

FROM THE TCFV POLICY TEAM



Lege Happenings

Over the past two weeks the TCFV policy team has been very active supporting survivors' rights and seeking to support measures that build on that safety.

The TCFV Policy team has already testified more times this session than all of the 88th session at just over the mid-way point! We continue to advocate for our priority bills while monitoring quite a number of other bills that require action. Updates from the past two weeks include:



From left to right, Bronwyn Blake (Texas Advocacy Project), Angela Litwin, Britney Kinsey, Molly Voyles (TCFV).

- TCFV Director of Public Policy, Molly Voyles testified in support of one of the Texas Coalition on Coerced Debt's, and TCFV's priority bills, HB 4238, to further support survivors of coerced debt. Big thanks to our TCCD partners and especially Texas Appleseed! The bill was voted favorably from the committee on House Pensions/Investments/Financial Services. Lauren Lluveras, Public Policy Manager testified on SB 2902, the companion bill to HB 4238 and we are hopeful for a favorable vote out of committee.



Did you know? A committee substitute is a revised version of a bill that can be heard in a committee hearing to remedy an error or issue with the original bill.



Lauren Lluveras (top) and Barbra Grimmer (below) testifying at the Capitol

- Lauren Lluveras, Public Policy Manager, also testified in support on HB 714. This bill was led by our partners at Disability Rights Texas and would create a Texas Tenant Readiness and Landlord Incentive Pilot Program (TRLI). TRLI could cover expenses such as security deposits, utility arrears, moving expenses, and rental applications.
- TCFV Public Policy Coordinator, Barbra Grimmer testified in support of HB 3783, which would require courts to consider a history of family violence or sexual abuse when deciding to order family counseling in suits affecting parent and child relationships. The bill would prohibit the court from ordering counseling when there is evidence of this, including family reunification therapy.

- TCFV Public Policy Manager, Jen Mudge testified in support of HB 1194 and its companion bill, SB 2196, which would extend the duration of magistrate's order for emergency protection, or MOEPs, from 30-60 days to 60-90 days, or up to 120 days (previously was 90 days) for offenses involving a weapon.
- TCFV staff shared thoughts and testimony on several measures that would have potentially limited access to important protections for survivors and has appreciated working with the authors on new language to best support survivors and their families.



Jen Mudge (top) testifying at the Capitol and TCFV staff Lauren Lluveras and Molly Voyles (bottom)

The More You Know: Determining TCFV's Priority Bills

Every legislative session, TCFV has priority bills, or legislative agenda, that we work hard to pass. While we take action on many bills, we dedicate a great deal of time and energy to our priority bills. But how do we determine what our priorities will be? More than a year prior to legislative session, TCFV forms a Public Policy Committee (PPC), comprised of 20-25 members, including survivors and individuals who have experience working with survivors in various settings. This committee meets with the policy team several times leading up to the start of legislative session to raise legislative ideas and to determine the priority bills through a voting process. Leading up to the 89th session, TCFV also distributed a survey to advocates and survivors, asking for their input on legislative priorities. We heard from over 200 respondents and nearly half identified as survivors. Equipped with this information the PPC members and the TCFV policy team eventually arrived at the priorities you see today which then went before our board. Thank you to our PPC members and all the survey respondents for helping us develop a collaborative legislative agenda!

Policy Priorities



Reducing and Preventing Family Violence Homicide in Texas: This measure would create a two-year taskforce focused on prevention and reduction of family violence homicide with explicit charges to make policy recommendations for the 90th legislative session. (SB 1946, Zaffirini / HB 4155, Manuel) *Referred to Senate Criminal Justice & House Homeland Security, Public Safety and Veterans' Affairs*



Enhancing Crime Victims' Rights; Ability to Confer on a Plea Notice for Family Violence Survivors: This measure proposes to add victims of felony family violence to the list of people who can confer with prosecutors on the plea agreement, within Article 56A of the Code of Criminal Procedure. (SB 1120, Hinojosa and Huffman / HB 4918, Johnson) *SB 1120 passed by unanimous vote in the Senate and was received in the House*



Dating Violence Policy Implementation and Survivor Safety Supports: This measure focuses on implementing dating violence policies in schools by adding clean up language to Section 11.252 of the Education Code to ensure that these policies are addressed in district improvement plans. Language would also be added to address survivor safety in reporting dating violence to parents. (HB 1332, Garcia / SB 2242, West) *Referred to House Public Education & Senate Education K-16*



Support and Accountability for Youth Using Violence: This measure would allow for collection of data on dating violence in schools and would create a pathway for young people using violence to be referred to Disciplinary Alternative Education Programs (DAEPs) with the option for healthy relationship and dating violence education to be offered. (HB 1963, Garcia, SB 2241, West) *Referred to House Public Education & Senate Education K-16*

Read full bill text at the Texas Legislature Online!

Many thanks and send any questions or suggestions to us at policy@tcfv.org!