FaithWorks

BOLD ADVOCACY. REAL IMPACT.

2027 Legislative Priorities, Texas

IMMIGRATON

FaithWorks believes that every person is made in the image of God and carries inherent dignity, regardless of immigration status. We advocate for policies rooted in welcome, family unity, and human dignity at the border and across Texas.

Current Context

SB 8 now requires all large Texas counties to enter 287(g) agreements with ICE, expanding local enforcement and threatening trust between immigrant communities and law enforcement. At the federal level, expanded enforcement, shifting asylum policies, and pressure on DACA recipients continue to destabilize Texas families. The Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board (THECB) is implementing new residency and tuition rules, following FaithWorks' formal public comment in September 2025.

Strategic Objectives

- Monitor and respond to THECB rulemaking to protect immigrant students' access to in-state tuition.
- Advocate for county-level alternatives to 287(g) compliance and educate faith communities on SB 8's impact.
- Support FaithWorks' border ministry network (https://faithworks.com/border-partners-1) and ELIM (https://elimfw.org/) in responding to increased enforcement.
- Prepare legislative proposals for the 90th session focused on immigrant dignity, due process, and family unity.
- Oppose any efforts to revoke Plyler v. Doe protections for immigrant children in Texas public schools.
- Monitor anti-immigrant legislation at the state level inspired by the potential erosion of birthright citizenship by SCOTUS.

PUBLIC EDUCATION

FaithWorks supports fully funded, equitable public schools as a cornerstone of a just society. We believe public funds belong in public institutions, and that every child—regardless of immigration status—has the right to a quality education.

Current Context

SB 2 created Texas' first ESA voucher program ($10,000 per student for private school tuition), which FaithWorks views as a threat to public school funding and church-state separation. HB 2's $8.5 billion investment in public schools is a meaningful step forward, but still falls short of the full need. Both

laws are now in the implementation phase. Continue to vigilantly watch for attacks on Plyler v. Doe, which protects immigrant children's access to public education.

Strategic Objectives

- Monitor the implementation of SB 2 and document its impact on public school funding and enrollment.
- Advocate for full and equitable implementation of HB 2's public education funding provisions.
- Oppose any expansion of the ESA voucher program in the 90th session.
- Defend every child's right to access Texas public schools, including undocumented students. (Plyler v. Doe)

- Promote accountability measures ensuring public funds directed to private schools are spent appropriately.
- ***Push back against curriculum that seeks to demean other faiths***

RACIAL JUSTICE

FaithWorks is committed to confronting systemic racial injustice embedded in Texas' criminal legal system. The racial disparities in capital punishment, mass incarceration, and policing are a moral crisis demanding a faith response.

Current Context

Despite sustained advocacy in the 89th session, all death penalty abolition and major reform bills failed without floor votes or hearings. The coalition successfully defeated SB 990, which would have expanded death penalty eligibility. Work with TCADP and other partners continues as FaithWorks begins preparing for the 90th session.

Strategic Objectives

- Deepen partnership with TCADP and criminal justice reform coalitions.
- Secure committee hearings for death penalty abolition and reform bills in the 90th session.
- Expand the Racial Justice Program (https://faithworks.com/racial-justice-program) to engage more Christians and churches in criminal justice advocacy.
- Advocate for cash bail reform, reduced mass incarceration, and expanded rehabilitative services.
- Center the stories of those most affected by racial inequities in the criminal legal system.

HUNGER

FaithWorks believes that ensuring every person has enough to eat is a sacred obligation. Guided by Matthew 25:35, "I was hungry, and you gave me food," we are called to address food insecurity among children, seniors, and working families in Texas.

Current Context

The hunger landscape in Texas has changed dramatically and urgently. H.R. 1 has driven 468,731 Texans, including 253,060 children, off SNAP since July 2025. Texas's 8.32% SNAP payment error rate means the state faces over $700 million per year in cost-share penalties beginning in 2027, creating an enormous fiscal and moral challenge for the 90th Legislature. Governor Abbott's veto of Summer EBT administrative funding turned away $450 million in food assistance for 3.8 million Texas children. FaithWorks joined a broad coalition of faith leaders in a letter urging the Governor to reconsider.

Strategic Objectives

- Actively participate in the Food Policy Roundtable as a coalition partner.
- Advocate for state administrative action to enable Texas' participation in Summer EBT for Summer 2027.
- Build a bipartisan faith coalition to advocate for SNAP access and SNAP cost-share funding in the 90th session.
- Advance the "Food is Medicine" approach through Medicaid-funded food bank integration.
- Monitor and respond to declining SNAP enrollment driven by H.R. 1 and SB 379's SNAP purchase restrictions.

PREDATORY LENDING

FaithWorks believes that exploiting the economic desperation of our neighbors is morally wrong. Debt-trap lending disproportionately harms communities of color and working-class families. We are committed to protecting Texans from usury in all its forms.

Current Context

Predatory lending was among the most successful policy areas for FaithWorks in the 89th session. The coalition defeated two major threats: HB 2043/SB 938 (app-based payday-loan loophole) and HB 4339/SB 1906 (increased consumer-loan costs). These victories were built on sustained coalition advocacy. The threat is perennial; industry actors remain politically active, and the interim period is the time to prepare for 2027.

Strategic Objectives

- Defend the 50+ Texas cities and towns with local payday-lending ordinances against preemption efforts.
- Monitor industry lobbying and regulatory proposals during the interim.
- Advance affirmative consumer protection legislation for the 90th session, including interest rate caps.
- Expand faith-community engagement on predatory lending as a justice and racial equity issue.

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY & SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

FaithWorks holds a robust, historically Baptist commitment to religious liberty for all people, not just Christians. We believe a government entangled with religion is bad for both faith and democracy. The integrity of the church depends on its independence from the state.

Current Context

The 89th session produced a wave of legislation eroding the constitutional separation of church and state. SB 10 mandates Ten Commandments displays in all public school classrooms. SB 11 introduces organized prayer and religious text reading in public schools. SB 965 purports to protect school employees who engage in religious speech while on duty. SB 24, framed as anti-communism education, reflects the broader integration of Christian nationalism into the public school curriculum. All four laws are now in the implementation phase.

Strategic Objectives

- Monitor agency and school district implementation of SB 10, SB 11, SB 965, and SB 24.
- Document and publicize concerns about constitutional compliance and student coercion.
- Amplify the voices of theologians, clergy, and constitutional scholars opposing government-sponsored religious expression.
- Advocate against further church-state erosion in the 90th session.
- Defend the principle that public funds—including ESA vouchers—should not flow to private religious institutions without accountability.