

*the* COALITION *of* TEXANS *with* DISABILITIES  
*report on the*

# 84<sup>th</sup> TEXAS LEGISLATURE



## Letter from Dennis Borel, CTD Executive Director



Was this 2015 Texas Legislature a mirror of *House of Cards*, the popular Netflix series about political ambition, chasing elections, pursuing power, and when it was convenient, creating good public policy? Perhaps it was, as the major issues in the public eye included gun rights, business tax cuts, overriding local control when it interfered with the oil and gas industry, and ramping up border security. Of the real issues benefitting the lives and future of Texans, only highways were seriously addressed.

But this Texas *House of Cards* didn't stop your CTD team from working long, hard hours to make positive change. Read on for an overview of the many bills we worked on: good ones we helped pass and bad ones we helped kill.

There's an important lesson in the challenges we faced to bring disability issues to the table. Open carry of guns received more press and attention than our seniors and people with disabilities living with dignity. As advocates, we all have a responsibility to turn this conversation in a more constructive direction. It's up to all of us to take part in the next elections and ask questions about public health, access to employment, and full inclusion of people with disabilities. It can be done, and CTD commits to being with you every step of the way.

For a barrier-free society,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Dennis Borel".

### Our Team:

While our report takes a cue from *House of Cards*, there are no dastardly Frank Underwoods among us! Instead, we introduce our well established advocacy team, Executive Director Dennis Borel and Director of Advocacy Chase Bearden, who analyzed bills before the session was called to order, made visits, prepared and delivered testimony, organized self-advocates, and provided recommendations and language for a number of bills. Chris Masey joined the team as our Developmental Disabilities Policy Fellow \*, greatly expanding our capacity to address our priorities, in particular the Texas ABLE Act.

Our advocacy team got an even bigger boost midway through the session, when volunteer Michael Hart joined our efforts. A law school graduate with an intuitive grasp of public policy, Michael contributed to our efforts on many issues. Rumor is, he's looking for a real job, but we'll hijack his talents for free for as long as we can. Thanks, Michael!

Elsewhere on CTD's staff, Communications Director Laura Perna and Editor Susie Angel worked to keep the world up-to-date with our advocacy activities through newsletters, action alerts, and web and social media content. COO Denise Curtice-Ellison and CDS Payroll Specialist Sandra Rios provided testimony on the issues of access to Hepatitis C medication and CMV awareness (respectively). Finally, in a Fox 7 interview, Film Festival Coordinator William Greer called attention to traumatic brain injury (TBI) and needed funding for comprehensive rehabilitation services.

This report is made possible by support from





## BUDGET



Money is a major player in *House of Cards*, something the show has in common with the Texas Legislature. We make the State Budget a priority each session; successful advocacy is near impossible without an eye on appropriate funding. This year, the State Budget drew a lot of public attention as legislators fought over tax cuts, the budget cap, and school finance. Funding for health and human services didn't get completely lost amid the scuffles, but our issues rarely win big in the budget, and 2015 was no exception.

On the upside, CTD is pleased to report that we helped secure **\$353.3 million for independent living programs and supports** (see table).

Ultimately, though, the state budget outcomes were far below our goals. Despite strong state revenues, the will of the Legislature was not to meet the health needs of Texans. Instead, priorities were tax cuts (mostly for business), highways, and simply leaving available money unspent.

For years, one of our highest policy priorities has been **raising attendant wages**. Personal or community attendants are a cornerstone of independent living, but with a base wage of \$7.86 per hour, these workers have been woefully underpaid for decades. While we did see a small increase, progress here was so minimal, we don't count it as much of a victory. After months of long talks about attendant wages with Governor Greg Abbott's staff, we felt we had secured a strong ally. However, after calling for a raise in attendant wages by a modest 5% in his State of the State address in January, the governor remained silent on the issue. Once the Legislature convened, we were surprised and disappointed when the House Appropriations Committee budget gave attendants only a 14¢ raise, and the Senate Finance Committee's budget gave an 11¢ raise. Through back channel talks, there was some indication that we might see a bigger increase; this was not to be, and the 14¢ figure is what we got.

