore local districts need to have the flexibility to address each student's behavior and needs based on a larger picture of what is best for ALL instead of the one. This bill supports that by removing the limits to suspend under the age of 10 and for homeless students who exhibit extreme behaviors; clarifying the rules of ISS and OSS suspensions; allowing removal for serious behavioral concerns whenever and wherever they occur, providing a virtual disciplinary option versus expulsion to the streets, and providing an avenue for judicial removal of dangerous students from school. Even these supports though are limited in time and supports therefore I also support the implementation of a specialized behavioral treatment education programs (BTEP) as proposed, which would ensure additional funding and behavioral supports for those students and families who need it the most. Our students are our future and we cannot continue to put them at risk by not providing them quality educational opportunities in a safe, risk free environment.

Rolinda Schmidt
Texas Association of School Boards
AUSTIN, TX

Chair Buckley, Vice Chair Bernal, and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Texas Association of School Boards (TASB), thank you for your commitment to ensuring every Texas student has access to a safe, high-quality public education.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments in support of House Bill 6 related to discipline in public schools. We would also like to extend a special thanks to Chairman Leach and the sixty-four joint-authors and co-authors of this important legislation.

The need to revise laws governing school discipline has been driven by a troubling trend of increasing disciplinary infractions, including assaults by students on school district staff and other students. It has been noted that one of the primary causes driving good teachers out of the profession is the severity and frequency of assaults on teachers. Moreover, parents expect their children will be provided a safe and orderly learning environment at school each day. Teachers, administrators, and school boards work diligently to ensure the safety of our students and staff, but we need the help of this committee and the legislature as a whole.

For the 2023-2024 school year, the Texas Education Agency reported 3,350 assaults on district employees, a 37% increase over the previous year, and 81 aggravated assaults on district employees, a 31% increase over the previous year. Overall, there were 54,303 incidents of fighting/mutual combat and 1,090,755 violations of local codes of conduct.

It is essential that we take a step to reverse this trend, and that school districts are provided with the tools to ensure students can learn without disruption. Thankfully, HB 6 provides flexibility and mechanisms school districts need to establish order in the classroom.

The bill ensures that students who commit violent offenses, such as murder or sexual assault, even if the offenses does not occur on a school campus or property, be subject to mandatory expulsion in the same manner as if the offense occurred on school property. HB 6 establishes a requirement that students be removed to a virtual DAEP in those circumstances in which no other placement is available through an in-person DAEP or JJAEP.

The bill also provides flexibility for districts to address more severe threats by removing the requirement that students who use, sell or deliver an e-cigarette be removed to DAEPs and allowing for greater local control for the use of in-school and out-of-school suspensions when conduct threatens the immediate health and safety of students in the classroom.

We stand ready to assist Chairman Leach and members to ensure that any refinements to the bill help to make certain that school districts are properly supported to successfully implement the bill.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support for HB 6 and please do not hesitate to reach out to Kelly Rasti with TASB Governmental Relations if you have any questions or require additional information.

Yulissa Chavez
The Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Austin, TX

Hello Chair and Committee,

My name is Yulissa Chavez and I am here to represent the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities (CTD). CTD works to ensure that persons with disabilities may work, live, learn, play and participate fully in the community of their choice. CTD disagrees with the removal of 3 days of ISS, opposes pre k-2 removal for “disruption” and in support of eliminating mandatory DAEPs for e-cigarettes.

While ensuring safety and appropriate behavior in schools is important, this bill presents several shortcomings and raises serious concerns, particularly for students with disabilities.

One of the most alarming aspects of this bill is the provision allowing schools to file civil actions for the removal of students with disabilities from their current educational setting through alternative placement. This could have severe implications for these students, who often rely on the stability and specialized resources provided in their usual educational environments. Schools are given the power to remove these students if they believe the student's presence is substantially likely to result in physical harm. However, the criteria and evidence required for such a drastic measure are insufficiently defined, potentially leading to misuse or misinterpretation. Students with disabilities may exhibit behaviors related to their conditions, and without proper understanding and intervention in place, these behaviors could be misclassified as threats, unjustly leading to their removal. Furthermore, while alternative placements may promise continued educational services, the quality and appropriateness of these services in a new setting, especially in virtual programs, is questionable. Students with disabilities often require individualized attention and specialized instruction—something that a virtual or different alternative setting might not adequately provide. This bill could inadvertently increase the marginalization of students with disabilities, emphasizing exclusion and discipline over understanding. We must ensure that all students, particularly those who are most vulnerable, receive the support they need to thrive within their educational environments. I urge you to consider these implications deeply and vote to protect the rights and education of our students with disabilities by eliminating the provision of the removal of 3 days of ISS, and oppose pre-k-2 removal for “disruption”. Thank you.

Bryan Allen
self; public educator
Clyde, TX

I support this bill. Thank you for your consideration.

Emily Kaszczuk
Self/parent
Leander, TX

HB 6 prioritizes expelling students over empowering parents, teachers, and students to reach their full potential. Rather than addressing root causes, it relies on removal as a blanket solution—lumping serious infractions with minor discipline issues, despite a lack of basic resources in Texas schools.

The funding crisis has lead to teacher turnover, restricting districts abilities to update their practices in response to needs, higher child-to-special education teacher and school psychologist ratios, teacher burnout, and more disabled children with unmet educational needs.

We want to create a positive school climate where teachers and students have their needs met. Instead of addressing the root cause of discipline issues, this bill shifts decision-making from parents to judges while burdening schools with costly legal and alternative education expenses. Research shows that isolating students with behavioral challenges doesn’t improve outcomes—it often makes them worse.

Supporting this bill contradicts support for parental rights, teacher resources, and better student outcomes.

John Casner
Self, Licensed Psychological Associate
Austin, TX

I am writing to express my concern and opposition to House Bill 6. I am a licensed psychological associate, recently retired, who has provided service to students and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) for 50 years. I have a master's degree in education from Texas State with a dual major in psychology and special education. I was Assistant Chief Psychologist at the Austin State School, now the Austin State Supported Living Center, for 10 years. In private practice I have provided behavioral and psychological services through the Home and Community Based Services, a Medicaid Waiver program, for more than 30 years. For approximately 15 years I worked with a nationally recognized consulting team, providing services to 9 different states regarding decreasing dangerous behavior and effectively addressing behavioral and psychiatric disorders for children and adults with IDD. I have consulted with and provided training to staff at Austin, Pflugerville, and Round Rock ISDs.

The measures proposed in HB6 will not provide the services these students need to be able to be as independent and productive as possible, while decreasing dangerous behavior to others and themselves. These students are not disposable. People who work in the field know that even the most significant behavioral challenges can be effectively addressed to decrease dangerous behavior and improve their quality of life. Is it an easily achieved task? Of course not. It takes comprehensive assessment (behavioral, psychiatric, medical, environmental, and more), adequate supervision to prevent dangerous behavior, and adequate behavioral and psychiatric intervention. And it takes time for learning to occur from ongoing training and effective, evidence-based interventions. Online services, without significant hands-on supports, cannot achieve these outcomes. My experience in Texas and other states is that "alternative" educational environments may be necessary to manage dangerous behavior for short periods of time, but public schools with adequate resources and staff training, with a comprehensive team approach, including the family, provides the best opportunity to effectively meet the needs of these challenging students.

Respectfully Submitted,
John A. Casner, M.Ed.

Susan Molitor
Self
Houston, TX

Please carefully consider that children with disabilities need protection and understanding of their unique circumstances. Lumping them in with children who have severe behavioral issues unrelated to a disability is not likely to benefit them but rather make those behaviors worse. I feel this is a very slippery slope you are starting to slide down. It is our duty to protect children, not make their circumstances worse making it nearly impossible for them to improve their behavior or learn properly.

