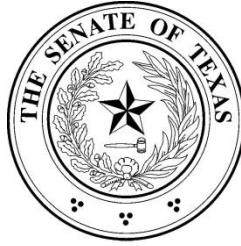


Capitol Address
P.O. Box 12068
Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 463-0126 | Room: 3.S3



District Address
Westgate Shopping Center
7121 US HWY 90 Suite 240
San Antonio, Texas 78227
210-673-3579

José Menéndez

Texas State Senator

District 26

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Dwight Clark 512-463-0126

Senator José Menéndez Releases Legislative Agenda Focuses on Public Education, Veterans, and Public Safety

Austin, Texas - Today, Senator José Menéndez filed his first set of bills as State Senator. The bills cover a variety of topics specifically focusing on Veterans, Public Education, and Public Safety.

"I was sent here to get to the table where decisions are being made and represent the values of the families in the San Antonio. We are off to a great start and the team has already been working on legislation," Menéndez said. "We have seamlessly made the transition to the Senate and have hit the ground running. I've been approached by several of my former House colleagues about carrying their bills in the Senate and I am confident that we are going to get good legislation passed that will help Texas families."

Children Benefit When We Support Our Teachers

Senate Bill 1302 will reduce standardized testing for grades 3-8 to only what is federally required. This would eliminate three unnecessary and burdensome tests in the lower grades.

"I've heard from the parents of San Antonio and they are sick and tired of our public education system focusing on testing rather than teaching," Menéndez said. "As State Senator, I'll fight for more classroom time for learning and less time filling in bubbles on a scantron."

Senate Bill 1303 would give every teacher in Texas a pay raise. Texas currently ranks in the bottom 25% of what teachers earn nationally. Senate Bill would grant a \$4,000 pay increase each year.

"We can't recruit the best and brightest to educate our children if we continue to pay teachers less than other states," Menéndez commented. "We have to look at teacher salaries as an investment. An investment in our teachers is an investment in our future economy."

Honoring Our Veterans and Military Families

Texas is home to 1.6 million Veterans with the largest population of female Veterans. Senator Menéndez's legislative agenda continues to serve our military community with legislation aimed at improving their lives.

Senate Bill 1304, 1305, and 1306 will directly improve Veterans mental health treatment in Texas. Too many Veterans suffer from PTSD, Traumatic Brain Injury, and other related mental illness. These bills will create programs that specifically address issues facing female Veterans and improve access to care for Veterans in rural areas. Senate Bill 1306 will create a commissioner at Health and Human Service Commission whose job it is to develop and support programs that help military families."

Senate Bill 1310 will drastically improve Veteran Treatment Courts throughout the state. It will focus on getting our Veterans treatment instead of locking them in jail. The bill builds on the success of Veteran Treatment Courts throughout Texas and establishes a reliable funding source for them in the future.

Senate Bill 1307 will require state agencies that issue occupational licenses to provide an expedited licensure for military service members, military spouses, and military veterans. It will also credit military experience towards licensing requirements so our Veterans can get a job faster when they return home.

Senate Bill 1308 will reduce drivers license fees for Veterans and mail out an information flier about all the benefits Texas offers to our nation's heroes. Too many of Veterans do not know that Texas has programs to improve their health, find a job, and offer education benefits. This bill would ensure each Veteran has access to the benefits they have earned.

"In light of the deplorable actions of the Veterans Administration, Texas must step up to the plate," Menéndez stated. "Our Veterans have sacrificed so much for our freedoms that we owe our support to them and their families as they transition into the civilian world. The bills I file today will do that by creating mental health services and jobs for our nation's heroes."

Protecting Our Public Safety

Senate Bill 1317 seeks to criminalize the act of taking an invasive photograph or recording of an individual without consent. Last year, the Texas Court of Appeals found that the statute governing invasive photos was written too broadly. Senate Bill 1317 tailors the language to specifically address intentionally taking invasive recordings or photos of an individual without consent in a public place.

"We don't want to send the message that it is acceptable to take away an individual's sense of dignity. I filed this bill to let those who plan to invade someone's privacy know that it will not be tolerated in the State of Texas," Menéndez said.

Senate Bill 1318 allows counties to set regulations for consuming alcohol and causing a nuisance at or around bus stops. Too often senior citizens or individuals with disabilities are harassed by intoxicated individuals during their daily commute. This bill seeks to give public transportation passengers peace of mind during their daily commute.

"Regardless of the issue, I'm ready to continue working for the people of San Antonio," Menendez added. "We've got a short time to get things done, but when the session concludes I'll be proud of what we accomplished for the families of Texas."