

# Advocacy Training for Cannabis Law Reform in Texas

Texas Capitol  
Saturday, January 14th, 2016



# Welcome to the Team!



# Training Program

- Importance of Advocacy / 85(R) Recap
- Civil Penalty (HB81) Bill Overview and Messaging
- Medical Cannabis (SB269) Bill Overview and Messaging
- Review the Legislative Process
- Hearing Process and Preparing Your Testimony
- How to Engage With Legislators
- Tracking legislation

Constituent advocacy is one of the most critical tools we have as a grassroots movement. Legislators and other community members need to hear from Texans like you who want to see sensible marijuana policies instituted.

# Individual Advocates

Progress is only possible  
because of advocates  
like you!

Hundreds of Texans  
visited their Capitol  
to support marijuana  
law reform



# Individual Advocates

Advocacy is all about building relationships and effective communication (this includes listening and responding to concerns)



# 2015 Legislative Recap

Unlike many other states, Texas does not allow ballot initiatives. The Legislature meets for 140 days every two years.



Unprecedented number of marijuana related bills introduced.



# Legislative Timeline 2017

Jan 10, 2017: 85th Texas Legislative Session Begins

Feb 6-10, 2017: Civil Penalties Educational Exhibit

Feb 7, 2017: Civil Penalties Legislative Briefing

Feb 8, 2017: Citizen Lobby Day

Feb 27- Mar 3, 2017: MMJ Educational Exhibit

Mar 8, 2017: MMJ Briefing

Mar 13, 2017: Last Day to File a Bill

May 29, 2017: Last Day of the Session





# Ellic Sahualla

Chief of Staff to  
Rep. Joe Moody



# House Bill 81 Highlights

Marijuana Possession (< 1 oz.):

- No Arrest
- No Jail Time
- No Criminal Record
- No Driver's License Suspension

# Discussion

Talking Points:

Proactive Discussion - key points and facts to convey.

These are the topics and facts that we want to bring up when given the opportunity to make our case.

# Discussion

Rebuttals:

Reactive discussion - responses to typical arguments and statements made.

These may not be points we bring up but we need to be prepared to address them.

# Talking Point Examples

- Annually, 72,000 Texans are arrested for simple possession at an estimated cost of \$10,000 per arrest
  - During 2012, 90% of all burglaries, over half of all reported rapes, and a quarter of all murders went unsolved.
  - 40% of those arrests are for youth under the age of 21
    - The State of Texas spends about \$8,500 to educate one child for one year, ranked 44th in the Nation

# Rebuttal Examples

## What about the children?

- a record can seriously limit a youth's educational opportunities and scholarship/grants, access to employment, professional advancement, and options for housing
- Lowered rates of use in Colorado
- Drug dealers do not ID

# Texas Compassionate Use Program

Texas has acknowledged that cannabis is medicine!!

This program...

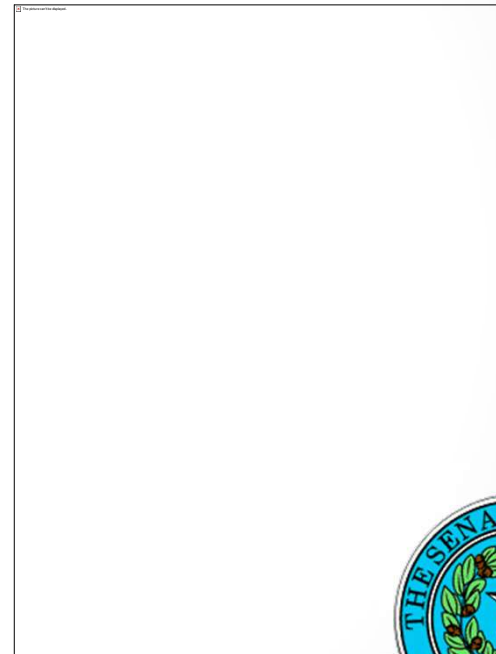
- allows some patients with epilepsy to access low-THC cannabis oil
- establishes cannabis businesses: Dispensaries, cultivators, and manufacturers
  - Licensing deadline: Sept. 2017
- is regulated by the Texas Department of Public Safety
- requires doctors to prescribe cannabis oil
  - Potential problem!