Leslie Winters
Self
Round Rock, TX

Let's add the TEA and the senate.

Tina Lincoln
Self, Hill County Juvenile Probation Department Chief
Hillsboro, TX

I support most of what is written into HB 6 but would like to specifically address opposition and concerns regarding virtual education. In HB 6, school districts will have the opportunity to provide virtual instruction for students who are expelled within their districts. As a JJAEP Administrator, I have significant concerns about virtual education, as I was the administrator during the Covid epidemic and witnessed the struggles of educating students while holding them accountable for their behaviors. Although I recognize schools may need alternatives, there would be concern that school districts may use this measure as a way to not address those behaviors, especially when the student will eventually return to school. One advantage of DAEP and, more specifically, JJAEPs are the interventions which are provided to students. It would be beneficial to clearly state that a county that operates a mandatory or discretionary JJAEP must utilize the established JJAEP and not be allowed virtual instruction, unless space is not available within the JJAEP classroom (determined by the JJAEP Administrator). With public safety in mind, being able to educate students in person will allow for students to be held accountable for their behavior, provide tools and opportunities for true support and rehabilitation and ensure our students are educated, further reducing the likelihood of behaviors leading to delinquency. Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Beatrice Marquez
Self, Education
Houston, TX

We cannot continue to skirt issues with heavy handedness for youth who need mental supports and personalized academic interventions to help them succeed in school.

Jennifer Williams
Me
Weatherford, TX

Against

Catherine Garcia-Prats, Mrs.
Self
Houston, TX

I am vehemently AGAINST this Bill. Without the proper resources, struggling children who need a little extra support, will never have a chance of becoming functional members of society. We can not pretend these kids don't exist. We can not pretend isolating them from proper education and socialization is the answer. If anything we should be putting more resources into these programs for these kids. Please do not vote yes to this Bill!

Tim Garcia-Prats
Self
Houston, TX

A bill that not only grossly ignores the root cause of the issue it's attempting to address, but will actively make the problem worse. This bill not only attacks the poor & minority population, but also those families who have children with behavioral issues. Forcing poor students to do online school requires either a parent/guardian to stay at home. This in most cases is not possible for obvious reasons (i.e. parent is working). You're forcing marginalized students/families to become even more marginalized. While I believe this is the real effect the bill is attempting to have I need to make it clear in case you're complete negligence to this issue is somehow genuine. The bill lacks any understanding of child development and nurturement. This bill will most likely lead to children entering into the "system", which studies show puts them on a path towards prison later in life. Grow up and stop forcing your cowardly agenda onto children and their families. Vote no.

Leslie Winters
Self
Round Rock, TX

No. No virtual school.

James Garcia-Prats
self
Houston, TX

I am writing to share my adamant disagreement with this bill. Zero tolerance does not work and has been proven to not work on an academic and disciplinary level. The Texas Tribune shared that, "the U.S. Department of Education and the Department of Justice have issued studies stating that zero-tolerance policies do not make schools safer, and instead discriminatorily criminalize and harm Black and Hispanic students, as well as students with disabilities." The damage this bill will do to our students and schools is insurmountable. You are policing schools like you police the streets and students of color are the ones who will feel this more than any other population of students. We need to be able to help all of our students and instead of just kicking them out of the schools, we work to provide better support for them, the school and their families. This bill will only have a negative impact on our students, families and communities.

Tracy Hanes
Self
Victoria, TX

As a strong advocate for the tried-and-true classical model of education, limited government, and local control, I am AGAINST HB 6 because it fails to address the root causes of discipline issues in public schools and introduces vague, subjective language that could lead to unintended consequences.

The first priority should be to repeal restorative practices in public education. These ineffective policies have undermined classroom management, removed consequences for bad behavior, and eroded campus climate. We must return to tried-and-true discipline practices that empower teachers, restore order, and create safe learning environments.

Additionally, virtual schooling and programs have been proven harmful and destructive to children. Expanding DAEP to include virtual online programs is not a solution—it is another failed experiment that isolates students and deprives them of structure and accountability.

While I firmly believe in strong discipline and high behavioral standards, this bill contains broad and vague language that could be misapplied or weaponized:

- No limit on in-school suspension days – This opens the door to indefinite suspensions with no clear path to resolution.
- Gives district courts the power to suspend or expel students without following the established standards of Chapter 37 – This bypasses necessary due process protections.
- Allows district courts to extend expulsions or suspensions – No clear limitations or guidelines are provided.
- Removes Chapter 37 protections requiring that behavior occur on school grounds – This means students could be suspended or expelled for incidents that occur off-campus, at any time, for any reason, solely at the discretion of a court.

Discipline should be fair, consistent, and focused on maintaining order in schools—not an arbitrary or subjective system that varies from case to case.

We must repeal ineffective restorative practices, reject virtual disciplinary programs, and ensure discipline policies are clear, consistent, and protect both students and educators. HB 6 does not accomplish this and should be opposed.

For Liberty,
Tracy Hanes

Tracey Bleakley
Self- teacher
Georgetown, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education,

I strongly oppose House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned parent and in Georgetown , Texas, I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions.

Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. This could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion.

I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).

The key to improving school safety is addressing funding, not imposing undefined expulsions. Texas ranks 43rd in per-student funding, and the \$1.7 billion shortfall in special education needs urgent attention. Without proper funding, schools lack resources to support students who need help.

I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Tracey Bleakley

Ana O'Quin
Girls Empowerment Network
Austin, TX

My name is Ana O'Quin, and I am submitting this testimony on HB 6 on behalf of Girls Empowerment Network. Girls Empowerment Network is an organization that works with youth and girls to teach them the skills they need to thrive and increase their self-efficacy, which is their belief in their ability to succeed, and our flagship programming – Radiant G, takes place in campuses across central Texas in Austin, Houston, and Dallas. This includes programming in public schools, private schools, private schools, and also alternative placement programs (DAEP's).

Our direct work with youth, and direct feedback from youth on our policy priorities for this session, has taught us that students never thrive with an increase in both in school suspension and campus removal. Our youth instead recommend trauma-informed, restorative based responses to behaviors that will help them successfully return to the classroom ready to learn. In light of this reality, we recommend the following amendments on HB 6:

Section 1 – amend limit on in-school suspension to no time limit to 10 days. Limiting ISS to 10 days is a reasonable compromise to support school districts while also ensuring students don't spend months away from their classrooms where they can connect with their peers, and return to their academic endeavors.

Section 1 – remove disruption exception expansion to preK-2nd grade. Early childhood is a pivotal time in a student's development, and beginning classroom removals at this age could directly impact the school to prison pipeline crisis in Texas.

Section 2 – Girls Empowerment Network applauds the repeal of mandatory removal to DAEP for e-cigarettes. The rise in vaping due to stress, mental health, and marketing for youth is troubling, yet we understand that removal from school does not address the root problem of students turning to vaping as coping skill. Instead, we support broad, substance use prevention programs in public schools.

Section 3-7 – Girls Empowerment Network opposes the creation of virtual DEAP's. As a body of research has proven with COVID, virtual learning is both difficult for student's mental health and ineffective for their academic growth.

Additional recommendation: we recommend professional development for teachers on behavior management. We applaud the legislature's efforts to address teacher pay and teacher shortages, and also acknowledge that this work can be bolstered by giving teachers the tools they need to address the ever changing landscape of youth needs.

