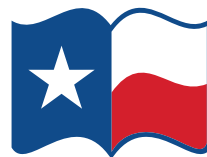




2016 THSC Ministry Report

30 YEARS STRONG



TEXAS
HOME SCHOOL
COALITION

Keeping Texas Families Free™

Keeping Texas Families Free Since 1986

Keeping Texas Families Free

2016 marked Texas Home School Coalition's 30th anniversary of defending home schooling and preserving freedom for Texas families. We started the fight when parents were being jailed for home schooling. Three decades later, Texas is arguably the most favorable state for home schooling in the country. That's what we call success.

THSC remains a strong defender of liberty by the grace of God and because of our faithful partners. This includes members, donors, homeschooling families, public officials who stand with us, and our staff and volunteers. Together we create a bulwark around parental rights and our freedom to homeschool.

And yet, we can not and do not take our strength, nor our freedom, for granted. We are never more than one legislative session away from losing the liberty we hold dear. We must therefore be diligently attentive, continually advocating and constantly building grassroots support for freedom for Texas families. This captures many of our core activities in 2016.

As an election year, 2016 was critical for ensuring freedoms for Texas families, as well as laying the foundation for a successful 2017 legislative session. In addition to record PAC activities, THSC fielded more calls about CPS than ever—84 in all. These calls, as well as the heartbreaking Tutt saga, underscored the necessity to address CPS reform in the next legislative session.

In 2016, we saw Texan's band together with THSC to form an even stronger network for freedom. More than 250 area home school groups across the state became THSC Partner Groups, the number of individual families joining the mission of THSC through membership increased, and even more signed up to stay informed through our publications and our online platforms.

We are incredibly grateful for all the Texas families who have joined with our mission at every level of engagement. Together we are *Keeping Texas Families Free!*

THSC Ministry Report 2016

One Vision, Three Missions

Our vision, informed and motivated by our faith, is to empower parents to direct the care, control and upbringing of their children. We work to achieve this vision through three missions:

- **Texas Home School Coalition**, the state support organization, has as its mission to inform and inspire families and promote home schooling and families in Texas.
- **Texas Home School Coalition Association**, a member organization, aggressively protects, defends and advances home schooling and parental rights in Texas, including educating parents and students in the legislative process.
- **Texas Home School Coalition Political Action Committee (PAC)** informs voters with the aim of electing advocates and defenders of home schooling and families.



Branch Key



Texas Home School Coalition, Inc. 501(c)(3)
Education, Support, and Service
Supported by tax-deductible donations



Texas Home School Coalition, Assn. 501(c)(4)
Advocacy, Lobbying, and Defense of Freedom
Supported by non-tax-deductible donations



THSC PAC, a political action committee
Education and Election of Advocates for the Texas Family

Legal Fight for Parental Rights

Defending Families in Court

The Tutt Case Draws to a Close



thsc.org/tutts

In November 2013, seven home schooled children in the Tutt family were illegally removed from their home and placed into foster care for two months before a second judge ruled that their removal was unjustified. The judge ruled that some of the children should be returned to the family but they could not resume home schooling, leaving Child Protective Services (CPS) in control.

THSC intervened, publicized the case and raised support to defend the family and help them regain custody of their children. THSC has helped the Tutts regain their parental rights one small step at a time. But, one challenge remained. After three years, one little girl the family was in the process of adopting is still in foster care.

A writ of mandamus was filed with the Texas Supreme Court in 2015 because the **court ignored a legal requirement for cases to conclude within a year and a half**. Despite no evidence of abuse, the case dragged on for over three years. A request was made for the case to be dismissed, but the writ of mandamus was denied in 2016 by the Supreme Court without comment.

The Tutts, like many families in these horrific situations, have been traumatized by the constant **threat that CPS poses to their children**. Lamentably, after more than three years of fighting, the family arrived at the heart-wrenching decision to release their adoption plans, leaving the child in foster care in order to protect their other children.