# Dwight Clark

Media Relations & Legislative  
Director for Texas State  
Senator Jose Menendez  
(District 26)



# SB 269 Highlights

- Medical practitioners could recommend cannabis to a qualifying patient, working with the patient to determine the best CBD:THC ratio for their individual medical condition.
- Patients with one of the specifically-listed debilitating medical conditions will be issued a written certification by their medical practitioner, and formal authorization by the Department of Public Safety.
- Patients who are included in the Compassionate Use Program could use/possess an allowable amount of cannabis or grow a limited amount in a secure location.
- Independent laboratories would be licensed and regulated, providing consumer protection with regard to potency and contaminants. Labeling and packaging requirements promote safety.
- Cannabis business licensing fees would be capped at a reasonable price, protecting small business access to the market and patient access to cannabis medicine.



# Talking Point Examples

- 62% of the U.S. population lives in a jurisdiction with access to medical marijuana
- 76% of Texans think seriously ill people should have the right to use marijuana for medical purposes
- States with medical marijuana have seen prescription opioid overdose rates decrease by 25%
- Both Texas Republicans and Democrats include in their party platform a call upon the Texas Legislature to improve the Compassionate Use Act to allow doctors to decide the appropriate use of cannabis



# Rebuttal Examples

## Didn't we just legalize medical marijuana?

- Only high CBD oil for people with intractable epilepsy
- The most effective drug for one person might not work at all for another
- Marijuana contains about 80 active cannabinoids (including CBD & THC) and many of them contribute to marijuana's therapeutic effects

## What about the children?

- Many sick children's parents would like to use cannabis as a first line of defense
- Many families are becoming medical refugees to surrounding medical states, leaving their homes and lives behind

# Medical Community Recognizes the Importance of Safe Access

*Medical marijuana is proven to be effective in the treatment of a variety of debilitating medical conditions.*

In its 1999 report, the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine reported, "Nausea, appetite loss, pain and anxiety are all afflictions of wasting, and can be mitigated by marijuana."

The National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine offers a review of scientific research findings published since 1999 which reports, "Limited evidence says marijuana and other compounds can boost appetite in people with HIV or AIDS, and ease symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder"



# Medical Community Recognizes the Importance of Safe Access

Many other medical organizations and physicians have recognized marijuana's medical benefits, including:

- The Epilepsy Foundation
- The American Nurses Association
- The American Public Health Association
- The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society
- Arthritis Research Campaign
- The Lymphoma Foundation of America
- The American College of Physicians
- The National Nurses Society on Addictions
- Texas Nurses Association
- The majority of doctors responding to WebMD survey in 2014.



# Staying on Message is Important

Builds a bridge from their question to your response

We are able to clearly express the knowledge that we want to convey to our audience