Amber Fusca
Self
Spring, TX

While ensuring the safety of teachers and classrooms is essential, HB6 poses a risk to disproportionately harm autistic students who are already underserved or denied services by school districts. Many districts throughout our state fail to provide adequate support, leading to behaviors that are often misunderstood (and completely preventable) rather than appropriately addressed. A few years ago my autistic son would have been considered a "dangerous student". He is not violent or aggressive by nature, but the school's failure to meet his needs led to severe behavioral struggles. Once we won our due process case and the district was required to provide the appropriate services, his behavior completely changed--he has not had a single behavioral issue since. My son's case is unfortunately not unique. Without safeguards, HB6 could be used to punish students like my son instead of ensuring they receive the interventions they need. Any legislation addressing school safety must also consider the systemic failures in special education and protect students from policies that could further marginalize them rather than support them.

Monica Sullivan
Block House Creek PTA
Leander, TX

I strongly oppose House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned parent in Leander, Texas, I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions.

Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. This could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion.

I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).

The key to improving school safety is addressing funding, not imposing undefined expulsions. Texas ranks 43rd in per-student funding, and the \$1.7 billion shortfall in special education needs urgent attention. Without proper funding, schools lack resources to support students who need help.

I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Monica Sullivan
Block House Creek PTA

Lisa Healy
Self
Midlothian, TX

This is a terrible bill and should not be voted out of committee. It in no way helps with accountability and discipline. Another education bill that creates more government and bigger budgets requiring more taxes.

Georgianne Warnock, Dr.
Terrell ISD
Terrell, TX

There is a great need in our school districts for what this bill provides. We are in full support of this bill. Thank you.

Elaine Branagh
self
Austin, TX

I am against this bill and in particular:

- 1) Unlimited in-school suspension. Ten days should be enough time to put together a plan.
 - 2) Pre-K to 2nd grad disruption exception expansion does not help children at the age. Instead we should provide more help for teachers to manage struggling little kids.
 - 3) Great to repeal removal to DAEP for vaping but kids need to be educated on the particular harms of vaping & be given help in stopping. My brother died in 2024 of idiopathic lung disease clearly caused by his years of vaping - a habit he sadly took up thinking it would be better than smoking!
 - 4) DAEP should not be automatically applied for off campus offenses particularly when guilt has yet to be proven. Kids in these situations need the structure of school all the more.
 - 5) Virtual teaching proved to be less than ideal during the pandemic for kids that weren't struggling. There is no logic to using virtual teaching for these kids.
 - 6) Expanding the reach of state statues by codifying the Honig injunction process simply adds unnecessary bureaucracy.
- In summary, we should focus our efforts on helping teachers by providing additional training, the time off to take that training and most importantly smaller class sizes along with additional help in the classroom to help manage children with issues.
-

David Kossey

Self, previous educator of 7 years, spouse of 17+ year educator, HD87 resident against HB3
Stinnett, TX

Changes Needed: Texas House Bill 6 (HB 6) aims to enhance school safety through restraint oversight but requires adjustments for legal, cost, and efficacy concerns. First, replace the five-day per-incident reporting requirement with quarterly aggregate reports (e.g., total incidents by category, not individual details). This cuts statewide costs from \$540,000 to \$192,000 annually and ensures compliance with FERPA by de-identifying student data, avoiding privacy violations that could trigger federal penalties. Add explicit language mandating FERPA adherence. Second, address the unfunded mandate risk under the Texas Constitution by appropriating \$200 per district annually (\$240,000 total) for reporting or exempting small districts (under 1,000 students) to reduce legal exposure and financial strain. Third, refine the grant program by targeting funds to 600 high-need districts (above median restraint rates), lowering costs from \$4.32 million to \$2.52 million yearly. Mandate evidence-based training (e.g., CPI-certified) with a focus on de-escalation and positive behavior strategies, not just restraint, to reduce incidents and limit liability under due process laws (e.g., 14th Amendment claims). Finally, require TEA to analyze data for racial or disability disparities, per Title VI and IDEA, and report training outcomes annually for accountability, ensuring equity and effectiveness.

State Cost Offsets: The state should fully fund the grant program at \$2.52 million annually through legislative appropriations, prioritizing high-need districts to maximize impact and equity. For reporting, a \$240,000 yearly appropriation (\$200/district) covers staff time, easing burdens on districts, especially smaller ones with tight budgets. If appropriations fail, districts might tap federal IDEA funds (\$1-2 million potentially) for training, though this isn't guaranteed. Long-term, de-escalation training could reduce restraint incidents by 20% (per national studies), dropping reporting costs to \$150,000 and training to \$2 million, yielding a total of \$2.2 million annually, enhancing sustainability.

Benefits: These changes save \$168,000 to \$2.33 million yearly versus the original, making HB 6 fiscally responsible. Legal compliance with FERPA, due process, and equity laws reduces lawsuit risks (e.g., from misuse of restraint or discrimination). Districts gain cost-effective, high-quality training, cutting reliance on restraint and improving safety, especially for vulnerable students (e.g., special education, minorities). TEA's oversight via disparity analysis and outcome reporting ensures accountability and addresses systemic issues, aligning with Texas's educational priorities. Students benefit from safer, less punitive school environments, fostering better outcomes.

Melissa Collins
Self (Teacher)
Euless, TX

As a mom with students in HEB ISD, and as a teacher in that district, I see daily how valuable our public schools are to our children, and how dangerous the false so-called "competition" of vouchers would be. Education is a game of what I, as a math teacher, think of as exponential compounding. Small, incremental improvements--in methodology, in curriculum, in interventions--add up over the course of a child's life to exponentially greater success.

But while I and my colleagues work tirelessly to help children, we cannot be expected to do so for free. Developing extracurriculars that keep kids engaged, and curriculum that is challenging and vertically aligned, and alternative schools that reinforce appropriate behavior--all of these require money. We have an excellent administrative staff that uses all the tools available, and would welcome any additional flexibility from HB 6. But an in-school suspension program, or our DAEP, are only effective if they are adequately staffed. And of course it is far better to motivate students to avoid such issues in the first place, or to provide early interventions that help children learn to moderate their behavior. Which requires money.

Vouchers take that needed money, the money that should go to to help all kids, and send it to private schools for with no oversight and no responsibility to the neediest. As a public school teacher, we are here to serve ANY child that lives in our area. The more needy that child, the more costly the interventions--and the less likely that child would be allowed to attend a private school.

Vouchers therefore are not in the public interest. It is best for Texas if that money continues to flow to public schools, where we can continue to use it carefully to help our most needy young Texans--and ALL our children--prepare to become the best versions of themselves and the future Texas needs. Say no to vouchers!

Whitney Aswell
Self, speech pathologist and dyslexia specialist
Richardson, TX

I am asking you to vote no to the school vouchers bill. Our tax dollars should stay in our public-school system that serves all Texas children, including the kids that need it the most. It ensures they have access to the kind of education that grows the Texans of the future. Neighborhood public schools are the glue that helps hold our communities together and funding them only serves all of us versus the select few.

As a speech pathologist and dyslexia therapist, I am concerned that my students will not get the instruction and education they need due to a lack of resources. My son has an IEP for a language and articulation disorder. My daughter has a 504. They deserve for my tax dollars to stay in the public schools they are attending. This vote impacts the lives of many people. Please consider those who don't fit the cookie cutter mold.

Charlotte A Saenz
Myself
Baytown, TX

Until we have discipline back in schools, our education system will continue to fail. Plain and simple...

Claire Maciques
Claire's Longarm Quilting
Bastrop, TX

I am strongly against the HB. It takes needed money away from public schools and supports private interest groups and not our students!!! Oppose this bill and stand up for Texas school children! Support our public schools!!

Jamie Haynes
Texans Wake Up
Canyon, TX

I am in support of HB6 by Rep. Leach and encourage all members to vote FOR the bill. I am in support of HB 6 because it...

