


ATTORNEY GENERAL OF TEXAS  
GREG ABBOTT

## Sexual Assault Advisory Council

Presented to Annual Conference of the Council on Sex Offender Treatment  
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## Workshop Goals and Objectives

- ▶ Define SAAC and its Purpose, per HB 1751
- ▶ Identify Stakeholder Partners
- ▶ Identify Workgroups and Tasks
- ▶ Describe Report to Legislature
- ▶ Discuss Recommendations

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## HB 1751

- ▶ Author, Representative Cohen of Houston
- ▶ Passed during 80<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session and provided for:
  - Imposition of \$5 fee on certain sexually oriented businesses
  - Third party assessment of Adult Entertainment Industry
  - Sexual Assault Advisory Council
  - Grants for sexual assault related purposes

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## Definition of the SAAC

*A statewide collaborative of agencies working to address issues related to sexual assault*

- ▶ Established by HB 1751, passed during Texas' 80<sup>th</sup> Legislature
- ▶ Purpose: Examine five key areas as they related to sexual assault
- ▶ Prepare a report to the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature

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## Five Key Focus Areas

- ▶ Prevalence of sexual assault in Texas
- ▶ Reduction of recidivism of convicted sex offenders
- ▶ Increased prosecution and conviction rates
- ▶ Resources for addressing the needs of sexual assault victims
- ▶ Identifying the cost of sexual violence in Texas

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## HB 1751 Establishes Mission and Membership

### Mission

- ▶ To serve as a clearinghouse and informal coordinator of sexual assault programming efforts
- ▶ To create a report to the Governor and the 81<sup>st</sup> Legislature
- ▶ To develop recommendations for performance measures
- ▶ To report on effectiveness of appropriations made by 80<sup>th</sup> Legislature

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## HB 1751 Establishes Mission and Membership

**Membership:** Representatives designated by the Attorney General from state agencies that receive sexual assault-related appropriations and invited key stakeholder organizations

- ▶ Comptroller of Public Accounts Judiciary Section, Special Prosecution Unit, Civil Commitment Division
- ▶ Texas Department of Public Safety
- ▶ Department of State Health Services
- ▶ Governor's Office, Criminal Justice Division
- ▶ Office of the Attorney General
- ▶ Texas Department of Criminal Justice

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## HB 1751 Establishes Mission and Membership

**Membership (con't)**

- ▶ Texas State University, School Safety Center
- ▶ Texas Supreme Court via the Texas Access to Justice Foundation
- ▶ Texas Youth Commission
- ▶ The University of Texas at Austin, Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (IDVSA)
- ▶ Council on Sex Offender Treatment, Texas Association Against Sexual Assault, Texas Department of Family and Protective Services, Texas District and County Attorney Association, and Texas Municipal Police Association, and Texas State Counseling Center/Alcohol and Drug Resource Center (Invited Partners)

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## Workgroups and Tasks

- ▶ Prevalence
- ▶ Recidivism
- ▶ Improving Reporting and Prosecution
- ▶ Services and Resources
- ▶ Cost of Sexual Violence in Texas

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## Effectiveness of Appropriations

- ▶ Office of the Attorney General (6 projects)
- ▶ Department of State Health Services: prevalence study (in process) and grants to assist victims of human trafficking (no funding)
- ▶ University of Texas Institute for Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault: 3 literature reviews
- ▶ Texas State University, School Safety Center: one Youth Specialist position
- ▶ Texas Access to Justice Foundation: pilot project

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## Challenges and Recommendations

Recommendations: [A] Awareness, [C] Collaboration, [E] Education, [F] Funding, [R] Research, [T] Training

- ▶ DPS – rural area service delivery, hampered investigations due to victim reluctance to participate, better training [ACEFT]
- ▶ DSHS – Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System continuation, Sexually Violent Predator caseload expanding [F]
- ▶ Governor's Office, Criminal Justice Division – any VOCA or VAWA funding cuts will impact programs [F]
- ▶ OAG - SANE Certification increasing, SART development needs, CVC maintaining solvency of the Fund for direct reimbursements to victims and programs that assist and support them, ACP expansion, VINE maintenance and technology updates [CFT]

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## Challenges and Recommendations

- ▶ TDCJ – SA victim and parole officer education on victim rights, offender release and Victim Impact Statements
- ▶ Texas State University Counseling Center – issue of SA incident underreporting and limited number of counseling sessions available [AEFT]
- ▶ Texas State University School Safety Center – school district acknowledgement of sexual assault as a safety issue, in-school infrastructure to address sexual harassment, dating violence and sexual assault [AET]
- ▶ Texas Supreme Court/Texas Access to Justice Foundation – expanding the SALAN pilot project (shelter, pro bono attorneys, legal aid services), evaluation in order to modify program to demographic need [CFR]

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## Research, Response and Prevention of Sexual Violence

- ▶ Research
  - Increased reporting to law enforcement
  - Direct services to victims of sexual assault
  - Victims of sexual assault – empirical studies
  - Sexual abuse among children and teens
  - Prevention of sexual assault and information on perpetrators
- ▶ Response
  - Victim-centered throughout CJ process
  - Education on strengthening the individual
- ▶ Prevention
  - Assessment of community based root causes

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## Current Advancements and Future Projects

### Review of the SAAC Executive Summary

Other:

- ▶ Texas Primary Prevention Plan (TAASA website)
- ▶ Adult Entertainment Industry study (IDVSA website)
- ▶ HB 2626 Non-reporting to law enforcement, SANE exam and Sexual Assault Exam Reimbursement (DPS website)
- ▶ SANE Certification program changes
- ▶ Human Trafficking Law Enforcement Task Force
- ▶ SA Statewide Needs Assessment
- ▶ Offender study and recidivism

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## Ideas and Suggestions

- ▶ What is needed in the field?
- ▶ What are your observations about most prominent sexual assault related issues?

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## Resources

- ▶ Texas Association Against Sexual Assault [www.taasa.org](http://www.taasa.org)
  - Sexual Assault Advisory Council report  
[http://www.taasa.org/leg\\_advocacy/pdfs/FinalSAACReport-combined.pdf](http://www.taasa.org/leg_advocacy/pdfs/FinalSAACReport-combined.pdf)
- ▶ Institute on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault (IDVSA)  
<http://www.utexas.edu/research/cswr/idvsa>
  - "An Assessment of the Adult Entertainment Industry in Texas: Final Report"
  - "Human Trafficking in Texas – A Statewide Evaluation of Existing Laws and Services"
- ▶ Texas Department of Public Safety  
[http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/criminal\\_law\\_enforcement/crimelaboratory/Non-ReportedSexualAssaultEvidenceProgram.htm](http://www.txdps.state.tx.us/criminal_law_enforcement/crimelaboratory/Non-ReportedSexualAssaultEvidenceProgram.htm)

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## THANK YOU

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If you would like a copy of this presentation, please send an email to the address above.

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