

TEXAS PROGRESSIVE ACTION NETWORK

# 86TH REGULAR LEGISLATIVE SESSION - A REVIEW

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## Introduction

Texas Progressive Action Network kicked off in January of 2017 and formally incorporated in August of the same year.

Here we take a quick look back at our efforts this past legislative session and examine ways to strengthen our efforts next session.

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## **51 Bills This Legislative Session.**

Texas Progressive Action Network (TPAN) tracked over a 100 pieces of legislation this session and took action on 51 bills.

At the start of session, we create a master list for legislation we've flagged to follow. Our ability to focus on more issues is entirely dependent on the amount of eyes we can put on bills. We are a volunteer led organization. Our focus first and foremost will always be legislation revolving around voting, voter ID, voter rights and election laws.

Our Action Team of 25 volunteers responded and acted on alerts on a weekly and/or daily basis (depending on their availability), making calls, writing letters, making office visits.

This session, we also tracked and advocated on legislation related to smart gun laws, healthcare, redistricting, criminal justice and prison reforms, and the upcoming 2020 Census, to name a few.

On these specific issues, we managed 15 targeted calls to action on relevant bills and in so doing, our Network grew by 188 new members. These individuals worked with us to advocate on these issues and thanks in part to their efforts, we saw several good bills pass this session.

Our chief goals this session however were bills related to online voter registration. While we did not ultimately see a hearing on any such legislation, we will continue to advocate for OVR to be brought to the state of Texas because we know that it is a good policy that better serves Texas voters. It is our intention to push to see those bills introduced again when the Texas Legislature convenes in 2021.

## **Expanding Our Efforts.**

There is much that can be done and everyday voters can make all the difference.

We saw Texans rise up this session on a major scale to speak up and speak out for each other and for our communities. It is this effort that we believe is the most successful in moving our lawmakers towards progress.

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It is through people powered movement that we can break through.

From joining with us in an open letter to the Texas House to stop SB 9 (and later watching that bill fall to the heap of dead legislation as it should), to making our voices so loud that members of the Texas Senate could only do right by Texas voters and vow to reject David Whitley's nomination as Secretary of State (from which he later resigned).

For TPAN to give coverage during future legislative sessions to the issues we care most about, we will continue to look to everyday voters who want to rise up and help make a difference.

Our goal is to be more involved in criminal justice reform, healthcare and immigration issues when the Texas Legislature next meets. That work begins now!

In particular, our voters rights advocacy will be channeled through a project we started during session:

### **Our Votes, Our Power.**

Our Vote Texas is focused on voter rights advocacy in the Lone Star State. The mission is simply to provide Texans with information about their voter rights and to make sure they have the resources they need to combat efforts to undermine their vote. We do this through voter registration and voter education with a goal to not just reach new voters but to reach new voter rights advocates.

We believe that voting is power and that Texas is strongest when people come together to protect that voice.

### **Where We Can Continue To Grow.**

TPAN will need to more clearly define volunteer roles for the next legislative session and we can do this by picking core issues we will endeavor to put the majority of our advocacy efforts towards. (ex: voter rights, redistricting, criminal justice, etc)

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In doing this, we can enable volunteers to pick key areas in which to focus when bill tracking, when showing up to make office visits or testifying, or when crafting action alerts and sharing calls to action from other advocacy groups.

Please share additional ideas and observations you have about this past session!

**Thank You For Your Advocacy This Session!**