1. Enhances School Safety: By mandating disciplinary action for serious offenses (e.g., threats, harassment, drug-related incidents), the bill helps protect students and staff.
2. Clearer Guidelines: It provides schools with specific rules on when alternative disciplinary placements like DAEPs are required, creating consistency across districts.
3. Focuses on Serious Conduct: While limiting suspensions for very young students, it ensures older students face consequences for dangerous behaviors (actions should have consequences).
4. Supports School Staff: It addresses harassment or threats against school employees directly. Our educators should always feel safe and never in danger.

Please vote FOR HB 6.

Eve Margolis
Self
Austin, TX

This bill doesn't offer a solution for discipline issues, it creates more problems. Addressing behaviors that can have a variety of causes such as: maturity, family problems often stemming from economic issues, societally driven problems, and health issues including hunger, issues that are exacerbated by decisions made by this same body will make the school to prison pipeline begin at 4 years old. If this is the only path to addressing discipline you have, you aren't asking the experts. Absolute no!

margaret Williams
self
Austin, TX

opposed to this bill

Crystal Johnston
Self
Lubbock, TX

Please listen to the wide range of your constituents and vote NO for HB3. Parents from across the spectrum are begging you to vote no. From homeschool to public school parents, none of us are in favor. In my mind, your ultimate responsibility is to represent your constituents and vote according to our desires, but I see Gov Abbott and the Senate completely ignoring us. I believe the only population who would benefit is private school families who would receive a discount. The vouchers wouldn't cover the cost of private school, and the gap between tuition and vouchers would eliminate low and middle income families. At the same time, it would take money from public education which is already hemorrhaging money since Abbott has not released money to them in years. Who does he hurt when he holds money ransom? Our kids! Public schools are operating without basic needs such as adequate plumbing. My son has taken a cold shower for three years at Lubbock High School's athletic facilities because they don't have hot water. Sometimes following early morning practice his hair actually freezes between the field house and school. We can do better, especially when we have a budget surplus! Despite inadequate resources, heroes (teachers and principals) go to the public schools every day and do their best to educate our children and prepare them for their future despite Gov Abbott and his cronies doing everything in their power to cut them off at their knees. They are actively trying to make public education fail. I am watching and I will NEVER again vote for anyone who votes affirmatively for the HB3. Take care of our children and our future! Fund public schools and support democracy.

pauline Agulefo
DISD/SELF-PUBLIC SCHOOL Clinician
SEAGOVILLE, TX

Please, I am asking member of the House Committee on Public Education to vote NO on HB6.

Rebecca Fowler
Mental Health America of Greater Houston
Houston, TX

Bill Section 2: Support and Amend: Add Drug Education, Prevention, and Intervention Measures

Vaping among young people has increased due to factors such as stress, mental health issues, social media, and targeted marketing. This has become a serious issue. However, removing students to DAEPs and criminalizing the behavior does not address the root causes of vaping and only disrupts their education while involving them in the juvenile justice system. We support the repealing of the mandatory DAEP removal for vaping established in 2023 by the 88th regular session. We would also like to see provisions added that when a student is found with e-cigarettes they are provided with substance use materials on the harms of vaping, providing mental health support, and offering addiction treatment.

Section 5: Amend: Add Parental Choice and TEC 37.023

The parental right to choose the most appropriate educational setting for their child must extend to DAEP placement. Districts should make clear how a recommendation for placement of a student in virtual DAEP is determined and ensure that parental choice plays a key component of the placement based on the needs of the family.

Texas public schools have re-entry planning requirements under TEC 37.023 to support students returning from alternative education placements. However, a 2024 report found that only half of districts are following these requirements, with virtual DEAPs likely having even lower re-entry planning rates due to the statute's omission. As schools extend removal periods, it's crucial to address targeted learning supports upon students' return. Virtual DEAPs should include re-entry planning to ensure academic and behavioral support for missed learning. With districts that are creating re-entry planning as required by TEC 37.023, there is an alarming trend of excluding parents from the re-entry planning process due to the current permissive language in the statute. Amend HB 6 to make clear a parent's role in their child's placement and return to campus and clarify their role in virtual placements is essential.

Amend Section 5 of the bill by adding provisions to Section 37.0083 to include:

- 1) Parental decisions related to input on whether virtual or in-person is best for the student and family unit, and the parental choice to determine the best educational setting for their child.
- 2) Endurances that the existing requirements for re-entry planning under TEC 37.023 for DEAP applies to both virtual and in-person placement.

As Governor Abbott has said, "In Texas, parents matter – and so do the needs of their children. Parents know their kids better than anyone else." When it comes to students attending and returning from disciplinary alternative education programs, parents are the most informed and invested parties.

Erin Mancil
Self
Cedar Park, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education,

I strongly oppose House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned parent in Cedar Park, Texas, I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions.

Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. This could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion.

I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).

The key to improving school safety is addressing funding, not imposing undefined expulsions. Texas ranks 43rd in per-student funding, and the \$1.7 billion shortfall in special education needs urgent attention. Without proper funding, schools lack resources to support students who need help.

I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Erin "Katie" Mancil
[Your Contact Information]
[City, Texas]

Daniel Fuller
self
Austin, TX

I'm writing to voice my complete opposition to the language in this bill that allows for the suspension of children in 2nd grade and younger. This will have a devastating impact on very young children and their families. I speak from firsthand experience. Children with undiagnosed disabilities that only manifest once in the school setting will be punished before they've even had a chance to thrive. The unbelievably cruel sentiment shared by Sen. Perry and, apparently, others that "Some kids just don't belong in schools anymore" has no place in education. To dismantle access to education for the most vulnerable children in our population, including those who experience homelessness, is an unconscionable evil. Thank you, Daniel Fuller

Benjamin Mancil
Self
Cedar Park, TX

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I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Benjamin Mancil
U.S. Army Disabled Veteran
3rd Brigade, 1st Armored Division
bmancil@gmail.com
Cedar Park, Texas

Emily Vinson
self
Austin, TX

I'm writing to voice my complete opposition to the language in this bill that allows for the suspension of children in 2nd grade and younger. This will have a devastating impact on very young children and their families. I speak from firsthand experience. Children with undiagnosed disabilities that only manifest once in the school setting will be punished before they've even had a chance to thrive. The unbelievably cruel sentiment shared by Sen. Perry and, apparently, others that "Some kids just don't belong in schools anymore" has no place in education. To dismantle access to education for the most vulnerable children in our population, including those who experience homelessness, is an unconscionable evil. Thank you, Emily Vinson

Reese Armstrong
Students United
Austin, TX

Students United is an organization of students that fights for the interests of students. Students United is opposed to HB6.

It is widely agreed that schools are a place for students to learn, and that they learn best when they feel safe. Putting these two ideas together leads to the obvious conclusion that schools are more effective when students feel safe. Students are safer when they can act as they want without fear of being arrested, suspended, or expelled. HB6 goes counter to that, instead making it easier for students to be taken out of classrooms and sent to potentially unsafe and unhelpful locations.

Indefinite suspensions are explicitly included in HB6. If a student is placed in in-school suspension for any reason, the state legislature intentionally permits that student to spend as much time as the school wants in suspension and away from the classroom. A student could accidentally bring a defunct lighter to school one day and spend a semester in suspension for their mistake. That is excessive punishment for an action that could not be dangerous and that the student had no intention of doing.

Out-of-school suspensions can put students in unsafe situations for three days at a time.

Homeless students have no safe home to be for those three days, and young students with abusive parents, guardians, or other people they encounter on a regular basis may find themselves trapped in an unsafe situation for a majority of a week for vague reasons.

Disciplinary alternative education programs, or DAEPs, function as day prisons for students. Students can be sent to a DAEP for an excessive amount of time, much like a prison, for an offense that doesn't harm others, much like a prison, and are farther behind everyone around them upon release from the DAEP upon release, much like a prison. 6-year-old students can already be sent to a prison under Texas law, and HB6 makes it easier for them to make their way into one.