**Reduction of Medicaid community waivers** fared poorly with funding allocated for only a 4% reduction. **Promoting Independence**, which directs emergency support to people at immediate risk of institutionalization, was fairly funded. **PASRR** (for relocation from nursing facilities for people with I/DD and for active treatment for those remaining) was addressed, although not adequately.

### BUDGET SUMMARY

Community attendant wage floor to \$8/hour.	\$106M
Reduce Medicaid waivers wait lists:	
STAR Plus CBA	\$ 31.3M
CLASS	\$ 39 M
HCS	\$ 93.1M
Promoting Independence-STAR Plus and HCS	\$ 70.7M
PASRR, specialized services for people in NFs	\$ 13.2M
<b>Total Budget Items, All Funds</b>	<b>\$ 353.3 M</b>

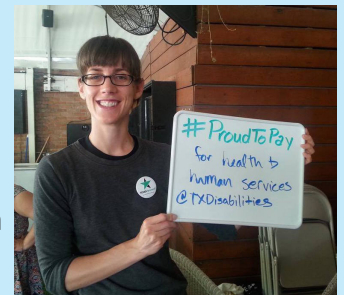
### COLLABORATION: TEXAS FORWARD



CTD played a leading role in Texas Forward, a coalition of organizations who support a balanced approach to state budget decisions. With Dennis Borel as co-chair of the steering committee, we worked to promote an equitable and adequate tax system that can meet Texas' needs. (Below: CTD Communications Director Laura Perna at Texas Forward #ProudtoPay event).

Policy Victories include:

- **HB 903**, allowing the **investment of a portion of the Rainy Day Fund**, passed in both chambers.
- **HB 2083**, requiring that accepted appraisal methods be used to **appraise all property fairly**, passed in both chambers.
- After testimony from Texas Forward members in House Ways & Means, a sunset provision was added to **SJR 5**, which will provided a constitutional dedication of a **portion of sales tax revenue to the state highway fund** (if approved by voters).



(adapted from Texas Forward's 2015 Legislative Session summary)

## INDEPENDENCE & ACCESS



The freedom for all to work, live, learn, play, and participate fully in one's community of choice is written directly into our mission. CTD seeks out opportunities to encourage policy that increases independence and access for Texans with disabilities.

Historically, people with disabilities have had limited, often expensive, options for saving money, but we took a big step forward in this area with the passage of the federal **Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act** in 2014.

ABLE establishes the possibility of a financial safety net and independence from the \$2,000 Medicaid eligibility asset cap and reliance on limited SSI/SSDI income.

While this is important legislation by the federal government, individual states must pass enabling legislation. Fortunately, several Texas legislators filed ABLE enablement bills, including Senator Charles Perry. He requested that CTD take the lead on this bill, and we worked closely with him and his staff to ensure its passage. CTD's Chris Masey,\* by now a subject matter expert on ABLE, worked tirelessly to educate decision makers about the issue of financial security for people with disabilities and to organize self-advocates and groups. The Legislature unanimously passed Texas ABLE (**SB 1664**).

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**Accessible parking** abuse is a growing problem across Texas, to which many of our members can personally attest. Several bills filed this session addressed this problem, and Rep. Bohac, the author of one of those bills, invited us to give input. As a result, CTD took the lead to change **HB 1317** into a **statewide study on accessible parking issues**. This report will allow us to return next session with stakeholder input and recommendations on the most effective ways to address accessible parking issues in our state.

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The **Homebuyer Assistance Program (HBA)** is one of the only assistance programs that exists solely to help persons with disabilities realize the dream of homeownership. However, recent rule changes have created a high-risk situation where HBA applicants may lose upfront costs invested in the contracting process and the contracts themselves. **HB 1428** (Raymond) amends current law to reduce this risk and protect HBA applicants. Our hats are off to **Tanya Lavelle of Easter Seals**, who led advocate efforts to support it.

