

The Never-ending Saga Ends

For those of you who have been following our efforts to be recognized in law, we are at last, successful. This journey began 6 years ago with Gloria Key, Steve Oldroyd, and Zack Brady, our first lobbyist. As you know, Kathy Hutto, our current lobbyist, told us of her “adventures” in her article last year. This year we have better news to report. On May 14, 2007, Governor Rick Perry signed SB 158, which recognized that Educational Diagnosticians must have appropriate certification to be employed. Our previous attempts all failed, as we were attached as amendments to bills that were not successful. This year, thanks to Carol Covin, of Canyon ISD, we were in a stand-alone bill sponsored by Senator Kel Seliger. Then Representative Rob Eissler agreed to sponsor the companion bill in the House.

This year I can honestly say that I have spent more time in Austin than I ever expected to as your President, and that without the help of many other TEDA members, we could not have been successful. In January, the TEDA Board decided to sponsor a Legislative Day on February 14 and we had good representation from around the state. That very day, Kathy asked me to return to Austin the following week to testify before the House Education Committee. The hearing was to begin at 2 P. M. but because of delays, it was 9 P. M. before I got to testify; and then the next day I had to be back in Dallas to catch a 9 A. M. plane to El Paso!!! It seems as if nothing we do is ever easy. My next visit to Austin to testify before the Senate Education Committee came in the middle of my Spring break trip with my sister to Fredericksburg. That doesn't sound like it would be a problem, but it was also in the middle of the South by Southwest Music Festival and I found the only room in the city that wasn't already booked. On March 15, I testified again, and got a very positive response from the Committee members. In fact, they voted it out of committee the same day; after that, the long wait began.

On March 26, the Senate passed our bill unanimously and referred it back to the House. On April 16, the House Education Committee voted our bill out of committee and then on May 2, the House passed our bill and we only had one step left to becoming a law. On May 3, 2007 SB158 was sent to Governor Perry for approval. (In case you are not as up to date on the legal process in Austin, the governor has 10 days in which to sign a bill, veto a

bill, or do nothing to it and on the 10th day, it becomes law.) On May 14, 2007 (at about noon), I received the call we had been waiting 6 years to hear...Governor Perry signed SB 158!!!

Soon, my term as President ends and I must give my final thanks to all the TEDA Board, the TPED Board, Kathy Hutto, and many others who traveled to Austin, wrote letters and e-mails, and called to ask for support for our bill. The "Never-ending Saga" has ended. This year has been truly amazing, and I am proud that I was able to represent you. I am sure that we will still have battles to fight as laws in Texas change. I challenge other Diagnosticians to accept responsibility as it comes to them and if you are asked to represent TEDA at the state or local level that you will agree to serve our organization. I consider it a great honor to be on the TEDA Board, and cannot tell you how much I have learned and how many interesting people I have met.

Thank you again for all your support this year! I look forward to seeing you in Waco next Spring, for our 2008 state conference.

Georgene Moon