



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security to meet Wednesday

*Among discussion items: Increased state involvement in
immigration law, and applying military skills to state employment*

Austin - The Senate Committee on Veteran Affairs and Border Security will have a hearing starting at 9 a.m. tomorrow (Wednesday, Aug. 29, 2018) to review several interim charges related to "border security" and to monitoring bills that passed in previous sessions. That includes SB 389 by Sen. Rodríguez, which passed in 2015 to match military occupation codes with state job requirements. The bill resulted in the State Auditor's Office creating a military crosswalk document, as well as a military crosswalk guide, to assist state agencies in determining the applicable military occupational codes to include on their notices of employment openings.

Also to be discussed is increasing coordination of local law enforcement with immigration enforcement. Sen. Rodríguez has opposed the efforts by state leadership to target immigrants, regardless of legal status, as inherently dangerous. Data indicates that immigrants overall commit crimes at lower rates than native-born, and have high rates of entrepreneurship and workforce participation. Increasing indiscriminate immigration enforcement that tears families apart and creates a climate of fear in communities decreases overall public safety. Local policing and federal immigration are completely different areas of law and enforcement, and the state should be focusing on dangerous criminals, not adopting blanket policies that target entire communities.

The interim charges to be discussed are as follows:

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- **Border Security - Law Enforcement:** Study and make recommendations on opportunities to create public safety partnerships. Consider the federal 287(g) program and any needs of a state or

local jurisdiction when entering in a Memorandum of Agreement for receiving delegated federal authority. Review cross training programs offered in other states that allow U.S. Border Patrol agents to be certified as state peace officers, and determine if Texas could create such a program.

- **Border - Invasive Species:** Study and make recommendations on the impact to border security caused by invasive plant species, such as Carrizo cane and salt cedar. Review proposals for eradication of invasive plant species that provide a natural shelter for human trafficking and/or smuggling arms and illicit substances.
- **Monitoring:** Monitor the implementation and impact of legislation passed by the Texas Legislature. Make recommendations for any needed improvements or steps to ensure completion.
 - SB 27 by Campbell 85(R), relating to the mental health program for veterans;
 - SB 277 by Campbell 85(R), relating to ad valorem tax incentives for wind-powered energy devices near military aviation facilities; and
 - SB 389 by Rodriguez 84(R), relating to the addition of military occupational specialty codes on state agency employment listings..

The hearing begins at **9 a.m. CST** in Austin (8 a.m. MST in El Paso). You can find the live stream here: <http://www.senate.texas.gov/av-live.php>

José Rodríguez represents Texas Senate District 29, which includes the counties of El Paso, Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio. He represents both urban and rural constituencies, and more than 350 miles of the Texas-Mexico border. Senator Rodríguez currently serves as the Chairman of the Texas Senate Democratic Caucus, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Natural Resources and Economic Development; Transportation; Veteran Affairs and Border Security; and Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs (Vice Chair).

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