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THE SENATE OF TEXAS



LOIS W. KOLKHORST

STATE SENATOR

DISTRICT 18

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Kolkhorst Bill Bans Vaccine Passports in Texas

AUSTIN - The COVID-19 pandemic brought to light various opportunities to improve the State's preparedness to address a public health disaster. As Chair of the Senate Committee on Health & Human Services Committee, Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) authored and passed SB 968 to ensure that Texas is better prepared for a future pandemic. Thanks to the overwhelming bipartisan support SB 968 received in the Texas Legislature, the legislation took effect immediately with the Governors' signature today.

"This session, we used the lessons learned over the past year to improve the state's response to any future health event," said Kolkhorst. "I was proud to author and pass SB 968 which provides guidance and reforms accountability for state and local governments in responding to pandemics. Most importantly, SB 968 prohibits governments and businesses from requiring proof of COVID-19 vaccination status to protect individuals' private medical information from the intrusive governmental and business-led mandates. This legislation is a great example of striking a balance between our public health priorities, civil liberties, and economic freedoms."

Specifically, SB 968 requires: the Texas Division of Emergency Management to ensure adequate stockpiles of American made PPE, establishes legislative oversight during a public health disaster, protects access to elective medical procedures, establishes the Office of the Chief State Epidemiologist, and bans the use of vaccine passports.

"Having had many inquiries about Carnival Cruise Lines sailing out of Texas, I am confident that like in Florida, Carnival will allow all to sail on cruises from Texas, regardless of their vaccination status," said Kolkhorst. "SB 968 still allows for health screenings such as temperature checks if a company chooses." ###