THSC will be working in the 2017 legislature to address this abuse of power.

For more information on this case, please visit thsc.org/tutts.

CPS Defense and Advocacy thsc.org/advocacy

The battle for parental rights rages on today. Judges who disregard the law and jaded caseworkers seem to be on the rise as are innocent families feeling those effects. So, THSC has innovated ways to protect families as the challenges shift. A 24-hour CPS hotline now provides THSC member families a direct line to legal assistance whenever the need arises.

In 2016, THSC fielded **84 calls** from families dealing with CPS. Notably, THSC's special council on CPS issues, home school dad Chris Branson, handled 14 CPS cases for THSC members in 2016.

THSC also met with the commissioners of CPS and the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) to negotiate agency policies that better protect home school families.

For more information on THSC's work to protect home school families from CPS, please visit thsc.org/advocacy.

Legal Education thsc.org/advocacy

In addition to CPS cases, there are an increasing number of custody cases heading to Texas courtrooms. Unfortunately, home schooling has become a scapegoat for opposing the placement of a child with home schooling parents. It has become apparent that judges and attorneys are in need of education on the subject.

To address the rising need, in 2016 THSC contracted Maureen Ball - an experienced family law attorney and home school mom - to support THSC members fighting for their freedom to home school in custody disputes.

THSC also conducted a Continuing Legal Education seminar on Defending Families from CPS to train judges and attorneys on handling the issue of home schooling in both custody and CPS cases. Attendees expressed appreciation for the unique perspective on family law, of which the vast majority of attorneys have little knowledge or experience.

For more information on this subject, visit thsc.org/cle.



Election Activism

Fighting for Conservative Principles

THSC recognizes that in order for our government to respect the rights of parents and home schoolers, it is vital that the home school community take an active role in electing pro-liberty, pro-home school officials.

In 2016, THSC greatly expanded our role in Texas elections, helping to elect conservative candidates to local, state and judicial positions. We helped establish five committees around the state that interviewed candidates and assisted THSC in finding champions for home schooling and parental rights.

THSC **vett**ed and **endor**sed a **total of 81 candidates** in the 2016 Primary election, successfully helping **51** of these candidates to victory. In a subsequent Runoff election, THSC supported **19 candidates**. **7** won their races, including **5 in our priority races**. In the General Election, THSC-supported candidates achieved near-universal victory—62 of 64 candidates won their respective races.

Home schoolers won in the 2016 elections. THSC-endorsed candidates achieved a **73 percent success rate** across the board, with **120 victories** out of 164 total endorsements.





thsc.org/watchmen

THSC Watchmen Standing Guard



Training Tomorrow's Leaders

In 2013, THSC launched the **THSC Watchmen** program with remarkable success. In 2015, our second team of THSC Watchmen blocked or fixed **15** bills that would have jeopardized the freedoms enjoyed by home schoolers and parents in Texas.

In 2016, the THSC Watchmen program prepared for its third legislative session with the recruitment of a new, six-person co-ed team. Over the fall, they training to defend Texas families against harmful bills that could be filed during the 2017 Texas legislature.

The home school community has a commanding presence at the Texas Capitol. The work of the **THSC Watchmen** has inspired home school students across the state to become active in the political system. This movement was covered by numerous press outlets, including CBS, the *Austin American-Statesman*, *The Texas Tribune*, *World Magazine*, and the Associated Press.

*The work of the
THSC Watchmen has
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Fight for the Right to Free Speech C4

THSC Sues for Government Overreach

For almost three years, THSC has battled the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC) and its efforts to limit Texans' political speech in associations like THSC.

THSC sued the TEC for what the *Wall Street Journal* called the “attempt to ensnare virtually all civic organizations under government control and regulate their activities.” The TEC finally conceded in part, agreeing to clarify its ambiguous policy and withdraw its proposal to redefine “campaign contributions.”