To reiterate, under HB6, students would more easily be imprisoned, thrust into a dangerous environment, and required to spend as long as a school administrator wants them to in purgatory. There are some students who disrupt classes to a degree where everyone else's education suffers, but the problem is usually the environment the disruptive students live or grew up in and not with the student themselves. An iron fist is known to not solve disciplinary issues, even in the rare cases as mentioned above. All students are placed at risk under HB6, but those in the worst circumstances will be the most damaged by it.

Taryn Jones
self, stay-at-home mom
LEANDER, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education,
I strongly oppose House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned parent in Leander, Texas, I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions. Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. This could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion. I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).
The key to improving school safety is addressing funding, not imposing undefined expulsions. Texas ranks 43rd in per-student funding, and the \$1.7 billion shortfall in special education needs urgent attention. Without proper funding, schools lack resources to support students who need help.
I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely,
Taryn Jones

Emily Kaszczuk
Self/parent
Leander, TX

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I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).

I support the evaluation and assessment of students with behavioral issues before expulsion. Furthermore, I support increasing funding for evaluations, counseling, and special education programs, which will ensure children in need of services will be helped instead of being denied access to education.

I have personally seen the cost to children, parents and teachers, when children with disabilities are not being served. Classroom safety is at risk! Mental health outcomes are declining. Learning outcomes suffer.

Diana Spain
Retired
Austin, TX

Good morning,

I just read over the text of HB 6 and while it contains some valid points which would make it easier for a disruptive student to be removed from a classroom and eventually from the school, this Bill can unfairly target low-income children and minority children because they are more likely to be identified as being disruptive. It is no secret that all children have not been raised in similar nurturing environments, and due to inequities in our social structure, many kids come to school with negative influences over which they have no control. Such children should be helped through RESTORATIVE JUSTICE practices, rather than focusing time and efforts on removing them from classrooms. The root of the problem should be addressed, instead of simply treating the symptoms. Remember we are talking about very young children here. Point to consider: we were all children, we all have or know children, and as we grow older, there is a chance we will turn into children again. We need a system to manage behavioral issues that has compassion and education as its core, rather than a punitive approach.

I strongly urge you to revise this Bill, and to NOT pass it in its current form. It is too punitive. Remember: what benefits one, benefits us all. What harms one, harms us all. We are all interconnected. Let's address our societal problems that show up as behavioral issues in young children in a way that builds up and reforms our society, so that the most vulnerable are not left behind. We do not want to criminalize others. We have not shortage of criminals!

Sincerely, Diana Spain

Summer BARBER
Self
Leander, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education,

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I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Summer Barber
Leander, TX

Tanya Lavelle
Self
Cedar Park, TX

My name is Tanya Lavelle and I am a parent to 2 small boys in Cedar Park, including a dual-exceptional kindergartner. I am strongly opposed to House Bill 6 in its current form. I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions.

Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. My little boy has ADHD and is known to disrupt class because he likes to engage with his teacher and friends. There is no malicious intent, nor is his teacher significantly concerned because behavior like his is common, and developmentally appropriate for young children. Under this bill, he and kids like him could be expelled, something that would cause significant trauma. There is no reason whatsoever to punish young children for developmentally appropriate behavior, especially when it comes to kids with disabilities. With that regard, this bill could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion.

I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).

The key to improving school safety is addressing funding, not imposing undefined expulsions. Texas ranks 43rd in per-student funding, and the \$1.7 billion shortfall in special education needs urgent attention. Without proper funding, schools lack resources to support students who need help.

I urge you to reconsider HB 6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you

Diana Garcia-Prats
Self, APRN, adoptive/foster parent
Houston, TX

This is an absolute outrage and shows a gross misunderstanding of mental health needs of children and of supporting and developing kids with special needs and accommodations to be as successful as they can be as a member of society. All this shows is that Texas has zero interest in children and their safety.

Jazzmin Woodford, Mrs.
Self
Houston, TX

I am writing to express my strong opposition to HB6, "relating to discipline in schools." This proposed legislation, which allows for the suspension of young children, including those under second grade and those experiencing homelessness, as well as the exclusion of students with special education needs by shifting them to online alternative schools, is not only regressive but also profoundly detrimental to the most vulnerable members of our society.

Courtney Arnold

Employee of The Riverside Project, foster parent for Casa de Esperanza and mom to 3

Spring, TX

This bill avoids and seems to negate the availability and widely-proven efficacy of trauma-informed relational intervention, which is easily accessible across Texas. The bill also discriminates against children with past trauma, those with prior or current involvement with DFPS, and children who have no family support. With how much funding the state of Texas has, let's stop criminalizing our children for their behavior, and actually do something to lessen the growing number of kids in foster care. Where is that bill?? The "negative behaviors or actions" children have so early in school are a direct result of the abuse, neglect or inadequate parenting they've received at such a young age.

Paula Ortega, Homemaker

Self

Houston, TX

Do not let this Bill pass. This is harmful to children everywhere!

Darlene Tarango

Self

San Antonio, TX

No

Richard Jones

Self

Graford, TX

I completely oppose HB3 along with the vast majority of voting Texans. ESAs are NOT a priority with our tax dollars. Instead, increase the basic allotment for public schools by \$750-\$1000 to allow a positive impact on the 5+million students in Texas. We will ALL remember how you vote on this. Will you listen to the majority of your constituents and oppose this Bill or will you be one who blindly falls in line with the billionaire agenda? Will your legacy be of service to children, teachers, community, and tax payers or will you be remembered as one of the "bought"? Will you stand for your people now or will you end your service as one afraid to stand against a tyrannical push of our governor? These words may seem harsh but they represent the thoughts and heart of your constituents, your voters, your people! VOTE NO TO ANY ESA/VOUCHER BILL! Our children, teachers, community, and future deserve your courage to push back against this scam that only represents the chosen few! Create a legacy of courage and ethics and stand for ALL children. We will remember next election how you vote on this bill.

Kriss Ethridge

Myself

Lubbock, TX

No

Karyn Holly

Citizen

Dallas, TX

This is not about school choice. It's a bill designed for tax supported private school education for the rich!!!

Vonda Boswell, Ms.

Self

Brady, TX

Why is the HB relating to vouchers not listed? You've asked for input but conveniently left out the one on the forefront of conversations everywhere. So, my comment is that representatives need to LISTEN to their constituents when they repeatedly say they do not want vouchers. Listen to Texas teachers and administrators say they do not want school vouchers. Texas parents ALREADY have choices, if there are choices available in their district, but 158 districts have no choice. There are no private schools in those districts, so vouchers are worthless there. In addition it is beyond unethical to take public school tax dollars and funnel them to private schools that are not held to the same standards as public schools. Let's also consider the separation of church and state. The majority of private schools are church/faith based institutions. I would imagine most private schools are at 90% capacity or better, leaving little to no room for new students attempting to use a voucher. Private schools have the power to accept or decline a student for whatever reason they choose. Public schools educate ALL students. We do not get to pick and choose. Vouchers have not worked in other states. They will not work in Texas. Texans do not want this!!

Carolyn Billman

Myself

Keller, TX

I oppose school vouchers and want the public schools funded. I will vote out anyone in my district that votes for them. I will definitely vote out YASS ABBOTT!!

