



SENATOR CHARLES SCHWERTNER, MD
SENATE DISTRICT 5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Schwertner Files Legislation to
Reform Foster Care, Keep Texas Children Safe**

AUSTIN, TX -- Today, Senator Charles Schwertner, MD (R-Georgetown) filed SB 1406 and SB 1407, a package of legislation aimed at improving the lives of children in foster care and providing new resources to ensure child safety. Earlier this year, Schwertner also filed the Department of Family and Protective Services Sunset Bill (SB 206) -- legislation that proposes a number of sweeping reforms and operational changes to the agency charged with overseeing Child Protective Services (CPS) and the state foster care system.

"The state has a fundamental responsibility to ensure that every child entrusted to its care is kept safe from abuse and neglect," said Senator Schwertner. "Many of these children come from very difficult backgrounds, and I believe we owe them every opportunity to live a normal and fulfilling life."

Currently, many children living in foster care are prevented from engaging in otherwise normal extra-curricular activities, like participating in after-school sports or attending a classmate's birthday party, due to potential liability concerns for the foster parents and foster care agency. SB 1407 is designed to allow foster children to live a more "normal" life by protecting foster parents from punitive damages when they allow their foster child to participate in age-appropriate activities. This legislation was developed in partnership with the Texas Court-Appointed Special Advocates (CASA).

"Texas CASA is grateful to Senator Charles Schwertner for his leadership and advocacy on behalf of children and youth in the foster care system," said Texas CASA CEO Vicki Spriggs. "We are honored to work with both the Senator and DFPS to strengthen opportunities for children in care to lead lives that are as normal as possible."

SB 1406 will expand use of the existing Child Safety Check Alert List to allow the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) and the Department of Public Safety (DPS) to locate missing children during an investigation into abuse or neglect.

In November 2014, Dr. Charles Schwertner was overwhelmingly reelected to serve the citizens of Senate District 5, a ten-county region of central and east Texas. Following the 83rd Legislative Session, Senator Schwertner was named a "Courageous Conservative" by the Texas Conservative Coalition, a "Lone Star Conservative Leader" by the Texas Conservative Roundtable, and "Senate Freshman of the Year" by Texas Monthly magazine.

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