

Outcomes of Texas Catholic Conference Legislative Activity 81st Regular Session of the Texas Legislature

Legislation: Texas Catholic Conference actively monitored 304 bills, and took positions on 225 individual bills (157 Support, 68 Oppose) during the 81st Regular Session of the Texas Legislature. Some of these bills were the identical companion bills filed in the House and Senate. Overall, we took positions on 180⁺ different pieces of legislation throughout the session. Bills are passed, or enrolled, when they pass both the House and Senate Chambers. Passed bills do not become law unless they are signed by the Governor or are not vetoed before the Governor's veto period expires, which occurred for this session on June 21, 2009.

Public Positions:

- ★ TCC supported 68% of tracked legislation (123 bills), an increase of 18% from last session.
- ★ TCC opposed 32% of tracked legislation (57 bills), a decrease of 13% from last session.

Outcomes:

- ★ Of the legislation that TCC tracked, 14% was enrolled (25 bills), the same percentage as last session.
- ★ Of the legislation enrolled, 92% was signed by the Governor or was effective without his signature (23 bills, 2 bills vetoed). No TCC-tracked bills were vetoed by the Governor last session.

Legislation TCC Supported:

- ★ Of the legislation that TCC supported, 20% was enrolled (25 bills), a 5% decrease from last session.
- ★ Of the legislation that TCC supported, 1.6% was vetoed (2 bills vetoed).
- ★ Of the legislation that TCC supported, 19% was signed by the Governor or was effective without his signature (23 bills).

Legislation TCC Opposed:

- ★ Of the legislation that TCC opposed, 0% was enrolled (0 bills), a 2% decrease from last session.

81st Legislative Session Summary:

Overall, our agenda was 46% successful in terms of bills we supported passing and bills we opposed failing. While these statistics are interesting, they do not capture the full impact of our presence at the Capitol. It is also helpful to review our outcomes in light of the outcomes of the entire legislature.

- ★ 18% of House Bills filed passed both houses of the legislature (867 of 4836)
- ★ 23% of Senate Bills filed passed both houses of the legislature (592 of 2583)
- ★ 19% of total bills passed both houses of the legislature (1459 of 7419); 20% of TCC-supported bills passed.

Texas Catholic Conference Priorities for 81st Legislative Session

Texas Catholic Conference divides our advocacy agenda into five sections: Life Issues, Immigration, Education, Health and Human Services and Criminal Justice. In this section, we include in our successes that all of the bills that we opposed failed to pass.

Life Issues: The budget includes an increase in \$3 million in funding for alternatives to abortion programs and continues funding for adult stem cells research. We are disappointed that there are no major successes in terms of pro-life legislation this session. Efforts to allow women seeking abortions to view their ultrasound, to create a Choose Life license plate, and to improve reporting and informed consent for abortion were all defeated.

Life Issues continued:

- ★ 0% of legislation we supported passed (0 of 11), which is the same percentage as last session.
- ★ 0% of legislation we opposed passed, (0 of 9) which is the same percentage as last session.

Immigration: The session started with multiple anti-immigrant bills that were able to be defeated by and large. While this session was a mostly defensive session on the immigration issue at the state level we did see the passage of one positive bill that allows an excused absence for children participating in activities to pursue citizenship. We look forward to continued efforts by the U.S. Congress to enact comprehensive immigration reform which will bring our immigrant brothers and sisters out of the shadows and improve our nation's security.

- ★ 17% of legislation we supported passed (1 of 6), which is an increase of 17% from last session.
- ★ 0% of legislation we opposed passed (0 of 32), which is the same percentage as last session.

Education: Successes included post-secondary programs and restorations of the licensing exemptions for public and private afterschool care. We are disappointed that there was no success on parental choice in education and that the expansion of pre-kindergarten programs was vetoed by the Governor.

- ★ 27% of legislation we supported passed both houses of the legislature (6 of 22), which is an increase of 2% from last session. However, only 23% of legislation we supported passed into law because one bill was vetoed by the Governor.
- ★ 0% of the legislation we opposed passed (0 of 5), which is a decrease of 13% from last session.

Health & Human Services: Affordable housing initiatives, lifetime respite programs, nutrition initiatives to reduce childhood obesity, funding for health benefits for autism spectrum disorders, and legislation aimed at reducing human trafficking in Texas are among the many successful Health and Human Service initiatives of the session. Unfortunately efforts to institute a state-wide smoking ban and to improve CHIP and Medicaid failed this session.

- ★ 19% of legislation we supported passed (11 of 59), which is a decrease of 5% from last session.
- ★ 0% of legislation we opposed passed (0 of 11), which is the same percentage as last session.

Criminal Justice Reform: Criminal Justice reform was a major highlight of the session with passage of bills to ban shackling of pregnant inmates during labor and delivery, set standards for the treatment of pregnant inmates, a plan for re-entry and re-integration programs for ex-offenders. While we did not succeed in any legislation to ban the death penalty, the legislature passed bills to require training and experience in capital cases for indigent defense attorneys and the creation of the innocence commission and the office of capital writs. We hope these efforts will result in fewer executions in Texas. We are disappointed that the Governor vetoed a loan repayment program for correctional officers.

- ★ 32% of legislation we supported passed both houses of the legislature (8 of 25), which is an increase of 3% from last session. However, only 28% of legislation we supported passed into law because one bill was vetoed by the Governor.
- ★ 0% of legislation we opposed passed (0 of 0), which is a decrease of 50% from last session.

Additional Issues: TCC also took a position supporting a bill to allow mausoleums to be built beneath certain religious buildings. This bill passed.

ⁱ Percentages in the report are calculated based on the total number of pieces of legislation which equals the total number of bills related to our public policy agenda that we took positions on, excluding companion bills. We had 180 pieces of legislation this session. See the Appendix for more information on bills used to obtain these statistics. Percentages are rounded to two significant figures.