Focus on one topic at a time





# How to Stay on Message

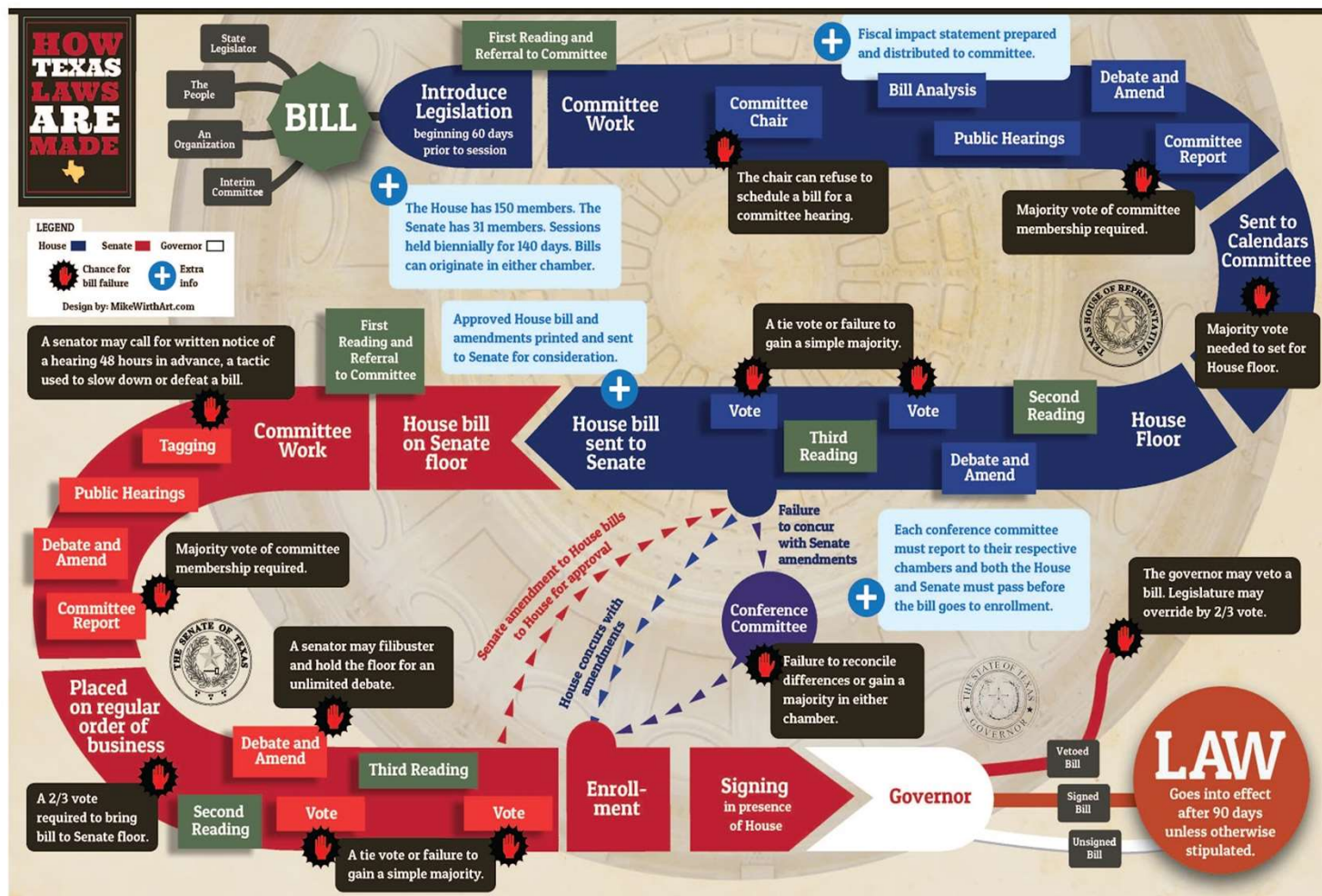
- Pick your topic and stick with it
- Only bring up relevant facts to selected subject
- Keep it simple
- Have a few variants of your message
- Remain clear and concise

# Expressing Passion

- Relate to a personal story
- Don't let your passion get in the way of your point

# How a Bill Become a Law





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# Hearing Expectations

- 5 Day Notice for Hearings
- Come Early
- Sign up at the Kiosks
- 3 minutes for Verbal Testimony,  
Written Testimony
- Expect a Long Day
  - Bring a sweater
  - Bring water and snacks

# Preparing Your Testimony

- Select your topic
- Find reliable resources
- Select your talking points
- Select your personal touch
- Write your testimony
- Time yourself (3 min. limit)
- Share for feedback
- Print copies of testimony and resources for Committee (12 copies)



