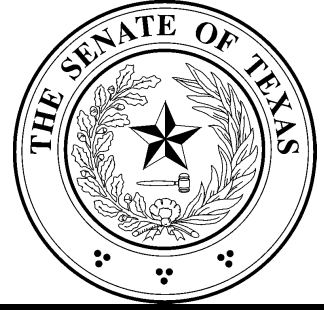


SENATOR
JOHN WHITMIRE
DISTRICT 15
NEWS RELEASE



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Senator Whitmire Calls for Emergency Hearing on Prison Security Breaches

Austin, Texas -- Senator John Whitmire (D-Houston) has called an emergency meeting of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee this afternoon to discuss alarming security breaches within the state's prison system.

"I have repeatedly warned the leadership of the prison system that the level of security is unacceptable and poses a critical threat to public safety," stated Whitmire. "Contraband in our prisons has reached epidemic proportions. The tolerance of contraband has to end and it has to end now."

"Just this June, we heard testimony from correctional officers that inmates can get anything they want in prison and that searches of correctional officers were not being carried out," commented Whitmire. "I ask the vast majority of our correctional officers who are hard-working, dedicated, and honest public servants to join us in putting an end to the corruption in our prisons."

"I support Governor Perry for demanding immediate and tough action from the Criminal Justice Board and I join with him in insisting violators be prosecuted to the fullest extent," stated Whitmire. "This is the first step in securing our prison system. We will take the discussion to the next level today in Committee."

"When 10 death row inmates make 2800 phone calls from one cell phone in a period of 30 days including calls to the Chairman of the Senate Criminal Justice Committee which included inquiries by name of my daughters, I personally declare war on contraband," stated Whitmire. "To the inmates, give it up. To the crooked correctional officers, you are no better than the inmates you are entrusted to incarcerate. To the public, you have a right to demand a safe, tough prison system."

"No crime victim, prosecutor, juror, or Texan should have to worry that inmates have open access from prisons to make threats, commit new crimes, or harass the citizens of this state."

The Senate Criminal Justice Committee will meet today, October 21, 2008, at 1:30 p.m.

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