

State of Texas  
Texas Senate

P.O. Box 12068  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-2068  
(512) 463-0107  
FAX (512) 463-8810



11451 KATY FREEWAY, SUITE 209  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77079  
(713) 464-0282  
FAX (713) 461-0108

**Paul Bettencourt**  
DISTRICT 7

Paul.Bettencourt@senate.texas.gov

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**Contact Information**

Lauri Saathoff | (512) 463-0107  
Lauri.Saathoff@senate.texas.gov

**Texas Senate Unanimously Approves SB 7 to Stamp Out Statewide Epidemic of Improper Student-Educator Relationships**

*Senator Bettencourt passes Lt. Governor Patrick's priority SB 7 through Texas Senate 31-0*

**AUSTIN** – The Texas Senate today unanimously passed Senate Bill 7 by Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) to crack down on inappropriate student-educator relationships. All 30 Senators co-authored the bill. Senator Bettencourt said, **“Inappropriate relationships between students and educators must be stamped out, period. We’re talking about the health and safety of our kids. We cannot afford to turn a blind eye or sweep these issues under the rug. Students are irrevocably changed by these improprieties.”**

SB 7 has broad support from educator groups, school board groups and the education community. Key bill points include:

- Expanding the Texas Education Agency’s investigative authority from intra-district to inter-district relationships;
- Expanding reporting requirements to include not only superintendents, but principals as well, with penalties for failing to report; and
- Automatic revocation of teaching certificate if offender receives deferred adjudication for an educator misconduct offense or any offense that would require them to register as a sex offender.

Senator Bettencourt added amendments from Senators Van Taylor (R-Plano) and Royce West (D-Dallas) on the floor to strengthen SB 7 based on ideas presented during public testimony.

The amendments clarified the teacher preparation training, the specific reporting role of principals and superintendents on the issue, allow felons to be fired by school districts immediately, and allow for pension revocation.

**“Educator misconduct has become a statewide epidemic,”** Senator Bettencourt continued. **“I know Texans will appreciate knowing that there are people in Austin who care about their children and their well-being, and I thank the Texas Senate today for unanimously standing up for Texas students to pass SB 7 and stamp this problem out!”**

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