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# TEXAS STATE ALLIANCE OF YMCAs

## 85th Legislative Session Recap

# About Us

The Texas State Alliance of YMCAs is an association representing the interests and concerns of the 26 independent YMCAs across Texas to build capacity and leadership in the areas of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. The YMCAs in Texas are a collection of nonprofit organizations that are grassroots-driven and volunteer-led, serving over 1.4 million Texans. Through strategic partnerships and collaborations with school districts, higher education institutions, hospitals, local and state governments, we work diligently to achieve our mission of building healthy spirit, mind and body for all.

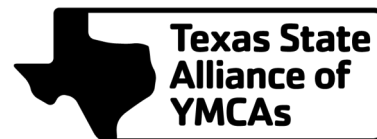
The Alliance functions to advocate on behalf of local YMCAs to promote our three areas of focus while fostering statewide communication and collaboration in over 200 urban, suburban and rural communities. We monitor legislative and regulatory issues and educate policymakers on the status of the communities we serve; as well as programs and services we provide.

For over 160 years, the Y has been dedicated to the health and wellness of people we serve. With a history of success and a constituency of over 1.4 million Texans, the Y is Texas' major partner to help strengthen Texas families & communities.





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Dear Cause-Driven Advocates,

We rely heavily on advocacy to spark change in the places we live, work and play. We engage in advocacy by raising our voices and connecting to causes that unite people from all walks of life. For the Texas State Alliance of YMCAs, we advocate by activating our network of volunteers and members to engage people from diverse populations for individual and collective action within our three focus areas. Over the years, we have seen much growth in our grassroots efforts and this has resonated in the halls at the Capitol.

Successful advocacy requires collecting data on an issue, campaign planning, garnering support from stakeholders and volunteers, and educating decision makers on priorities. We were fortunate to receive a \$95,000 grant from the American Heart Association and Voices for Healthy Kids to launch an advocacy campaign called DASH. It was our goal to promote quality in out-of-school time programs. Together with our advocates and volunteers, we told our Y story and shared personal experiences with lawmakers during the 85<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session.

We will continue to use advocacy as a way to elevate the conversation and lend credibility to our brand. In doing so, we will strengthen community and lead the change we want to see in our communities and across the Lone Star State. We thank you and we look forward to your continued support as we push ahead in our Movement.

Yours in service,

Ar'Sheill Monsanto, MPA  
State Advocacy Director

Christianna Burwell, LMSW  
Public Policy & Legislative Affairs Manager

### By the Numbers: 85th Session

Bills filed: **6,631**

Passed: **1,211**

Vetoed: **51**

# 85<sup>TH</sup> SESSION SNAPSHOT\*

**22** pieces of legislation influenced

**4** YMCA resolutions filed & adopted in the House & Senate

**9** public statements on Y priorities at committee hearings

**212** individual meetings with state legislative offices

**8** action alerts sent in support of policies

**102** actions taken by advocates

**25%** average open rate of action alerts

**1,289** total grassroots advocates

\*Data used is representative for the January - May 2017 time period.



# 2017 State Advocacy Days

In February, over 55 YMCA CEOs, staff and board members convened in Austin for the biennial State Advocacy Days. During their time in Austin, they met with more than 40 legislative offices to share key information about the [DASH initiative](#) and other topics that promote healthy living, youth development and social responsibility. Representative Eddie Lucio III gave an inspiring keynote address on the importance of instilling healthy habits in Texas youth. In addition, Representative Jason Villalba congratulated Gordon Echtenkamp on his retirement from the YMCA of Metropolitan Dallas by introducing [House Resolution 402](#) and invited him onto the dais to be honored in front of the Texas House of Representatives.



# 2017 National Advocacy Days

Texas YMCAs showed up in full force at the 2017 National Advocacy Days held in Washington D.C. The Texas delegation, which included the Texas State Alliance, Austin Metropolitan YMCA, YMCA of Metropolitan Fort Worth, YMCA of Greater El Paso TX & Rio Grande Valley and the YMCA of the Greater Houston Area, met with 15 congressional offices to ask for their support of the Y's national advocacy initiatives. In addition to YMCA CEOs and staff, Texas was also represented by Texas Youth & Government Program youth advocates from the Houston & Dallas areas, Monica Earley and Nandita Vegesna. These youth participated in various workshops and met with congressional staff to advocate for Y priorities as well as share their personal Y stories.



Members of the YMCA of Greater Houston met with Congressman Ted Poe to discuss national policy priorities during National Advocacy Days in Washington D.C.

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Texas YMCAs



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