

TO: Members of the City of Austin Library Commission
FROM: Commissioner Courtney Rosenthal
SUBJECT: Legislative issues that could impact our library
DATE: January 23, 2023

At our November regular commission meeting, Wendy Woodland of the Texas Library Association discussed bills that have been filed with the Texas legislature that would impact libraries, both good and bad – some of which are very bad.

A current list of issues is here:

<https://txla.org/advocacy/texas-legislative-session/library-related-issues/>

Some of the bad bills could harm public freedoms and services at the Austin Public Library, as well as expose our library staff to undue risk and harm. I propose that we, as a commission, take action to identify these bad bills and highlight our concerns.

The City's legislative agenda currently covers some – but not all – of the concerns. That document is here: <https://tinyurl.com/igro2023>

Here are some specific steps I propose.

1. As individuals, we can sign up to receive timely information:

- Texas Library Association – <https://texansfortherighttoread.com/>
- Texans for the Right to Read – <https://texansfortherighttoread.com>

2. We can request APL staff to keep us apprised via email of relevant events and opportunities.

3. We can post a monthly agenda item, through the end of the legislative session, for an update on legislative issues. Although we won't be posted for an action, we can receive information and discuss.

4. We can adopt resolutions that express positions on the various bills.

5. We can identify other commissions with aligned interests, and adopt joint resolutions on these bills.

6. We can recommend that City Council places priority on the full range of issues with the city's Intergovernmental Relations Office.

I propose that we form a Legislative Issues Working Group to review items 4, 5, and 6 above and return to the commission with recommendation for specific actions.

DRAFT MOTION: Form a Legislative Issues Working Group to develop a plan and draft actions regarding issues of concern in the 88th session of the Texas Legislature.