

Coalition United in Strong Opposition to SB 11, HB 18, HB 19

The Honorable Governor Greg Abbott
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 12428
Austin, Texas 78711-2428

May 29, 2019

Re: Request for Veto of SB 11, HB18, HB19

Dear Governor Abbott,

We are a coalition of groups and individuals, some partisan and non-partisan, who have come together in opposition to Senate Bill 11 and House Bills 18 and 19.

We greatly appreciate your efforts to make schools safer. Regrettably, we cannot support these bills. SB 11 contained several features that directly addressed school safety. However, it also had provisions of concern. While some groups attempted to get these concerns addressed, the bill was only made worse.

We believe that the use of a psychiatric consortium that has inherent connections to the pharmaceutical industry simply puts Texas children at risk of dangerous psychotropic drugging and policies that lead to same.

As Attorney General you sued numerous drug companies over illegal marketing schemes. We know you are well aware of just how far drug companies can reach into our state programs. In 2012 you settled a lawsuit with Johnson & Johnson related to the marketing of an antipsychotic drug for unapproved populations including children.¹ This was done under the Texas Medication Algorithm Project. Several faculty members from UT medical schools were involved. In other instances, state employees resigned from their jobs over allegations that they worked with drug companies to promote their product in state programs.²

We do not believe a mental health consortium is necessary to school safety. That it is composed of the psychiatry departments of our medical schools; and as our medical schools work closely with pharmaceutical companies, this creates a conflict that cannot be cured.

¹ <https://www.texastribune.org/2012/01/19/state-settles-largest-ever-medicaid-fraud-suit/>

² <https://www.texastribune.org/2015/04/17/terrell-state-psychiatrists-resign-after-accusatio/>



southern baptists
of texas convention



Texas Eagle Forum



North Texas Citizens Lobby



Assessment for “potential” danger is unreliable, will create injustice

The idea that one could pinpoint those who will “potentially” become dangerous and then get them the “help they need” is abhorrent to us. **No one can predict evil.** Even if they could, there is nothing to suggest that mental health treatment can prevent it. Absent an immediate and obvious threat, there is no screening, assessment, or interview that can dependably predict future dangerousness. Even the American Psychiatric Association has stated that when it comes to long term predictions of future dangerousness, they get it wrong in at least two out of three cases.³

How many innocent children will be labeled as potential threats and then deprived of precious liberties?

A mental health supervisor for Austin Independent School District’s campus police testified on HB10 that AISD alone had referred over 875 students to Child Protective Services over mental health issues so far this school year. In questioning, it sounded like many of these cases revolved around differences of opinion with parents.

We believe that foster children, special needs children, and children of color will be especially vulnerable to such programs because of biases and stereotypes.

Threat Assessments Are Subjective: Therefore, Mistakes Will Be Made - These Are Not Harmless

Using Threat Assessment Teams to scrutinize children, question children, and offer subjective assessments of risk, without providing true information on the frailties of such assessments, and without full Miranda warnings is an affront to parental and civil rights. The fact that the Texas School Safety Center website features at least one model from another state in which everyone, including the child, is questioned **before the child’s parents are brought in** make the prospect of Threat Assessment Teams even more disturbing.⁴

We would remind you that Nikolas Cruz was apparently the subject of a threat assessment AND mental health treatment.⁵ This certainly did not prevent the Parkland shooting.

Mental screening for “at-risk” students is notoriously inaccurate with false positive rates as high as 84%.⁶ What defines “at risk”? The problem with mental screening in general and with labeling “at-risk” children with a psychiatric label is that the already admittedly subjective diagnostic criteria are even more difficult to apply to children. The World Health Organization (not known as a conservative group) has said: “Childhood and adolescence being developmental phases, it is difficult to draw clear boundaries between phenomena that are part of normal development and others that are abnormal.”⁷

³<https://www.psychiatry.org/File%20Library/Psychiatrists/Directories/Library-and-Archive/amicus-briefs/amicus-1982-barefoot.pdf>

