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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Schwertner Files Major Sunset Reform Legislation for Dental, Optometry Boards

AUSTIN, TX -- Today, Senator Charles Schwertner, MD (R-Georgetown) filed Senate Bill 313 and Senate Bill 314, legislation to reform the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners (TSBDE) and the Texas Optometry Board (TOB), respectively. Both bills represent key reforms recommended by the Sunset Advisory Commission, a 12-member legislative body charged with providing a comprehensive, periodic review of the operation of more than 150 state agencies.

"It's been a unique privilege to serve as a member of the Sunset Advisory Commission these past three and a half years," said Schwertner, who chairs the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. "The Commission worked hard to identify operational deficiencies in both the Texas Dental Board and Optometry Board, and I'm eager for the opportunity to improve these agencies in a way that makes them more responsive to the needs of Texans."

SB 313: Texas State Board of Dental Examiners

The Sunset Commission found that for a relatively small agency, the Texas State Board of Dental Examiners had more than its share of problems stemming from high staff turnover and an oversized board prone to involving itself in operational matters well beyond its proper role. In addition, several high-profile deaths involving dental patients under parenteral anesthesia highlighted a critical need to review safety guidelines governing the administration of dental anesthesia.

Senate Bill 313 strengthens standards for the administration of parenteral dental anesthesia, reduces the size of the board from 15 to 11 members, and improves licensing and enforcement standards.

SB 314: Texas Optometry Board

While the Sunset Commission concluded that the Texas Optometry Board is generally well-managed, it also identified certain licensing and enforcement practices that need to be updated to be more consistent with best practices.

Senate Bill 314 proposes a number of conforming changes to the Prescription Drug Monitoring Program, makes updates to the licensing process, strengthens enforcement actions, and reforms the governing structure of the board.

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

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