### Other bills

**SB 1292** (Zaffirini). **FOR**. Did not pass. Would have positively reformed **accessible parking enforcement procedures** and prevented placard abuse.

**HB 126** (Fletcher). **AGAINST**. Did not pass. Would have allowed all licensed chiropractors in Texas and surrounding states the ability to write prescriptions for their clients to apply for **temporary disabled parking placards**.

**HB 3010** (Simmons). **FOR**. Did not pass. Would have included civilians with disabilities for purposes of recognizing some businesses as **Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUB)** for preferential treatment in government contracting.

**HB 1377** (Longoria). **FOR**. Did not pass. Would have required **beds in accessible hotel guest rooms** to measure no more than 19.5 inches in height.

## CAPITOL ACCESS SURVEY

Sometimes, progress comes from unlikely places. At the close of the 83rd Legislative session, Representative Susan King broke her leg and relied on a scooter to get around, witnessing first hand some of the issues facing Capitol visitors with disabilities. At Rep. King's urging, the Texas Preservation Board (TPB), which manages the Capitol grounds, started looking at **Capitol accessibility**. The TPB requested that CTD compile a report of some of the accessibility issues that our members, disability advocates, parents, professionals, and other stakeholders have experienced at the State Capitol and their suggestions to address them.

Based on the data we collected and our recommendations,

- signage indicating priority access has been posted by elevators and in hearing rooms.
- signs indicating that certain seats are reserved for people with disabilities have been posted in hearing rooms.
- way-finding signs around the exterior of Capitol have been posted, pointing the way to the accessible entrance at the north steps.



The TPB's efforts to improve Capitol accessibility are ongoing!



## CIVIL RIGHTS & PROTECTIONS



While independence is an important concern, so too is creating policy and practices that protect the well being and civil rights of people with disabilities.

One of our most significant wins this session is in the area of **Guardianship**. Guardianship is defined as a legal tool that allows one person or entity to make decisions for another. It's a necessary, and often helpful, option for people with disabilities, but it can be abused.

Over the past several years, CTD and our allies have noted an uptick in the number of legal battles regarding guardianship in Texas. In response, the group formed the Guardianship Reform & Supported Decision Making (GRSDM) workgroup in 2013 to develop policy reforms and less restrictive alternatives to guardianship. CTD is pleased to report that hard work and coordination among the various groups of the GRSDM over the past two years yielded major results:

- Created a **Bill of Rights** for people under guardianship (**SB 1882**, Zaffirini; **HB 1438**, S. Thompson).
- Established **less restrictive alternatives to guardianship**, like power of attorney and a Supported Decision-Making Agreement, where individuals choose people they trust to help them understand the decisions they need to make and to communicate their decisions to others (**CSHB 39**, Smithee, **SB 1882**, Zaffirini).
- Required that courts determine if formal and informal supports are in place or available so that **guardianship may be averted or limited** (**CSHB 39**, Smithee).
- Ensured that individuals under guardianship should, if possible, be able to **make decisions about where they reside** (**CSHB 39**, Smithee).

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**HB 1286** (Simmons) responds to a horrible case where a youth with an intellectual disability enthusiastically agreed to the popular "ice bucket challenge," only to have a bucket of reeking garbage dumped on him. The bill **expands the definition of disability in the Texas Penal Code** and removes a clause restricting prosecution based on disability to only those older than 14. This allows a younger person's disability to factor into such prosecutions.

### ADVOCACY CORPS

The Advocacy Corps (A-Corps) was a new CTD program aimed at developing young and emerging self-advocates. In addition to a series of trainings, CTD's DD Policy Fellow Chris Masey\* facilitated multiple opportunities for these emerging advocates to put their knowledge and skills into practice over the course of the legislature. Advocates from Austin and El Paso (pictured below) completed the program.