In 2015, the agency finalized a new definition of PAC that is in clear contradiction of federal and state law. The chairman of the TEC, in a hearing in which THSC's attorney laid out these problems, said that it would just adopt the rule and let the courts sort it out.

The courts will only correct the injustice if the agency is challenged. Otherwise, the illegal definition will be enforced. As expected, the district court ruled in favor of the TEC and, as planned, THSC appealed the decision to the Third Court of Appeals. THSC's case against the Ethics Commission is currently pending before the Third Court of Appeals, and THSC expects a favorable ruling.

THSC will continue to pursue litigation against the TEC until the Commission returns to its constitutionally-established limits and the free speech rights of Texans are recognized and protected by the state.

To read more about this legal battle, please visit thsc.org/freespeech.



thsc.org/freespeech

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C4 The Ranger Program

The Offensive Line of the Home School Community



thsc.org/rangers

THSC's Rangers program launched in 2014. After a great kickoff, THSC used 2015 to identify local leaders to launch clubs around the state and expand the Rangers program. In 2016, THSC partnered with these local leaders to start the first two THSC Rangers clubs. The new clubs will:

- Teach home school students how their government functions at the local and state levels, and engage them in the process
- Directly impact the election of local judges and other officials whose decisions affect the lives of individual children and their families
- Bring activists and experts into local communities to teach on important policies and components of the political system.

THSC is actively partnering with local leaders to engage and train the next generation of advocates.

Please visit thsc.org/rangers to learn more.

*Making a difference today
and for the future.*

Advocacy for Families C4

The Fight Against Discrimination

The freedom to home school in Texas does not preclude discrimination against home schooled students. Some private and government entities have no policy for handling home schoolers, are uninformed about legal issues, or choose to operate in deliberate violation of the law.

For 30 years, THSC has developed working relationships with government agencies and officials including:

- Texas Education Agency
- Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board
- Texas Workforce Commission
- Texas Commission on Law Enforcement Officer Standards and Education
- Texas Department of Family and Protective Services
- Texas Department of Public Safety
- Texas Department of Insurance
- Social Security Administration
- Texas Legislators
- Local Officials
- Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation
- Texas Funeral Service Commission
- U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs
- U.S. Department of Defense



Through these relationships and a working understanding of Texas codes and policies, THSC intervenes in cases where students are denied a driver's license, college admission, social security benefits, and other rights. THSC confronts the discriminating entities, educates them on the law, and helps establish policies to accommodate home schooled students.

In 2016, **THSC intervened in 120 different situations** to assist home school families in these life-impacting battles.

Read more about this battle to educate agencies at thsc.org/interventions.

Annual Events

Educating Texas Families Equipping Parents



thsc.org/gala

Gala



In October 2016, THSC welcomed guests from around the state to its 21st Annual Gala and Fundraiser. Guests heard Texas Lt. Governor Dan Patrick challenge them to keep up the fight for our country.

Celebrity Guests Included:

Master of Ceremonies — Rep. James Frank
Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton
Texas Supreme Court Justice John Devine
Texas Railroad Commissioner Wayne Christian
Texas Agriculture Commissioner Sid Miller
Former President of Texas Eagle Forum Cathie Adams
Texas Right To Life Executive Director Jim Graham

More supporters than ever participated to help raise record funds through the THSC Gala, furthering the work of protecting and defending Texas families.



THSC Conventions

The THSC Conventions equip families for the vital job of raising up the next generation of leaders and testify to the benefits of home schooling and parenting.



thsc.org/conventions

16 YEARS

In its 16th year, the THSC Convention drew thousands of families to two stellar events in 2016. The result was equipping parents as they continue their home school journeys.

165 WORKSHOPS

7,474 adults enjoyed 165 workshops at the THSC Conventions. Parents also shopped exhibit halls packed with nearly 200 booths containing top-notch curriculum.

