

John Hagee, Robert Morris Part of Massive Effort to Stand Against Perversion

With an overwhelming majority of Texans—roughly 80 percent, according to one poll—determined to provide protections for women and children in public bathrooms, a group of pastors in that state has been trying to motivate a group of obstinate politicians to advance a bill that would do exactly that.

It's not the Democrats they're trying to convince, though, but rather the Republican leadership of the state House of Representatives.

In the 2016 election last November, Texans sent 96 Republicans to Austin to fill the 150-seat House. With that kind of supermajority, many assumed a bill like Senate Bill 6 or even House Bill 2899 would sail through the legislature like a breeze.

But it hasn't.

Speaker of the House Joe Straus (R-San Antonio) refused to assign SB 6 to a committee, where it will die at the end of the current legislative session, despite passing overwhelmingly in the state Senate. HB 2899 is stuck in the committee to which it was assigned, as well, likely at Straus' direction.

"Pastors around Texas are asking themselves how they sent 96 Republicans to the House and yet they can't get a bill passed to keep men out of women's bathrooms," Texas Pastor Council President Dave Welch said in an exclusive interview with Charisma Caucus. "They now realize they can't take for granted the letter behind someone's name means they will reflect the values of that party. We need to know who we send. And does

their record indicate they're willing to stand and vote and advocate for our values?"

The Texas Pastor Council got a promise before Easter from Gov. Greg Abbott, who is also a Republican, that a bill would soon move out of the House to protect women and children. They patiently waited for two weeks beyond Easter, only to see no action whatsoever as the clock winds down on the legislative session.

Welch said he reached out to the governor's office to arrange phone calls with nine of the state's most influential pastors, hoping that by hearing from them, Abbott would be emboldened to push Straus to change his mind. The pastors are also trying to convince the governor to call a special session if the House continues to sit on SB 6 and HB 2899.

They're not overly confident that he will.

"I would love to say I have confidence that he will," Welch said. "But, we're doing everything we can do, and trusting God will open their hearts to do the right thing. We serve a big God."

Abbott and Straus are feeling a lot of pressure from the state's largest business lobbying group, the government relations efforts of which are being led by an openly homosexual lobbyist who has a vested interest in seeing SB 6 and HB 2899 fail. But, that group's checkbook gives the relatively small group an oversized voice in Austin.

They're all feeling pressure from the national LGBT movement, which has painted both bills as "homophobic" and "discriminatory."

Welch said his group is still in the process of confirming all of the phone calls were made, and assessing how successful they were. The governor's office has not responded to requests for comment about the matter.

One pastor who was on the Texas Pastor Council list and who apparently did receive a call from Abbott is Robert Morris, pastor of Gateway Church in Southlake, Texas. The charismatic megachurch pastor mentioned the call during his sermon this past Sunday:

Governor Abbott called me yesterday. He's calling—he called 10 churches that are megachurches here in the state of Texas. There's a House bill right now that we need to let our representatives know about, and bring it to the floor for a vote. It's being held up right now by the Speaker of the House ...

You can go to our website, and find out how to contact your representative. It is being referred to as the bathroom bill, but please understand, this is to protect our children. We need to stand up, and as adults, that's why we say, "No, you don't drive a car when you're 11. You don't get to drive a car until you're 16." Adults need to make laws and rules for children who don't know how to make those decisions at that time.

And we don't want to be disrespectful to anyone, but this is so that boys do not go into girls' locker rooms, and girls do not go into boys' locker rooms. And the governor said, "Please, ask your people to call their state representative by Monday." ...

But we want you to at least bring it to a vote. At least get it out of the committee. And this one representative, y'know, is holding it up. So we really do need to protect our children. So I'm asking every member of Gateway church to do that. All right?

It's not clear that Morris was able to convince Abbott to hold a special session if either bill fails to get passed this session. LGBT activists have reported that Pastor John Hagee of Cornerstone Church in Straus' hometown of San Antonio also

spoke about the bill during his sermon last Sunday, although that has not been independently confirmed.

The Texas Pastor Council lobbying effort was already well under way before President Donald Trump signed his executive order on religious liberty last week. Welch said that while it didn't have an impact on what they are doing, he is optimistic that it may embolden other pastors to do what they should have been doing all along.

"It sends a strong signal that what they should've been doing now has a greater veil of protection," he said. "It's an encouragement that a limited, narrow threat has been restricted even further. Pastors are under a mandate of calling ... and they must fulfill that call to lead their people to be good stewards and good citizens." {eo}