Members of the A-Corps attended and helped with the **ADA25 Trailblazers** celebration on March 4, 2015, ending with their first-ever legislative office visits. That led to participation

in all aspects of our April 1st **\$10 Campaign Rally and Advocacy Day**, including the pre-advocacy dinner, training, rally, and office visits to advocate for raising community care attendant wages.

We can't wait to see what they do next!

For decades, the State of Texas has claimed **sovereign immunity from federal law in cases involving the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**. This has successfully prevented persons claiming discrimination based on disability from having their day in court. CTD has been the advocacy leader in pursuing measures to waive sovereign immunity from the ADA. We are grateful to a long-time supporter of this effort, Senator Hinojosa, for filing **SB 1745**, which would waive Texas' sovereign immunity for the limited purposes of ADA violations. Despite his support and the calls many of our members made to the appropriate committee clerk, SB 1745 never received a hearing.

Other Bills

**HB 80** (Craddick). **FOR**. Did not pass.

Would have made use of a portable wireless device for **reading, writing or sending a text while driving** a misdemeanor statewide.

## SYSTEMS CHANGE



If one area exemplifies the *House of Cards*-style spectacle and playing politics with policy, State health and human services agencies may be it. This session brought major changes, but reform was not as dramatic as it could have been (and in some cases, not as widespread as we fought for). The **Texas Sunset Commission's Reports** that came out last summer overwhelmingly suggested that business-as-usual was not going to cut it for the populations these agencies serve. How to change, however, was a matter of much debate and conflict before and during the legislature.

Citing inefficiencies and duplication of efforts, the Sunset Commission's report on **Department of Assistive and Rehabilitative Services (DARS)** recommended dissolving the agency and moving many of its programs to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). Addressing problems within DARS made a good deal of sense, but moving children's programs, like Autism services and early childhood intervention (ECI) to the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)? Shifting these programs around with little to no preparation or planning? After a lot of arguing and countless bill revisions, here is what's in store for DARS programs:

- Independent Living programs, including the state's 28 **Centers for Independent Living (CILs)**, will move to the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) next fall, rather than TWC. CTD feels this is a much better fit, and our membership rallied around this position in a big way! ACBT and the CILs and their consumers made a huge impact, sending over 6,000 emails to key legislators.
- On **autism program funding**, CTD supported state funding for the more intense DARS ABA program and for school-based programs. The Legislature did increase total funds but shifted funds away from the more costly DARS program to the Texas Education Agency (TEA). The DARS Autism program, as well as ECI, will move to HHSC.
- **Vocational Rehabilitation**, the **Criss Cole** Rehabilitation Center, and **older Blind services** will move to TWC.

### PROVIDER RECOUPMENT

"Medicaid recoupment" may not sound terribly exciting, but it's an issue that we have an interest in, along with service providers and HMOs. In short, Medicaid service providers might follow all the rules, but because of current practices, they can still be penalized for errors they didn't make. The money paid out to them is then recouped, or taken back.

CTD has felt the sting of this unfair policy in our own CDS Division. Representative Klick filed **HB 3917** to address this situation. The bill did not pass; but after legislators forced the issue in a hearing, HHSC made the appropriate corrections on their own and committed to lasting change.

**Consumer protections in managed care** had not grown since it was a pilot in one county, and managed care is now in all 254 Texas counties. As an organization and as part of a workgroup, CTD has been working for the past several sessions to ensure that adequate consumer protections are in place as managed care develops.

Originally a stand-alone bill by Sen. Garcia (right, with CTD Director of Advocacy Chase Bearden), a piece of **Medicaid ombudsman** legislation



expands consumer protections and ombudsman services in Medicaid managed care. It was stalled out for political reasons, but CTD and our partners fought to make sure it didn't die. After exhausting several other possibilities, we worked with CPPP and the staff of several key legislators to add the bill as an amendment to **SB 760** (Zerwas).



