



## TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

GENE WU

STATE REPRESENTATIVE · DISTRICT 137

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### **FEDERAL COURT STOPS ANOTHER HARMFUL REPUBLICAN BILL BEFORE MORE THAN 770 LEGISLATIVE ITEMS GO INTO EFFECT TODAY**

HOUSTON, TX - Today, September 1, 2023 marks the effective date for more than 770 new laws passed by the Texas Legislature this year. This legislation includes countless bills by Republicans to strip away the rights of Texans.

Many of these items are so unconstitutional or violative of existing law that many have been preemptively struck down by judges in state and/or federal court; including Senate Bill 12, the “drag ban,” which would criminalize “sexual gesticulations” if children are present. Yesterday, a federal judge issued a temporary restraining order (TRO) blocking this restriction of First Amendment expression from going into effect today.

“In the Republicans’ attempt to find ways to demonize and attack the LGBTQ community, over a form of creative expression that has been a long-held tradition in the community, they have also effectively criminalized cheerleading, dance teams, and possibly even theatrical performances. This is what happens when you have a party in charge that spends all of its time and energy on hyper-partisan culture wars, rather than on governing in a bipartisan manner to fix the grid or pay our teachers what they deserve,” said Rep. Wu.

In addition to Senate Bill 12, the following legislation from the 88<sup>th</sup> Legislative Session with an effective date of September 1, 2023 are also currently being litigated at taxpayers’ expense:

- ❖ Senate Bill 14 - which categorically bans best-practice, life-saving treatment for transgender youth
- ❖ Senate Bill 17 - which bans Diversity, Equity and Inclusion policies meant to remediate historical discrimination against minority communities in institutions of higher education, impacting both students and faculty
- ❖ House Bill 900 - which requires book sellers to individually set ratings for books so that school districts can censor and ban them more easily
- ❖ House Bill 2127 - the Death Star bill, which prohibits cities and counties from passing local protections that go further than what’s explicitly allowed under state law in an attempt to eliminate local control

“I expect to see a stream of additional lawsuits filed to combat other blatantly unconstitutional laws that will go into effect today,” Wu continued. “House Bill 763, which goes into effect today, will allow Texas school districts to use public education funds to hire unlicensed religious leaders to serve in place of actual licensed and certified school counselors; a direct violation of the First Amendment. Additionally, under House Bill 17, also effective today, courts are now free to remove duly elected district attorneys for exercising their prosecutorial discretion and expressing their own freedom of speech if a citizen disagrees with them politically. Our state will spend tens of millions in taxpayer money to defend unconstitutional laws that actually make life worse for Texans. This should be unacceptable.”

Rep. Gene Wu (D-Houston) will be available for virtual interviews with media outlets. To schedule an interview or for more information, please contact Paige Dodge at [Paige.Dodge@house.texas.gov](mailto:Paige.Dodge@house.texas.gov).

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