# Sharing Your Testimony

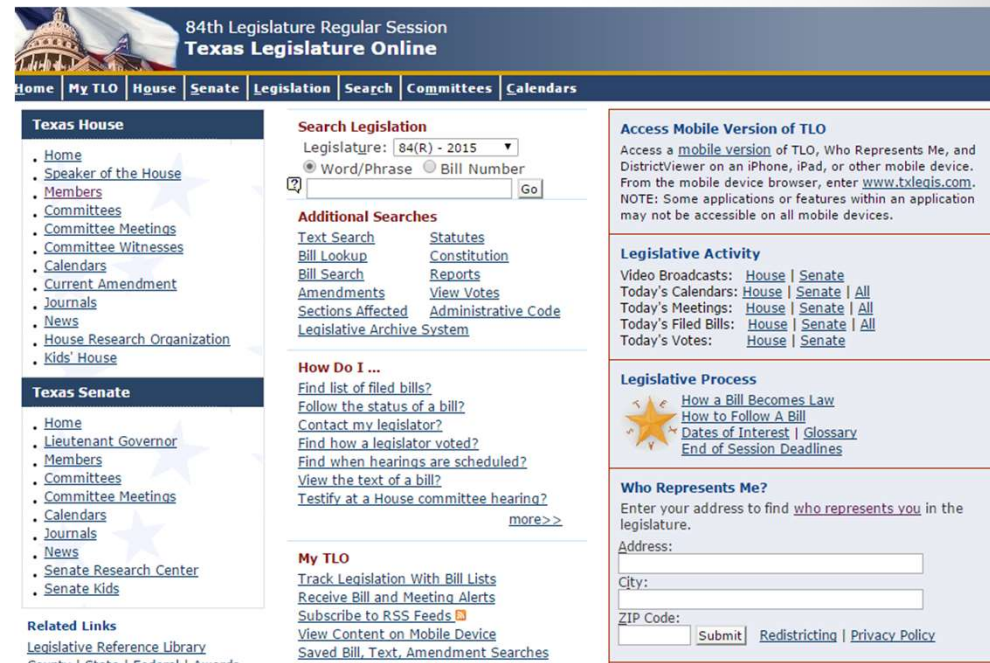
- Create a one page testimonial
- Choose a picture
- Email to [jax@texasnorml.org](mailto:jax@texasnorml.org) or [hfazio@mpp.org](mailto:hfazio@mpp.org) to be used in the upcoming legislative session





# Meeting with Legislators

To find your State Representative and State Senator go to  
<http://www.capitol.state.tx.us/>  
or Google:  
"Texas Legislature Online."



The screenshot shows the Texas Legislature Online website for the 84th Legislature Regular Session. The header includes the Texas Capitol dome and the text "84th Legislature Regular Session Texas Legislature Online". A navigation bar contains links: Home, My TLO, House, Senate, Legislation, Search, Committees, and Calendars. The main content area is divided into three columns. The left column has two sections: "Texas House" and "Texas Senate", each with a list of links including Home, Speaker of the House, Members, Committees, Committee Meetings, Committee Witnesses, Calendars, Current Amendment, Journals, News, House Research Organization, and Kids' House. The middle column has three sections: "Search Legislation" with a dropdown for "Legislature: 84(R) - 2015" and radio buttons for "Word/Phrase" and "Bill Number"; "Additional Searches" with links for Text Search, Bill Lookup, Bill Search, Amendments, Sections Affected, Statutes, Constitution, Reports, View Votes, Administrative Code, and Legislative Archive System; and "How Do I ..." with links for finding bills, status, legislators, voting, hearings, bill text, and committee hearings. The right column has four sections: "Access Mobile Version of TLO" with instructions for mobile devices; "Legislative Activity" with links for video broadcasts, calendars, meetings, filed bills, and votes; "Legislative Process" with links for how a bill becomes law, following a bill, dates of interest, glossary, and session deadlines; and "Who Represents Me?" with a form to enter an address to find the representative.

