

## FIGHT TO SAVE THE PLUMBING INDUSTRY IN TEXAS

Texas – May/June 2019

The power of social media was recently demonstrated in the struggle to save the Texas State Plumbing law which includes the state plumbing license and state plumbing codes. After the Texas Legislature failed to pass a bill to continue the state plumbing law during the last days of the legislative session, the law was set to expire September 1, 2019, effectively ending all requirements for plumbing licenses, codes, and permits. With no requirements of any kind to perform plumbing work within the entire state in place, one prominent publication stated "It's the Wild West" in Texas for the plumbing industry and consumers.



Many plumbers and plumbing organizations were continuously utilizing social media to keep one another and their members updated on the progress of the legislation. Once word of the state lawmaker's failure to compromise on a safety net bill to save the state plumbing law prior to the ending of the legislative session became public, many of the social media sites exploded with comments. To the credit of every plumber in the state, instead of focusing on the negative side of the situation, and being the problem solvers we are, we utilized social media to organize ourselves with a single message to the governor of Texas: ***We want our state plumbing law and licenses back!***

Within days, there were 70,000 signatures on a petition to reinstate the plumbing law. Friends, families, and supporters not from just the state of Texas, but from around the United States and the world were utilizing the multiple social media platforms to voice their support for our cause. Due to the tremendous amount of social media activity, traditional media outlets such as television and radio, picked up the story. Social media activity skyrocketed as the general public became aware of the safety implications and began to demand action by the governor to correct the mistake of the legislature. As the public outcry for the governor to get involved intensified, plans were made to hold a rally on the steps of the state capitol in Austin in support of the plumbing law. Social media platforms were once again relied on as rally organizers shared the information and the response was overwhelming. On Friday, June 14, 2019, 10,000 plumbers, family members, friends and industry partners gathered on the capitol grounds in support of the state plumbing law and the rally quickly became a celebration of the governor's action. The previous day, at 3:30 pm, Texas Governor Greg Abbott issued an emergency proclamation to extend the state plumbing law until May 31, 2021, effectively giving the state legislature another session to correct their mistake.

The ability to utilize social media as a tool to unite plumbers of all backgrounds, experience levels, and geographical areas was monumental to the successful reinstatement of the state plumbing law in Texas.