The **Drug Utilization Review Board (DURB)** makes important recommendations on Medicaid drug formularies (lists of drugs that Medicaid covers). The DURB is made up mostly of doctors, pharmacists, and drug company representatives. CTD took advantage of the sunset process to make a recommendation to the Sunset Commission before the session to add a crucial voice to the DURB- a representative of Medicaid recipients. Senator Estes took up our recommendation, adding it as an amendment to SB 200 (the HHSC Sunset bill).

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The **Department of Aging and Disability Services (DADS)** manages the state's long-term care services for Texans with disabilities and the elderly, including Texas' **state supported living centers (SSLCs) system**. The Sunset Report on DADS, especially its management of SSLCs, was nothing short of scathing.

CTD has long been a proponent of consolidating the SSLCs and redirecting savings to community programs. **CSSB 204** would have, among many other things, discontinued DADS as an independent agency and transferred its administrative functions to HHSC.

While it met with enough opposition to kill it, this proposed bill was the closest we have ever been to closing the Austin SSLC and appropriately consolidating the other SSLCs. CTD and many of our disability advocacy and independent living partners were involved in supporting it.

## PARTNERSHIPS

AARP | ADAPT of Texas | American Cancer Society | American Council of the Blind of Texas (pictured below, right) | Austin Clubhouse | Autism Society of Central Texas | Autistic Self-Advocacy Network | Center for Public Policy Priorities | Chatelle & Associates | Children's Hospital Association of Texas | Clarity | Community NOW! | Disability Rights Texas | Down Syndrome Association of Central Texas | Easter Seals of Central Texas | Girling Health Care | Guardianship Reform Advocates for the Disabled & Elderly (GRADE) | Guardianship Reform and Supported Decision Making Workgroup (GRSDM, pictured below, left) | HAND | Hogg Foundation for Mental Health | Mothers Advocating Medical Marijuana for Autism (MAMMA) (pictured below, center) | Methodist Healthcare Ministries | National Association of Social Workers- Texas Chapter | Providers Alliance for Community Services of Texas (PACSTX) | Personal Attendants Coalition of Texas (PACT) | Sign Shares | Texas Council of Administrators of Special Education, Inc. | Texans Care for Children | Texans for Life Committee | Texas Alliance for Life | Texas Association of Centers of Independent Living | Texas Association of Goodwills | Texas Association of Home Care and Hospice | Texas Baptists Organization | Texas Catholic Conference | Texas Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America | Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities | Texas Hospital Association | Texas Medical Association | Texas Parent to Parent | Texas Pediatric Society | Texas Physical Therapy Association | Texas Public Policy Foundation | Texas Star Alliance | Texas State Teachers Association | The Arc of Texas | The Gathering Place



plus numerous businesses, lobby firms, legislators, aides and state agency professionals

Other bills:

**SB 1507** (Garcia). **FOR**. Passed.

Creates position of a **forensic director** at the Department of State Health Services.

## ACCESS TO CARE & DRUG POLICY



Medicine and access to care are huge concerns for the disability community, especially in a state that is not always friendly to comprehensive support networks and programs! CTD staff devotes a large part of our time and energy to policy regarding access to medication, drug regulation and enforcement, and pharmaceutical research and development.

In 2013, CTD worked to clarify and strengthen individual protections in policy regarding **advance directives law**. We felt the laws governing end-of-life care lacked clarity and placed people with disabilities in particular in potentially life threatened situations. The most glaring flaw was allowing food, water, and pain medication to be withdrawn with no medical standard for their withdrawal.

So we jumped at the opportunity to engage Rep. Springer in this issue. His bill, **HB 3074**, prohibits the withdrawal of food and water except in rare cases where it would be harmful.

This bill was originally part of a larger advanced directives bill that was impossible to pass; reigning in the scope of HB 3074 helped to pass this change.