84th Legislature Regular Session  
Texas Legislature Online

Home My TLO House Senate Legislation Search Committees Calendars

**Texas House**

- Home
- Speaker of the House
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- Committee Meetings
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- Current Amendment
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**Texas Senate**

- Home
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- Calendars
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- News
- Senate Research Center
- Senate Kids

**Search Legislation**

Legislature: 84(R) - 2015

Word/Phrase Bill Number

Go

**Additional Searches**

Text Search Statutes  
Bill Lookup Constitution  
Bill Search Reports  
Amendments View Votes  
Sections Affected Administrative Code  
Legislative Archive System

**How Do I ...**

Find list of filed bills?  
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Contact my legislator?  
Find how a legislator voted?  
Find when hearings are scheduled?  
View the text of a bill?  
Testify at a House committee hearing?  
[more>>](#)

**My TLO**

Track Legislation With Bill Lists  
Receive Bill and Meeting Alerts  
Subscribe to RSS Feeds  
View Content on Mobile Device  
Saved Bill, Text, Amendment Searches

**Access Mobile Version of TLO**

Access a [mobile version](#) of TLO, Who Represents Me, and DistrictViewer on an iPhone, iPad, or other mobile device. From the mobile device browser, enter [www.txlegis.com](http://www.txlegis.com). NOTE: Some applications or features within an application may not be accessible on all mobile devices.

**Legislative Activity**

Video Broadcasts: [House](#) | [Senate](#)  
Today's Calendars: [House](#) | [Senate](#) | [All](#)  
Today's Meetings: [House](#) | [Senate](#) | [All](#)  
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Today's Votes: [House](#) | [Senate](#)

**Legislative Process**

[How a Bill Becomes Law](#)  
[How to Follow A Bill](#)  
[Dates of Interest](#) | [Glossary](#)  
[End of Session Deadlines](#)

**Who Represents Me?**

Enter your address to find [who represents you](#) in the legislature.

Address:

City:

ZIP Code:   [Redistricting](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

# Meeting with Legislators

- Texas Senators and Representatives are in charge of state law, decided in Austin, Texas, every legislative session.
  - Penal Code
  - State-granted medical marijuana program
- U.S. Congressmen and Senators (Cornyn & Cruz) go to Washington, D.C., to impact federal policy.
  - FDA and DEA approved testing of marijuana
  - Banking regulations
  - Legality of crossing state lines

### Texas U.S. Senators

U.S. Senators represent the entire state. Texas' current U.S. Senators are [Senator John Cornyn](#) and [Senator Ted Cruz](#).

### Texas U.S. Representatives

Congressional District 20--Congressman Joaquín Castro  
[Texas Congressional Member Websites](#)

#### Texas State Senator

Texas State Senate District 26--[Senator José Menéndez](#)  
Capitol Office: CAP 3S.3  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0126  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 12068, Capitol Station  
Austin, TX 78711  
District Address: 101 W. Nueva Street, Suite 809  
San Antonio TX 78205  
Phone: (210) 733-6604  
[State District Offices](#)

← During session

← Out of session

#### Texas State Representative

Texas State House District 116--[Representative Trey Martinez Fischer](#)  
Capitol Office: CAP 1W.3  
Capitol Phone: (512) 463-0616  
Capitol Address: P.O. Box 2910  
Austin, TX 78768  
District Address: 4242 Piedras Dr. East,, Ste. 111  
San Antonio TX 78228  
Phone: (210) 737-7200

← During session

← Out of session

# Before You Call

- Who is the legislator?
- How have they voted?
  - review their biography
  - review the types of bills they have authored or co-sponsored
- check out their social media
- What committees do they sit on?
- Which committees are important to us?
  - House: Criminal Jurisprudence, Public Health
  - Senate:
    - Criminal Justice
    - Health & Human Services

