



Platform for the 81st Legislative Session

In order of priority, as voted on by the TAASA membership.

- Preserve funding for sexual assault related services through the adult entertainment fee. *Fully funding research, prevention, response and treatment is critical to the future elimination of sexual assault in Texas.*
- Expand the length of time for which claims relating to sexual abuse can be filed in civil court. *Currently, the statute of limitations in civil court for sexual assault or aggravated sexual assault is 5 years. This is out of line with criminal statutes of limitations which are unlimited for child victims of sexual assault.*
- Allow sexual assault victims to terminate their lease without penalty. *Currently, sexual assault victims must remain in the home where they were raped, pay early termination fees or suffer bad credit history for breaking a lease.*
- Allow crime victims or their designee with the right to provide an oral victim impact statement prior to sentencing. *This right is already available in Texas juvenile court. Forty-eight other states allow victims the right to address the court before sentencing.*
- Create a 'sexual motivation' finding that could be attached to any offense. Many offenses that are sexually motivated are not easily identifiable. For example, some assaults are sexually motivated (grabbing the genital area). The special finding would enable law enforcement and employers to better identify offenses that are sexually motivated. *Sexually motivated crimes are a unique subset of crimes that require special treatment. Tagging or properly labeling these crimes may allow for early identification of repeat sex offenders.*
- Require, upon request of the victim, HIV/AIDS testing of a defendant within 48 hours after indictment of a sex offense. *The fear of contracting HIV/AIDS through rape is one of the top concerns of sexual assault victims. Prompt testing of a defendant after indictment is a reasonable step towards relieving these fears.*
- Allow an adult victim of sexual assault to obtain a sexual assault forensic exam without first making a report to law enforcement. *The embarrassment, guilt and shame felt by survivors of sexual assault often results in delayed reporting. In many instances, the report is made after the window for evidence collection is closed. Collecting evidence immediately after the crime ensures that evidence will be there when a rape survivor is ready and able to come forward.*