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Marijuana made a big debut this session. Legislators filed a record 11 bills regarding marijuana, from strict medical use to complete legalization. **Mothers Advocating for Medical Marijuana for Autism (MAMMA)** approached CTD about legislation that would allow parents to use marijuana to treat their children with epilepsy, autism, and a variety of other disabilities. We threw our support behind **SB 339 (Eltife)**, which legalizes the prescription of low-THC cannabis (also known as CBD oil) for treatment of intractable epilepsy. A great example of targeted, thoughtful advocacy on a hot button issue, SB 339 was the only marijuana bill this session to pass.

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Unlike traditional chemical medicine, **biosimilars and biologic drugs** are made up of living matter and have great promise for improving the health and independence of many in the disability community. Using our nickname “the Gila Monster Bill” (after an insulin treatment from the saliva of a Gila monster), CTD supports legislation that opens future access to biosimilar medicines.

With CTD playing the lead disability advocacy role, Rep. Zerwas filed and passed **HB 751**, a crucial first step in this industry that opens up new pathways for the use and development of biologic drugs. CTD will continue to play an active role in the creation and support of strong pharmaceutical policies that create affordable and timely access to all medications.

### THE \$10 CAMPAIGN RALLY



The **\$10 Campaign for attendant wages Rally and Capitol Day** took place March 31 and April 1 in Austin. Over 200 attendants, consumers, family members, and advocates came from all corners of the state to urge key legislators to raise attendant wages to a base of \$10 per hour. Among the participants were Austin and El Paso branches of the **Advocacy Corps (A-Corps)\***, a CTD program aimed at developing young and emerging self-advocates with disabilities.



The morning of April 1st, most of the attendees packed the house at our morning **training session**, where they heard from experts on the attendant wage issue and practiced speaking to legislators. Then, the group marched to the north steps of the Capitol for an enthusiastic rally, where still more supporters joined in. A long time ally of an attendant wage raise, **Rep. John Zerwas**, was among the speakers (above, with CTD Executive Director Dennis Borel).

Attendees kept the energy high as they proceeded into the Capitol to meet with Governor Abbott's staff quickly before proceeding to their assigned legislative visits (below, in the Capitol rotunda).





## HEPATITIS C DRUG ACCESS

Not all advocacy wins come with a bill number; sometimes, we are able to leverage our connections and position to promote good policy without legislation. One example is the work we are doing to help make a breakthrough drug available to the general population. Early in 2015, for the first time ever, a **pharmaceutical cure for Hepatitis C** was developed. When the approval process to get this new drug covered by Medicaid stalled, CTD's Dennis Borel pointed out the delay as an example of why advocates need to be on the official committees approving formularies (a list of medications that a plan covers) to HHSC.



Then, our COO, Denise Curtice-Ellison (who had contracted Hep C during a routine blood transfusion decades ago; left) testified at HHSC's Pharmaceuticals and

Therapeutics Committee (P&T) about the importance of making this new cure affordable. P&T was moved and approved the drug for the Medicaid formulary. Dennis circled back by working with HHSC staff to accelerate the adoption of the approval into practice. Denise has emerged as a face of the issue and has appeared in national media interviews!

**Palliative Care** is specialized medical care for people with serious illnesses, providing patients and their families with relief from the symptoms and stress of their illness. Palliative care complements the social model of disability (as opposed to the medical model). Effective at signage, **HB 1874** (Zerwas) establishes the **Palliative Care Interdisciplinary Advisory Council**, which will promote palliative care in Texas. CTD secured key support as the bill journeyed through the Senate.

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**Trauma-informed care** is evidenced-based treatment and support for improving the mental health of those who have experienced trauma. People with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) experience trauma at a much higher rate than the general public. Oftentimes their trauma stems from abuse, neglect, bullying, isolation, or institutionalization.

**HB 2789** (Raymond) develops trauma-informed care training for new employees before they work directly with persons with I/DD in state supported living centers, intermediate care facilities, and state hospitals. CTD supported HB 2789, which passed and will take effect this fall.

