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Powell Passes Legislation to Protect our Military Installations from Drone Encroachments

Austin, TX—Today, the Texas Senate passed unanimously SB 2299 by Senator Beverly Powell. Senate Bill 2299 by Powell would move Texas' military installations, such as NAS JRB in Fort Worth or Lackland AFB in San Antonio, to critical infrastructure status. This change restricts individuals from flying drones on or near our military bases.

Background:

Earlier this year, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* reported that a drone was found on a taxiway at the Naval Air Station Fort Worth Joint Base Reserve Base, the second drone sighting near the base in the last year. The *Star-Telegram* reported that the drone found was a "Promark Drone P70-CW with a built-in WiFi signal, battery-powered, with automatic takeoff and landing, and the ability to stream, record and photograph live footage to smartphones".

Currently, many facilities are defined as a "critical infrastructure facility" and restrictions on the operation of unmanned aircrafts (drones) near those facilities are defined. Examples of critical infrastructure facilities include but are not limited to water treatment plants and power plants. Although the Federal Aviation Administration has guidelines restricting the use of drones above the airspace of a military installation, no guidelines exist referring to physical contact with bases. SB 2299 would amend the statute to classify military installations as critical infrastructure facilities for the purposes of extending the drone restrictions to our military installations. Extending restrictions prevent a drone from coming into contact with military aircrafts and will prevent encroachment of drones with cameras near military bases.