9 SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN

A total of 9 children with moderate to severe special needs enjoyed the tailor-made Special Buddies Program at both Conventions. This gave their parents a rare opportunity to attend workshops and to shop.

200 TEENS

200 teens attended the Teen Staff program at the Conventions. They made friends, attended workshops geared toward to them, and focused on exploring world views, courtship and dating. Teens also gained valuable leadership skills working as Convention staff.

650 CHILDREN

Over 650 children thrived in the weekend-long custom VBS-style Kids Convention and Preteen programs. This year's focus was on great American heroes.

9,100 PEOPLE

More than 9,100 people were served at the THSC Conventions, which was made possible by a handful of THSC staff and more than 450 event volunteers.



"Everything really was wonderful! Thank you for the nursing mom's room, the water jugs everywhere, and the opportunity to get a recording of a session if you had to leave. Y'all have truly made an excellent convention with lots of conveniences for the mamas of babies."

"Y'all really knocked it out of the park this year! The cupcakes were a fab touch. Really had a great time!"

"We love to come and laugh (sometimes so as not to cry) about the common mishaps and joys in homeschooling. My husband and I like to come each year to literally recharge our batteries so we're ready to put forth extra energy into our children. It's wonderful to see we're not alone in what we do, how we do it, and the arguments we face."

"This was my first time attending a THSC Convention and I will definitely be back! It was organized and wonderfully fun and informative!"

"We are new to home school. My husband and I both attended the convention and I have to say it was an amazing experience for both of us. We were overwhelmed, encouraged, cried and laughed. We had a great experience. It was our first convention and we left feeling blessed that we were able to attend."

"It was so refreshing—thank you for a great conference! I especially love that THSC members get in free."

Continuing Legal Education Seminars C3

There is a critical need for legal defense and advocacy for families dealing with false CPS allegations. THSC responded by hosting the annual Continuing Legal Education (CLE) seminar for Texas attorneys who are willing to help.

Chris Branson, THSC's special counsel for CPS issues, and other industry experts have presented at this specialized training. The CLE seminars have been strategically conducted in the following cities to build a network of attorneys educated on these critical issues in Texas:

The CLEs have been strategically conducted in the following cities to build a network of attorneys educated on these critical issues in Texas:

- El Paso
- Houston
- Lubbock
- Austin
- Dallas
- Waco
- Abilene

More than 240 attorneys have received this one-of-a-kind training free of charge if they agree to handle one pro bono CPS or custody case for a family in need.

While THSC works at the state level with agency officials to see harmful CPS policies changed, the need for legal support of families is being addressed through this growing network of local attorneys.

thsc.org/cle



Support for Texas Families

THSC's mission includes serving and informing parents and the Texas home school community. Our dedicated Customer Service team helps new and veteran home schoolers alike navigate the home school world. Our comprehensive website, magazine, blog and social media offerings keep the community informed and up to date.

THSC Review Magazine  thsc.org/review

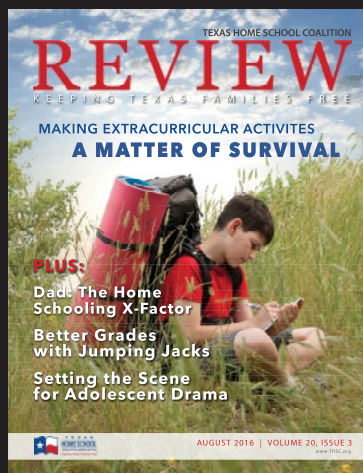
A quarterly publication mailed to more than **58,000** Texas families.

THSC Email Updates **C4**  thsc.org/emailupdates

Regular emails sent to approximately **27,000** subscribers.

THSC Website and Blog   thsc.org/blog

The go-to information source for new and veteran Texas home schoolers, parents and officials. The THSC website had **308,531 visitors** and over **1.5 million** pages viewed in 2016 alone, with mobile access increasing by 7 percent over the previous year.