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**SB 791** increases education on the causes and prevention of **congenital cytomegalovirus (CMV)** in infants. A CTD staff member testified in favor of the bill, which passed and has been signed by the governor.

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There remains a strong resistance to **expanding Medicaid**. This leaves a coverage gap of about a million uninsured Texans who do not qualify for a federal healthcare subsidy or Medicaid. Legislators offered no solutions this session; not one bill was heard in any committee that would have addressed healthcare coverage for this group.

### Other bills

**HB 21** (Kacal). **FOR. PASSED.**

Will allow people with terminal illnesses to have quicker access to **safe but experimental drugs**.

**HB 504** (Zaffirini). **FOR. PASSED.**

Designates the second full week in September as **Direct Support Professionals Week**.

**HB 1263** (Raymond). **FOR.** Did not pass.

Would have expanded consumers' **access to physical therapy**.

**HB 1541** (Burkett). **FOR.** Did not pass.

Would have expanded the availability of Medicaid-reimbursable **peer support services** into more mental health programs.

**HB 1940** (Flynn). **FOR.** Did not pass.

Would have created **Dental Hygiene Practitioners**, who would deliver routine preventive and restorative oral health care to underserved communities under the supervision of a dentist.

**HB 2351** (Harless). **FOR.** Did not pass.

Would have established guidelines for **hospital ethics committees** on avoiding conflicts of interest and considering disability in decisions.

**HB 2505** (Clardy). **FOR.** Did not pass.

Would have made **abuse-deterrent (ADF) opioid analgesic drugs** more accessible.

## TAKE-AWAYS AND WHAT'S TO COME

When we think about our wins from the 84th Legislature, the words that stand out are “leadership” and “collaboration.” For the first time, we hosted a **Legislative Briefing** prior to the convening of session. In response to several requests from our Austin colleagues, we gathered about 50 representatives from a diverse range of organizations to announce our own policy priorities and to provide a networking opportunity to develop further partnerships. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, and we plan to continue leading such events next session. We also strove to maintain our **reputation as a disability policy leader**, which has helped us get a foot in the door to key discussions.

We relied on **collaborative efforts** with tried-and-true partners as well as some new players. Our work with the **GRSDM workgroup** led to true gains in the area of guardianship, and we look forward to expanding access to medicine with new partners **MAMMA** in the coming years.

Looking ahead, the needs and interests of Texans with disabilities don't stop when the legislature adjourns and neither does CTD's advocacy work. During the interim, we are committed to

- pushing for **staff appointments** in key advisory positions.
- redoubling our efforts to activate **advocacy on a local level** all over Texas, starting with our Advocacy Corps members in Austin and El Paso and CIL-based self-advocate groups.
- raising the level of **media coverage** on disability issues.

We invite you to stay involved with our work by joining one or more of our **Action Groups**. Through email, we'll keep you informed about developments in policy that matters to you and ways to support your highest priority issues! Learn more at [txdisabilities.org/Advocacy](http://txdisabilities.org/Advocacy).

