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Lucio Announces Senate Passage of Bill to Limit Illegal Gambling in Willacy County

AUSTIN - Today, Senator Eddie Lucio, Jr. (D-Brownsville) announces Senate passage of a bill to limit illegal gambling in Willacy County. [House Bill 2123](#) by Rep. Ryan Guillen (D-Rio Grande City) and sponsored by Senator Lucio would give the County Commissioners Court the power to regulate the operation of game rooms. The bill is intended to discourage illegal use of "amusement redemption machines," commonly known as eight-liners in the County.

"Game rooms which illegally use eight-liner machines to pay out cash awards have become hotbeds for illegal activity and violence," Sen. Lucio said.

As passed out of the Senate House Bill 2123 grants commissioners authority to regulate game rooms. The County may restrict the location of game rooms in specified areas of the County, including unincorporated areas. The County may further prohibit the location of game rooms within a prescribed distance from schools, places of worship, residential neighborhoods, or other specified land. Finally, the County may restrict the number of game rooms.

The bill also allows the County to inspect any business that contains six or more amusement redemption machines to determine whether the business is in compliance with regulations set forth by the County. Owners would violate the law if they refused to allow either law enforcement or County employees from conducting an inspection.

The bill applies a civil penalty of not more than \$10,000 for each violation.

"These game rooms have been a burden for many communities and have proven difficult for law enforcement to stop. This bill will give law enforcement a new tool and require anyone operating a game room to obtain a license and prove they are not operating the machines illegally," Sen. Lucio said.

Now passed out of the Senate, House Bill 2123 moves to the Governor's desk.

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