Social Media

THSC provides information and encouragement to parents and home educators of the 21st century through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+ and YouTube.



facebook.com/texashomeschoolcoalition
twitter.com/thsc
instagram.com/texashomeschoolcoalition
pinterest.com/homeschoolintx/
thsc.org/g+
youtube.com/TexasHomeSchool



Home School Support



The THSC Customer Service team is here to field calls and electronic communications from families looking for help, support or information.

- The THSC Customer Service team fielded more than **5,200 calls** in 2016, and responded to more than **4,000 electronic communications**.
- **Customer Service helped 120 THSC members** with situations requiring THSC intervention for resolution. THSC intervened on behalf of these members facing discrimination and challenge from a variety of institutions, companies, state and federal agencies.
- In response to an increasing number of contacts requesting help, **THSC added Special Counsel for Custody to assist members with custody issues** related to home education.
- The **THSC Member Portal** was enhanced to help members easily utilize the many benefits.
- In 2016, Customer Service expanded to meet the needs of home school families with special needs children. THSC added a second **Special Needs Consultant** to our staff and welcomed a team of Special Needs volunteers. The Special Needs team:
 - Provided more than 519 consultations, in addition to personal consultations at THSC Conventions
 - Offered support through special needs blog articles
 - Published special needs-focused articles in THSC's *Review magazine*
 - Presented at conferences across the country.
- In 2016, the **THSC Special Needs Facebook** support group more than doubled from 370 members to **783 members**. Relevant content is shared and discussed throughout the week by dedicated THSC volunteers.

THSC strives to educate and support the Texas home school community at all levels. In order to impact home school and parental rights at the highest level of state government, THSC supports a statewide network of home schoolers by connecting, serving and encouraging local groups and their leaders.

THSC supports leaders by:

- Coordinating with regional organizations that offer support to local groups
- Connecting with students, parents and group leaders at Capitol Days
- Referring families to local groups among a list of **283** home school groups across the state
- Scheduling speakers for conferences, graduations, back-to-school events, etc.
- Sending promotional materials to groups for their events
- Posting monthly leader blog articles
- Sending a monthly newsletter to keep leaders updated
- Publishing a Leader's Guide
- Hosting the annual Texas Leaders Conference, which served 142 leaders in 2016.



2016 South Texas Leaders of the Year, Elinette Butuyan, LIGHT Katy Co-op



2016 North Texas Leader of the Year, Abby Longley, Big Country Home Educators

In 2016, THSC broadened its support of leaders by adding innovative features. In order to help families find groups and to support group leaders, we implemented the following:

- Interactive, searchable map allowing families to find groups near them
- THSC Affiliate Group program
- Password protected page to access group leader benefits
- Two simplified landing pages—one for families and one for group leaders
- Valuable new promotional benefits for groups
- Our first Regional Rep volunteer
- Updates to the THSC Leader's Guide.

Speaking Engagements C3 C4

THSC presented informative and inspirational messages to families in cities across Texas, including:

- Longview
- San Angelo
- Arlington
- The Woodlands
- El Paso
- Denton
- San Antonio
- Austin
- Houston
- Tyler
- Cisco



For more information, visit thsc.org/groups.



thsc.org/phc

THSC Patrick Henry Scholarships

Educating Future Leaders

Since 2009, THSC has awarded \$27,500 in scholarships to Texas home school graduates attending Patrick Henry College.

THSC looks for scholarship applicants who embrace life with the same passion and commitment as the great patriot Patrick Henry. We are proud to invest in future leaders of our great state and country.

Texas Home School Coalition, now 30 years strong, is looking ahead to the next generation.

The Impact We Are Aiming For:

- Inspire future generations to teach their children at home
- Train and equip future generations to defend liberty
- Inspire future generations to engage the culture.

*Thank you for partnering with us over the last three decades of
Keeping Texas Families Free.*

Imagine what we might accomplish in the next 30 years...



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