



# CTD 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

*Disability Advocacy, Organizing, Arts & Film, Consulting, and Consumer Direction.*



*2018 has flown by. Natural disasters and political turmoil seem to have become the norm. In an ever more chaotic environment, we reflect on all we've been able to accomplish to work toward our mission of a barrier-free society.*

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## 2018 by the numbers

**40** years of CTD history

**38** boards, workgroups, committees CTD staff sits on  
(including 2 where CTD plays a lead role)

**20** presentations, trainings, and talks CTD  
staff gave on disability topics

**15** conferences CTD staff participated in  
(including 2 we helped organize)

# Public Policy & Advocacy

## More voters, informed voters

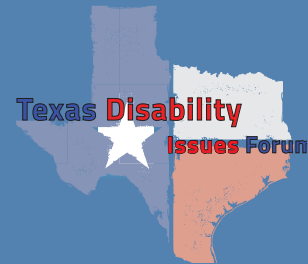
Midterm election years are typically not great for voter turnout, but 2018 didn't quite follow that rule. At CTD, we were encouraged that 53% of registered voters voted in the midterms (source: [Texas Tribune](#)). Our efforts to register and engage voters this year include...

... serving as a lead organizer for the **2018 Texas Disability Issues Forum**, which brought together the disability community and major candidates for statewide office to discuss issues affecting the disability community.

O'Rourke for Senator, Lupe Valdez for Governor, Mike Collier for Lt. Governor, and Justin Nelson for Attorney General—attended to speak about their disability issue positions. Each of these candidates, as well as Governor Greg Abbott, Republican candidate for Governor, answered our Disability Issues Survey and can be referenced at [revuptexas.org](#).

### TDIF by the numbers

**400** IN ATTENDANCE  
**11,000** LIVESTREAM VIEWS  
**77** CO-HOST ORGS



Our banner wasn't big enough for the San Antonio advocates who rode up for TDIF! Photo by CTD.

Each of the Democratic candidates—Beto

... participating in the **REV UP Texas coalition**, which works to increase the political power of Texans with disabilities through voter registration, voter education, and voting. CTD worked with REV UP Texas to produce and promote a series of video PSAs. We also helped compose and promote REV UP's response to an important **study by Austin Community College, looking at voters with disabilities**. The study confirms that Texans with disabilities are politically engaged and vote in unexpectedly extraordinary numbers (read the press release at [revuptexas.org](#)).

“Here at UT Arlington we have had a great time watching the #TDIF2018 and learning more about the issues that are important to us! We're getting ourselves prepared to #REVUPTX!”

Tyler James, TDIF livestream watch party organizer



... facilitating a series of interviews with people with disabilities to help SUMA, a social marketing company, with a study of their experience voting in Texas.

... taking the **Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)** to task on their federally required responsibilities to help register Texans with disabilities to vote. TWC is supposed to help people with disabilities register to vote during vocational rehabilitation, but they removed that function in their 2016 policy manual. Represented by Disability Rights Texas and the Texas Civil Rights Project, CTD sent TWC a letter threatening to sue unless they put voter registration help back into their vocational rehab functions. They publicly committed to revising their practices.

## Helping to stop HR620, the bad ADA bill

We are pleased to report that the harmful federal bill **HR620, the ADA Education Reform Act**, did not come to the Senate floor for a vote. Proponents of the bill said it would attack bad faith lawsuits, but HR620 failed to address that issue. Instead, it would make people with disabilities the only class of Americans held responsible for the enforcement of the very civil rights laws that protect them.

While HR620 passed the House in February, 43 Senators pledged to vote “no” on the bill, effectively stopping it in its tracks. CTD joined national efforts to oppose HR620. In addition to action alerts and a guest blog series on the bill, our graphic of how the Texas delegation voted became our biggest Facebook post of 2018, with a reach of over 47,000 (below).

Thank you for your action!

**CTD Coalition of Texans with Disabilities**  
Published by Laura Perna · 15 February · 3

Today, the US House of Representatives shamefully passed **#HR620**, the Americans with Disabilities Education and Reform Act of 2017, offending over 3.4 million Texans with disabilities, including our veterans with disabilities, who seek lives without discrimination. Proponents say the bill attacks bad faith lawsuits, but HR620 fails to address that issue. Instead, it would make people with disabilities the only class of Americans held responsible for the enforcement of the very civil rights laws that protect them. The **#ADA** is a Texas product, signed by Texas president George H. W. Bush.

