

Coalition of Texans with Disabilities 2018 Annual Report

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

2018 has flown by. Natural disasters and political turmoil seem to have become the norm. In an ever more chaotic environment, we count our blessings as we are able to continue our work toward our vision of a barrier-free society.

Public Policy and Advocacy

More voters, informed voters

Midterm election years are typically not great for voter turnout, but 2018 didn't quite follow that rule. At CTD, we were encouraged that [53% of registered voters voted in the midterms](#). Our efforts to register and engage voters this year include...



... serving as a lead organizer for the **2018 Texas Disability Issues Forum**, which brought together the disability community and major candidates for statewide office to discuss issues affecting the disability community.

left: we didn't have a big enough banner for the San Antonio advocates who rode up for TDIF!

Each of the Democratic candidates—Beto O'Rourke for Senator, Lupe Valdez for Governor, Mike Collier for Lt. Governor, and Justin Nelson for Attorney General—attended to speak about their disability issue positions. Each of these candidates, as well as Governor Greg Abbott, Republican candidate for Governor, answered our Disability Issues Survey and can be referenced at revuptexas.org.

“Here at UT Arlington we have had a great time watching the [#TDIF2018](#) and learning more about the issues that are important to us! We're getting ourselves prepared to [#REVUPTX!](#)”

Tyler James, TDIF livestream watch party organizer



... by the numbers

400 IN ATTENDANCE • 11,000 LIVESTREAM VIEWS • 77 CO-HOST ORGS



... participating in the **REV UP Texas coalition**, which works to increase the political power of Texans with disabilities through voter registration, voter education, and voting. CTD worked with REV UP Texas to produce and promote a series of video PSAs. We also helped compose and promote REV UP's response to an important **study by Austin Community College, looking at voters with disabilities**. The study confirms that Texans with disabilities are politically engaged and vote in unexpectedly extraordinary numbers ([read the press release](#)).

... facilitating a series of interviews with people with disabilities to help SUMA, a social marketing company, with a study of their experience voting in Texas.

... taking the **Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)** to task on their federally required responsibilities to help register Texans with disabilities to vote. TWC is supposed to help people with disabilities register to vote during vocational rehabilitation, but they removed that function in their 2016 policy manual. Represented by Disability Rights Texas and the Texas Civil Rights Project, CTD sent TWC a letter threatening to sue unless they put voter registration help back into their vocational rehab functions. They publicly committed to revising their practices.

Helping to stop HR620, the bad ADA bill

We are pleased to report that the harmful federal bill **HR620, the ADA Education Reform Act**, did not come to the Senate floor for a vote. Proponents of the bill said it would attack bad faith lawsuits, but HR620 failed to address that issue. Instead, it would make people with disabilities the only class of Americans held responsible for the enforcement of the very civil rights laws that protect them.

While HR620 passed the House this February, 43 Senators pledged to vote “no” on the bill, effectively stopping it in its tracks. CTD joined national efforts to oppose the bill. In addition to action alerts and a guest blog series on the bill, our graphic of how the Texas delegation voted became [our biggest Facebook post of 2018](#), with a reach of over 47,000 (right). Thank you for your action!

CTD Coalition of Texans with Disabilities
Published by Laura Perna · 15 February ·

Today, the US House of Representatives shamefully passed #HR620, the Americans with Disabilities Education and Reform Act of 2017, offending over 3.4 million Texans with disabilities, including our veterans with disabilities, who seek lives without discrimination. Proponents say the bill attacks bad faith lawsuits, but HR620 fails to address that issue. Instead, it would make people with disabilities the only class of Americans held responsible for the enforcement of the very civil rights laws that protect them. The #ADA is a Texas product, signed by Texas president George H. W. Bush.

See how your rep voted in the graphic below (please contact us at info@txdisabilities.org if you need an alternative format).

House Vote #80 in 2018 (115th Congress)
H.R. 620: ADA Education and Reform Act of 2017

Vote	Party	Rep.	District	
Yea	R	Arrington, Jodey	TX 19th	Lubbock
Yea	R	Babin, Brian	TX 36th	Woodville
Yea	R	Barton, Joe	TX 6th	Ennis
Yea	R	Brady, Kevin	TX 8th	Woodlands
Yea	R	Burgess, Michael	TX 26th	Flower Mound
Yea	R	Carter, John	TX 31st	Round Rock
Nay	D	Castro, Joaquin	TX 20th	San Antonio
Yea	R	Conaway, Michael	TX 11th	Midland
Yea	D	Cuellar, Henry	TX 28th	Laredo
Yea	R	Culberson, John	TX 7th	Houston
Nay	D	Doggett, Lloyd	TX 35th	Austin
Yea	R	Farenthold, Blake	TX 27th	Corpus Christi
Yea	R	Flores, Bill	TX 17th	Waco
Yea	R	Gohmert, Louie	TX 1st	Tyler
Nay	D	Gonzalez, Vicente	TX 15th	McAllen
Yea	R	Granger, Kay	TX 12th	Fort Worth

Protecting the right to live in the community

On November 15, 2018, the latest chapter in an 8-year legal battle ended with closing arguments in the **Pre-Admission Screening and Resident Review or PASRR suit**. In

2010, the plaintiffs—6 individuals with disabilities, CTD, and the Arc of Texas—contended the State of Texas failed to comply with federal law requiring that nursing facility residents with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) be allowed to live in the most integrated setting.

