

AUSTIN, Texas, Oct. 29 -- The Texas Psychological Association issued the following news release:

In response to the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners (TSBSWE) and the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC) accepting language from the Governor that removes protections against discrimination for sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression from the Social Work Code of Conduct, TPA's Board and Trustees and two Local Area Societies affiliated with TPA submitted a letter to BHEC expressing outrage with the recent actions of the state regulatory boards.

The letter from TPA can be found here

([https://www.texaspsyc.org/resource/resmgr/2020/bhec/TPA\\_Letter\\_to\\_BHEC\\_re\\_Social.pdf](https://www.texaspsyc.org/resource/resmgr/2020/bhec/TPA_Letter_to_BHEC_re_Social.pdf)) and the letter from the Capital Area Psychological Association and Sam Houston Area Psychological Association can be found here ([https://www.texaspsyc.org/resource/resmgr/2020/SHAPA\\_CAPA\\_letter\\_on\\_social.pdf](https://www.texaspsyc.org/resource/resmgr/2020/SHAPA_CAPA_letter_on_social.pdf)).

TPA President **Dr. Megan Mooney** gave testimony at BHEC's October 27 quarterly meeting regarding the rule change to the Social Work Code of Conduct. Her statement came a few hours following BHEC's decision to keep the social workers' original rule in place that prohibited social workers from turning away clients on the basis of disability, sexual orientation or gender identity.

To listen to Dr. Mooney's testimony, click here ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYr8\\_Q41mNw&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1bLm1cipYR64m0u1hQ1v7iCW-US6u0CiYbh7wphedMgPbS4rTsoMdb\\_HE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DYr8_Q41mNw&feature=youtu.be&fbclid=IwAR1bLm1cipYR64m0u1hQ1v7iCW-US6u0CiYbh7wphedMgPbS4rTsoMdb_HE)).

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Letter from Texas Psychological Association

October 23, 2020

Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council

Via email

Dear Members of the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council,

We, the Board of Trustees of the Texas Psychological Association, are outraged with the recent action taken by the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners (TSBSWE) and the newly created Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council (BHEC) to redact language from the Texas Social Worker Code of Conduct, Tex. Admin. Code Rule Sec. 781.201 guaranteeing protections for individuals and communities that fall under disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression without first accepting additional public comments, as is traditionally done when substantive rule changes are proposed.

Professional codes of conduct serve as the foundation that guides a practice. To undermine the process by which codes of conduct are established by refusing to re-publish the proposed changes and thereby limiting comments from the professionals and members of the public directly impacted by these rules is disturbing, to say the least. It forces us to question to what extent this new-found authority will be used.

Furthermore, it is direct insult to the already marginalized and vulnerable populations singled out with this action. As mental health professionals trained to provide care to all individuals, we do not discriminate based on personal values, and our state regulatory boards should not be encouraging such behavior.

This rule change seeks to deny basic human rights to the Texas citizens who are singled out by this action. It is incomprehensible that such discriminatory behavior was ever the intent of the Texas Legislature or that it reflects the will of the public.

Respectfully,

President - Megan Mooney, PhD

President-Elect - Frances Douglas, PsyD

President-Elect Designate - Alfonso Mercado, PhD

Past President - Alice Ann Holland, PhD, ABPP

Judith Andrews, PhD

Ana Arenivas, PhD

Michael Ditsky, PhD

John Godfrey, PhD

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Bret Moore, PsyD, ABPP

Melody Moore, PhD

Kimberly Roaten, PhD

Brian H Stagner, PhD

Jeff Temple, PhD

Jennifer Rockett, PhD

John Velasquez, PhD

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Letter from Capital Area Psychological Association and Sam Houston Area Psychological Association

October 26, 2020

Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council

Via email

Dear Members of the Texas Behavioral Health Executive Council,

On Friday, October 23, 2020, the Texas Psychological Association Executive Board submitted a letter of support for social workers opposing the actions taken by the Texas State Board of Social Worker Examiners (TBSWE) redacting language from the Texas Social Worker Code of Conduct, Tex. Admin. Code Rule Sec. 781.201 guaranteeing protections for individuals and communities that fall under disabilities, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression. We, the members of the Sam Houston Area Psychological Association and Capital Area Psychological Association, join in full agreement with the statements offered by the TPA Board of Trustees. Further, not only are we outraged with the actions taken by the TWBSWE, but we are also gravely concerned by the action of the Governor to limit the ethical practices of

social workers as specified in the Texas Social Worker Code of Conduct.

We agree with the TPA Board concerning the procedural matter of bypassing a period of public comment, as is traditionally done when substantive rule changes are proposed. We are additionally concerned with the ethical bind that social workers in the State of Texas currently face.

As eloquently stated by a social worker practicing in the State of Texas: "The law should never allow a social worker to legally do unethical things" (Walters, 2020). We are deeply concerned about these recent actions taken by the Governor and the TWBSWE and the possible "slippery slope" down which the Behavioral Health Executive Council and the Texas State Board of Examiners of Psychologists may eventually follow. As stated by the TPA Executive Board: "It forces us to question to what extent this new-found authority will be used."

As psychologists trained to provide care to all individuals, we do not discriminate based on personal values, and our state regulatory boards should not be encouraging such behavior. This rule change seeks to deny basic human rights to the Texas citizens who are singled out by this action. It is incomprehensible that such discriminatory behavior was ever the intent of the Texas Legislature or that it reflects the will of the public.

Respectfully,

Capital Area Psychological Association

Sam Houston Area Psychological Association

[Category: Psychiatry/Psychology]

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**CITATION (CMS STYLE)**

"Texas Psychological Association Stands With Social Workers." *Targeted News Service (USA)*, October 29, 2020. *NewsBank: Access World News*. <https://infoweb-newsbank-com.atxlibrary.idm.oclc.org/apps/news/document-view?p=AWNB&docref=news/17F36477C2961C00>.

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