

MEDIA ALERT

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GOV. ABBOTT SIGNS SENATE BILL 835 INTO LAW IN TEXAS,
FREEING SURVIVORS OF SEXUAL ASSAULT FROM NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS

AUSTIN, Texas (June 21, 2025) – Today, Gov. Greg Abbott [signed](#) Senate Bill 835, named [Trey's Law](#), into law in Texas. It will go into effect on September 1, 2025. [This new law](#) bans the use of non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) in civil cases of sexual assault, including child sexual abuse and human trafficking cases, in Texas, regardless of when the underlying claims occurred. It will also release victims currently under NDAs from those agreements, unless a Defendant is specifically granted a court order to maintain an existing NDA.

While “Trey’s Law” was introduced to focus solely on survivors of childhood crimes, the public safety bill was broadened to apply to sexual assault and trafficking victims of any age after witness testimony overwhelmingly supported language that would apply to all sexual assault and human trafficking victims.

[SB 835](#), authored by [Sen. Angela Paxton](#), R-McKinney, was unanimously passed by the Texas House of Representatives with a vote of 144-0 and garnered a rare vote by Speaker of the House, Rep. Dustin Burrows, R-Lubbock, upon [second reading](#). The bill was also unanimously approved by the Texas Senate with a vote of 31-0.

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 zero “no votes” and complete bi-partisan support in both chambers.

The bill’s signing 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.

“[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 (founder of Gateway Church) is facing child sexual abuse charges for his crimes committed against her beginning at age 12, has also [testified in support](#) of Trey’s Law. At one point, Morris and his counsel attempted to silence Clemishire with an NDA.

“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 Senate State Affairs Committee the day before Morris’ first court appearance in Oklahoma, following his indictment on five felony counts.

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, Texas joins Tennessee and Missouri as the only states to pass legislation specific to prohibiting NDAs in civil child sexual abuse settlements, rendering them “void and unenforceable.” The Missouri bill was signed by Gov. Kehoe on June 10, 2025 and will apply to any action arising on or after August 28, 2025. More information is available at [TreysLaw.com](#).

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