Use this knowledge to connect with officials and customize your talking points



Legislature: 84th Legislature

## Committee Assignments

### Committees

[Criminal Jurisprudence](#) (Vice Chair)  
[General Investigating & Ethics](#)  
[Homeland Security & Public Safety](#)  
[Mental Health, Select](#) (Vice Chair)

### Conference Committees for 84(R) - 2015

Conference Committee on [HB 211](#) (Discharged)  
Conference Committee on [HB 1295](#)  
Conference Committee on [HB 1396](#)  
Conference Committee on [HB 1690](#)  
Conference Committee on [HB 2150](#)  
Conference Committee on [HB 2633](#)  
Conference Committee on [HB 2645](#)  
Conference Committee on [SB 1756](#)

## Legislative Information

### 84(R) - 2015

[Bills Authored](#)  
[Bills Sponsored](#)  
[Bills Coauthored](#)  
[Bills Cosponsored](#)  
[Amendments Authored](#)



# What to Say When You Call

- Ask for the scheduler.
- Say you are a constituent who would like to meet the Rep./Sen. when they are in-district.
- Typically they will ask for the topic you are calling about or have you send an email.

# What to Say When You Call

- It is not uncommon for the office staff to drop the ball. It's okay to be aggressive with a 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> call.
- You may have to schedule a couple weeks out.
- Other ways to get in touch with the legislator:
  - Sign up for their campaign email list
  - Sign up for the County GOP & Democratic email lists
  - "Like" them on Facebook / Twitter to catch their events



# What to Say When You Call

If you want to discuss medical marijuana or decriminalization / legalization of marijuana, say:

"I've been in the district for \_\_\_ years and have never met with Rep./Sen. \_\_\_. I'd like some time to speak briefly about health / criminal justice related issues and drop off some materials."



# What to Expect in Your Meeting

- Prepare questions to get the legislator talking rather than talking the whole time.
- Expect 30-60 minutes.
- Introduce yourself and explain in a personal way why the issue is important to you.
- Ask how the legislator feels about it.
- Listen.
- Legislators want to know how this issue affects them – a.k.a. what it is you “ask”.
  - Make a note of any questions the legislator has so you can follow-up with an email.
  - Look to creating a relationship rather than convincing them of your way in the course of one meeting.

# Building a Relationship

- Every state representative is running for office
- Campaign staff often double as office staff
- Volunteers are not easy to come by - volunteer for campaign or party
- Attend local political events to meet lawmakers and community leaders.
- Sharing personal stories and experiences sheds light on your perspective.
- Follow up with folks you meet who are interested in getting involved. Share this website with them so they can learn more and sign up for email alerts and updates: [www.TexasMarijuanaPolicy.org](http://www.TexasMarijuanaPolicy.org)




# Tracking Legislation

*Texas Legislature Online*

[www.MyTLO.com](http://www.MyTLO.com)



# Create Your Own Account

Texas Legislature Online  
**MyTLO Login**

Home My TLO House Senate Legislation Search Committees Calendars

Login

E-mail Address:  ☐ Remember Me

Password:

Account Options: [New User?](#) | [Forgot Password?](#) | [Delete Account](#) | [Change E-mail Address](#)


MyTLO Features

The MyTLO section of the Texas Legislature Online website offers personalized viewing of legislative content.

- 🔔 **Bill List:** A custom list of bills created by:
  - Manually entering the bill number
  - Adding the bill number from the bill history page or bill or text search results page
  - Adding all the bills from a bill search result set
- 🔔 **Bill Alert:** Receive e-mail notification when bills on this custom list have selected significant actions added. Bills are added by:
  - Manually entering the bill number
  - Adding the bill number from the bill history page
  - Adding the bill number from a text or bill search results page
- 🔔 **Bill Subject:** Receive alerts when bills are assigned a specific subject.
- 🔔 **Other alerts:** Receive e-mail notification when selected calendars, committee hearing notices, committee minutes are posted, or the house/senate adjourn.
- Access RSS feeds for legislative content through your favorite newsreader software.
- Access legislative content on your wireless mobile device.
- 🔔 Save your bill, amendment, and text searches to use later.

