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Joan Huffman  
Senator ★ District 17

## **Senator Huffman's "Damon Allen Act" Receives Senate's Final Approval; Heads to Governor's Desk**

AUSTIN- Today, Senator Joan Huffman's (R-Houston) Senate Bill (SB) 6, known as "The Damon Allen Act", received final legislative approval in the Texas Senate and is now headed to Governor Abbott's desk to be signed into law. The bill is a culmination of months of work to help increase transparency in the judicial process and bring accountability to judges and magistrates that are often making life-or-death decisions when determining bail.

"SB 6 is a game-changer", said Huffman. "We have all seen the horrible consequences of current bail practices throughout Texas, and I am hopeful that SB 6 will help mitigate these seemingly preventable tragedies. Over the coming months we will monitor the bill's implementation to ensure that the process is working as intended and is efficient for the judicial system. This is a tremendous first step toward addressing our State's broken bail system."

One of the bill's key provisions establishes a Public Safety Report System, which the Office of Court Administration (OCA) will develop and make available to all counties free-of-charge. This interface will provide officials setting bail with instantaneous access to basic information relating to the defendant's risk, including criminal history, past failures to appear, and any pending criminal charges. By requiring review of this information when bail is set—and providing the Public Safety Report as an efficient, simple tool for doing so—SB 6 will ensure that officials have the information they need to make educated bail determinations. These decisions, in turn, will keep our communities safe and help ensure that defendants return to court as required.

Additionally, SB 6 will require any state official setting bail to complete a form certifying that all relevant factors were considered in assessing the defendant's risk to the community. This form must be electronically signed by the bail-setter, and will be available for public inspection on OCA's website. The bail form, along with other required reporting, will begin statewide data collection on the bail system for the first time in Texas.

"I am thankful for the support of leadership, my senate colleagues, and the criminal-justice community throughout this endeavor", said Huffman. "In crafting SB 6, I have remained focused on public safety, not politics. That is why this bill has garnered bipartisan support, much to the dismay of a small number of detractors that have continuously mischaracterized the bill to fit a misguided narrative. I truly believe that once implemented, SB 6 will help Texans from all walks of life be more safe in their communities moving forward."

*(Senator Joan Huffman represents District 17, which includes portions of Brazoria, Fort Bend and Harris counties. Huffman currently serves as Chair of the Senate Special Committee on Redistricting, Chair of the Senate Committee on Jurisprudence, Vice Chair of the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, and as a senior member of the Senate Committee on Finance, Administration, and Legislative Budget Board. Huffman and her family reside in Houston.)*

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