



SENATOR CHARLES SCHWERTNER, MD
SENATE DISTRICT 5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Contact: Tom Holloway

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(512) 923-5944

Schwertner Files E-Verify Bill for State Contractors

Senate Bill 254 would require businesses to use the federal E-Verify system as a precondition to receiving contracts from the State of Texas.

AUSTIN, TX -- Today, Senator Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown) filed Senate Bill 254, legislation that would require all state contractors and subcontractors to utilize the federal E-Verify system in determining the legal work status of their employees. E-Verify is an Internet-based system that confirms employment eligibility by comparing data from an employee's Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification) with data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration.

"If we ever hope to make progress in solving our nation's illegal immigration problem, we must first address the jobs, benefits, and other factors that entice immigrants to enter our country illegally in the first place," said Schwertner. "SB 254 represents a critical step in securing our border and stopping the flow of illegal immigrants into Texas."

SB 254 codifies an executive order by former Governor Rick Perry requiring state contractors and subcontractors to use E-verify. According to the Legislative Budget Board, there are currently more than 30,000 government contracts in place between the State of Texas and various private businesses, valued at over \$91 billion collectively.

"The bottom line is, if a contractor can't provide the state with reasonable assurances that their employees have the legal status to work in this country, then they don't need to be doing business with the State of Texas," said Schwertner. "The state should lead by example on this issue and Texas taxpayers should feel confident that their hard-earned tax dollars are not spent hiring immigrants who are legally ineligible to work in this country."

SB 254 also includes key protections for contractors who act in good faith to comply with the law and ensures that they are not unfairly penalized for any errors stemming from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' E-Verify system. A nearly identical bill filed by Schwertner last session (SB 401) earned the endorsement of the state's largest business and commerce group, the Texas Association of Business (TAB).

A medical doctor by training, Dr. Schwertner currently serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. Schwertner is currently serving his second term as the senator for Senate District 5, a ten-county region of central and east Texas.

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