Rebecca Paterson

Self

Conroe, TX

Needed. There are so many behaviors in school, by a few, that are so severe it regularly disrupts the learning of others. Not to mention the amount of times other children are also physically hurt by such children, and have traumatic experiences. Discipline needs to be handled quickly so the child learns their behavior is unacceptable. Some behaviors seen are due to different styles of parenting, and parents not knowing what to do, and not wanting to discipline. Parents may also struggle with poor behavior from their children at school due to a lack of expectations in the home, or lack of social skills. Teachers are there to teach, they should not have to parent also, but they do. Administration needs options and support to discipline quickly and effectively with various options for consequences. If behavior continues, students should not be allowed to stay at school and be sent home or expelled. If parents are "inconvenienced" maybe they will start doing more to help their child be a more conscientious human being thus allowing them to be able to thrive in a learning or later work environment.

Paula Lane

Self

Wylie, TX

I OPPOSE HB3

Jamie Brokaw

Self

St Paul, TX

I oppose HB3

Nancy Lillie, Mrs
Self
Denton, TX

In passing the voucher bill, you will be ignoring the desires of the majority of Texas residents. Using tax dollars for private education is inherently wrong and as a taxpayer I vehemently oppose this. Only the most wealthy will benefit from vouchers as they are insufficient to cover a private school education for those who cannot already afford it. I'm sure this will fall on deaf ears, but I felt compelled to voice my opinion.

Patricia Dicoste, Ms
Grandmas
Bellaire, TX

PLEASE PROTECT OUR CHILDREN??
Vote NO on Vouchers PLEASE
City of Bellaire Grandma

Gretta Leckbee
Self
Cedar Park, TX

Please listen to the majority of the people you represent. Not just the donors to your campaign. Texans do not want the voucher system. We believe in public schools & think this system is not what's best for Texan children.

Shelley Wood
Self
Boerne, TX

I oppose school vouchers. They are bad for the children of Texas and only good for the Texas elite.

Jessica Hanson
self- Public Educator
AZLE, TX

As a former elementary school principal from years 2014-2022 I support HB6.

Melissa Shaner
Self - Public school teacher and parent of 3 school-aged children
Tuscola, TX

Provision of funding for school vouchers is robbing our public education system of the ability to provide quality education to all students. As a teacher in public education, I am considering leaving my profession, the one for which I am highly qualified and love, because the state of Texas will no longer enable me to do my job well. Removing funding from public schools does not give any more choice to parents than they already have. It simply provides a "coupon" for the wealthy, non-discriminant families whose students are already welcomed into private institutions. Shame on the ignorant lawmakers who do not have the slightest idea what it is like to teach in our school system. YOU are making the problem worse, instead of finding a solution.

Kristy Jurecka
AFT
Nacogdoches, TX

I feel that teachers need rights when students are allowed to beat up teachers but they receive no punishment if they are younger than the age of 9. Teachers are being put in the hospital or going to the ER with severe injuries from students because they are not allowed to touch the student.

Consuelo Sanchez
Self, parent
Fort Worth, TX

Please consider the importance of this matter.

Kelley Start
Self
Baytown, TX

No vouchers! Fund public education at the rate it should be.

Betina Foreman, Realtor & wife
Self
Austin, TX

Since you don't have HB three listed for comments I am putting this comment under another Bill.
House Bill 3 is an atrocity school vouchers should not happen. If people want their children to go to private schools or religious schools then they need to pay for it My tax dollars should not go towards private schools. This is an egregious MoneyGrab to steal from public schools to fund private schools. We have a separation of church and state for a reason and no public tax dollars should go to any religious schools. Our legislature has spent millions of our tax dollars on multiple special sessions to try to push this on Texans. We don't want it. If it were a brilliant bill then you would let we the people of Texas vote on it.
Abbott must stop pushing this horrific Robin Hood steel from the poor give to the rich bill.

Sterlin Lauer, Mrs.
Self, Community Volunteer
Fort Worth, TX

HB3 is an effort to destroy Public Education and is in violation of our Texas Constitution. I am opposed to this bill, and it should be rejected by the House Public Education Committee.

Lynn Chaffin
Gatherings at Mercer Crossing
Farmers Branch, TX

Vote NO on HB 3. I oppose House Bill 3

HORRIBLE COMMENT FORM
VOTE NO HB3 VOTE NO ON VOUCHERS

Mara LaViola, Ms
Self & Texans for Special Education Reform
Austin, TX

Dear Chairman Buckley and Members of the Committee,
My name is Mara LaViola, and I am testifying today on behalf of Texans for Special Education Reform and as a parent of a Texas public school student.
For years, we have known what works for students with disabilities: well-funded schools with well-trained educators, mental health professionals on campus, smaller class sizes, and authentic, ongoing training in developmentally appropriate behavior interventions and crisis prevention. Schools should be equipped to support students before behaviors escalate, not reactively remove them when they do.
The research is clear: exclusionary practices — suspensions, expulsions, removals — do not improve student outcomes or school safety. Instead, they increase academic disengagement, deepen behavioral issues, and cause long-term harm. But instead of addressing the root causes — underfunding, understaffing, lack of appropriate training, poor placement decisions, and environments that are too overwhelming or socially challenging — HB 6 takes the easiest route: blaming the child.
It's far too easy to place blame on the child when the real issue often lies in the school's failure to provide appropriate supports and environments. And that failure is the result of the state's unwillingness to properly fund public education. Often, these behavioral escalations are caused by classrooms or settings that are too noisy, unpredictable, or socially complex for the student's needs. Sensory dysregulation, anxiety, and behavioral incidents frequently result from environments that are not designed for their success. Socially challenging moments — where a student misreads cues, cannot express frustration appropriately, or responds impulsively — are part of disability, not defiance.
Instead of asking, what did the child do wrong? schools should be required to ask:

- Was the placement appropriate for this student?
- Is the classroom environment too challenging, overstimulating, or socially overwhelming?
- Have we given this child the tools, supports, and interventions to manage these moments?
- Could this have been prevented with thoughtful planning, placement, and professional training for staff?

HB 6 ignores these questions and instead institutionalizes quick removals and punishment. As both an advocate and a parent, I know that these approaches harm our students most. Unfortunately, there is no time to share our story about our own child and the difference in behavior and learning when these factors were authentically considered and implemented. I welcome a discussion should anyone on the committee like to hear how effective pro-active strategies can be. They can change a life, literally.
Due to character limit on submission of public comments online, we cannot go over each area of concern. Instead, due to this we would simply like to state that we agree with the public comments submitted by Disability Rights Texas in their entirety.
Thank you for this opportunity.

Marisela Barba-Salloum
Self/ Advanced Practice Registered Nurse
El Paso, TX

This is absurd! Our children need our support more than ever. Schools keep children safe, fed, and provides the social aspect that they need to thrive. I am wholeheartedly against this bill!

Janell Moyes
self
Austin, TX

Vote NO on HB6. This bill as written will harm students of special education whose conditions often cause distraction (e.g. stemming, blurting, tapping) or whose unsupported disabilities may cause distraction (e.g. anxiety from overcrowded classrooms, struggles to maintain behavior in unstructured environments).

Stella Logan
SelfHB
Austin, TX

Good Morning. I am a mother, a grandmother, a former school nurse, and a psychiatric-mental health nurse practitioner. I am emphatically against HB 6 which seeks to allow suspension of the youngest children (2nd grade and under) in favor of “alternative online education. We know from COVID and other studies that especially for the youngest or most disadvantaged children “online” or other alternative forms of education is not only ineffective for learning, and for children who already have behavior challenges it can be further devastating to self-esteem, social skills, and self control. I have seen first hand the damage that rejection and abandonment by agents that are supposed to be interested in positive outcomes can do to children. If you don’t help these children early, the emotional costs to families and the actual financial costs to the state from hospitalization and institutionalization are outrageous. Please vote NO!

