



Written by [James Murphy](#) on May 6, 2024

## Austin Wants to Become a Transgender Sanctuary Despite Texas Law

In a controversial vote taken last Thursday, the Austin, Texas, City Council voted 10-1 in favor of language that would protect transgendered individuals and clinics from strict enforcement of state laws prohibiting transgender treatment for children. The new resolution would seem to be a direct attack on Texas law, specifically SB 14, a law [passed](#) last year that forbids certain such treatments in the state.

The [law](#), which passed with bipartisan support, puts an end to children receiving puberty blockers or hormone treatments, as well as mastectomies for girls and so-called “bottom” surgery, which includes castration and vasectomy for boys and hysterectomy for girls. The city [resolution](#) calls for no city funds or personnel to be used to investigate or prosecute transgendered individuals or their healthcare providers.



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Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton [called the resolution](#) “nonsensical” and “an empty political statement.”

“On May 2, 2024, the Austin City Council passed a resolution that purportedly directs the City Manager and city employees not to comply with Texas’s prohibition of puberty blockers, cross-sex hormones, and invasive surgeries for children who believe their gender is different than their biological sex,” Paxton said in a statement. “Riddled with problems, the resolution starts with the falsehood that such prohibited treatments have ‘proven to be evidence based, medically necessary, and lifesaving.’ In addition to a growing body of medical research rejecting such claims, Texas concluded that the proposed treatments for minors are dangerous, and banned the practices by passing SB 14.”

“Further, the resolution is no more than an empty political statement. Each clause directing the City Manager to defy SB 14 is prefaced with the nonsensical qualification, ‘except to the extent required by law.’ In other words, the Austin City Council would order the City Manager and city employees to follow the law while pretending to say the exact opposite,” he concluded.

Mayor Kirk Watson answered [in a statement](#) of his own: “Attorney General Paxton is accusing the City of Austin of refusing to follow state law while simultaneously dismissing the resolution as an ‘empty political statement,’” Watson said. “The Austin City Council isn’t flouting state law. We’re doing what the state and our residents want us to do — prioritizing public safety and [the] basic needs of all Austinites.”

According to Watson, the resolution is more about the correct allocation of city resources than aligning



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with far-left values regarding transgenderism.

“This is about priorities. For example, we want our limited city resources focused on things like responding quickly to 911 calls and other important services rather than targeting transgender individuals seeking healthcare,” Watson said.

Even so, Paxton promised that the law would be followed: “If the City of Austin refuses to follow the law and protect children, my office will consider every possible response to ensure compliance. Texas municipalities do not have the authority to pick and choose which state laws they will or will not abide by. The people of Texas have spoken, and Austin City Council must listen.”

The author of the resolution, Chito Vela, decried what he referred to as “intimidation tactics” from supporters of the law.

“Trans people deserve the right to self determination,” [Vela said](#). “Our state has forced them and their medical providers into hiding, and that is wrong. Austinites do not prioritize criminal enforcement of rules that limit medical decisions made between families and their doctors, whether that’s the decision to terminate a pregnancy or how to treat a child struggling with gender dysphoria.”

Of course, when those “trans people” are adults, they can choose whatever they like. SB 14 does not criminalize such treatments for adults, only for children.

The one council member who voted against the resolution noted that it could open the city up to lawsuits.

“The State of Texas has enacted laws that, regardless of personal opinions, have passed through the lawful, democratic process, and represent the legislative will of Texans,” [said Mackenzie Kelly](#). “City attempts to undermine state law [expose] the City to legal risk, [and] often result in frivolous and costly lawsuits that divert resources from critical services. In a year of a projected budget shortfall, actions like this burden Austin taxpayers by necessitating the allocation of funds for legal defenses or possible penalties imposed by state authorities.”



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