



TEACHING
HOSPITALS
of TEXAS

THOT MEMBERS

AUSTIN

Central Health
Ascension Texas Ministry Seton

CORPUS CHRISTI

CHRISTUS Spohn Health System
Nueces County Hospital District

DALLAS

Children’s Health System of
Texas
Parkland Health & Hospital
System
The University of Texas
Southwestern Medical Center

EL PASO

University Medical Center
of El Paso

FORT WORTH

JPS Health Network

GALVESTON

The University of Texas
Medical Branch

HOUSTON

Harris Health System
The University of Texas MD
Anderson Cancer Center

LUBBOCK

UMC Health System of Lubbock

MIDLAND

Midland Memorial Hospital

ODESSA

Medical Center Health System

SAN ANTONIO

University Health System

TYLER

UT Health Northeast

GME Affiliate

RIO GRANDE VALLEY - EDINBURG
Doctors Hospital at Renaissance

**Testimony for Senate Transportation Committee
May 17, 2017**

RE: Engrossed House Bill 2068 by Larry Phillips; Sponsored by Senator Miles

Good morning, Chair Nichols and members of the committee.

My name is Maureen Milligan. I am the President of the Teaching Hospitals of Texas. THOT members represent about two-thirds of all Level I trauma hospitals, and provide care representing about half of the uncompensated trauma costs in Texas.

On behalf of our membership, I am speaking in favor of the engrossed version of House Bill 2068, and because we are uncertain of the impact of changes in the proposed CSHB 2068, we are testifying ‘On’ the CSHB 2068. But let me be clear about one thing: we think HB 2068 offers an unprecedented opportunity to eliminate the negative impacts of the existing DRP program, while maintaining critical funding for Texas’ trauma hospitals. While it may not be perfect, it’s certainly very good, and much better than what is in place today.

Not only does it eliminate the DRP **program** going forward, it achieves the following:

It makes the trauma funding mechanism easier to understand:

- It eliminates the confusing six-point system used to trigger DRP fines.
- Tickets will provide the exact amount of fines due. There is no surprise bill two and three years later.
- Tickets will provide a court date, and at the court hearing, individuals can share financial circumstances and work out payment options locally and accessibly.

It provides local flexibility and supports Judges’ assessments of individual circumstances:

- Judges may choose to reduce some fines, and can authorize payment programs to accommodate those unable to pay the full fine at one time.

Because the DRP program will be eliminated, those penalties and impacts still in effect because of the program also will be eliminated, getting millions of Texans back on track:

- An estimated 1.3 million Texans will get back their licenses. Many of these were lost because of not understanding or getting lost or trapped in a very confusing DRP program. With a license, these Texans have a new opportunity to start again and get back to legally driving to and from work and re-engaging in their lives.

In reduces the number violations that trigger this fine, but holds accountable those Texans with the most egregious violations.

- While the point system, and lesser violations, are eliminated, the most egregious violations, driving while intoxicated and driving without insurance, will continue to trigger fines and support the trauma program.

HB 2068 will achieve these outcomes, and at the same time, according to the fiscal note, will provide continued funding for the Texas trauma system and general revenue.

For these reasons, we strongly support the legislative leadership and collaborative work that has led to a bill that we believe will create a sustainable approach to maintaining critical trauma funding while eliminating the DRP program. The engrossed version of HB 2068 has the full support of a broad coalition of stakeholders. We know that CSHB 2068 has similar goals.

Background

THOT members operate nearly two-thirds of the state's level one regional trauma centers, and provide about one-half of the state's unfunded trauma care. Because an estimated 20 percent of trauma related hospitalizations are for patients without insurance, Texas' financial support of trauma care is critical – not only for care provided to uninsured Texans, but to maintain the trauma system as a whole.

Because THOT's mission includes caring for vulnerable populations, we share concerns with other stakeholders about the unintended negative effects of the DRP program, particularly on low-income Texans. We've worked with the Smart on Crime Coalition and others concerned about the DRP beginning last session to seek collaborative solutions to address concerns with DRP while maintaining critical trauma funding. We proposed and analyzed other financing options and worked with a broader hospital and county coalition to find common ground and present possible alternatives for trauma funding. We see HB 2068 as providing an opportunity to address problems with the DRP while, according to the fiscal note, maintaining trauma funding.

Trauma funding supports care for all Texans who may need trauma services anywhere and at any time, including our first responders and law enforcement. We know that receiving care within the first hour makes a significant impact on saved lives and saved function. Your investment in trauma support is working.

- Texas' trauma investments have been successful: the 2014 trauma case fatality rate was lower than the 2013 rate; and Texans' trauma mortality rates are lower than the national average. However, because of our growing population and broad geographic expanse, our trauma system needs continue to grow.

- With a 20 percent, uninsured rate for trauma admissions and an estimated \$300 million in unfunded trauma costs per year, by offsetting nearly 2/3 of these losses, state funding helps keep our trauma system in place.

We appreciate Rep. Phillips' work to identify trauma funding options that would allow the state to maintain critical trauma funding while addressing the unintended issues associated with the Drivers Responsibility Program (DRP); and we appreciate Senator Miles and this committees' support for finding a solution to such an intractable problem.

Thank you for your continued support of trauma funding. Please let me know if we can provide additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'MM', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Maureen Milligan
President and CEO
Teaching Hospitals of Texas
512.476.1497