Melissa Bowman
Self Nurse Practitioner
Lubbock, TX

Every child in the state of Texas deserves a quality education , regardless of medical conditions, socioeconomic status or legal status. To say some children don’t belong in public schools is abhorrent. The whole purpose of public education is to guarantee that every child has access to a quality education. That education should be free from bias, political agendas and religion. It should be on par with or exceed the national standards. We do such a poor job of providing a decent education to our children, I find it unacceptable to advocate for less inclusion and services. Providing additional avenues to marginalize individuals and exclude them from education is unacceptable. We as Texans should do better for our children.

Katerina Crews
Self
Cedar park, TX

Apparently none of you have ever had a child with special needs or you wouldn’t be both so cruel and so clueless as to the impact of what you’re proposing. Special needs children need sufficient support for their needs and when that is provided, they don’t have behaviors. Every behavior is a communication. That communication needs to be understood and addressed. Do not put children with special needs in jails! This is simply cruel. Write a bill to support the kids, not to jail them.

Heather Cariker, Nurse Pray
Self
Temple, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Public Education Committee,

I am writing to express my concerns about House Bill 6 and its potential impact on younger students, particularly those who are homeless or come from disadvantaged backgrounds. While I understand the need to ensure classroom safety and support teachers in maintaining discipline, I worry that expanding suspension policies—especially for younger children—could disproportionately harm the most vulnerable students.

Children experiencing homelessness or other hardships often struggle with behavioral challenges that stem from instability, trauma, and unmet basic needs. Removing them from the classroom through suspension does not address these underlying issues. Instead, it may push them further behind academically, deny them access to essential school resources, and increase their risk of disengagement from education altogether.

Rather than punitive measures, I urge the committee to consider alternative approaches, such as increased access to behavioral intervention programs, trauma-informed care, and counseling services. Schools should be places of support and stability, particularly for children who lack these structures outside of the classroom.

I respectfully ask that the committee take these concerns into account and ensure that HB 6 does not unintentionally harm the students who need school the most. Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the education and well-being of Texas students.

Kristen Kelley
Self. Exec assistant for a non-profit
Houston, TX

Please do not pass this bill. Marginalizing kids who don't have life "all together" because of instability from birth defects or childhood trauma further creates an elite or superior mentality. This will be devastating to families who are trying to help their children. Some kids need additional support because they are brilliant. Some kids need additional support because they aren't neurotypical. All kids deserve the same opportunities.

Courtney Lewis
Self. Stay at home mom
Leander, TX

Dear Members of the Texas House Committee on Public Education,

I strongly oppose House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned parent in Leander, Texas, I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions.

Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. This could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion.

I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).

The key to improving school safety is addressing funding, not imposing undefined expulsions. Texas ranks 43rd in per-student funding, and the \$1.7 billion shortfall in special education needs urgent attention. Without proper funding, schools lack resources to support students who need help.

I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Courtney Lewis
Courtney.Spurling@gmail.com
Leander, TX

Tom Garcia-Prats
Self
Houston, TX

I am writing in opposition to HB6.

Legalizing a zero-tolerance policy in our school system that proposes treating our students and young children like criminals seems contrary to the vision of family values this state stands for.

We can find practical ways to deal with school safety but this is not one for them.
I am opposed to HB 6.

Miriam Wood
self - public school teacher
Azle, TX

I strongly oppose House Bill 6 in its current form. As a concerned parent in [City], Texas, I believe the bill could lead to unnecessary expulsions of young children, particularly those with disabilities, due to vague language in its discipline provisions. Section 1., (c), (3) allows expulsion for "repeated or significant disruption" but lacks clear definitions, potentially putting children as young as 5-8 years old at risk and ignoring possible underlying disabilities. This could also violate the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as behavioral issues at these ages often signal a need for support, not expulsion. I am also concerned about the removal of section 37.001 (b-1) and the impact of Sec. 37.1151 on IDEA and Manifestation Determination Reviews (MDR).

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I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.
Sincerely, Miriam Wood

Katie Lowery
Self
Leander, TX

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I urge you to reconsider HB6's provisions, focus on providing support for all students, and prioritize funding Public Education. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Katie Lowery
KLowery678@gmail.com
Leander, TX

Mark Garcia-Prats
Self
Houston, TX

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 245 and House Bill 655, which propose the reinstatement of zero-tolerance disciplinary policies in our schools. While ensuring school safety is paramount, these bills risk reviving punitive measures that have historically proven ineffective and discriminatory. ?

Zero-tolerance policies often fail to consider individual circumstances, leading to disproportionate impacts on minority and at-risk students. Such measures can exacerbate the school-to-prison pipeline, increasing the likelihood of students entering the criminal justice system. Instead of fostering a supportive educational environment, these policies may alienate vulnerable students, hindering their academic and personal development.

Rather than reverting to outdated punitive approaches, we should invest in supportive and rehabilitative disciplinary practices. Implementing restorative justice programs, increasing access to mental health resources, and providing targeted interventions can address the root causes of disruptive behavior more effectively.

I urge you to reconsider these bills and focus on strategies that promote both safety and equity in our schools, ensuring all students have the opportunity to succeed.

Lennea Hartoonian
All children and families in Texas
Frisco, TX

HB6 is a nightmare for a child & the parents. It's vague and not clear on what constitutes certain things like "terrorism." A child can be set up by another child who is out to frame them. So much unadulterated power to the school administration and no word of witnesses or evidence? In School Suspension with NO TIME LIMIT? The consequences are a pipeline to prison tract and none of it is in the best interest of a child. A child should never be left vulnerable in a situation of interrogation without notification to the parents prior. Notifications happen after the fact and the damage has been done. Where are the children's rights? The parent's rights? This has been known to set up a child for a pat down directed by a principal and administered by an AP, all the while the child was innocent. There was no recourse for the child or the parents. Principal would not meet with them and proceeded to tell the child it was a mistake. The child was mentally traumatized. We have a system of rules that allows for unlawful search and seizure of a minor without the parent's knowledge. This current system is designed to protect the administration to violate children's rights. I would not let my children in the public schools knowing this is what might be happening in them at all. Surely, bringing a gun to school is not equal to bringing alcohol but in this bill the consequences are similar if not the same. It sickens me to see them treat children, who can make a mistake, like a criminal in so many cases. This bill can be devastating for Texas children and families. JJAEP & DAEP needs to be fixed as well. This bill has way too many loopholes.
NO ON HB6!

Steven Snell, Superintendent of Liberty Hill ISD
Teachers, parents, and students of Liberty Hill ISD
Leander, TX

Chairman Buckley and Members of the Committee,

I am submitting this written testimony to express my strong support for House Bill 6 and want to thank all the members of the House who worked on this bill including Representative Jeff Leach and Chairman Buckley two of the authors of this bill.

Our schools are facing many challenges today, challenges that were not a part of most elementary classrooms just a few years ago. Under the current system, teachers often face challenges in managing disruptive behaviors, which can impede the educational experience for all students.

We have elementary children in the primary grades who are attacking teachers and other students. Teachers are getting hit, kicked, spit on, cussed out, and in extreme cases using the bathroom in the middle of the classroom.

The fact that we cannot suspend these students and have to wait (in some cases weeks) until we can bring parents and team members together to create a solution is leaving both teachers and administration with a feeling of helplessness.

All while the other students who behave and are ready to learn, get traumatized and their education gets disrupted. I can't tell you how many times a classroom has been emptied

I would argue that the student behavior and the lack of resources to effectively deal with these behaviors is the reason many teachers are leaving the classroom

This year alone we have 25 cases of teachers filing workers comp claims from student injuring teachers costing Liberty Hill ISD over \$300,000.

Over the last few years, I have had to hire a behavior specialist at every elementary campus. That's a half million in salaries!

LH has police officers at every campus. The ones who are assigned to elementary campuses are spending more time with dangerous classroom behaviors than my middle school and high school officers combined.

