

## Texas Legislative Update March 1-5, 2021

### PRAYER

Be checking on our TERLC website (<https://sbtexas.com/ethics-religious-liberty/>) for our Texas prayer packets to download so you can know how to pray for Texas and our leaders, and encourage your church to participate!

Also, here are some great points from the National Day of Prayer [nationaldayofprayer.org](http://nationaldayofprayer.org)

**If you missed last week's issue and action items from the Sentinel see here** [sbtexas.com](http://sbtexas.com)

### NATIONAL ISSUES

**HR 1 "For the PEOPLE ACT"** On March 4, 2021 the U.S. House passed 'For the People Act,' on almost a strict party line vote of 220-210 with no Republican voting for it. It is now headed to the U.S. Senate. It is a misleading, complex bill that regulates free speech and exposes American citizens to harassment. This bill would also create sweeping changes in election law including things like not requiring a voter ID even if a state law requires it, it would make almost impossible to clean up the voter rolls of deceased or ineligible voters, would encourage mail-in ballots being sent to people who did not request them, would require donor names to non-profits be released, and further limits the freespeech of non-profits. There would be little, if any, accountability in our voting system and these are just a few of the many problems with HR 1.

The following quote may be attributed to Alliance Defending Freedom Senior Counsel Zack Pruitt regarding the U.S. House of Representatives' passage of H.R. 1, legislation that expands the definition of "political speech" and dramatically alters the First Amendment speech and association protections that American citizens have enjoyed since the founding of our country:

*"Tonight the House of Representatives voted in favor of a bill that tramples on the free speech and free association rights of American citizens. Throughout its nearly 800 pages of complex and convoluted text, H.R. 1 imposes unworkable and invasive regulations on the ability of individual Americans and groups of citizens to discuss vital policy issues with elected officials or the public and to exercise constitutionally protected freedoms. The bill intrudes upon the private financial decisions made by everyday citizens, subjecting them to harassment and intimidation simply for giving to causes they care about. Despite being called the 'For the People Act,' it is anything but that, as the U.S. Supreme Court has made clear that 'the people lose when the government is the one deciding which ideas should prevail.' We hope the Senate will see through this façade and reject this misleading and deeply flawed bill."*

**ACTION on HR 1** Please call your U.S. Senator and tell them to vote NO (find name and numbers here [capitol.texas.gov/home](http://capitol.texas.gov/home) ), and for more reading about HR 1 see here [heritageaction.com](http://heritageaction.com) , and here [heritage.org](http://heritage.org)

### TEXAS ISSUES

**HB 3 By Rep. Dustin Burrows** [capitol.texas.gov](http://capitol.texas.gov) currently under consideration by the Texas House of Representatives, is an item of serious concern for all Texans. In its current form, HB 3 grants sweeping new pandemic emergency authority to the governor and creates narrow and nearly meaningless liability protection for Texas businesses, including placing Texas businesses under federal/CDC, state, and local ever-changing guidelines.

**Read here for more of a breakdown of Texas House Bill 3** [texasaction.com](http://texasaction.com)  
and listen here on the Luke Macias show to understand what the bill would do: [youtube.com](http://youtube.com)

**ACTION on HB3:** Public Hearing at the Austin State Capitol on March 11, 2021 at 8:00am if you would like to testify for 3 minutes before the House State Affairs Committee. They are taking testimony in the Capitol Auditorium, E1.004, which is on the first floor of the extension across from the cafeteria and gift shop. Remember to sign-in at the computer kiosk near the committee room on your arrival if you plan to testify.

Please also call your House Representative and tell them to vote NO on HB3 (find who your Texas Representative is here - [capitol.texas.gov/home](http://capitol.texas.gov/home)) and instead, ask them to support two of Senator Brian Birdwell's (R-SD 22) bills that would rebalance legislative and executive responsibilities during a declared disaster or emergency -

**SB 1025** ensures the TX Governor cannot suspend law or make law without the legislature and **SJR 45** allows any sitting legislator at the time of the disaster to challenge the Governor in the Supreme Court of Texas if the governor fails to convene the legislature after a qualifying disaster or emergency declaration.

**Three Religious Liberty Bills – SB 26** [capitol.texas.gov](http://capitol.texas.gov) | **SJR 27** [capitol.texas.gov](http://capitol.texas.gov) | **SB 247** [capitol.texas.gov](http://capitol.texas.gov)

On Monday, March 8th at the Capitol in Austin, the Texas Senate State Affairs Committee met and listened to public testimony on SB 26 by Senator Angela Paxton which would prohibit suspension of laws protecting religious freedom and prohibit closure of places of worship, SJR 27 by Senator Kelly Hancock – a proposed constitutional amendment to prohibit government from closing or limiting a religious service, and SB 247 by Senator Charles Perry – a bill to protect the religious liberty and freedom of association rights of attorneys.

This past year has shown how vulnerable our churches are to discrimination and closure and even in Texas some churches had their drive-in church services monitored for “compliance.”

**ACTION:** Please reach out to your Texas Senator and House Representative and ask them to support these bills (SB 26, SJR 27, SB 247)! ( find who your Texas Representative and Senator is here [wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home](http://wrm.capitol.texas.gov/home))

**Regarding the priority on banning gender reassignment** surgeries, hormone therapies, and puberty blockers in children and adolescents, in addition to protecting women's sports:

**HB 1458** by Texas Rep. Valoree Swanson the Fair Play in Women's Sports Act

This bill defends women's rights, secured under Title IX, to equal access to athletic opportunities and scholarships. As biological males are entering women's sporting competitions, girls are being robbed of these opportunities and this bill would put a stop to it in Texas. House Bill 1458 was referred to the House State Affairs Committee.

**ACTION on HB 1458** Please call Rep. Chris Paddie, the Chairman of State Affairs, at 512-463-0556 and let him know you want to see a hearing on this bill and it's important that it be passed! Mississippi just passed a bill to protect women's sports and Texas must do the same - [theepochtimes.com](http://theepochtimes.com)

**HB 68 and HB 1399** - On March 3rd the Alabama Senate passed a bill called the Vulnerable Child Compassion and Protection Act that now heads to the state House of Representatives and if passed, this law would make it a felony if a youth under the age of 19 were treated with puberty-blockers, hormone therapy or surgery. We need to do the same in Texas.

Currently, one of the Texas bills we are supporting that would help to ban these practices is HB 68 [capitol.texas.gov](http://capitol.texas.gov), and it has already been referred to the Public Health Committee.

We are also looking for HB 1399 [capitol.texas.gov](http://capitol.texas.gov)/ to be assigned to a committee soon.

**ACTION on HB 68:** Please let Texas Rep. Stephanie Klick (512) 463-0599, Chairwoman of Public Health, that you would like to see a hearing on this bill immediately to protect our children.