



TEXAS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

O'Rourke, Valdez, Collier, Nelson to Speak at Texas Disability Issues Forum

AUSTIN, Texas (August 23, 2018) Candidates for statewide office will be joining their constituents with disabilities on Monday, August 27, at the Texas Disability Issues Forum (TDIF) in Austin.

Through a series of one-on-one interviews, TDIF gives candidates the opportunity to discuss their positions on a variety of topics of interest to the estimated 3,250,900 Texans with disabilities and their families and supporters. Such topics include emergency preparedness, housing, special education, legalizing marijuana, and others.

As of today, each of the invited Democratic candidates—Beto O'Rourke (US Senate), Lupe Valdez (Governor), Mike Collier (Lt. Governor), and Justin Nelson (Attorney General)—have confirmed their attendance at the Forum. Organizers continue to work with the campaigns of the Republican incumbents—Senator Ted Cruz, Governor Greg Abbott, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, and Attorney General Ken Paxton—to secure their participation.

Patrick Svitek, of TDIF media partner, the Texas Tribune, will conduct the interviews. Representatives from Disability Rights Texas, the League of Women Voters of Texas, and the Secretary of State's Office will also present on voter rights and processes.

“As we're coming up on the November elections, political candidates need to know that people with disabilities are listening very closely—and they're voting,” says TDIF organizer Bob Kafka of ADAPT of Texas. “Disability advocates have noted increased participation in activism and media attention since the 2016 presidential election. We have every reason to believe this energy will carry over to voting rates among people with disabilities in the midterms.”

In addition to holding the TDIF, organizers sent a survey to each of the invited candidates in order to learn about their stance on disability issues. Responses are currently available on the TDIF website, www.revuptexas.org, and will remain so through the election.

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More about the Texas Disability Issues Forum:

TDIF will be located at Robert B. Rowling Hall (1900 University Ave.), the newest building at UT Austin McCombs School of Business, adjacent to the AT&T Hotel and Conference Center. Parking available at the self-parking garage on 20th Street behind the AT&T Center. Program begins at 10:00 am and ends at 12:30 pm.

TDIF moderator, Patrick Svitek (provided by TDIF media partner, The Texas Tribune), will lead a series of 20-minute one-on-one candidate interviews. The Forum follows a nonpartisan, unbiased, and impartial format. It is not a candidates' debate. Candidate interviews are scheduled as follows:

- 10:15 am Mike Collier
- 10:45 am Justin Nelson
- 11:15 am Lupe Valdez
- 12:00 pm Beto O'Rourke

Spanish translation, CART service, and ASL interpretation will be available at the event.

TDIF will also be broadcast via Facebook Live at @REVUPTX.

Lead organizers are ADAPT of Texas, the Coalition of Texans with Disabilities, Disability Rights Texas, REV UP Texas, the Texas Advocates, Texas Parent to Parent, Texas State Independent Living Council, and The Arc of Texas. Co-hosts include 77 organizations from across the state (see next page). Major sponsors include Superior HealthPlan, UnitedHealthcare, BlueCross BlueShield of Texas, Magellan Healthcare, Abbvie, Amerigroup, Cigna, Gilead Sciences, Humana, Lilly, MCNA Dental, and We Work for Health Texas.

Full information: <http://www.revuptexas.org/tdif-2018-landing-page/>



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2018 TDIF Co-hosts

1. 22q Texas/VCFS Texas, Inc.
2. AARP Texas
3. Access Empowerment/Parking Mobility
4. American Council of the Blind of Texas
5. Arc Greater Mid Cities
6. ARCIL, Inc.
7. Austin/ Travis Country Reentry Roundtable
8. Austin Democratic Socialists of America
9. Autism Society of Texas
10. Brazos Valley Center for Independent Living
11. CDS in Texas
12. Center for Public Policy Priorities (CPPP)
13. Center on Independent Living (COIL)
14. Children's Defense Fund-Texas
15. Coastal Bend Center for Independent Living
16. Collin County Democrats with Disabilities
17. Crockett Resource Center for Independent Living
18. Darren Bates LLC, Building a Global Culture of Access and Inclusion™
19. Disability Chamber of Commerce
20. Disability In Action Center for Independent Living
21. Disability Services of the Southwest
22. Disability Studies Minor at the University of Texas at Arlington
23. disABILITYsa
24. Down by the Border
25. Down Syndrome Association of Central Texas
26. Easterseals Serving Central Texas
27. Goodwill Industries of Central Texas
28. Grupo DIO (Dignidad Igualdad y Oportunidad)
29. Guardianship Reform and Supported Decision Making Workgroup
30. Health Alliance for Austin Musicians (HAAM)
31. Helping Restore Ability
32. Imagine Art
33. Indivisible Austin
34. Knowbility
35. League of Women Voters Austin Area
36. LifeSpan Home Health
37. LULAC Council #650, Austin, TX
38. Mary Lee Foundation
39. Meals on Wheels Central Texas In-Home Care



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40. NAMI Texas
41. National Association of Social Workers, Texas Chapter
42. National Infusion Center Association
43. Our House ATX
44. Palestine Resource Center for Independent Living
45. Panhandle Independent Living Center
46. Paralyzed Veterans of America, Texas Chapter
47. REACH Resource Centers on Independent Living-Fort Worth, Dallas, Denton & Plano
48. RISE Center for Independent Living-Beaumont
49. Silent Network
50. Superior HealthPlan
51. Texans for Special Education Reform
52. Texas Alliance for Retired Americans
53. Texas Association for Home Care & Hospice
54. Texas Association for Interior Design
55. Texas Association of Goodwills
56. Texas Center for Disability Studies
57. Texas Civil Rights Project
58. Texas Counseling Association
59. Texas Dental Hygienists Association
60. Texas Health Institute
61. Texas Interfaith Center for Public Policy/ Texas Impact
62. Texas Nurses Association
63. Texas Oral Health Coalition
64. Texas Partners in Policymaking
65. Texas Rowing Center/ Texas Rowing For All
66. Texas Silver-Haired Legislature
67. The Arc of the Capital Area
68. The Center on Disability and Development at Texas A&M
69. The Gene and Dave Show
70. The Self-Determination Group
71. TX21 Indivisible
72. TX MAMMA
73. Valley Association for Independent Living (VAIL)
74. Volar Center for Independent Living
75. VSA Texas
76. Whitburn & Pevsner, PLLC
77. Wildflower Unitarian Universalist Church