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REP. PATTERSON & SEN. HUFFMAN FILE 'THE BISHOP EVANS ACT'

(Austin, TX) — Today, on the first day of pre-filing of bills for the 88th Texas Legislative Session, Representative Jared Patterson and Senator Joan Huffman filed HB 90 & SB 155, entitled 'The Bishop Evans Act'. This legislation seeks to improve the workers' compensation and death benefits for Texas Military Forces while serving in a State Active Duty status.

Because the Biden Administration's failure to secure the border, a record-breaking 2.76 million illegal immigrants have crossed the southwest United States border in the fiscal year 2022. In past times of national emergency, presidents have activated the National Guard to take action. In doing so, they are compensated and covered at a higher benefit level under federal law. Biden's refusal to act on the border required Governor Abbott to initiate Operation Lone Star, which remains vital for the safety and protection of the state in times of unprecedented human trafficking and drug smuggling.

Since most large scale deployments are federalized, any guardsmen injured or killed in the line of duty would have received significant benefits. Operation Lone Star, while imperative to the safety and security of Texas communities, has also exposed a gap in coverage for those working around the clock in service to our state. For example, current statute does allow for a line of duty death benefit for guardsmen under State Active Duty orders.

The benefit disparity became apparent on April 25th, 2022, when Texas National Guardsmen Bishop E. Evans tragically died on duty attempting to save lives. Because Evans was serving in a State Active Duty status, his family was not guaranteed any surviving financial assistance.

HB 90 & SB 155 seeks to address the benefit discrepancy by authorizing the death benefit lumpsum payment for surviving families of \$500,000, clarify uncertainty around workers' compensation benefits, apply accelerated disputes to guardsmen facing workplace injuries, and include PTSD coverage under workers' compensation for all Texas Military Forces who serve in a State Active Duty status.



Rep. Patterson stated, "Sergeant Bishop Evans served the state of Texas and our nation to the highest extent. We should honor him by ensuring all guardsmen serving on State Active Duty status are granted the benefits they've earned." Sen. Huffman stated, "We hope that in naming this bill in his honor allows Sergeant Bishop Evans to be remembered not only for his service and sacrifice, but for a meaningful change in policy for all guardsmen moving forward."

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