⁴https://static1.squarespace.com/static/55674542e4b074aad07152ba/t/5b442226562fa7fde6f5bc38/1531191846207/LAUSD_Threat_Assessment_CHECKLIST.305182908.pdf

⁵<https://www.sun-sentinel.com/local/broward/parkland/florida-school-shooting/fl-ne-nikolas-cruz-threat-assessment-20190124-story.html>

⁶<https://thenationalpulse.com/commentary/parents-beware-mentalscreening-students-ramps-up-texas/>

⁷<https://thenationalpulse.com/commentary/turning-teachers-psychotherapists-will-not-prevent-schoolshootings/>, <http://edlibertywatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/School-Safety-Memo-to-Commission.pdf>

THE RUTHERFORD INSTITUTE



We believe that as a result of this mental health approach, perfectly normal children will be given subjective mental health labels, or viewed as potential threats, affecting their rights now and in the future.

Mental Health Education is problematic

We believe that mental health education, as envisioned in SB11 and HB18, is more likely to become an indoctrination tool, a marketing tool, than it is to help children. There are at least two major cases in Texas where books, coloring books, or similar materials were used to either fill hospital beds or steer children toward medication.^{8,9} In addition, some schools are using mindfulness programs that include practices one would associate with Eastern religious practices. This is objectionable to some families. **We believe parents, families, and their care providers are best positioned to provide unbiased information, and to decide when or if their children are ready for that discussion.**

Psychotropic Drugs, Suicide and Violence

Multiple school shooters and other perpetrators of mass violence have been under the influence of psychotropic drugs or withdrawing from them.¹⁰ Many drugs are associated with risk of suicidal thoughts or behaviors, aggression, hostility, agitation or other violent effects. While legislation was filed that would have at least explored psychotropic drugs in relation to suicide, it went nowhere. We do not support legislation that could exacerbate the problem.

Opening Schools to Private Mental Health Providers Invites Fraud, Abuse

HB18 supports the idea of schools partnering with private mental health providers for those services. This is not otherwise defined. As the bill author filed another bill allowing hospitals to run school mental health clinics, we can only assume HB18 includes private psychiatric hospitals. **At this time, a psychiatric hospital company in Arlington is under a criminal indictment alleging, among other things, that patients were illegally held against their will.**¹¹ Other hospitals are under suit over similar issues.¹² Our nation's largest chain of psychiatric hospitals is being sued by stockholders alleging similar behavior.¹³ This chain of hospitals has 15 psychiatric hospitals licensed in Texas, plus other facilities under different licensure. In 1992, Texas State Senator Mike Moncrief testified that private psych hospitals in Texas had entered into arrangements with Texas schools to provide counseling services and then referred students for inpatient treatment.¹⁴ **We do not want our children to become cash cows for fraudulent schemes.**



⁸ Texas State Senator Mike Moncrief, Congressional testimony, 1992

⁹ <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00282733c;view=1up;seq=15>

⁹ <https://www.infowars.com/creepy-coloring-book-tells-kids-to-take-drugs/>

¹⁰ <https://www.cchrint.org/school-shooters/>

¹¹ <https://www.star-telegram.com/news/local/community/arlington/article223102785.html>

¹² <https://www.khou.com/article/news/lawsuits-patients-held-against-their-will-at-dallas-behavioral-hospital/285-509394385>

¹³ <https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/legal-regulatory-issues/uhs-can-t-dodge-claims-it-held-patients-illegally-investors-say.html>

¹⁴ <https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=umn.31951d00282733c;view=1up;seq=99>

In Summary

We believe vigilance, hardened campuses and other direct measures, not mental health, not subjective risk assessments would better improve school safety.

We believe that families, their chosen communities, and their churches are charged with our children's social, emotional, and moral education. There has been increasing controversy over schools teaching about family values, relationships, belief systems or behaviors. Transparency has also been a problem. We do not support legislation that would allow our role, our God given duty, to be undermined by the state.

We recognize that some families may choose psychiatric treatments, including drugs, for their children. We do not believe it is in the best interest of the state or our children for these services to be promoted in schools. This is a family matter.

