

The 85th Legislative Session is Officially Over: A Special Session Report

Governor Abbott called for a special session, which began on July 18 and ended on August 15. The special session agenda covered [20 items](#) that the Legislature neglected or ran out of time to pass during the 140-day regular session earlier this Spring. Click here for a list of special session agenda items.

The Christian Life Commission focused primarily on three issues in line with the [public policy objectives](#) set by our commissioners last Fall.

Human Life

In accordance with Genesis 1:26-31, we believe every person has an innate dignity and worth given to them by their Creator and as such are entitled to abundant life. While this does not guarantee life without hardship, it should mean life free from preventable, premature deaths. Therefore, we support legislative efforts to promote a culture of life in our state.

- Support pro-life legislation that reduces the number of abortions, expands access to prenatal care and services for pregnant women.
- Support legislative efforts to address the spike in maternal deaths in Texas.

Results:

HB 7 passed: Abortion Insurance Reform bill that restricts health plan and health benefit plan coverage for elective abortions. CLC supported.

HB 214 passed: Abortion Complication Reporting bill that strengthens the laws applicable to the reporting of abortions and abortion complications to the state. CLC supported.

SB 5 passed: Maternal Mortality Task Force bill that continues the operation and expands the duties of the state task force which has been integral to the efforts to reduce the abnormally high maternal mortality rate in Texas. CLC supported.

Poverty

As the Bible contains numerous references to our responsibility to care for the poor and the vulnerable (Isaiah 1:17, James 1:27, Galatians 2:10), we believe the state of our economy is more accurately judged by the well-being of the poor, the destitute, the deserted. Therefore, we support legislative efforts to extend justice and protection from exploitation to the poor.

- Support legislation to protect the right of local municipalities to enact payday and gambling ordinances stronger than state laws.

Results:

Fortunately, despite the payday industries best efforts, nothing that pre-empts local payday and gambling ordinances passed during the special session.

Education

In accordance with God's original design (Genesis 1:26-31), we believe healthy, flourishing families are the cornerstone of strong churches and communities. We support legislative efforts meant to strengthen the economic, psychological, physical, and relational well-being of all God's children and their families, this includes access to quality public education, affordable healthcare, and high-quality pre-kindergarten.

- Support efforts to strengthen public education to ensure all Texas school children have access to quality public schools.
- Oppose efforts to reduce state investment in public education. This includes any attempt to divert funds from neighborhood schools to private schools. We also want to preserve the autonomy of private religious institutions by rejecting public funds for private sectarian schools through vouchers.

Results:

HB 30 passed: School finance commission bill that creates a statewide commission to study and recommend improvements to the state's public school finance system. CLC supported.

HB 21 passed: Additional funding for Texas public schools including \$351 million into public schools, \$120 million for charter schools and new facilities for traditional schools. It also includes a grant program to help small, rural districts hurt by the ending of another state aid program and funding for grant programs for autism and dyslexia services in Texas public school. This bill represents a compromise between the House and Senate as the original House version included \$1.8 billion in funding for public schools and updates to the outdated school finance system, but the Senate rejected that proposal by the House. The Senate wanted to include a provision creating a voucher for special needs students, but that proposal was rejected by the House. Lastly, the bill included additional money to make the Teacher Retirement System health insurance program for retired teachers more affordable. CLC supported the bill in its final form. In the earlier versions, we supported additional funding and opposed the voucher effort.