See how your rep voted in the graphic below (please contact us at [info@txdisabilities.org](mailto:info@txdisabilities.org) if you need an alternative format).

House Vote #80 in 2018 (115th Congress)  
H.R. 620: ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017

Vote	Party	Rep.	District	
Yea	R	Arrington, Jodey	TX 19th	Lubbock
Yea	R	Babin, Brian	TX 36th	Woodville
Yea	R	Barton, Joe	TX 6th	Ennis
Yea	R	Brady, Kevin	TX 8th	Woodlands
Yea	R	Burgess, Michael	TX 26th	Flower Mound
Yea	R	Carter, John	TX 31st	Round Rock
Nay	D	Castro, Joaquin	TX 20th	San Antonio
Yea	R	Conaway, Michael	TX 11th	Midland
Yea	D	Cuellar, Henry	TX 28th	Laredo
Yea	R	Culberson, John	TX 7th	Houston
Nay	D	Doggett, Lloyd	TX 35th	Austin
Yea	R	Farenthold, Blake	TX 27th	Corpus Christi
Yea	R	Flores, Bill	TX 17th	Waco
Yea	R	Gohmert, Louie	TX 1st	Tyler
Nay	D	Gonzalez, Vicente	TX 15th	McAllen
Yea	R	Granger, Kay	TX 12th	Fort Worth

## Protecting the right to live in the community

On November 15, 2018, the latest chapter in an 8-year legal battle ended with closing arguments in the **Pre-Admission Screening and Resident Review or PASRR suit**. In 2010, the plaintiffs—6 individuals with disabilities, CTD, and The Arc of Texas—contended that the State of Texas failed to comply with federal law requiring that nursing facility residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) be allowed to live in the most integrated setting.

The trial was held in federal district court in San Antonio over 4 ½ weeks. CTD was represented pro bono by Disability Rights Texas, the Center for Public Representation (Boston), the US Department of Justice, and the Sidley Law Firm.

The trial concluded on the following note:

*Judge: Can the State confirm the number of people with IDD in nursing facilities under Texas Medicaid?*

*The State of Texas: 3,600.*

*Judge: How does the State view these people?*

*The State: All want to be in nursing facilities.*

*Judge: How do you know that?*

*The State: The State has policies to ensure it.*

With that, the Judge closed the trial and instructed both sides to file additional documents. We can expect a ruling after the new year.

## ABLE Accounts now open to help people with disabilities save money

In 2015, CTD's Chris Masey led efforts to pass legislation enabling the federal ABLE bill in Texas. After its passage, he remained a subject matter expert on ABLE accounts, sitting on the state's ABLE advisory committee. This May, the program opened for enrollment.

## Medicaid

Early this year, the Dallas Morning News published the multipart series, ***Pain & Profit: Investigating Medicaid Managed Care***, which exposed some deeply troubling failures on the part of Medicaid Managed Care companies to provide services for Texans with disabilities. The series received intense public attention and outcry. We responded in an opinion piece that the DMN ran in June, "***Texas Legislature cries foul over Medicaid tragedies but fails to admit its own role.***"

Legislators convened hearings to address the problems with MCOs, and we provided both invited and public testimony regarding consumer protections under Medicaid Managed Care.

"I was impressed with the approach, strategy, and teamwork of the attorneys defending the rights of people with disabilities. Dennis Borel was prepared and outstanding representing the disability community on the witness stand."

Willie Mae Clay, San Antonio disability advocate



# 15th Annual Cinema Touching Disability Film Festival

What a year for Cinema Touching Disability! One thing that made our 15th anniversary so memorable was Tilly Jones (below, photo by William Philpott).



Tilly, a teenage composer with multiple disabilities, had submitted TILLY'S SYMPHONY, a short documentary about her music and relationship to her disabilities, to our Short Film Competition. In it, she muses, "in the future, I would still like to be composing, and maybe even composing for other people. And maybe hear my pieces played around the world."

We asked Tilly if she'd compose a piece for the Festival, and after months of emails, the world premiere of jazzy Marciac greeted our audience

as they entered the theater!

That's not all. Thanks to a grant from the Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities, we brought Tilly and her mother, Marj, all the way from Brisbane, Australia to Austin to present TILLY'S SYMPHONY and Marciac, and of course, treat us to some live music!