🔔 Usage of the bill list, alert list, and saved search features requires registration. Service is FREE of charge ([privacy policy](#)).

**NOTE:** Alerts are removed at the beginning of each regular session. All accounts will remain intact without the need to re-register.

84th Legislature Regular Session  
**Texas Legislature Online**

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Legislature: 84(R) - 2015

\* Word/Phrase Bill Number

Go

**Additional Searches**

[Text Search](#) [Statutes](#)

[Bill Lookup](#) [Constitution](#)

[Bill Search](#) [Reports](#)

[Amendments](#) [View Votes](#)

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[End of Session Deadlines](#)

**Who Represents Me?**

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Address:


City:

ZIP Code:   [Redistricting](#) | [Privacy Policy](#)

**Capitol Complex Information**



# Research



Texas Legislature Online  
**Search**

Help | FAQ | Site Map | Contact | Login

House: Adjourned sine die  
Senate: Adjourned sine die

Home | My TLO | House | Senate | Legislation | **Search** | Committees | Calendars

Bill: 84R ▼  ▼ Go

**Bill Search**  
Search bills for a specific legislature based on combination of author/sponsor, committee, subject, and action.

**Text Search**  
Search against the text of bills, bill analyses, fiscal notes, and amendments using a simple or Boolean search.

**Amendment Search**  
Search against the text of amendments using a simple or Boolean search.

**Texas Statutes**  
Search the text of statutes (codified law) by exact phrase or a specific code. Individual statutes are also available for download as zipped HTML, PDF, or Word documents.

**House Journals**  
Search and view the official daily proceedings in the house chamber.

**Senate Journals**  
Search and view the official daily proceedings in the senate chamber.

**Texas Constitution**  
Search the text of the constitution by exact phrase. The text is also available as a downloadable Word document.

**Legislative Archive System**  
The Legislative Archive System provides electronic access to scanned copies of the official bill files from the collections of the Legislative Reference Library and the Texas State Library and Archives Commission. The files are scanned and made available as PDF documents. The system also allows users to search for legislation across multiple legislative sessions.

**Tips on Finding A Bill**  
1. Use [Bill Lookup](#) when you already know the bill number.  
2. Use [Text Search](#) when you do not know the bill number but know content.  
3. Use [Bill Search](#) to search using multiple criteria such as author, committee, subject, or action.

# Bill Lists and Alerts

Texas Legislature Online  
**Selected Bill List**

Help | FAQ | Site Map | Contact | Logout

House: Adjourned sine die  
Senate: Adjourned sine die

Home My TLO House Senate Legislation Search Committees Calendars

Bill: 84R ▼ Go

Bill Lists Selected Bill List

To add bills to this list, enter the bill number (e.g., hb27, sj9) and an optional comment. Click **Add**. You may also add a comment line without entering a bill number. In the Display Order area, click the **Bill** radio button to sort rows by bill number, or click **Entry** to display your entry order. Once you have finished editing the bill list, click **Save** to save changes. Click **Run** to display the bill list report.

Legislature: 84(R) - 2015 Display Order: ☐ Bill ☒ Entry

Bill List: NORML

Description: Cannabis Related

Bill	Comment	Row Action
HB 2165	Repeal prohibition	Delete Insert
HB 837	Naitsthat - Affirmative Defense for Medical Use	Delete Insert
HB 507	TRMP - Civil Penalties Bill	Delete Insert
SB 1417	TRMP - Civil Penalties Bill	Delete Insert
SB 1839	TRMP - MMJ Bill	Delete Insert
HB 3785	TRMP - MMJ Bill	Delete Insert
HB 414	Dutton - Oz or less	Delete Insert
HB 325	Wu - 0.325 oz decrim bill	Delete Insert
SB 339	Elitfe - CBD only bill	Delete Insert
HB 892	Klick - CBD only bill	Delete Insert
HB 557	Research Hemp	Delete Insert
HB 1322	Industrial Hemp	Delete Insert
		Add