We believe these bills open up our schools and Texas's children to fraud and abuse.

We believe these bills favor industry, not families.

Four times as many teens in the U.S. die from accidents as from suicide.¹⁵ Nearly four times as many die from accidents as from homicide.¹⁶ Therefore we find it curious that our state is spending hundreds of millions in these bills for suicide and violence prevention, and not one dime for accident prevention. We want to know why.

We believe that these bills feed into further data on our children being collected and shared.

We believe that these bills codify unsettled science, with no consensus, such as trauma informed care and adverse childhood experiences, into law.

We want our schools to return to their original intent with the focus on academics – reading, writing, mathematics. Let parents and families decide what their children need. Let our churches, communities, and private doctors be the ones we go to when we need help.



¹⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/products/databriefs/db37.htm>

¹⁶ Ibid

We believe that the issue of school safety needs more seats at the table, and must involve a diversity of views from parents, faith-based counselors, ministers and groups concerned with our liberties to discuss what is best for our children. These bills do not reflect that diversity.

Therefore, we request that SB11, HB18, and HB19 be vetoed.

Signed, concerned community and opinion leaders, *

Lee Spiller, Executive Director, Citizens Commission on Human Rights-Texas

Trayce Bradford, President, Texas Eagle Forum

Southern Baptists of Texas Convention

Alice Linahan, Vice-President, Women on the Wall

Barbara Harless, co-Founder North Texas Citizens Lobby

JoAnn Fleming, Executive Director, Grassroots America – We the People PAC

Cathie Adams, 1st VP, Eagle Forum, Former Chairman, Republican Party of Texas, HD 89, SD 8, Parker

Kevin Freeman, Founder, National Security Investment Consultant Institute (NSIC)

Rachel Malone, Texas Director, Gun Owners of America, HD 50, SD 14, Manor

Beth Biesel, Co-Chair, Park Cities Preston Hollow Leadership Forum, HD 108, SD

Pastor Stephan Broden, State Republican Executive Committeeman SD 23, Gone2Far Movement, Dallas16, University Park

Ruth York, Vice President, Tea Party Patriots of Eastland County, HD 60, SD 28, Cisco

Cindi Castilla, President, Dallas Eagle Forum, HD 114, SD 16, Dallas

J. Clayton Young M.D., FACOG, Medical Freedom Activist, The Woodlands

Virginia Young, M.S., Medical Freedom Activist, The Woodlands

Jerri Lynn Ward, J.D., Travis County Precinct Chair, Pct. 312, Lakeway, TX

Tom & Toni Fabry, Chairman & Treasurer, Frisco TEA Party, HD 106, SD 12, Frisco

Stacy McMahan, Executive Director, East Texans for Liberty PAC

Mary & Dale Huls, Past President & current Executive Committee members, Clear Lake TEA Party, HD 129, SD 11, Friendswood

John Whitehead, The Rutherford Institute

Jill Glover, Licensed Professional Counselor; Precinct Chair, Denton County GOP, HD 63, SD 12, Denton



Julie McCarty, President, NE Tarrant TEA Party, HD 98, SD 12, Grapevine

Desiree Watts, Legislative Chair, East Texans for Liberty PAC

Michael Olcott, Ph.D., Co-founder, Parker County Conservatives, HD 61, SD 30, Fort Worth

Rebecca Forest, President, Women on the Wall

Lacey Hull, Co-founder, We the Parents Coalition

Russell Ramsland, Founder, Park Cities/Preston Hollow Leadership Forum, HD 114, SD 16, Dallas

Nancy Dillard, President, Denton County Conservative Coalition; Prec. 2022 Chair, Denton County GOP

Maria Espinoza, Co-founder & National Director, The Remembrance Project

Deborah Simmons, Take Back the SHAC

A. Patrick Huff, Ph.D., Adjunct Professor - Houston, Retired Public School Principal

Meg Bakich, Concerned Highland Park (HPISD) Parent, Former HPISD School Board Candidate

