

MEDIA ALERT

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“TREY’S LAW” PASSES TO GOVERNOR ABBOTT’S DESK

The bill would regulate the misuse of NDAs against sexual assault victims in civil settlement agreements

AUSTIN, Texas (May 26, 2025) -- Today, the Texas House of Representatives unanimously passed SB 835, authored by [Sen. Angela Paxton](#), R-McKinney, and known as “[Trey’s Law](#),” with a vote of [144-0] on [third reading](#). The bill seeks to end the misuse of nondisclosure agreements (“NDAs”) against sexual assault victims in civil settlement agreements. It will now be sent to Gov. Abbott’s desk for signature.

Yesterday, in an exceptionally rare moment, Speaker of the House, Rep. Dustin Burrows, R-Lubbock, joined the Texas House by casting a vote as part of its unanimous passage upon [second reading](#) [144-0]. As a member of the House, the Speaker maintains the right to vote on bills and issues considered by the chamber but traditionally refrains from voting in order to maintain impartiality and neutrality in their role as the presiding officer of the Texas House of Representatives. Exceptions to voting abstention typically take place when the Speaker’s vote is needed to break a tie, or for a procedural matter.

Speaker Burrows’ public support of the bill follows [powerful testimony](#) by numerous survivors, advocates and subject matter experts, including victims of child sexual abuse at Kanakuk Kamps, Boy Scouts, Assemblies of God, and in other contexts. While “Trey’s Law” was introduced to focus solely on survivors of childhood crimes, the bill was broadened to apply to sexual assault and trafficking victims of any age after testimony overwhelmingly supported language that would apply to all sexual assault and trafficking victims.

“[Trey’s Law](#)” is named after [Trey Carlock](#), a Dallas native who sued Kanakuk after enduring a decade of child sexual abuse by their popular director, Pete Newman. His civil case was settled and included a restrictive NDA that family members say led to his death of despair in 2019. Carlock’s older sister, Elizabeth Carlock Phillips, has testified in support of the bill.

“I am proud to be Trey’s sister,” [Phillips testified](#) at a March 19 hearing on the House companion bill. “And I hope Texas will be proud of Trey’s Law.”

Cindy Clemishire, whose abuser Robert Morris is facing child sex abuse charges, has also [testified in support](#) of Trey’s Law.

“Because I refused to sign that NDA at 37, I am able to sit here today at 55 years old and share my story in hopes of helping others,” [Clemishire testified](#) in a May 8 hearing on the bill, the day before Morris’ first court appearance in Oklahoma following his indictment on five felony counts.

The identical House companion bill, [HB 748](#), was authored by [Rep. Jeff Leach](#), R-Plano, who also served as co-sponsor to SB 835. Sen. Paxton's SB 835 gained 31 additional sponsors across the House and Senate. Both bills saw largely bipartisan support in both chambers.

"I believe very strongly that this bill that we're about to vote on is one of if not the strongest bill for sexual abuse survivors and victims anywhere in this country," Leach said before moving for its passage.

[On receiving the bill](#), Gov. Abbott will have 20 days after Sine Die to act.

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How does NDA reform serve survivors of child sexual abuse?

NDAs (also known as non-disparagement or confidentiality clauses) can be part of a larger settlement agreement or a standalone contract wherein one or more parties agree that certain information will remain confidential. While NDAs were created to keep proprietary business information, such as trade secrets or sensitive client information, confidential, they have since become a standard practice in civil settlements related to child sexual abuse, trafficking and other crimes. As a result, bad actors are protected while survivors are forbidden to share their stories to various extents, depending on the language in a particular settlement agreement or contract.

While 18 states and the U.S. Congress (via the "[Speak Out Act](#)") have clarified the law on NDAs for witnesses and adult survivors of sexual harassment in the workplace, Tennessee is the only state to pass [legislation](#) in 2018 specific to prohibiting NDAs in civil child sexual abuse settlements, rendering them "void and unenforceable." A similar bill passed in Missouri this session and is awaiting Gov. Kehoe's signature. More information is available at [TreysLaw.com](#).