



April 18, 2017

State Representative Byron Cook
Chairman, House State Affairs Committee

Subject: HB 2899

Dear Chairman Cook,

On behalf of the nearly 1,600 investors in the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, our directors and Executive Committee of the Board, we respectfully submit our opposition to HB 2899. This past January, our Board of Directors voted unanimously to oppose Senate Bill 6. After careful review of the new language that is included in HB 2899, we find it disappointing that our State leadership continues to press forward with legislation that would nullify existing non-discrimination protections and may also complicate the enforceability of existing local anti-discrimination ordinances beyond the context of bathrooms and changing facilities.

The language in HB 2899 forbids any Texas cities, counties, or school districts from protecting people in the future from discrimination in bathrooms, showers and other changing facilities.

It is one-sided in its prohibition and will codify discrimination in Texas Law. The result will be an unprecedented form of exclusion from legal protection.

The state should take under consideration the fact that over 1,000 companies, including the Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce, have signed the Texas Compete Pledge, which opposes any discriminatory legislation and highlights their commitment to promoting a competitive, economically vibrant Texas. If this were passed, many of these companies would no longer be interested in conducting business in the state of Texas. It will also undermine all efforts in retaining and attracting the best talent to the state.

We welcome any opportunity to meet with your committee to discuss our concerns.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jack T. Chapman".

Jack T. Chapman
Chairman of the Board 2017

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard E. Dayoub".

Richard E. Dayoub
President and CEO