

Sine Die: A Wrap Up of the 86th Legislative Session

Whew! Legislative sessions are always rollercoasters. After numerous fact sheets and infographics, long days at the Capitol meeting with legislators and their staff, late night hearings, monitoring more than 40 bills through every step of the legislative process, and a great amount of coordination and advocacy, we have good news to report this session (see below bills that passed related to our work), knowing there's always still more work to be done to help the Texans who need it most.

HB 2697 Expands the identity theft definition to include debts incurred through coercion, supporting victims of abuse

HB 811 Schools will consider a student's foster care status or homelessness in the case of disciplinary action

HB 692 Ends out-of-school suspension for homeless students, barring serious situations

HB 123 Makes it easier for homeless children and those in foster care to obtain ID documents like birth certificates or driver's licenses

HB 2524 Restricts rent-to-own businesses from using criminal charges, which could mean hefty fines and jail time, in the event someone defaults on their transaction

HB 996 Protects against "zombie debts," including stopping lawsuits when the statute of limitations has expired, and prohibits a good faith payment from reviving an old debt

HB 1442 Continues the operation of the Office of Consumer Credit Commissioner and expands their authority to include online consumer loan transactions

SB 1637 Expands protections to prevent unconstitutional practices related to criminal justice debt

SB 11 Omnibus school safety bill includes provisions Texas Appleseed advocated for

SB 1707 Limits school police officer duties so that they are not involved in routine student discipline

Introducing New Staff



Andrew R. Hairston

Director, School-to-Prison Pipeline Project

Andrew is a civil rights attorney and writer who relocated from D.C. to Austin to join Texas Appleseed. He earned his law degree from Louisiana State University. He received his bachelor's degree, cum laude, from Howard University. From 2017 to 2019, Andrew served as a staff attorney at Advancement Project in Washington, D.C. He began his legal career as the George N. Lindsay Fellow and Associate Counsel at the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law. At Appleseed, he is particularly interested in diminishing the presence of police officers in schools and hopes to replace them with school psychologists, social workers, and counselors.



Kristian Caballero

Community Outreach Coordinator

Kristian helps develop partnerships and coordinate efforts to engage, activate and empower the community to create social change. She is an expert in community engagement, diversity outreach, grassroots organizing, coalition building, advocacy, and campaign strategy. She has a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and Legal Reasoning from The University of Texas at El Paso.



Sara Donovan

Communications Associate

Sara assists with communications efforts. Her background includes expertise in social media, traditional public relations, marketing and nonprofit communications. Sara holds a Bachelor of Journalism from The University of Texas at Austin.

Layne Kruse, Chair
Norton Rose Fulbright*

N. Scott Fletcher, Chair-Elect
Jones Day*

Patrick H. Cantilo, Secretary-Treasurer
Cantilo & Bennett, L.L.P.*

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The Law Office of Lynn Coyle PLLC*

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Vinson & Elkins LLP*

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George Butts Law*

Kent Caperton
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Susan Hartman
BVA Group*

Gregory Huffman

Tommy Jacks
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Susan Karamanian

Charles Kelley
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Michael Lowenberg
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Deloitte Financial Advisory Services LLP*

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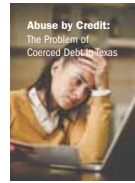
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Our Latest Reports and White Papers



Abuse by Credit

This report examines the growing problem of identity theft within abusive relationships. To gain control over a victim, an abuser in an intimate relationship uses force, threat, or fraud to coerce the victim to engage in non-consensual, credit-related transactions.

www.texasappleseed.org/coerced-debt



Thank You for Your Service

This report was conducted through a partnership of the United Way of Central Texas, Texas Appleseed, and United Way of Greater Houston. It offers a snapshot of the impacts of payday and auto title lending on Texas veterans.

www.texasappleseed.org/payday-auto-title-lending-reform



Driven by Debt

Co-authored with the Texas Fair Defense Project, *Driven by Debt* reveals the negative impact of driver's license suspensions. Most license suspensions in Texas are the result of unpaid fines and fees, not dangerous driving. Often when Texans cannot afford to pay traffic tickets, they continue to drive with a suspended license in order to work and support their families, which can lead to more tickets.

<http://stories.texasappleseed.org/driven-by-debt>



An Analysis of Texas Jail Bookings

This report examines the charges leading to jail booking and how long people are staying once they are there. Based on an analysis of only 12 Texas counties' jail booking records, the report finds that tens of thousands of people are booked into jail each year charged with the lowest-level misdemeanors.

www.texasappleseed.org/bail-reform



Texas: State of School Discipline

School exclusions—from out-of-school suspensions to in-school suspension to DAEPs—can be harmful for students. When students miss time with their regular teachers and peers, they may fall behind academically, and important social development opportunities may be negatively affected. Our report includes the latest data from the Texas Education Agency and also examines the impact of exclusionary discipline on students with disabilities, students of color, and our state's youngest students.

www.texasappleseed.org/school-prison-pipeline



Shadow Discipline

In partnership with Disability Rights Texas and Easter Seals Central Texas, we released a policy brief about “shadow discipline”—when schools use alternative, unreported methods to punish students. These forms of exclusionary discipline—including unreported out-of-school suspensions (also known as parent pickup)—negatively impact our schoolchildren.

www.texasappleseed.org/school-prison-pipeline



Guarding Our Most Precious Resources

Prevention and intervention are the foundation to safe and supportive schools. This white paper looks at the way schools are staffed with counselors and mental health professionals compared with school police. One finding is that schools are unevenly resourced and that schools greatly need more counseling and mental health resources.

www.texasappleseed.org/school-prison-pipeline

I HEART JUSTICE

April's I Heart Justice event was a big hit. Look for the exhibition to come to Houston in September! This year, I Heart Justice features limited-edition silkscreened prints by 15 Texas artists. Posters highlight a public policy issue related to Texas Appleseed's mission and projects. Through each artist's piece, we strive to open dialogues about some of the pressing justice issues of our day. Posters are for sale for \$75 each, including those from our 2017 series, with proceeds benefiting Texas Appleseed. Check out our online shop!

www.IHeartJustice.org



Natural Disasters, Race and Class

As another hurricane season begins, we are faced with stark reminders that for many Texans, recovery from Hurricane Harvey almost two years ago has just started. We think of hurricanes and other natural disasters as forces that don't discriminate based on economic status, race, or ethnicity, but disasters have a disproportionate effect based on race and class, and the structure of the federal disaster recovery system only exacerbates these disparities. While some Harvey victims are preparing for hurricane season in new, elevated homes or in new, less flood-prone neighborhoods, others with fewer financial resources are still homeless or living in mold-infested homes, and are in a worse position to withstand another hurricane than they were before Harvey.

Neither disasters nor disaster recovery affect all Texans equally, with the most vulnerable Texans bearing the most harm. But these systemic issues are central to mitigating future disasters. Texas Appleseed is working with communities for equity in disaster recovery with the goal of ensuring that mitigation projects prioritize protecting people and not property value. We need to deal with a history of discrimination and disinvestment that has pushed low-income families and families of color into more geographically vulnerable areas and denied them even basic infrastructure; over 80 percent of the open ditch drainage in Houston, for example, is in communities of color, and almost half of that drainage is non-functional. If we don't protect our most vulnerable communities, we are not mitigating the impact of future disasters.

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