

November 15, 2025

Texas Impact Report to SCYM

I am reporting on Texas Impact as the newest SCYM rep.

Texas Impact has recently reorganized. A goal of the reorganization is to reduce exposure to leadership from our aggressive state and federal governments pursuing people and organizations who disagree with administration political views. Joanna and I are therefore now members of the Texas Impact Leadership Council instead of the board. The board – as I understand it – is a much smaller group and more vulnerable.

In the September 11, 2025 Texas Impact leadership meeting, Beaman Floyd – Texas Impact’s lobbyist, shared how politics in Texas has changed. Politicians used to be able to hide their position by letting bills die by letting the legislative clock run out. Now the leadership is using special sessions to extend the legislature’s time in session and to complete the majority’s agenda. This puts legislators on the spot because bills desired by the majority now are far more likely to ultimately come up for a vote requiring legislators to take visible positions. This is used to expose RINOs (Republicans in Name Only).

It was shared that the attorney general (Ken Paxton) is going after non-profits he does not like. It was shared that religious institutions need to be strong and in solidarity. Different religious denominations shared the status of their legal support.

The 1999 Texas Religious Freedom Restoration Act (TRFRA) was mentioned as something to be aware of – it’s important because it takes preference over other laws if the other laws if the laws cause “substantial burden.” The government needs to prove compelling interest and that they pursued least restrictive means. This can be used to the benefit of faith communities.

In the October 9, 2025 Texas Impact leadership meeting, much discussion was on the presidential memorandum (different from a presidential executive order) on domestic terrorism (<https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/09/countering-domestic-terrorism-and-organized-political-violence/>). It was suggested that groups “lawyer up” and train personnel on how to respond to questioning. For example, questions and responses might be: “Who are you serving in your food pantry?”, “What is your position on X issue?”) with: “I would like to talk to a lawyer.” Also, one would need to tell authorities that we do not want them to enter the door – that they are trespassing if they do. The memorandum specifically targets tax-exempt organizations. This may be less of an issue for SCYM and more of an issue for monthly meetings. A “Know Your Rights” training (like from ACLU) was recommended.

There was some discussion on the pros and cons of speaking out (op-eds for example) which could lead to targeting. If/when one does speak out it would be beneficial to have others in solidarity.

Texas Impact did not have a meeting in November. Staff is at COP30 in Belém, Brazil.

Of note is that Texas Impact is a selection of Christian and Jewish organizations. They organize about topics on the political left (LGBTQ, immigration, Pro-Choice, etc) in which there appears to be

unanimity. Because of these political choices Catholics and Baptists are notably absent in Texas Impact. Similarly, because of the makeup of the membership, topics like Israel/Palestine are not mentioned. This was the case in 2018 when the anti-BDS legislation passed in the Texas legislature. I was in touch with Texas Impact at the time asking why they did not bring up this bill that limited freedom of speech in Texas and was told that they did not mention the bill in their correspondence to members because some of their members supported the bill. It is therefore important for SCYM to be aware of issues we want pursued in the state legislature and determine on which issues we want to work with Texas Impact and for which issues we need to pursue partners or other organizations.

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