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### **Texas Senate Passes Senate Bill 11, A Bill to Strengthen School Safety**

April 29, 2019- (Austin, Texas) Senate Bill 11 by Senator Larry Taylor (R-Friendswood) was passed out of the full Texas Senate today with a vote of 29-2. The bill aims to better prepare and equip schools to handle security threats and provide resources to support the mental health of public school students. Specifically, SB 11:

- Requires the Texas Education Agency to ensure that building standards provide a safe and secure environment.
- Offers loan repayment assistance to those who serve as school counselors and licensed specialists on school psychology.
- Offers a grant program for one time facility hardening for schools.
- Requires that teachers, including substitute teachers, receive safety training and have access to a phone or electronic device to allow for quick connection to first responders in the event of an emergency.
- Requires that mental health authorities employ a non physician mental health professional to serve as a resource and provide training to school district personnel.
- Requires that schools adopt a multi-hazard emergency operations plan and appoint a school safety committee.
- Requires that schools establish Safe and Supportive Care teams comprised of school personnel.
- Trains educators on methods of interacting with students coping with past trauma.

Upon passage of the bill, Senator Taylor said, "We know that we cannot prevent every tragedy, and there is no 'one size fits all' solution for strengthening school security, but SB 11 provides the framework to empower school districts to do what's best for them and their students."

The bill was filed in response to the May 2018 shooting at Santa Fe High School and creation of the Select Committee to Study Violence in Schools and School Security. The Select Committee held four hearings over the summer of 2018 and published a report on its findings that can be read in full here: <https://senate.texas.gov/cmtes/85/c565/c565.InterimReport2018.pdf>

Senate Bill 11 as it was passed by the full Senate can be read here: <https://capitol.texas.gov/BillLookup/History.aspx?LegSess=86R&Bill=SB11>

*Senator Larry Taylor is a lifelong Texan and Baylor University graduate raised in Friendswood. Before his election to the Texas Senate in 2012, he served five terms in the Texas House of Representatives. Senator Taylor was appointed Chairman of the Senate Education Committee in 2015. In 2018, he was appointed Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Violence in Schools and School Security.*

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