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## **Educator Misconduct Reform, SB 7, Unanimously Passes Texas House, Headed Back to Senate**

*Senate Bill 7, by Senator Bettencourt and a top priority of Lt. Governor Patrick, passes the Texas House  
TEA data shows a 65% increase in improper student-education relationships over a two-year period*

**Austin** – The Texas House unanimously passed Senate Bill 7, by Senator Bettencourt (R-Houston) by a vote of 146-0. Representative Ken King (R-Canadian) sponsored the bill in the Texas House and brought the bill to the House floor on Tuesday. The bill was previously unanimously passed in the Texas Senate by a vote of 31-0. The bill would prevent educators who engage in inappropriate relationships with students from being able to jump from school district to school district without facing any consequences. Data provided by the Texas Education Agency shows that there has been a 65% increase in cases involving an improper student-educator relationships in just a two-year period, April 2015 through April 2017.

**“I am proud to carry this legislation in the House and do the right thing for students in Texas,”** said Representative Ken King, the House sponsor of SB 7. **“Our children should be able to feel safe in their schools and it is our job to protect them.”**

SB 7 is widely supported by educator groups, school board groups and the education community. Key provisions include:

- 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.
- Expanding reporting requirements to include not only superintendents, but principals as well, with penalties for failing to report.
- Expanding TEA’s investigative authority from intra-district to inter-district relationships.
- An educator certificate may be revoked if they assist a person in obtaining employment at a school and they knew that person had engaged in sexual misconduct.

**“Educator misconduct is a statewide plague that has unfortunately been on the rise,”** said Senator Bettencourt. **“Inappropriate relationships between students and teachers must be stamped out, period. The ‘passing of the trash’ will stop as educators with this problem will lose their certificate and be out of the education system.”**

Educator misconduct reports have previously been filed all across Texas, including in Austin, Bastrop, Cleburne, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, Jefferson, Katy, San Antonio, and more than two dozen other cities.

Representative Matt Rinaldi (R-Irving) added an amendment to revert to language passed in the Senate and remove pensions from educators convicted of misconduct by stating, **“Crimes against children are an unbearable evil.”** An amendment to the amendment by Representative Gary VanDeaver (R-New Boston) left it up to judicial discretion if the convicted educator’s portion of the pension could be released to a spouse.

The bill now returns to the Senate for either concurrence or conference.

**“The citizens of Texas have been heard, as they have been repeatedly shocked and appalled about the conduct of supposed adults preying upon students for sexual relationships,”** concluded Senator Paul Bettencourt.

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