Randy Houchins, Concerned Leander ISD Parent, Mechanical Engineer Math Advocate

Penny Story, founder, Constitutional Conservative Activists, HD 10, SD 22, Red Oak

Mary Bowen, Texas teacher, Cedar Creek

Moira T. Dolan, MD, Internal Medicine Physician, Austin

Jennifer Fleck, Concerned Texas Parent and Attorney, Lake Travis

Dwayne Stovall, Director, Get Off My State LLC, HD 18, SD 3, Cleveland

Krista McIntire, Director of Family Rights Advocacy

Ann Newman, Speak Up Texas, Boerne

Tish Whitten, Political Donor, Dallas

Celise Hamann, Teacher, Cypress Fairbanks ISD

Joel and Karen Starnes, Organization for American Values

Barbette W. Stone, Houston

Adam Cahn, Austin political blogger, Cahnman's Musings, HD 51, SD 21, Austin

Ann Lieber, Precinct Chair, Collin County Republican Party, HD 214, SD 30, Prosper

Anna Bartosh, Treasurer, San Angelo TEA Party, HD 72, SD 28, San Angelo



Barrett Breedlove, Grassroots America - We the People, HD 6, SD 1, Tyler

Betty Anderson, President, Montgomery County Eagle Forum, HD 15, SD 4, Shenandoah

Bill & Patty Gallagher, Primadata Liberty Center, HD 2, SD 2, Mabank

Bill Bingham, past Vice President, Bryan/College Station Tea Party, HD 14, SD 5, College Station

Bill Culpepper, GAWTP; Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party, HD 6, SD 1, Whitehouse

Bill Hussey, Founder & Vice President, Llano TEA Party, HD 53, SD 24, Llano

Cara Hill, Member, Smith County Republican Women, HD 6, CD 1, Tyler

Carey Austin, President, Northwood Republican Women, HD 114, SD 16, Dallas

Carol Doucet, Co-Founder, Conservative Society of Navarro County & Navarro County TEA Party, HD 89, SD 22, Frost

Charlie Levitt, Board Member, Northeast Tarrant Tea Party, HD 91, SD 9, Haltom City

Craig Licciardi, Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party; Grassroots America - We the People, HD 6, SD 1, Flint

Crystal Main, Precinct Chair, Tarrant County Republican Party, HD 91, SD 9, North Richland Hills

Dave & Mary Fallert, Membership Chair, Lonestar Coalition SD 2, HD 4, SD 2, Crandall

David Halvorson, SREC SD 12, HD 98, SD 12, Grapevine

David Rasco, Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party, HD 6, SD 1, Tyler

Deborah Bailey, Secretary, San Angelo TEA Party, HD 72, SD 28, San Angelo

Della Clark, Member, Grassroots America - We the People, HD 6, SD 1, Tyler

Denise & Randy Rives, President, Star Republican Women, Precinct Chair, Llano County Republican Party, HD 53, SD 24, Horseshoe Bay

Dennis Cable, Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party, HD 6, SD 1, Whitehouse

Dottie Barnes, Co-Founder, Conservative Society of Navarro County, HD 89, SD 22, Frost

Dr. Dwayne "Doc" Collins, Founder & Chairman, Edom TEA Party, HD 2, SD 2, Ben Wheeler

Dr. Ivette Lozano, Former President, Dallas County Republican Assembly, HD 108, SD 2, Dallas

Elizabeth Theiss, President, Stop the Magnet, HD 134, SD 15, Houston

Ernie Clark, Past President, Grassroots America - We the People, HD 6, SD 1, Tyler



Eugene Ralph Sr, Vice President, SW Dallas County Republicans, HD 109, SD 2, Dallas

Fran Rhodes, Vice President NE Tarrant Tea Party, HD 24, SD 9, Fort Worth

Frank Dobrovolny, President, Cherokee County Texas Republican Club, HD 11, SD 3, Jacksonville

Frank Motsenbocker, Precinct Chair, Wood County Republican Party, HD 5, SD 1, Mineola

Gary & Janet Whitehorn, Board Member, We the People - Longview, HD 7, SD 1, Longview

