



SENATOR CHARLES SCHWERTNER, MD

SENATE DISTRICT 5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Tom Holloway

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(512) 923-5944

TEXAS SENATE PASSES HOUSE BILL 5

Schwertner Co-Sponsors Sweeping Legislation to Reform Texas Public Education

AUSTIN, TX – Today, the Texas Senate passed House Bill 5, a package of legislative reforms intended to improve Texas schools by expanding curriculum options, enhancing school accountability, and reducing the burden of high-stakes standardized testing.

The bill, co-sponsored by State Senator Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown), gives students and parents greater flexibility in tailoring a curriculum plan that supports a student's individual interests as they prepare to go to college or enter the workforce. HB 5 also reduces the number of high-stakes, standardized tests required in schools, so teachers are free to focus on instruction and education rather than simply "teaching to the test."

"To all the students, teachers, and parents frustrated over tedious state mandates and high-stakes standardized tests, the Texas Legislature has heard you," said Senator Schwertner.

HB 5 reduces the number of required high school exams to five (down from the 15 which are currently required) and allows districts the flexibility to administer two additional exams in English III and Algebra II if they so choose. The bill also removes a requirement that each exam count towards 15% of a student's final grade, and makes changes to the traditional "4x4" curriculum (four years of instruction in the four subjects of math, science, English, and social studies), allowing for greater flexibility in the student's individual graduation plan.

"This legislation empowers the individual to take charge of their education by offering a greater variety of curriculum options. HB 5 will provide students with the greatest possible opportunity to meet their individual potential...whether that ultimately takes the form of direct workforce entry, a postsecondary vocational program, or enrollment in a traditional four-year institution."

HB 5 also enhances school accountability through a new state rating system that measures school districts on academic performance, financial performance, and community and student engagement. All three ratings are graded on an easy-to-understand system of A, B, C, D and F provide a clearer understanding of a school district's overall track record.

In 2012, Dr. Charles Schwertner was first elected to serve the citizens of Senate District 5, a ten-county region of central and east Texas which includes Brazos, Freestone, Grimes, Leon, Limestone, Madison, Milam, Robertson, Walker and Williamson counties.

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