



2017.

Well, it wasn't the year we were hoping for. Between huge shifts in political climate, social unrest, and even the weather, we all experienced some sort of upheaval during these past 12 months. Even in relatively calm times, the work of advocates is never a walk in the park. CTD is grateful that we were able to deliver on a few measures; read on.

All photographs by CTD unless otherwise noted.

Left: CTD's Chris Masey fires up the crowd at a July education rally. Photo by Steven Aleman.

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# CTD 2017 ANNUAL REPORT

Disability Advocacy, Organizing, Arts & Film, Consulting, and Consumer Direction.

## 85th Texas Legislature

Despite significant gains in some areas, decisions made by the 85th Texas Legislature destabilized fundamental community services and supports. We noted some disheartening trends among lawmakers of undercutting the State's own budget, putting energy into politics over meaningful policy, and ignoring cost-effective community-based solutions for Texans with disabilities.

In this difficult environment, CTD and our partners still managed to secure several significant wins, including:

- a budget rider to study **dental services for adults with disabilities with Medicaid**;

- \$100 million in funding for **Comprehensive Rehab Services, Promoting Independence programs and mental health peer services**. For two years, CTD consistently worked on restoring damaging cuts to **Medicaid therapies for kids**. While the Legislature ultimately restored \$89 million, or 25% of the cuts, we pushed hard for more;
- the passage of SB 160, effectively banning the Texas Education Agency from ever implementing an arbitrary **cap on special education enrollment**, plus 17 other bills benefitting students with disabilities;
- a hard-fought **statewide ban on the use of cell phones and handheld devices while driving**; and
- an accessibility pilot program that specifically targets **wheelchair accessibility among Transportation Network Companies (TNCs, like Uber and Lyft)**;
- strengthened or extended **consumer protections in prescription medication policy**.

Read our full 2017 Legislative Report at [txdisabilitives.org](http://txdisabilitives.org) 

**100** bills CTD worked on

**43** partner organizations

**616** CTD member advocacy actions

# Federal Issues

It wasn't only the State legislature keeping us on our toes. In 2017, a number of federal issues emerged that we couldn't ignore. A new administration with very different priorities than the last served up a series of critical fights for the disability community.

## Congress' Assault on Public Health

Many of our elected officials in Washington want to cut health care coverage for the disadvantaged, including people with disabilities. Their starting point, the **repeal of the Affordable Care Act (ACA)**, would have thrown millions of Americans out of health coverage, caused almost 39,000 Texans to lose services under the Community First Choice Option, cut over 40,000 Texas health care jobs, and closed hospitals. If this wasn't bad enough, Congress **proposed to cut into traditional Medicaid** as it existed *before* the ACA. Cost-effective community services would definitely have been on the chopping block.



We salute our partners at ADAPT, in particular, and other national disability organizations that led the charge against bill after bill that would have been disastrous for Americans with disabilities. CTD

jumped in to these efforts, calling our members to action, organizing and participating in rallies (left, our Erin Moore joins Hands Around the Capitol) and town halls, and calling and visiting Texas congressmen and women.

Our movement to stop Medicaid cuts and ACA repeal has been successful so far. But Congress is still moving forward with its efforts to undermine access to healthcare and services for Americans with disabilities. Even now, they threaten kids of low income families by **failing to reauthorize funding for the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)**. **Proposed tax cuts**, heavily benefiting corporations and the wealthy, would be offset by draconian cuts to Medicaid, Medicare, and Social Security. **We'll follow these efforts closely into 2018, and we'll be counting on our members to continue raising their voices!**

## The Americans with Disabilities Act

During session, we successfully countered a state level bill that would have made it nearly impossible for someone without a law degree to file an ADA claim. Not to be outdone, Congressional Representative Ted Poe (of Texas, no less), filed **H. R. 620, the ADA Education and Reform Act** in January. Despite its misleading name, this bill would put the burden of ADA enforcement on individuals who encounter violations, rather than the businesses that commit them.

As of this report, no vote on the House floor has been scheduled, but H. R. 620 has continued to pick up cosponsors, including 12 from Texas.

**Our call to action to oppose H. R. 620 continues, too, at [txdisabilities.org](http://txdisabilities.org).**



## A few reasons we're not totally disappointed in 2017...



*CTD's Dennis Borel at SpEd Cap press conference.*

January: Represented by Disability Rights Texas and Winston & Strawn LLP, CTD prepared to sue TEA over their 8.5% cap on special education enrollment. At the last minute, TEA agreed to our terms, removing the cap.



June: Our Susie Angel shot a quick video on how critical Medicaid is to her daily life, especially during her recent cancer treatment. The video took off on Facebook, becoming our biggest post ever with over 11.8k views. Watch it now >

# Cinema Touching Disability

It was another remarkable year for our annual film festival, as we focused on world of **prosthetics**.



Photo by William Philpott.