### MEDIA COVERAGE

leading up to, during Session

- OpEd: *Denise Curtice-Ellison: Why All Baby Boomers Should be Tested for Hepatitis C* Jul. 17, Austin American-Statesman.
- OpEd: *Tom Suehs: Give Elderly and Persons with Disabilities Peace of Mind* Jul. 13, Austin American-Statesman.
- *Liberal groups warn Texas tax cuts, boost for roads will blow 2011-style hole in next budget* Jun. 1, Dallas Morning News.
- OpEd: *How Do We Stop Prescription Medicine Misuse?* May 10, Austin American-Statesman.
- Letter to the Editor: *SSLC piece based on flawed reasoning* Apr. 24, Austin American-Statesman.
- *Survivor of Brain Injury Tells his Story of Hope* Apr. 23, My Fox Austin.
- *Health Care Attendants Rally for Better Pay* Apr. 1, TWC News Austin.
- *Overhaul of Texas Health and Human Services Draws Ire at Senate Panel* Mar. 23, Austin American-Statesman.
- *Tax Cuts Proposals Meet Opposition* Mar. 17, KEYE.
- *Perry Files Legislation For The Disability Community Texas Able Savings Account Plan* Mar. 13, EverythingLubbock.com.
- *Disability Advocates Keep Close Watch on New Texas Governor* Mar. 12, ABC News.
- *Disabling the Perception of Disabilities* Mar. 11, Mason County News.
- *Conservatives Join Push to Pay Care Workers More* Mar. 3, Texas Tribune.
- OpEd: *Keeping an Open Mind about Mental Health Care in Texas* Feb. 19, Waco Tribune.
- *Hospitals Hope Texas Lawmakers Go after Obamacare Money* Feb. 8, San Angelo Standard-Times.
- OpEd: *Overlooked for years, public health program faces collapse* Dec. 30, 2014. Austin American-Statesman
- OpEd: *Transportation amendment symptom of crisis in state funding* (on behalf of the Texas Forward coalition) Nov. 19, 2014. Austin American-Statesman.
- *Disability groups hope turnover leads to reform* Sep. 25, 2014. Texas Tribune.



## PRESS CONFERENCES & EVENTS

- Jan. 16- CTD Legislative Briefing (below)
- Feb. 3- Texas Forward Press Briefing
- Feb. 10- National MS Society Capitol Action Day
- Feb. 17- Physical Therapy Capitol Day
- Feb. 17- Senior Day at the Capitol
- Feb. 28- Rare Disease Day (right, top)
- Mar.12- Cover Texas Now! Health care rally
- Mar. 12- ABLE Act Press Conference
- Apr. 1- \$10 Campaign Rally & Capitol Day
- Apr. 12- Access to Oral Care Press Conference (right, bottom)
- Jun. 1- Texas Forward Sine Die Press Briefing



# CTD

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*CTD is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with Federal Tax ID #74-2071160. CTD is a social and economic impact organization benefitting Texans with all disabilities of all ages. CTD is a membership organization controlled by people with disabilities.*



*\* Financial Support for the CTD Developmental Disabilities Policy Fellowship is provided by the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities, with Federal funds\* made available by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities. \*\$67,500 (71%) DD funds; \$27,011 (29%) non-federal resources.*

*The views contained herein do not necessarily reflect the position of the fund agency(s).*

# SUMMARY: CTD VICTORIES

**PASSED: Texas Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) Act**  
Individuals with disabilities will be able to save their earned income and plan for the future without the fear of losing their eligibility for Medicaid.

**PASSED: Guardianship Reform**  
Much needed reform to guardianship law includes a Bill of Rights, the establishment of alternatives to guardianships, and first-in-the-nation measures for supported decision-making.

**PASSED: Keep Independent Living** in Health & Human Services  
Self-advocates got vocal about keeping their IL services out of TWC, and the Lege listened.

**PASSED: Advance Directives Reform**  
With a breakthrough change, the Texas Advance Directives Act does more to protect the lives and end-of-life decisions of hospitalized, incapacitated patients, including people with disabilities.

**PASSED: Accessible Parking Reform**  
After many piecemeal changes over the last decade, a comprehensive study seeks to definitively address accessible parking.

**PASSED: \$353.3M Appropriations to CTD's Top Budget Targets**  
Promoting Independence (help for people at imminent risk of institutionalization) was adequately funded, and Preadmission Screening and Resident Review (PASRR) for specialized services in nursing homes was continued from initial funding in 2013.

**PASSED: Better Consumer Protections** in Medicaid Managed Care  
Long overlooked despite huge expansion of managed care, ombudsmen and other consumer assistance will grow.

**PROGRESS OUTSIDE OF LEGISLATION:**  
We successfully urged HHSC to address a **Medicaid provider recoupment** problem, and we played a key role in making **Hepatitis C cure** available to Medicaid recipients.