Visit [CTDFilmFest.org](http://CTDFilmFest.org) to read more about our outstanding 15th year in our Fest Wrap Up, including winners of our **international Short Film Competition**, selected from 501 entries from over 60 countries!

**Save the date: join us October 25 - 26, 2019 for the 16th year of Cinema Touching Disability!**



Students from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired attend the Fest to present their stop-motion short, *The Purr-fect Dream*. Photo by William Philpott.



"The organization and coordination of this event exceeds expectations. It is by far one of the most meaningful annual events I attended."

Anonymous audience survey

## Pen 2 Paper Creative Writing Contest

We're thrilled to report another record-breaker for our disability-focused creative writing contest: we received 361 pieces of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and comics from all corners of the globe! Grand Prize went to Georgette Mallory's **Disarmed**. In it, the author, who wears a prosthetic arm, judges her marriage to an able-bodied man, as she forms a new friendship with a recent amputee. That's not all, by a mile; check out all of this year's winners and finalists at [TXDisabilities.org/pen-2-paper/](http://TXDisabilities.org/pen-2-paper/)!



It was a good year for poetry at our **monthly inclusive open mic series The Lion & the Pirate**, which we co-host with VSA Texas at independent bookstore Malvern Books. Our April open mic was an official City Read for the Austin International Poetry Festival (the largest unjuried poetry festival in the US!). At our May and August events, we featured two Texas poets with disabilities, Maria Palacios (Houston) and Mel Finefrock (Plano, above, photo by Malvern Books).

## Consumer Direction

Our Consumer Directed Services (CDS) Division continues to grow, as more and more Texans who need attendant services make the choice to manage their own care. As we wrap up 2018, our client base is approaching 400 Texans with disabilities and seniors.

This year, we made substantial progress on technological solutions to better serve consumers, and we were pleased to welcome Aracely (Celly) Menendez and Kala Steading to the CDS team.



CDS team, from left, Rosie Williams, Celly Menendez, Denise Ellison, Kala Steading, Kit Cuny. Photo by Savanna Heydon.

“Thank you so much for this opportunity to make my voice and the voices of so many others heard. I hope this contest and your platform will help to raise awareness and deepen connections and understanding. I’m pleased to see there is such a contest at all.”

Jennifer Willis, non-fiction finalist (*Chronic Optimism*)



# CTD Coalition of Texans with Disabilities

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www.TXDisabilities.org | Social Media @TXDisabilities



## Board of Directors

CTD's Board reflects the population of Texas in terms of types of disability, geographic representation, ethnicity, and income level.

### Executive Committee

President: Rodney Hanneman\*  
Vice President: Crystal Lyons\* \*\*  
Secretary: Judy Telge  
Treasurer: Jet Schuler

### At Large Members

Region 1: Rick Razo  
Region 2: John Curnutt\*  
Region 3: vacant  
Region 4: Darrell Wilson\*  
Region 5: Marshall Burns\*  
Region 6: Francis Key\*  
Region 7: Gene Whitten-Lege  
Region 8: Kenneth Semien, Jr.\*

## Staff

Executive Director: Dennis Borel  
Director of Advocacy: Chase Bearden\*  
Chief Operations Officer: Denise Ellison\*\*  
Senior Public Policy Specialist Chris Masey\*\*  
Director of Communications: Laura Perna  
Film Festival Director: William Greer\*  
Editor/Researcher: Susie Angel\*

CDS Director: Kit Cuny  
CDS Payroll Administrators: Aracely Menendez, Rosie Williams  
CDS Claims Analyst: Kala Steading  
Developmental Disability Policy Fellow+:  
Tiffany Williams

\* Person with a disability

\*\* Parent of a child with a disability

+ 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 (79%) DD funds; \$17,947 (21%) non-federal resources.



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

General support of CTD provided by



Cover photos (by CTD unless noted), from top: CTD's Susie Angel in her role as voter registrar; CTD's Dennis Borel, Laura Guerra-Cardus (Children's Defense Fund Texas), Bee Morehead (Texas Impact), and Rev. Bill Gaventa testify at a House Appropriations hearing on Medicaid; CTD's Susie Angel and Laura Perna, VSA Texas' Eric Clow, author Krystal Cates, and Juan Munoz talk about Pen 2 Paper and the Lion & Pirate open mic series on KOOP Radio's A Common Thread (photo by Thor Armbruster); friends and partners at CTD's 40th birthday bash (photo by Vanessa Ramos).