*My Bionic Pet* (2014) screened as our big feature on Friday night. The documentary takes a look at animals with injuries or disabilities—and the custom prosthetics their humans develop for them. During the pre-show, audience members got to hang out with cohost **Austin Animal Center** and local bionic pet and Instagram star, **Elmer the cat** (above)! Following *My Bionic Pet*, star **Chris P. Bacon**, a pig who uses a wheelchair, joined us for a Skype Q&A.

Saturday night, *Out on a Limb* (2013) took top billing. Blending the technical with the personal, this documentary captures the experience of using today's most advanced artificial limbs and glimpses the exciting possibilities in the future of prosthetics. After the film, Dennis Borel moderated a **panel on prosthetics today** with local athlete **Greg LaKowski** and e-NABLE UT founder/ president **Glori Das**.

Read our wrap up at [CTDFilmFest.org!](http://CTDFilmFest.org) ➤

# Pen 2 Paper Creative Writing Contest

2017 was a record-breaking year for Pen 2 Paper, with 220 pieces of **disability fiction, non-fiction, and poetry**. Authors and poets shared their stories of losing loved ones to dementia, navigating life with a mental illness, writing with chronic pain, finding and celebrating the disability community, and more.

Grand Prize went to Heidi Johnson-Wright's *Crip Cargo*, a gut-punch of a story about pre-ADA accommodations and fitting in in junior high.

Read this year's outstanding entries at [txdisabilities.org/pen-2-paper/](http://txdisabilities.org/pen-2-paper/) ➤

Our monthly **Lion and Pirate inclusive open mic**, cohosted by VSA Texas at Malvern Books, continued as a popular community event. In addition to great music, stories, poems, and performances, we were proud to feature:

- writers from **VSA Texas' Distinguished Artist Veterans** program;
- the launch of graphic novel *And Yet We Rise* with author **David Borden**;
- the Austin debut of novel *La Roja* with author **Joseph Huerta**;
- an in-store reading of *The Only Light I Saw was in Galveston* with author **Susan R. Nelson**; and
- VSA Texas' **Opening Minds, Opening Doors** program.

Join us for our first open mic of 2018 on January 7 at Malvern Books! ➤



September: CTD's Pen 2 Paper disability focused creative writing contest received 220 entries from all over the globe, more than double what we've seen after eight years of holding this contest.



HCIL staffer Maria Orozco oversees wheelchairs for HCIL relief distribution. Photo by HCIL.

September: On CTD's recommendation, United Healthcare included the Houston Center for Independent Living in their million-dollar contribution to Hurricane Harvey relief. HCIL director Sandra Bookman: "This contribution emboldens us to be able to say, 'we'll be at the table when Houston starts to rebuild.'"

# CDS Division

Our Consumer Directed Services Division (CDS) helps people who need attendant care to manage their own attendants and remain in their homes.

As a growing enterprise since we began in 2007, our client base has increased to over 325 Texans with disabilities and seniors, who employ 350 personal attendants.

# New Staff

CTD is pleased to welcome Dyanna Matthews back as a payroll administrator for the CDS Division.



Tiffany Williams, LMSW joins the advocacy team as our Developmental Disabilities Policy Fellow+.



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## Board of Directors

CTD's Board reflects the population of Texas in terms of types of disability, geographic representation, ethnicity, and income level.

### Executive Committee

President: Rodney Hanneman\*  
Vice President: Crystal Lyons\* \*\*  
Secretary: Judy Telge  
Treasurer: Frank Santos

### At Large Members

Region 1: Rick Razo  
Region 2: John Curnutt\*  
Region 3: Regina Blye\*  
Region 4: Darrell Wilson\*  
Region 5: Marshall Burns\*  
Region 6: Francis Key\*  
Region 7: Gene Whitten-Lege  
Region 8: Jet Schuler

## Staff

Executive Director: Dennis Borel  
Director of Advocacy: Chase Bearden\*  
Chief Operations Officer: Denise Ellison\*\*  
Senior Public Policy Specialist Chris Masey\*\*  
Director of Communications: Laura Perna  
Film Festival Coordinator: William Greer\*  
Editor/Researcher: Susie Angel\*  
CDS Payroll Administrators: Dyanna Matthews\*, Rosie Williams  
CDS Claims Analysts: Erin Moore, Kit Cuny  
Developmental Disability Policy Fellow+: Tiffany Williams

\* Person with a disability

\*\* Parent of a child with a disability

+ Financial Support for the CTD

Developmental Disabilities Policy Fellowship is provided by the Texas

Council for Developmental Disabilities, with Federal funds\* made available by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities. \*\$67,500 (79%) DD funds; \$17,947 (21%) non-federal resources.



CTD is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization with Federal Tax ID #74-2071160 CTD is a social and economic impact organization benefitting Texans with all disabilities of all ages. CTD is a membership organization controlled by people with disabilities.

General support of CTD provided by

