

# Texas CLC backs package of pro-life legislation

April 18, 2017

AUSTIN—The Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission joined the Texas Alliance for Life, the Texans for Life Coalition and the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops in supporting what proponents call “a thoughtful package of pro-life legislation” in the Texas House of Representatives.

The bills would ban partial-birth abortions and wrongful birth lawsuits, stop state and local governments from contracting with abortion providers, regulate how the remains of an aborted fetus may be treated, increase criminal penalties for forced abortions on human trafficking victims, improve reporting of abortion complications and reclassify ectopic pregnancies to ensure their treatment is not reported as abortion.



Rep. DeWayne Burns (4th from left) and Rep. Hugh Shine (4th from right) confer with coalition members (left to right) Greg Terra, founder of the Texas Center for the Defense of Life; Jennifer Kane Andrews, staff attorney, Texas Alliance for Life; Kyleen Wright, president of Texans for Life; Kathryn Freeman, public policy director, Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission; Dottie Laster, human trafficking advocate; and Joe Pojman, executive director of the Texas Alliance for Life. “The health and flourishing of all people—especially the most vulnerable among us—is important, and those of us in this coalition

are committed to creating a pro-life culture in Texas,” said Kathryn Freeman, director of Public Policy for the Christian Life Commission. “We are thrilled to support a wide range of bills, which will have a real impact in protecting women and children.”

### **‘Well crafted to survive court challenges’**

Joe Pojman, executive director of the Texas Alliance for Life, applauded the bills as “well crafted to survive court challenges.”

Last year, the Supreme Court on a 5-3 ruling [struck down](#) a Texas law that required abortion clinics to meet surgical center standards and mandated that any doctor performing an abortion at a clinic have admitting privileges at a hospital not more than 30 miles away.

Jennifer Carr Allmon, executive director of the Texas Conference of Catholic Bishops, likewise affirmed the legislative package.

“We are thrilled a wide range of pro-life bills has been filed this session to better protect the life and dignity of the human person,” she said. “While we maintain the goal of ending abortion in the United States, this bill package makes strategic and incremental progress toward that goal.”

Most of the bills—scheduled for committee action in the House—have corresponding companion bills in the Texas Senate.

“We are excited to see members of both chambers moving our priority bills, demonstrating their strong commitment to honor and protect life,” said Kyleen Wright, director of Texans for Life.

### **Governor’s Life Initiative**

At least two bills in the House line up with the specific goals of the [“Life Initiative”](#) Gov. Greg Abbott launched:

- [HB 200](#) by Rep. Cindy Burkett, R-Sunnyvale, would ban partial-birth abortions, while providing an exemption for procedures to save a mother's life. The bill also would prohibit the sale or purchase of tissues and organs after an abortion.

- [HB 1936](#) by Rep. Drew Springer, R-Muenster, would prohibit state and local governments from entering into contracts with abortion providers or affiliates. The companion bill is SB 855 by Sen. Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels.

"Some city and county governments have entered contracts with Planned Parenthood for health services. While we support access to affordable health care for low-income women, we believe local governments should find alternatives for the provision of those services with entities like community health centers," Freeman [said](#).

**The coalition also supports five other bills in the Texas House:**

- [HB 35](#) by Rep. Byron Cook, R-Corsicana, would mandate "dignified final disposition of embryonic and fetal tissue remains" by cremation or burial. The companion bill for both HB 200 and HB 35 is SB 8 by Sen. Charles Schwertner, R-Georgetown. The House State Affairs committee passed HB 35 April 18. It moves now to the House Calendars Committee, which could schedule it for a floor vote.

- [HB 2962](#) by Rep. Giovanni Capriglione, R-Southlake, increases the requirements for reporting abortion complications by providers, as well as facilities that provide follow-up care. The companion bill is SB 1602 by Sen. Donna Campbell, R-New Braunfels.

- [HB 434](#) by Rep. Ron Simmons, R-Carrollton, would eliminate wrongful birth as a cause of action for lawsuits. The companion bill is SB 25 by Sen. Brandon Creighton, R-Conroe.

- [HB 2858](#) by Rep. DeWayne Burns, R-Cleburne, would increase criminal penalties for coercing victims of human trafficking to obtain an abortion. It also would require any facility that provides abortions to display a sign with the human trafficking hotline phone number. The companion bill is SB 1377 by Sen. Dawn Buckingham, R-Lakeway.
- [HB 3771](#) by Rep. Byron Cook, R-Corsicana, would amend the state's health and safety code to clarify that the legal definition of "abortion" does not include a procedure to remove an ectopic pregnancy.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Updated April 19 to reflect committee action the previous day.*