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Committees:
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Finance
International Relations & Trade
Select Committee on Redistricting
State Affairs

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Why I support CSHB 12

By State Senator Tommy Williams (R-The Woodlands)
Chairman, State Senate Transportation & Homeland Security Committee

I support both the strengthened “Border & Homeland Security Act (CSHB 12)” and the uniform statewide benefit of a “Sanctuary City Prohibition Act” (HB 12).

Texans are all too familiar with our growing problems with the Mexican drug cartels, expanding criminal gang activities, and the multitude of problems associated with criminal illegal aliens.

We need to implement solutions that are right for Texans, right for Texas law enforcement, and respect the U.S. Constitution and the division of responsibilities between the Federal and Texas State governments.

With this said, I firmly believe Texas law enforcement must have the proper tools and foundation in place, such as mandatory IN-JAIL citizenship checks and the proper mechanism to prevent those illegally in our country from obtaining either a Texas Drivers’ license or other form of State identification before a “Sanctuary City Prohibition Act” can be successfully implemented.

U.S. Customs and Immigration issued a press release (March 1, 2011) touting the success of their Project Southern Tempest efforts which led to the arrest of 678 gang members as well as seizures of illegal guns, drugs, cash and vehicles. They further noted that of those arrested, 421 were foreign nationals and 322 had violent criminal histories.

These numbers serve to highlight the very real threats this nation and in particular Texans face daily. CSHB12’s “Border & Homeland Security Act’s” provisions include the following:

- Require citizenship verification for everyone and anyone arrested and booked in Texas;
- Require an inventory of all criminal aliens in Texas jails;
- Increase penalties and incarceration periods for members of drug cartels and criminal gangs;
- Crackdown on known criminals who apply for a Texas driver's license by referencing the electronically captured fingerprints database;
- Create a pilot program for law enforcement to use automated license plate readers in patrol cars; and,
- Put more troopers and officers in the field by expanding the use of reserve law enforcement officers

CSHB 12's proposals come directly from the front lines of our state's border and homeland security battle.

Since being named Chair of the State Senate Transportation & Homeland Security Committee, I've spent days and weeks traveling up and down our border with Mexico working with, listening to, and learning from local law enforcement of all jurisdictions, as well as local elected officials as to what their specific needs are in dealing with border and immigration security issues.

CSHB 12 contains multiple, sweeping provisions to tackle specific issues unique to Texas' experience dealing with drug cartels and criminal illegal aliens from countries known to harbor international terrorists.

Separately, I am also committed to passing a "Sanctuary City Prohibition Act", but only if our state has the proper Border and Homeland Security tools in place. This is why I support CSHB 12.

Senator Williams represents Senate District 4 covering all or portions of Jefferson, Orange, Chambers, Liberty, Harris and Montgomery Counties. Williams serves as Chairman of the Senate Transportation and Homeland Security Committee and as a member of the Finance, State Affairs, International Relations & Trade Committees and the Senate Select Committee on Redistricting.

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