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Sen. Bettencourt & Hinojosa, And 5 More File Bill to Get ISD's Out of the Water Park Business
SB 1133 would prevent any ISD, like La Joya ISD, from owning and operating a water park!

Austin - Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) filed SB 1133 to protect the fundamental mission of school districts, the education of Texas students. Highlighting the need for reform in the recapture, or "Robin Hood" element of the school finance system, La Joya ISD used taxpayer money from their general fund for the construction and operation of a \$20 million complex that includes a water park. Senators that are Joint-Authors on the legislation include Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (D-McAllen) and Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville), along with Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels), Patrick Fallon (R-Prosper), Bob Hall (R-Rockwall), and Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola) from around the state of Texas.

La Joya ISD is in Senator Hinojosa's District. **"It's a challenge meeting all the funding needs of educating our children. This is why we must find a way to set parameters around the use of taxpayers' money to focus on spending the funds on teachers and students instead of on projects that are not essential to the mission of educating our children,"** remarked Senator Hinojosa.

"There is no fact or supposition of fact that the core operations of a Texas School District should involve owning and operating a water park," said Senator Bettencourt. **"Recently published press reports also indicate that the complex is operating at a loss and costing Texas taxpayers even more money!"**

SB 1133 would prevent a school district or open-enrollment charter school directly or indirectly through an affiliate, including an affiliated nonprofit corporation, from having a business interest in an entity or owning real property associated with a water park, golf course, or hotel. The bill makes La Hoya ISD get out of the water park and golf course business by making them divest all ownership of, or business interest in, their water park and golf course not later than September 1, 2024.

"Taxpayers all across the State are enduring rapidly increasing property tax bills and the fact that 'Robin Hood' monies are being used to build a water park and purchase a golf course (which is also operating at a loss) by La Joya ISD shows a clear lack of focus on their top priority...educating our students," he added. **"The venues must be divested by the passage of SB1133,"** he concluded.

Senator Bettencourt plans to file additional legislation on a variety of issues in the coming days.

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