



April 9th, 2017

On Tuesday, April 4, 2017, the Texas Senate approved S.B. 576 on a 30-1 vote, sending it to the House of Representatives. Authored by Senator Joan Huffman, the bill requires college students holding campus leadership positions, faculty, and staff to report instances of sexual and interpersonal violence committed by or against a student to the institution's Title IX Coordinator. S.B. 576 also outlines consequences and penalties for each designated party if they fail to report or attempt to conceal an incident.

Not On My Campus at The University of Texas at Austin is committed to empowering survivors, which includes taking necessary steps to protect their wellbeing, privacy, and safety. By expanding the scope of individuals on campus who are obligated to report sexual and interpersonal violence, survivors' access to confidential peer advocacy becomes very limited. Curtailing confidential resources may discourage individuals from seeking help out of fear that they will lose control over their options for recovery. Further, we strongly believe this piece of legislation will diminish trust between survivors and critical members of their support system. Our organization encourages campus accountability, but we do not believe this should ever come at the expense of survivors. All students who have experienced sexual or interpersonal violence are entitled to every right and resource they can be afforded, and no law should ever infringe on their ability to receive support.

We strongly encourage all members of the State of Texas House of Representatives to vote against the companion bill of S.B. 576 to preserve survivors' autonomy over where and how they choose to empower themselves. Voting yes to this piece of legislation will not bring campuses closer to reducing violence or increasing accountability. Instead, it will inflict consequences on a multitude of individuals for engaging in discussions about these issues.

Not On My Campus, UT Chapter Executive Board