



The Process of Passing Children’s Independent Activities Protections Under the Child Protection Law in Texas

In April 2021, Texas’s legislature passed omnibus child welfare legislation—H.B. 567—with overwhelming bipartisan support (in the House, the bill passed with 147 Ayes, 5 Nays and 1 Present and it passed the Senate unanimously). The bill passed into law without the Governor’s signature (as occurs by law when the Governor does not sign a bill). The bill included explicit protections for families that allow their children some reasonable childhood independence. The legislation, which also includes many other provisions related to family rights in the child welfare system, provides that it is not neglect for a parent to allow a child to engage in independent activities that are appropriate and typical for the child’s level of maturity, physical condition, developmental abilities, or culture, and neglect requires evidence of blatant disregard of an obvious danger. The law’s passage followed four years of advocacy by family advocates in Texas before the bill finally passed in 2021.

Unfortunately, Texas’s criminal law was not changed by this legislative effort.

Let Grow partnered with Texas Public Policy Foundation and other groups and individual parents and advocates to support the passage of H.B. 567.

For more information:

Skenazy, Reason (April 29, 2021), [“In Oklahoma and Texas, Parents Who Let Their Kids Play Outside Will No Longer Face Neglect Charges.”](#) (reporting legislative final passage the previous Wednesday in both states).

Marinko, K., [“Children are Now Protected by Reasonable Independence Laws in Three States.”](#) (Treehugger, June 10, 2021)

Tiana, S., [“Texas Bill Aims to Boost Rights of Parents Accused of Mistreating Their Kids,”](#) (Imprint, 5/18/21)