



Policy Committee Meeting
September 16, 2025

Amy Smith	HCDVCC
Shannon Fowler	UH Downtown
Rebecca Council	HCDVCC
Aarian Tipton	Texas Advocacy Project
Lt. Kira Webster	HPD- Family Violence
Katharina Dechert	Tahirih
Veronyka James	County Judge's Office
Jen Schirmer	Transgender Education Network of Texas
Thecia Jenkins	HCDVCC

Amy Smith welcomed everyone and announced Judge Warne is traveling and not able to join us today and introductions were made.

Amy announced that TCFV's legislative update is now available <https://heyzine.com/flip-book/0d71e432c6.html>

Lt. Kira Webster announced HPD update their blue card, and it can be found at https://www.houstontx.gov/police/pdfs/Rights_of_Crime_Victims_Blue_Card_English.pdf

Veronyka James announced the County Budget is set to be voted on at the September 18th Commissioner's Court meeting.

Shannon Fowler announced classes are back in session. He also announced that several bills affected colleges this session including SB 37- which allows auditors to review all Public Universities curriculum and SB 2615 that requires all faculty to be back on campus. They can still have online classes, but the professor must be on campus.

Jen Schirmer said about 90 % of the bills affecting LGBTQ and Transgender rights were blocked during this session however SB 8 included language that any agency receiving County/State Domestic Violence funding must use the gender a person is assigned at birth, not the gender they identify, with when assigning them to space in their shelter. It also mentions male children under the age of 9 can stay with their caretaker. If not, they could be fined \$5,000. TENT is working on a one pager that addresses this issue, and she will share it once it s complete.

Aarian Tipton announced the TAP gala this week. Amy announced that Amanda Elkanick Oder did a Legislative Update for our Community Partner meeting on September 11th. The link to her PowerPoint slides and notes https://www.hcdvcc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/09/Laws-Over-Lunch_Whats-New-in-Legislation-PDFNotes-1.pdf Amanda also mentioned they were waiting until the Special Session was over to complete the Cheat/Tip Sheets they were creating for advocates. Once they are complete they will be distributed.

Katharina Dechert mentioned all the bills she recently talked about SB8, SB 17 and SB 38 that will affect immigrant survivors. There are several issues pending at the Federal level:

<https://www.nilc.org/resources/the-anti-immigrant-policies-in-trumps-final-big-beautiful-bill-explained/>

<https://www.nilc.org/articles/what-new-federal-notices-mean-for-immigrants-program-eligibility/>

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b9f1d48da02bc44473c36f1/t/68261ad9114c9f328c1cb428/1747327706249/AIS-One-Pager_Reconciliation-Legislation.pdf

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b9f1d48da02bc44473c36f1/t/68261d1116de804bc0073bd1/1747328274216/AIS_Proposed-Reconciliation-Bill-Harms-Survivors.pdf

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b9f1d48da02bc44473c36f1/t/6830c0f24cce7f6dda1fc3fa/1748025586729/AIS_MOC-Save-Programs-for-Survivors.pdf

https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5b9f1d48da02bc44473c36f1/t/68bf5510cd16300781052cfc/1757369616101/AIS_Vote-Reccomendation-HR3486.pdf

Some of the lowlights are:

- fees have been imposed on Immigration Applications, both new and pending applications, that have never had fees before, however no mechanism in place to pay those fees. If you have a survivor that is having problems paying those fees, please have them attend a Friend of Court Days and someone can try and help them.
- Several changes are coming to Public Benefits that take effect in 2027-2029 including food stamps. This will affect those with approved refugee or asylum status, approved U or T visas who might no longer be eligible to receive benefits. This could go into effect when they go to renew their benefits.
- HR 3686 is proposing extreme sentences, including possible life sentences, for those convicted of illegal reentry into the Country.

Amy announced that HCDVCC is having a celebration for the release of the DVAF report on September 23rd and the annual Candlelight Vigil honoring those who lost their lives to domestic violence will be on October 22nd at 6:30 at The Montrose Center more details will be coming soon!

The next meeting will be October 21st, 2025 at 2:00 pm via ZOOM.

Meeting adjourned.