This fall’s trial was held in federal district court in San Antonio over 4 ½ weeks. CTD was represented pro bono by Disability Rights Texas, the Center for Public Representation from Boston, the United States Department of Justice, and the Sidley Law Firm.

The trial concluded on the following note:

Judge: can the State confirm the number of people with IDD in nursing facilities under Texas Medicaid?

The State of Texas: 3,600.

Judge: How does the State view these people?

The State: All want to be in nursing facilities.

Judge: How do you know that?

The State: The State has policies to ensure it.

With that, the Judge closed the trial and instructed both sides to file additional documents. We can expect a ruling after the new year.

“I was impressed with the approach, strategy, and teamwork of the attorneys defending the rights of people with disabilities. Dennis Borel was prepared and outstanding representing the disability community on the witness stand.”

Willie Mae Clay, San Antonio disability advocate



ABLE Accounts now open to help people with disabilities save money

In 2015, CTD’s Chris Masey led efforts to pass legislation enabling the federal ABLÉ bill in Texas. After its passage, he remained a subject matter expert on ABLÉ accounts, sitting on the state’s ABLÉ advisory committee. This May, the program opened for enrollment.

Medicaid

Early this year, the Dallas Morning News published the multipart series, [***Pain & Profit: Investigating Medicaid Managed Care***](#), which exposed some deeply troubling failures on the part of Medicaid Managed Care companies to provide services for Texans with disabilities. The series received intense public attention and outcry. We responded in an opinion piece that the DMN ran in June, “[Texas Legislature cries foul over Medicaid tragedies but fails to admit its own role](#)”.

Legislators convened hearings to address the problems with MCOs, and we provided both invited and public testimony regarding consumer protections under Medicaid Managed Care.

Community & The Arts

15th Cinema Touching Disability Film Festival



What a year for Cinema Touching Disability! One thing that made our 15th anniversary celebration so amazing was **Tilly Jones**. Tilly, a teenage composer with multiple disabilities, had submitted [TILLY'S SYMPHONY](#), a short documentary about her music and relationship to her disabilities, to our Short Film Competition. In it, she muses, “in the future, I would still like to be composing, and maybe even composing for other people. And maybe hear my pieces played around the world.” We asked Tilly if she’d compose a piece for the Festival, and after months of emails, the world premiere of jazzy *Marciac* greeted our audience as they entered the theater!

That’s not all. Thanks to a grant from the Texas Council on Developmental Disabilities, we brought Tilly and her mother, Marj, all the way from Brisbane, Australia to Austin to present *TILLY'S SYMPHONY* and *Marciac*, and of course, treat us to some live music (above)!

Read more about our outstanding 15th year in our [Fest Wrap Up](#), including winners of our **international Short Film Competition**, selected from 501 entries from over 60 countries! Plus: guests, wrap around events, and of course, great disability films!

“The organization and coordination of this event exceeds expectations. It is by far one of the most meaningful annual events I attended.”

Anonymous audience survey



Pen 2 Paper creative writing contest

We’re thrilled to report another record-breaker for our disability-focused creative writing contest: we received 361 pieces of fiction, non-fiction, poetry, and comics from all corners of the globe! Grand Prize went to Georgette Mallory’s *Disarmed*. In it, the author, who wears a prosthetic arm, judges her marriage to an able-bodied man, as she forms a new friendship with a recent amputee. That’s not all, by a mile; [check out all of this year’s winners and finalists!](#)

"Thank you so much for this opportunity to make my voice and the voices of so many others heard. I hope this contest and your platform will help to raise awareness and deepen connections and understanding. I'm pleased to see there is such a contest at all."



Jennifer Willis, non-fiction finalist ([Chronic Optimism](#))

It was a good year for poetry at our monthly **inclusive open mic series The Lion & the Pirate**, which we co-host with VSA Texas at independent book store Malvern Books. Our April open mic was an official City Read for the Austin International Poetry Festival (the largest unjuried poetry festival in the US!). At our May and August events, we featured two Texas poets with disabilities, Maria Palacios (Houston) and Mel Finefrock (Plano).

Consumer Direction

Our Consumer Directed Services (CDS) Division continues to grow, as more and more Texans who need attendant services make the choice to manage their own care. As we wrap up 2018, our client base is approaching 400 Texans with disabilities and seniors.

This year, we made substantial progress on technological solutions to better serve consumers, and we were pleased to welcome Aracely (Celly) Menendez and Kala Steading to the CDS team.

"Rosie, thanks for all your help with payroll this year. We appreciate all you do for us!"

Lori Galindo, CDS client



2018 by the numbers...

- 40: years old CTD turned in 2018
- 38: boards, workgroups, and committees CTD staff sits on (including 2 where we play a lead role)
- 20: presentations, trainings, and talks given by CTD staff on disability topics
- 15: conferences we attended (including 2 we helped organize)

"Thank you so very much for your time and speaking to the UCB group at our August meeting. Everyone enjoyed your comments and were impressed by the accomplishments of CTD."

Amy Whited, UCB Regional Director, State Government Relations & Public Affairs

About CTD

Contact Us

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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: Jet Schuler

At Large Members

Region 1: Rick Razo
Region 2: John Curnutt*
Region 3: vacant
Region 4: Darrell Wilson*
Region 5: Marshall Burns*
Region 6: Francis Key*
Region 7: Gene Whitten-Lege
Region 8: Kenneth Semien Jr.*

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: Aracely Menendez, Rosie Williams
CDS Claims Analysts: Kala Steading, 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.