Senator Bettencourt Unanimously Passes Another Major Bill To Protect Private School Students

SB1256 is a major piece of the pack to expand protections that public schools have to private schools

Follows up on SB7, the inappropriate student teacher relationship bill from last session

Austin, Texas - Another major step in education reform, Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) unanimously passed SB 1256 out of the Texas Senate that will create a Do-Not-Hire registry and continue to elaborate on legislation to protect private school students in Texas. Expanding on Senate Bill 7 from the 85th Legislative session, which protected public schools from inappropriate student/teacher relationships, Senator Bettencourt filed a pack of legislation to expand those protections to private schools as well. The bipartisan legislation, SB1256 passed by a vote of 31-0 and moves onto the Texas House.

"We have to protect our students from this type of aggressive behavior," said Senator Bettencourt. "SB1256 will stop 'passing the trash' from public schools to private schools and instead 'take out the trash' permanently, so our students will all be protected from sexual predators," he added.

Senate Bill 1256 would create a similar process for non-certified persons from Superintendent to custodians who engage in misconduct with students. This bill would require a Do Not Hire Registry for persons who may not be employed by public or private schools. SB 1256 ensures students are protected from this types of acts by the following provisions:

- Ensuring that non-certified persons who have engaged in unlawful acts or solicited or engaged in romantic relationships with students or minors are terminated from public or private schools.
- Creating a registry for non-certified persons who may not be employed by public or private schools.
- Prohibiting public or private schools from employing people who, after due process, have been placed on a registry prohibiting employment.
- Creating the same superintendent reporting requirements for non-certified employees that currently exist for certified employees and adds principals to the reporting requirements.

"Inappropriate relationships between students and educators must be fleshed out. We’re talking about the safety of our kids. We cannot afford to turn a blind eye or sweep these issues under the rug anymore," said Bettencourt. "This next legislative step will result in a safer learning environment for ALL students in the Texas education system," he added.

SB1256 affords all students in Texas schools protection from all school employees who have been found to have engaged in an unlawful act or other misconduct with a student. This bill is included in a larger package of education reform bills including SB933, SB1230, SB1231, and SB1476 by Senator Bettencourt that are moving through the Texas Senate.

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