Texas Legislature Online  
**Bill Alerts**

Home My TLO House Senate Legislation Search Committees Calendars


Bills Calendars Committee Notices Committee Minutes Subjects Adjournment

Bill Alert List | My Bill Alerts Today | Bill Alert Report

**84th Legislature Regular Session**  
Receive an e-mail alert when certain actions are added to entered bills. Enter the bill number, choose an action category, and enter an optional comment, and click **Add Bill**.

Bill	Category	Comment	
<input type="checkbox"/> HB 325	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> Decrim 8th	Save
<input type="checkbox"/> HB 414	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> Decrim OZ	Delete
<input type="checkbox"/> HB 507	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> Civil Penalties	Reset
<input type="checkbox"/> HB 557	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> Research Hemp	
<input type="checkbox"/> HB 837	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> Affirmative Defense	
<input type="checkbox"/> HB 892	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> CBD only	
<input type="checkbox"/> HB 1322	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> Industrial Hemp	
<input type="checkbox"/> HB 2165	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> Repeal Prohibition	
<input type="checkbox"/> HB 3171	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> Forfeiture	
<input type="checkbox"/> HB 3785	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> TRMP MMJ Bill	
<input type="checkbox"/> SB 339	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> CBD only	
<input type="checkbox"/> SB 1417	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> Civil Penalties	
<input type="checkbox"/> SB 1839	Any category	<input type="checkbox"/> TRMP MMJ Bill	

# Bill Summary

**History**

House: Adjourned sine die  
Senate: Adjourned sine die

HomeMy TLOHouseSenateLegislationSearchCommitteesCalendars

Bill: 84R ▼Go

HistoryTextActionsCompanionsAmendmentsAuthorsSponsorsCaptionsBill Stages

**Bill: HB 507**Legislative Session: 84(R)Council Document: 84R 2402 JSC-F[Add to Bill List](#) [Add to Alert List](#)

**Last Action:**05/11/2015 H Committee report sent to Calendars

**Caption Version:**House Committee Report

**Caption Text:**Relating to a civil action to collect a civil penalty for possession of certain small amounts of marihuana and an exception to prosecution for possession of associated drug paraphernalia.

**Author:**Moody | Lucio III | Dutton | Wu

**Coauthor:**Allen | Alonzo | Alvarado | Bernal | Blanco | Canales | Coleman | Collier | Deshotel | Farias | Farrar | González, Mary | Guillen | Gutierrez | Hernandez | Howard | Hughes | Israel | Johnson, Eric | Longoria | Márquez | Martínez Fischer | McClendon | Miles | Naishtat | Nevárez | Pickett | Reynolds | Rodríguez, Eddie | Rodríguez, Justin | Romero, Jr. | Rose | Simpson | Stickland | Thompson, Senfronia | Turner, Chris | Walle

**Cosponsor:**

**Subjects:**Crimes--Drugs (I0185)  
Vehicles & Traffic--Driver's Licenses (I0840)  
MARIHUANA (S3105)

**House Committee:**[Criminal Jurisprudence](#)

**Status:**Out of committee

**Vote:**Ayes=4 Nays=2 Present Not Voting=0 Absent=1

**Actions:** (descending date order)

Description	Comment	Date ▼	Time	Journal Page
H Committee report sent to Calendars		05/11/2015		
H Committee report distributed		05/11/2015	07:51 AM	
H <a href="#">Comte report filed with Committee Coordinator</a>		05/08/2015		3111
H Reported favorably as substituted		05/04/2015		
H Committee substitute considered in committee		05/04/2015		
H Vote reconsidered in committee		05/04/2015		



# Questions?





# Thank you for coming!

Contacts:

Heather Fazio -  
hfazio@mpp.org



Jax Finkel -  
jax@texasnorml.org