Gloria McDonald, Technology Chair, Denton County Conservative Coalition, HD 63, SD 12, Bartonville

Jack Dubose, Chair, Real County Republican Party, HD 53, SD 19, Leakey

Jackie King, Co-Founder, Conservative Society of Navarro County, HD 8, SD 22, Purdon

Janna Castloo, Chair, Wood County Republican Party, HD 5, SD 1, Mineola

Jill Youngblood Hilber, VP Legislation, Park Cities Republican Women, HD 106, SD 30, Aubrey

Jim & Char Doonan, Lake Country Republicans, HD 5, SD 1, Winnsboro

Jim Speiran, Past Board Member, Grassroots America - We the People, HD 1, SD 1, Bullard

Joan Somma, Board Member, Texans for Immigration Reduction and Enforcement (TFIRE), HD 134, SD 17, Houston

Joe Adams, Chair, Delta County Republican Party, HD 62, SD 2, Cooper

John Tweedell, Coordinator, Convention of the States Project, HD 5, SD 1, Hideaway

Josie D Schoolcraft, President, Cherokee County Texas Republican Club, HD 11, SD 3, Rusk

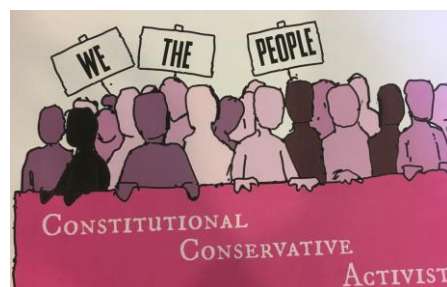
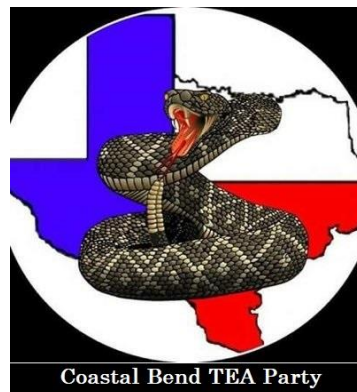
Karl Voigtsberger, Former SREC SD 8, Board Member, McKinney Tea Party, HD 67, SD 8, Richardson

Kathi-Ann Rivard, Precinct Chair, Collin County Republican Party, Golden Corridor Republican Women, Frisco Tea Party, HD 70, SD 30, Prosper

Kathy Hussey, President, Llano TEA Party, HD 53, SD 24, Llano

Kathy Ponce, President, Freedom Tea Party Patriots, HD 10, SD 22, Maypearl

Kurt Hyde, Precinct Chair, Denton County Republican Party, HD 64, SD 12, Corinth



Larry Korkmas, President, Texans for Immigration Reduction and Enforcement (TFIRE), HD 133, SD 17, Houston

Laura Pressley, Ph.D., Founder, True Texas Elections, HD 50, SD 14, Copperas Cove

Lou Vail, Chair, Knox County Republican Party, HD 69, SD 28, Knox City

Maggie Wright, Founding member & past President, Texas Patriots TEA Party, HD 58, SD 22, Burleson

Marcia Barnett, Precinct Chair, Denton County Republican Party, Parliamentarian, Republican Women of Denton, Collin & Dallas County, HD 65, SD 12, Carrollton

Maria Hammerlein, Executive Director, Immigration Reform Coalition of Texas, HD 134, SD 15, Houston

Marian Knowlton, Chairman, Atascosa County Republican Party, HD 31, SD 19, Poteet

Marty Forte, Preston West Republican Women, HD 114, SD 16, Dallas

Mary Anne Farrow, East Texans for Liberty PAC, HD 7, SD 1, Gilmer

Michael & Susan Najvar, Deep East Texas TEA Party, HD 17, SD 18, Gonzales

Michael Kinzie, Founder, TEAParty911.com, HD 130, SD 7, Tomball

Mike Openshaw, Founder, Texas Legislative Watch, HD 66, SD 8, Plano

Pastor Greg Young, Nationally Syndicated Radio host, Chosen Generation, HD 53, SD 24, Bandera

