

Christian Life Commission



Public Policy Priorities 81st Legislative Session

The Commissioners of the CLC have reviewed and approved the following public policy priorities for the 81st session of the Texas Legislature. These priorities, in a number of different issue areas, will serve as a guide for the work of the CLC public policy staff.

While the number of issues and priorities is long, it is by no means exhaustive or fully inclusive of all the advocacy work the CLC will do. Each legislative session is unique and poses its own challenges and opportunities for a positive impact at the capitol and in the state. Many bills will be filed in each issue area and the CLC will be monitoring their progress and taking appropriate action as the session develops.

Throughout the session the CLC will be sending regular updates on the status of a variety of issues and will periodically send more time-sensitive alerts to let people know when their voice can have the greatest impact with lawmakers.

Alcohol and Addiction

- Promote regulatory programs targeted at sellers, parents and adults, including keg registration
- Support parental notification of campus-related substance abuse
- Fund programs for at-risk youth so they do not enter the juvenile justice system
- Fund substance abuse and mental health programs for youth incarcerated in TYC facilities
- Repeal laws that hinder the accuracy of substance abuse reporting, substance abuse screening and intervention

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Children and Family Issues

- Promote the development of an interagency strategic plan on children's issues to elevate coordination and accountability across all child-serving agencies
- Provide access immunizations and health insurance for all children in Texas
- Ensure that the public and private eligibility system of the CHIP and Children's Medicaid eligibility system work well together

Church/State

- Defend the right of churches and church members to participate in the political process while protecting the autonomy of the church from misuse by politicians
- Oppose any private school voucher proposals that would fund sectarian education with tax dollars
- Support efforts to protect the ministries of churches in communities with hostile ordinances

Criminal Justice

- Advance prison chaplains within the Texas Department of Criminal Justice
- Adopt safeguards to detect and protect innocence throughout the Texas criminal justice proceedings
- Advocate for continued reform of the Texas Youth Commission including measures that promote rehabilitation and community-based treatment
- Support special drug treatment prisons, substance-abuse treatment centers, treatment diversion programs, and halfway houses for minor offenders

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Education

- Promote the expansion of adult literacy and learning through workforce development, postsecondary access and expansion of ESL
- Support teacher training and family incentives to expand dropout prevention and drop out recovery programs
- Support parental choice and standards of excellence and accountability for Texas charter schools
- Oppose providing public money for private sectarian use including vouchers

Environment

- Support renewable energy technology as one source for Texas' rising energy needs
- Support recycling of electronic waste
- Promote incentives for energy efficiency and measures that reduce air pollution

Gambling

- Maintain and protect family-friendly tourism and family-friendly industries in Texas
- Oppose casinos and other gambling expansion as a business model for Texas
- Support regulations, prosecution and penalties regarding 8-liner machines
- Oppose electronic bingo machines, VLTs, and the legalization of poker tournaments

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Health and Long Term Care

- Support quality of care improvements and strengthen Texas' long term care infrastructure
- Support small businesses coverage plans for high-quality health coverage Support statewide outreach programs for health coverage and health care
- Monitor and assess changes to the Texas Advance Directives Act

Immigration and Trafficking

- Support efforts to pass comprehensive immigration reform on the national level
- Support border security and law enforcement policies consistent with humanitarian values
- Support efforts to protect and care for victims of human trafficking
- Support law enforcement to pursue those who trade in and profit from human trafficking.