HB 6 addresses this issue by allowing educators to enforce discipline more effectively, ensuring that classrooms remain conducive to learning.

Specifically, the bill proposes adjustments to existing policies, permitting out-of-school suspensions for students in grades below third who engage in conduct that results in repeated or significant disruptions to the classroom.

—On Page 12 of the bill it allows school districts to remove a child who exhibits dangerous behavior without having to wait through all the red tape.

By supporting HB 6, you can assure the teachers of Texas that this committee is committed to providing teachers and administrators with flexible options and the tools they need to uphold classroom discipline, thereby enhancing the overall quality of education in my district and others across the state.

I respectfully urge the committee to approve this vital legislation. Thank you for being a champion for the students and teachers of public education.

George Brian Vachris, P.E.
self
Humble, TX

FOR HB 6

Rita Garcia-Prats, Mrs.
self
Houston, TX

As a public educator with over 20 years of experience, I am deeply opposed to HB6 and the idea of tying school ratings to discipline data. The notion that some students “don’t belong” in public schools, as stated by Senator Perry, is not only deeply troubling—it reflects a profound lack of understanding of the realities of special education and the broader public education system in Texas.

Our schools are not failing because of the students they serve. They are struggling because of chronic underfunding, lack of mental health resources, insufficient staffing, and increasing demands placed on educators without appropriate support. Penalizing schools for their discipline data will not address the root causes of behavior concerns—it will only further marginalize our most vulnerable students, many of whom are already identified as needing special education services or other supports.

Pushing students out of public schools through suspension, expulsion, or subtle exclusionary practices runs counter to the principles of equity, inclusion, and public education itself. As someone who has dedicated my career to supporting students—especially those with disabilities or behavioral challenges—I can tell you that what these students need is more support, not more punitive consequences.

HB6 does nothing to address the systemic issues that contribute to discipline concerns. Instead, it risks creating a system where schools are incentivized to remove or exclude students rather than serve them.

I urge you to reject HB6 and instead focus on legislation that funds schools adequately, supports teachers, invests in mental health services, and strengthens programs for students with diverse needs.

Natalie Montfort, Dr.
self
Houston, TX

Hi Representative Leach,

I met you this past fall when I testified at the Special House Committee meeting for Robert Roberson. I wanted to write you personally about some of my and my colleagues' concerns related to HB 6. I hope you will consider these concerns and amend the bill to protect students, so we do not have more cases like Mr. Roberson!

The way HB6 is written allows zero tolerance policies to be applied to students with disabilities. This is of grave concern to me because of what I see in my practice every day. Recently, I had a client with autism who was being teased by others. Because he was a white male and a loner, peers were calling him "the next school shooter." Peers without disabilities knew that they had to say this away from teachers and other students. The client I had tried to join with them and laugh at himself by saying, "I might be the next school shooter!" Unfortunately, because of his autism, he did not know that saying this in jest could get him in big trouble. He was overheard by teachers, interviewed by police, and an MDR (Manifestation of Determination Review) was held to determine if his behavior was the result of his disability. By having this meeting, it was discovered that he was being teased by other students and was simply joining in their teasing. If HB6 was in effect, this MDR may have been skipped, and this student would have been placed in DAEP. The problem with a student with autism going to DAEP for copied behavior is that he may copy behaviors at DAEP from students who are there for problematic behavior. This would not be an appropriate setting for the client I have described. I have countless more stories about the importance of MDRs that I am happy to share if it is helpful.

There is ample evidence to suggest these policy changes would be applied unfairly to students with disabilities, students of color, and underprivileged students. Mr. Roberson has two of these three characteristics. So do many students who function like him. In fact, I have a client in 6th grade who is currently facing suspension for "lack of empathy" when he pushed a bully who pushed him first. This student was later tripped and his wrist broken. Although he was not suspended for pushing the bully, the bullying was not stopped, and he was seriously injured. This is likely the result of my client's overly serious facial expressions and his inability to effectively communicate his emotional state. The bullying is taking a serious toll on him emotionally, but he is not able to show it or react in the usual way. When he stands up for himself, he does not appear to be remorseful, so the school is not stepping in to help him as much as they might for a student who has better emotional expression. As you are well aware, we must do better to protect these vulnerable people like Mr. Roberson. Please do not approve HB6 as it is currently written as it will be a step backwards in our efforts to help them.

Fondly,
Dr. Natalie Montfort

Carol Berg
HESP
Houston, TX

Keep Texas school Taxes for public school!!

Scott Sheppard, Dr.
Huntsville ISD
Huntsville, TX

My name is Dr. Scott Sheppard, the proud superintendent of Huntsville ISD, and I am testifying in support of HB 6. Thank you Chairman Buckley and distinguished members of the Public Education Committee for this opportunity to reinforce the importance of changes to Chapter 37, allowing more flexibility in keeping our classrooms and schools safe from severely disruptive students while also providing more options for the appropriate education of these students.

Throughout my 37 year career in Texas public schools, starting as a teacher in East Texas, then as a principal in Katy ISD, an assistant superintendent in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD, and now as the superintendent of Huntsville ISD, I have witnessed the troubling increase in severe behavior issues impacting the learning environment of our classrooms, along with the overall safety of our students and staff. Limited options available through the restrictions of Chapter 37 and interpretations by the Texas Education Agency make it extremely difficult to effectively address these severe behaviors in many instances. House Bill 6 offers great improvements to the process, helping districts address these behaviors in a more effective manner, protecting the educational environment for all students and staff. Thank you very much for your consideration.

Kimberly Friery
Self
Katy, TX

Many educators do not have enough training on mental health or developmental trauma to make these decisions. This bill will disproportionately affect students like my adopted son with developmental trauma, ADHD, MDD and DMDD, making it easier for schools to remove them instead of supporting them. Let's fight back against Zero Tolerance policies and protect the rights of students with disabilities!

LaShel Rowton, Mrs.
Self
Alvin, TX

Please bring back discipline in our schools. Teachers are raising students & teaching more social skills now more than ever. Home life has mutated since I was a child in the 70's where most kids had a mom & dad holding their children accountable. We need to suspend kids again for hitting, kicking, touching & cussing out teacher/administrators. We are not preparing students for the real world.

Samiya Ahsan
Self
Houston, TX

This bill will disproportionately target and impact students with disabilities and from backgrounds that are already setting them up for failure.

Zainib Ahmad
Self Teacher
Pflugerville, TX

Good morning,

I just read over the text of HB 6 and while it contains some valid points which would make it easier for a disruptive student to be removed from a classroom and eventually from the school, this Bill can unfairly target low-income children and minority children because they are more likely to be identified as being disruptive. It is no secret that all children have not been raised in similar nurturing environments, and due to inequities in our social structure, many kids come to school with negative influences over which they have no control. Such children should be helped through RESTORATIVE JUSTICE practices, rather than focusing time and efforts on removing them from classrooms. The root of the problem should be addressed, instead of simply treating the symptoms. Remember we are talking about very young children here. Point to consider: we were all children, we all have or know children, and as we grow older, there is a chance we will turn into children again. We need a system to manage behavioral issues that has compassion and education as its core, rather than a punitive approach.

I strongly urge you to revise this Bill, and to NOT pass it in its current form. It is too punitive. Remember: what benefits one, benefits us all. What harms one, harms us all. We are all interconnected. Let's address our societal problems that show up as behavioral issues in young children in a way that builds up and reforms our society, so that the most vulnerable are not left behind. We do not want to criminalize others. We have not shortage of criminals!

Sincerely,
Zainib Ahmad

Karen Santhanam
Self
Cedar Park, TX

I oppose this horrific bill. Unlimited discipline is wrong.
