



SENATOR JOSÉ MENÉNDEZ
DISTRICT 26

Media Release:

Monday, April 10, 2023

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**Senator José Menéndez Issues Statement on Passage
of Senate Bill 8 and 9 at 88th Legislative Session**

AUSTIN, TX – Statement on the passage of Senate Bill 8 and 9 out of the Senate:

Senator José Menéndez released the following statement-

“On Thursday the Texas Senate passed Senate Bill 8 and Senate Bill 9 which aim to make sweeping changes to education in Texas. Senate Bill 8 includes a Parental Bill of Rights, vouchers, and provisions even more extreme than Florida’s ‘Don’t Say Gay’ bill which went into effect in 2022. Senate Bill 9, enumerates several provisions for Texas teachers, including a minimal one time bonus, tightening teacher’s authority in the classroom, removing SBOE authority, and tying the hands of teacher union representation.”

“Make no mistake, I believe teachers and parents are an integral priority to this state and to the education of our children. However, these bills extended far beyond the claim of a parent’s or teacher’s Bill of Rights, and enact policies that will set back San Antonio and Texas schools as a whole. Provisions preventing ‘instruction, guidance, or activities’ on anything regarding LGBTQIA+ in K-12 cuts off safe spaces for our children to express themselves, especially considering other bills impacting them in this area this session.”

“In San Antonio, for example, SB 8’s ‘Education Savings Account’ vouchers are projected to remove \$16.5 Million dollars in the first year from Senate District 26 public schools. For the State as a whole, an estimated \$346 Million. SB 9 offered a \$2,000, one time bonus for all teachers, with an additional \$4,000 for school districts under 20,000. For San Antonio, the additional money only applied to a handful of districts. Compared to conversations in the house that offer teachers a \$15,000 bonus, the Senate’s offer was disrespectful, especially in terms of the real, long-term pay increases teachers have been advocating for. There are plenty of bills that actually address a teacher pay raise this session, including Senate Bill 657 (House Bill 74, Rep. Bernal), which gives an ongoing teacher retention incentive of \$10,000 a year for teachers who stay at a school for 4 or more years, among other initiatives. *I will not trade a few dollars for poor education policy and especially not for vouchers.*”

“I offered numerous amendments, including LGBT protections for students being ‘outed’, holding ALL schools harmless from the impacts of vouchers with \$10,000 to the school district for every child that leaves, and affirming that children with disabilities are not punished in ways that would violate their Federal rights and Individualized Education Plans. The latter was accepted to SB 9, as well as an amendment to SB 8 that would ensure – in the provision of free transfer between districts – that if that privilege is revoked from a student, they are given due process before expulsion.”

“It was a long night, and there are many more ahead. You have my commitment to continue to stand with teachers, parents, students and our public schools.”

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