

TAASA LEGISLATIVE AGENDA | 85TH SESSION

HB 142 Outlaw Groping

SB 339 Current law classifies the intentional touching of an adult’s intimate parts without consent as a class C misdemeanor—a ticket-level offense. A new criminal offense covering groping would acknowledge this conduct as serious sexual violence and improve accountability for sex offenders.

HB 1431 Outlaw Sexual Assault by Coercion

SB 340 Rape is always a violent act, whether accomplished by physical force or the threat of other serious harm. However, current law recognizes sexual assault only under threat of physical force. This definition reflects old “stranger danger” stereotypes, even though most victims know their assailants and are put at risk of a much broader spectrum of harm.

SB 77 Establish Rape as Grounds to Terminate Parental Rights

HB 1766 Rape victims should never be forced to co-parent with their rapists. However, current law only recognizes convictions for murder, attempted murder, or solicitation to murder a child’s other parent as grounds for termination of the offender’s parental rights, even if termination is also in a child’s best interests. Grounds for termination should include sexual assault against the other parent.

HB 472 Eliminate Loopholes in Protective Order Proceedings

SB 257 Judges may issue protective orders (POs) lasting up to a lifetime for victims of sexual assault stalking, and human trafficking. However, current law allows perpetrators to petition once a year in perpetuity to challenge the order. This forces victims to produce new evidence they were not required to prove in the first place, while abusers are allowed to use the court system to harass their victims indefinitely.

SB 454 Help Judges Assess Safety Risks in Family Law Proceedings

For the safety of victims and their families, current law requires divorce petitions to include copies of any protective order issued to a victim of family violence under the Family Code. However, the law does not cover other potentially dangerous cases, such as Suits Affecting the Parent-Child Relationship. It also omits POs issued based on sexual assault, stalking, and human trafficking. The law should be updated to reflect recent advances in our PO statutes.

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