Pat Tibbs, President, Montgomery County TEA Party PAC, HD 15, SD 4, Magnolia

Peter Batura, Vice President, Texans for Immigration Reduction and Enforcement (TFIRE), HD 132, SD 17, Katy

Rena & David French, Founder Patriot Members, Grassroots America – We the People, HD 11, SD 3, Bullard

Robert Kecseg, SREC SD 1, Precinct Chair, Wood County Republican Party, HD 5, SD 1, Winnsboro

Roy Willis, Conservative Texas Citizen, HD 99, SD 12, Fort Worth

Russ Bafford, Sr., President, Robson Ranch Republican Club, HD 64, SD 12, Denton

Sharon Armke, Concerned Parents of Texas, Hill Country Values, HD 45, SD 25, Dripping Springs

Suzette Griffin, Past President, Clear Lake TEA Party, HD 29, SD 11, Pearland

Sharon Emmert, self-retired Smith County Commissioner, Charter Member, Grassroots America - We the People, HD 6, SD 1, Tyler

Shirley Anderson, Precinct Chair, Smith County Republican Party, HD 5, SD 1, Lindale

Suzanne Guggenheim, President, Coastal Bend Tea Party, HD 31, SD 20, Corpus Christi



Tami Andrews, Community Affairs Chair, East Texans for Liberty, HD 7, SD 1, Gilmer

Tanya Robertson, SREC, Senate District 11, HD 129, SD 11, Seabrook

Terri DuBose, Precinct Chair, Real County GOP; former SREC SD 19, HD 53, Leakey

Terri Hall, Founder/Director, Texans Uniting for Reform and Freedom (TURF), HD 53, SD 24, Ingram

Terry & Joy Putnam, Texans 4 Truth, HD 20, SD 5, Georgetown

Terry Lynch, past President, Park Cities Republican Women, HD 89, SD 8, Parker

Terry Wade, President, Collin County Conservative Republicans, HD 67, SD 8, Plano

Thomas Morgan, Member, Grassroots America - We the People, HD 6, SD 1, Tyler

Trevor Dupuy, Founder & Coordinator, Horseshoe Bay Conservative Caucus, HD 53, SD 24, Horseshoe Bay

Vicki Slaton, Former (term limited) SREC SD 2; Lonestar Coalition SD 2, HD 113, Sunnyvale

Wallace Johnson, Precinct Chair, Brazos County Republican Party, Bryan

Wes Brumit, Chair, Voices of Conservatism and Liberty PAC (VOCAL), HD 9, SD 1, Longview

William Earnest, HD 20, SD 24, Spicewood

Bryan Slaton, Leader, SD 2 Conservative Grassroots Coalition, Vice President, Ethics and Political Economy Center (EPEC), HD 2, SD 2, Royse City

Jean Scott, Katy Republican Women, HD 26, SD 18, Sugarland

Alan Smith, Steering Committee Member, Fredericksburg Tea Party, HD 73, SD 24

Angela Smith, Founder/Steering Committee, Fredericksburg Tea Party, HD 73, SD 24

Janie Brittain, Steering Committee, Garland Tea Party, HD 112, SD 16, Garland

Jim Stanley, Chairman, Henderson County Tea Party, HD 4, SD 3, Chandler

Tillie Perkins, President, Red Texas Forum; founding member, Lone Star Coalition of SD 2, Mesquite

David Watts, Board Member, East Texans for Liberty, HD 7, SD 1, Gilmer

Peggy Plumlee, Wood County GOP State Convention Delegate, HD 5, SD1, Hawkins

Brian Newman, President, Collin Strong, HD 70, SD 8, McKinney

Mike & Laura Richter, members Lone Star Coalition SD 2, HD 107, Mesquite

Sue Evenwel, SREC, SD 1; County Chair, Titus County GOP, HD 5, SD 1, Mt Pleasant



Red Texas Forum - Dallas



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**This letter was signed by 153 opinion leaders, representing 130
unique organizations, groups, and districts across Texas.**