



Controversial clinic used to pass SB22 avoids closure



By Rudy Koski, FOX 7 Austin

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AUSTIN, Texas (FOX 7 Austin) - The doors are locked at the Planned Parenthood clinic on 7th

Street in east Austin. Water damage, not state lawmakers, has temporarily closed the clinic.

Its eventual reopening is no surprise for Joe Pojman with Texas Alliance for Life.

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"We would like for Planned Parenthood to leave that facility, and let some other provider that does a better job for local women to take over, we knew that wasn't going to be the case," said Pojman.



The property, owned by the City of Austin, is leased to Planned Parenthood for one dollar. Health care services like cancer screening, not abortions, are provided at the clinic. During the legislative session the deal prompted the filing of Senate Bill 22 and sparked a heated debate in the House chamber in May.

"How are you protecting my taxpayers," questioned state Rep. Eddie Rodriguez (D-Austin) as he debated state Rep. Candy Noble (R-Murphy).

The legislation, sponsored in the House by Noble, prohibits local governments from entering into

contracts with abortion providers.

"Taxpayers who oppose abortion should not have to see their tax dollars subsidizing the abortion industry," said Noble during the debate.

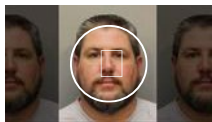
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Gov. Greg Abbott recently signed the bill into law, but in November well before the Session even started, the city of Austin had already protected its lease deal by extending it to 2039.

In a statement, Marc Rylander, spokesperson for the Attorney General, said "Our office will perform our duty to enforce Senator Donna Campbell's bill. SB 22 states that it applies to transactions entered after the bill becomes effective."

The law takes effect September 1. State Sen. Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) also sent a statement acknowledging the law is not yet in

play, saying:

"The City of Austin complains about potential tax revenue being capped by the Legislature, but at the same time they are subsidizing rent for billion-dollar entities like Planned Parenthood. Senate Bill 22 prevents these type of city contracts from going forward in the future - promoting life and saving taxpayers' dollars - but existing contracts must first run their course."

Officials with Planned Parenthood were not available Monday for an on camera interview. In a statement regarding the lease Ken Lambrecht, who heads up Planned Parenthood of Greater Texas,

said:

"(Keeping the Lease) doesn't feel like a win. It doesn't restore the uncertainty of patients who worried whether our doors would be open, and it doesn't eliminate future efforts by statewide officials to again target our health centers for political goals."

A spokesperson for Planned Parenthood said SB22 did briefly impact the repair schedule for the 7th Street Clinic. Efforts are being made to do a complete renovation and the legislation put the process in limbo. There is no date yet for the reopening.

The focus for the Texas Alliance for Life is now on pending contracts that abortion providers have with other cities. The concern for supporters of SB22 is a repeat of what happened in Austin at the clinic.

"Our public information request from across the state of Texas in major counties we found dozens of contracts with Planned Parenthood and other abortion providers that would be affected by SB22," said Pojman.

The next battleground could be the Austin ISD school board meeting room. A sex education circulation written by Planned Parenthood is up for consideration.

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Travis County Sheriff's Office deputy injured in crash

By Jacqueline Sarkissian, FOX 7 Austin

Posted Jun 18 2019 07:16AM CDT

A Travis County Sheriff's Office deputy has been injured after a crash. Officials say the deputy was taken to the hospital as a precaution and is expected to be okay.

The crash happened at around 3:30 a.m. at the intersection of Tuscany Way and Highway 290.

[Read the full article](#) as authorities investigated but all lanes are now open.

Judges to request pride flags be flown over two courthouses in Williamson County

By Destiny Chance, FOX 7 Austin

Posted Jun 17 2019 10:07PM CDT

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On Tuesday morning during commissioner's court, two justices of the peace in Williamson County will ask for permission to fly a rainbow pride flag over outside of its court buildings. The court will either say yes or no to approving the pride flag to fly in front of two buildings at separate locations in Williamson County.

Precinct 4 Justice of the Peace Stacy Hackenberg, one of the judges requesting this, says she's

[Read the full article](#) very eager to see how Tuesday morning plays out.

Medical cannabis access expanding in Texas

By Jennifer Kendall, FOX 7 Austin

Posted Jun 17 2019 08:51PM CDT

Updated Jun 18 2019 07:42AM CDT

More Texans suffering from incurable disorders will soon have access to medical cannabis. On Friday, the governor signed a bill expanding Texas' Compassionate Use Program to seven diagnoses.

Previously, only people with intractable epilepsy who met several qualifications had legal access to medical cannabis or CBD oil. Now, the law includes people with epilepsy, seizure disorder, multiple sclerosis, spasticity, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, autism, terminal cancer

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