

**Committee Members**

**Present**

Angie Panzica.  
*Committee Chair*

Edward Baffoe

Debbie Carlisle

Andy Crim, Council  
Char

Beatrice Degree

Sean Jackson, DRTX

Kate Layman, Title  
XIX/Medicaid

Robin Miller, A&M CDD

Ashley Sattler

Eric Shahid

**Committee Members**

**Absent**

Kyle Cox

**Guests Present**

Mary Hunter

Jessie Kelley

Lira Mach

Sarah Stepp

**Staff Present**

Kai Brewer

Scott Daigle

Marisa Iannaccone

Linda Logan

Melanie Teague

**Call to Order**

The Public Policy Committee of the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities convened on Thursday, August 7, 2025, at the Double Tree by Hilton Dallas – Campbell Centre, 8250 North Central Expressway, Dallas, TX 75206. Angie Panzica called the meeting to order at 1:36 P.M. A quorum was present.

**1. Introductions of Committee Members, Staff, and Visitors**

Committee members, staff and guests were introduced.

**2. Public Comments**

No public comment was given.

**3. Consideration of May 8, 2025, Minutes**

The minutes were reviewed and, and no corrections or additions were noted.

**MOTION:** To approve the minutes of the May 8, 2025, Public Policy Committee Meeting as presented.

**MADE BY:** Debbie Carlisle

**SECOND:** Eric Shahid

The motion **passed** without opposition.

**4. Chair's Remarks**

Chair Panzica reported on the expected absence of Kyle Cox.

Panzica shared her quarterly activities including her involvement in Coalition of Texans with Disabilities Raise Your Voice meetings. The

Chair also shared concerns about changes to Medicaid at the federal level and described advocacy efforts, including participation in a virtual rally celebrating the ADA and engagement with workgroups focused on independent living and mental health.

## **5. Member Quarterly Activities**

Committee members shared updates on their disability-related activities during the previous quarter.

## **6. Presentation: REACH Resource Centers for Independent Living**

Jessie Kelly and Sarah Stepp from REACH delivered a comprehensive presentation on their organization's mission, vision, and core services. They described REACH's commitment to empowering individuals with disabilities through programs such as information and referral, advocacy, independent living skills training, peer counseling, and transition services for both youth and seniors.

## **7. Legislative Update**

The Committee received a legislative update, beginning with a discussion of the TCDD Legislative Champions program. TCDD staff presented a list of 11 legislators recommended for recognition based on their work on disability-related legislation.

- Rep. Alma Allen
- Rep. John Bucy III
- Rep. Mary González
- Rep. Ana Hernandez
- Rep. Suleman Lalani
- Rep. Christian Manuel
- Rep. Claudia Ordaz
- Rep. Toni Rose
- Sen. José Menéndez
- Sen. Tan Parker
- Sen. Judith Zaffirini.

**MOTION:** To recommend council approval of the 11 legislators for recognition as TCDD Legislative Champions.

**MADE BY:** Sean Jackson

**SECOND:** Robin Miller

The motion **passed** without opposition. Beatrice Degree abstained from voting.

The regular session wrap-up included a summary of bills passed and ongoing advocacy strategies, such as interim charges, disability policy academies, and member visits. The special session update focused on disaster preparedness legislation and its inclusivity for people with disabilities, with staff and members actively tracking developments and participating in related meetings.

## **8. State and Federal Policy Update**

TCDD staff provided an overview of key state and federal policy issues affecting the disability community. Topics included Medicaid funding, TCDD funding, homelessness, mental health, and trends toward institutionalization. Members discussed the importance of monitoring these issues and contributing input as needed to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are addressed in policy decisions.

## **9. Future Agenda Items**

Chair Panzica invited suggestions for future meeting topics and presentations. Members expressed interest in law enforcement, transportation mapping, and continued focus on both local and statewide disability issues.

## **10. Other Discussion Items**

TCDD staff reported on legislative resolutions had been passed in honor of two councilmembers who had recently passed away. The next Committee meeting will be held in conjunction with the November 5-7, 2025, Council and Committee meetings.

## **Adjourn**

Committee Chair Panzica adjourned the Public Policy Committee at 4:59 PM.