



SENATOR PAUL BETTENCOURT

DISTRICT 7

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Texas Association of Business Numbers on Unfiled “Women’s Privacy Act” and Religious Freedom Bills are Wildly Speculative

Senator Bettencourt says let’s first read the bill to find out what is in it

HOUSTON – Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) has called into immediate question a study promoted by the Texas Association of Business (TAB) that describes the speculative economic impact of Senate Bill 6, supported by Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, that has not even been filed in the Legislature to date. The St. Edwards University study uses legislative acts from around the nation, many of which are not in effect in their home states. Therefore, the use of any of these examples of “denial of service” bills to extrapolate “bathroom bill” claims of business and job losses in Texas should never have been made in the first place.

“No matter which side you may or may not be on in this public policy debate on SB 6, women’s privacy and religious freedom, this study’s amazing claims of \$8.5 billion in economic losses and 185,000 job losses in Texas attributed to legislation that hasn’t even been filed are just flat wrong,” Senator Bettencourt said.

The study references Arizona SB 1062, which was vetoed and never implemented. It also uses Louisiana HB 707 that is no longer in effect and quotes an unverified media story with no basis in measurable fact that 80-85% of the business of the top conventions in the city of New Orleans was lost. These alleged losses are then extrapolated onto the Texas economy, despite having never been proven. In fact, the citation used to justify a large portion of the alleged loss in Louisiana states: “So far, statements issues by companies and conference organizers opposing the measure have not yet been followed up with action.” **“In plain English, that means their efforts did not pan out,”** said Senator Bettencourt. Finally, the study claims that Texas could lose 0.5% of its GDP based upon Indiana’s SB 101, a claim that has not been fully vetted nor adequately verified.

“This is indeed part ‘fake’ news, and the St. Edward’s University study should not be relying on misleading data prior to the filing of the actual bills,” Senator Bettencourt continued. **“Any study that ranges from a \$964 million impact up to an \$8.5 billion one, almost a 9 to 1 ratio, is just wildly speculative.”**

In 2015, 61 percent of Houston voters rejected a poorly worded initiative known as the Houston Equal Rights Ordinance, H.E.R.O., by former Mayor Annise Parker, without any measurable economic loss to the community. The 2017 Super Bowl, for example, is still coming to Houston. Senator Bettencourt opposed this ordinance along with the Houston Pastor’s Council, Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, and a broad coalition of community groups.

“While public policy debates can be heated, let’s first read the bill to find out what is in it!” Senator Bettencourt concluded.

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