



March 4, 2019

"The Road to Hell is paved with Good Intentions."

A Hand-book of Proverbs, Henry G. Bohn, 1855

Seven reasons we strongly oppose SB 10:

- ◆ **It infringes on the principle of limited government by creating an expensive new \$100 million program that is outside of the core functions of state government.** Instead of appropriating \$100 million for a new program, the state could re-prioritize some of the \$7.6 billion currently spent on mental health to improve and expand existing efforts.
- ◆ **It will jumpstart exponential growth of unelected bureaucracies.** By enlisting the Texas-funded public universities and the HHSC as the primary constituents of the consortium, this un-elected quasi-governmental body will have direct authority over millions of Texas taxpayer dollars. **We all know that once they are funded to start looking for a problem, they are going to find one. Conflicts of interest from pharmaceutical companies, special interests, and the universities themselves will be unavoidable under this structure.**
- ◆ **SB 10 duplicates what is already being done under existing authority.** The TWITR Project of Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center provides psychiatric help to hundreds of children throughout the ten school districts it serves and was implemented with a grant of \$565,000. Several medical schools across the state already participate in a mental health consortium that meets quarterly. **A new consortium is not necessary to enable further collaboration and coordination of higher education institutions for the purpose of improving access to mental health care.**
- ◆ **This proposed legislation has a high risk of evolving into a "Red Flag" monitoring program with respect to gun ownership.** The 2018 Republican Party of Texas (RPT) Platform Plank #73 opposes red flag monitoring programs that seek to deprive someone of their right to keep and bear arms if their child is identified under these programs.
- ◆ **This legislation has the potential to make mental illness a cottage industry within our schools.** The sale or sharing of any information collected in research or counseling for any commercial purposes is an affront to the constitutional liberties of Texas children and families. **SB 10 clearly opens Pandora's Box of unintended consequences.**
- ◆ **SB 10 further endangers privacy of parents and their children.** The stigma attached to any child misdiagnosed or even inadvertently revealed could severely damage children and their families. Information gathered through research or treatment should not be included in a student's

permanent file, should not be shared in a database, or released without express informed consent of the patient or guardian of the patient. Such sensitive information should be delivered to the parent(s) or legal guardians only and destroyed after the student leaves the school or graduates.

- ◆ **SB 10 is ripe for political agendas and abuse.** Throughout the second half of the 20th century, the use of psychiatry for political purposes plagued communist and other authoritative regimes. The Soviet Union was infamous for the systemic abuse of psychiatry, where approximately one-third of political prisoners were locked up in psychiatric hospitals. **Indeed, political abuse of psychiatric diagnosis is an important tool in stifling political dissent within socialist countries.** Is there any doubt – given today’s headlines – that the Democratic Left intends to push the United States into socialism? Mental health issues are becoming the “go to” tool of choice in today’s political circles and are being used to attack gun ownership and the ability of veterans with a PTSD diagnosis to retain their Second Amendment rights.

The Coalition believes that using existing laws and programs to support children with special education conditions, including mental health conditions, can enhance childhood mental health care without creating an expensive new liberty-stealing government bureaucracy.

SB 10 is NOT right for Texas! We should lead the way to Liberty – not into the lap of big Nanny-state government.

A Coalition letter by Barbara Harless, Desiree Watts and Dale Huls is in progress.

JoAnn excerpted these talking points for activists

to use to slow down the fast-track of SB 10 in the Texas Senate.