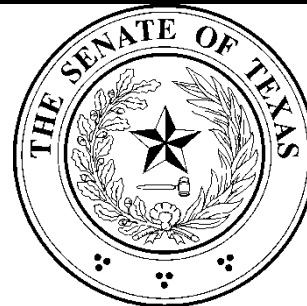


SENATOR
JOHN WHITMIRE
DISTRICT 15
NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Senator Whitmire files Senate Bill 316 to reform Texas Asset Forfeiture laws

AUSTIN, Texas -- Senator John Whitmire (D-Houston) announced today he filed Senate Bill 316 to address the continuing abuse of the asset forfeiture process and misuse of the funds generated by these seizures. Senator Whitmire stated, "The criminal convictions of a District Judge and District Attorney last year demonstrate these reforms are required and necessary."

The bill prevents a prosecutor from obtaining a waiver to the rights to property from an alleged offender until a suit has been filed and a district court is supervising the process. No longer will a waiver be allowed after a traffic stop; a practice which has led to allegations of highway robbery where a person is searched and their property seized, but the suspect is never charged with any crime.

The new law will also provide a list of prohibited uses of the proceeds and ensure that only expenditures to fight crime are allowed, the intended purposes for which these actions are designed.

"Without the proper guidelines and transparency, these events can lead to the worst case scenario of highway piracy, as we have so painfully observed in several cases across this state," stated Senator Whitmire.

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