



STATEMENT

For Immediate Release: June 19, 2015; 10:30 a.m. CST

HB 2398 and SB 1630 Signed into Law, and Other End-of-Session News

This is a historic day for Texas children. **Governor Abbott has signed into law HB 2398**, ending the harmful policy of criminalizing children for truancy. This new law will impact hundreds of thousands of Texas families, and Texas Appleseed is so proud to have been part of the large and diverse movement of families and advocacy groups dedicated to addressing truancy this legislative session.

The new law requires school districts to take meaningful steps to address the underlying issues that can cause truancy, thereby helping children stay in school and succeed. If a child's truancy problems persist, the law still allows for schools to refer that student to court, but the court process will be civil rather than criminal. A civil court process means that students will not be saddled with the fines and criminal records that have harmed so many families.

Juvenile Justice

- **Governor Abbott also signed SB 1630 into law**, which will end the practice of confining many juvenile offenders in far-away state facilities where they have little connection to their families. Rather, these kids would be in regional facilities, located closer to their homes, decreasing the likelihood that they will reoffend and ensuring they remain connected to the people in their communities. This will also expand monitoring and assessment procedures to ensure the safety of children in regional facilities.

Training for School Police Officers

HB 2684 is another bill that will impact Texas children, and Texas Appleseed and its coalition partners have worked hard this legislative session to advocate for its passage.

- **HB 2684** requires training for school police officers who work with children in Texas' largest school districts. Currently, these officers are not required to have any training that is specifically designed for the school setting. This bill would require training in de-escalation techniques, alternative discipline methods, mental health crisis intervention, addressing the needs of disabled students, and child development and psychology. If this bill becomes law, Texas would take an important step to ensure the safety of millions of Texas children. HB 2684 will become law if Governor Abbott signs it or does not veto it before the June 21 deadline.

Payday & Auto Title Lending Reform

- Texas Appleseed's legislative efforts, in conjunction with a broad group of partners, also supported reform of high-cost lending, by stopping efforts that would have eroded local and state protections that currently exist and ensuring a state study of the problem of high-cost lending as a tool to build towards reform. We continue our work to build momentum towards broad-based market solutions.

Sincerely,

Deborah Fowler
Executive Director
Texas Appleseed