



Policy Committee Meeting  
March 18, 2025

Amy Smith	HCDVCC
Lt. John Klafka	HCSO
Shannon Fowler	UH Downtown
Amanda Elkanick	Texas Advocacy Project
Aarian Tipton	Texas Advocacy Project
Vivian Phillips	Rice University Grad Student
Rebecca Councill	HCDVCC
Jacklyn Guerra	HAWC
Lt. Kira Webster	HPD- Family Violence
Maisha Colter	AVDA
Nusrat Ameen	DAYA
Swati Narayan	DAYA

Amy Smith welcomed everyone and said Judge Warne was on a conference call and unable to attend. Introductions were made.

Discussion began immediately about the current Legislative session. Amy Smith mentioned several agencies were approached by the Governor's Office about support for Bail Reform. No bill number was provided, and it appears the Governor's Office might be gearing up for a social media campaign since Bail Reform is one of his priorities this session. Amy also mentioned SB9 which includes mention of Bail Reform, and the role of Magistrates had a hearing and was favorably voted out of committee. There was also some discussion about several bail bills that have been filed some good, some bad and some that appear good in their summaries but have some hidden dangers for victims that are buried in the text of the bill.

Amanda also mentioned she testified on HB 837, a bill brought forward by An-Nissa to include domestic violence training for cosmetologists. This bill was also voted favorably out of committee. She also mentioned she is working with a Magistrate from Matagorda County on a bill to tweak allowing magistrates to hold dv offenders for up to 48 hours regardless of who wants to let them out.

SB 2196 on extending the length of MOEP's had a committee hearing but a vote has not been taken yet.

Vivian Phillips talked about her support for HB 1332 to increase education on dating violence in public schools. She also talked about some of TCFV's current legislative priorities:

**SB 1946 (ZAFFIRINI)/HB 4155 (MANUEL): REDUCING & PREVENTING FAMILY VIOLENCE HOMICIDE IN TEXAS**

With increases in family violence homicide in Texas, addressing lethal violence is an issue that requires a collaborative team working towards solutions. Research indicates that there are three top lethality indicators: strangulation, stalking, and the intersection of firearms and family violence. This measure would create a 2-year task force focused on prevention and reduction of family violence homicide with charges to make policy recommendations for the 90th legislative session.

**SB 1120 (HINOJOSA & HUFFMAN)/ HB 4918 (JOHNSON): RIGHT TO CONFER ON A PLEA FOR FAMILY VIOLENCE SURVIVORS**

Victims of sexual assault, stalking, indecent assault, and trafficking have the right to confer with the prosecutor on disposition decisions including plea agreements, rather than solely getting notice. This measure proposes adding victims of 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. This measure would allow family violence survivors greater safety and voice in the criminal justice process while also addressing a gap in the list of rights afforded to family violence victims.

**HB 1332 (GARCIA)/SB 2242 (WEST) & HB 1963 (GARCIA)/SB 2241 (WEST): SCHOOL DATING VIOLENCE POLICIES**

Current code requiring dating violence policies (Section 37.0831, Education Code) has referenced implementation in district plans for nearly 20 years but the circular code reference was never made. This measure focuses on implementing these policies 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. Survivors' parents would receive notification first to ensure time for safety planning and to require the survivor be offered safety resources and support. (HB 1332 / SB 2242)

**HB 4238 (MEYER) / SB 2902 (ZAFFIRINI): PROTECTING SURVIVORS FROM COLLECTION OF COERCED DEBT**

This measure seeks to protect individuals from debt collection actions when they are victims of identity theft by adding a new section to the Texas Finance Code, establishing that creditors and debt collectors cannot collect on debts incurred as a result of identity theft under certain conditions. Creditors and debt collectors could pursue legal action against the perpetrator of the identity theft to recover the debt.

There was some concern about HB 2771 which would reduce the number of crimes that would prevent someone convicted of a crime to possess a gun. These are the offenses that would be excluded in HB 2771 1. Sec. 42.072. STALKING. 2. Sec. 25.02. PROHIBITED SEXUAL CONDUCT. 3. Sec. 25.031. AGREEMENT TO ABDUCT FROM CUSTODY. 4. Sec. 25.07. VIOLATION OF CERTAIN COURT ORDERS OR CONDITIONS OF BOND IN A FAMILY VIOLENCE, CHILD ABUSE OR NEGLECT, SEXUAL ASSAULT OR ABUSE, INDECENT ASSAULT, STALKING, OR TRAFFICKING CASE. 5. Sec. 25.08. SALE OR PURCHASE OF CHILD. 6. Sec. 25.10. INTERFERENCE WITH RIGHTS OF GUARDIAN OF THE PERSON. 7. Sec. 25.11. CONTINUOUS VIOLENCE AGAINST THE FAMILY. Here is a link to the written testimony provided: <https://capitol.texas.gov/tlodocs/89R/publiccomments/billhistory/HB02771H.pdf#navpanes=0> This bill was left pending in committee.

Nusrat Ameen stated that HB 168 on Child Marriage to change the age to 17 for someone to get married in the State of Texas had a hearing, but it was left pending in the subcommittee. She also mentioned a new Federal registry for immigrants that went into effect on Friday April 11<sup>th</sup>. This registry is for anyone in the Country that has not registered through any other means.

She also talked about how important the Appropriation bill is for all everyone's funding. This is especially important because it is rumored that the Federal Government would like to combine the offices that oversee VOCA, VAWA and OFVPS money. This, however, would take an act of Congress since all three funding sources are run out of individual agencies and offices. Mention was also made of the possible City and County Budget shortfalls in the coming year. Maisha Colter mentioned that the DOJ pulled all the funding for the American Bar Association's trainings for the rest of the year and there is concern that the Executive Orders cutting funding to several big law firms will impact funding and pro bono work in the legal aid field.

Amanda announced that TAP testified against HB 2496 which would have required a dv incident to have occurred 2 years prior to filing for a Protective Order. This bill did not get voted out of the committee.

And finally, HCDVCC is hosting Dr. Eve Valera for Understanding the Intersection of Brain Injury and Intimate Partner Violence: Strategies for Improving Brain Health - Harris County Domestic Violence Coordinating Council click here to register <https://www.hcdvcc.org/event/understanding-the-intersection-of-brain-injury-and-intimate-partner-violence-strategies-for-improving-brain-health/>

Amy announced she will be out of town for the next meeting. Stay tuned it we will still be meeting.

Meeting Adjourned  
Next Meeting Tuesday May 20<sup>th</sup> or June 17<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 via ZOOM