



SENATOR CHARLES SCHWERTNER, MD
SENATE DISTRICT 5

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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**Schwertner Stands Up Against Illegal Immigration,
Files High-Priority E-Verify Bill for State Contractors**

Named a top legislative priority by Lt. Governor Dan Patrick, SB 23 would require businesses to use the E-Verify system as a precondition to receiving state contracts.

AUSTIN, TX -- Today, Senator Charles Schwertner (R-Georgetown) filed Senate Bill 23, legislation that would require state contractors to utilize the federal E-Verify system in determining the legal work status of their employees. Originally filed as SB 254, the proposal was recently designated a top priority of Lt. Governor Dan Patrick.

"If we ever hope to solve our nation's illegal immigration problem, we must first address the jobs and benefits that entice immigrants to enter our country illegally in the first place," said Schwertner. "I'm grateful to Lt. Governor Dan Patrick for naming SB 23 as one of his top legislative priorities, and the Lt. Governor and I both strongly believe that SB 23 represents an important step in securing our border and stopping illegal immigration in Texas."

E-Verify is an Internet-based system that confirms employment eligibility by comparing data from an employee's Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification) with data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Social Security Administration.

The legislation codifies an executive order issued by former Governor Rick Perry which requires state contractors and subcontractors to use E-verify. According to the Legislative Budget Board, there are currently more than 17,000 active government contracts between the State of Texas and private businesses, collectively valued at more than \$23.4 billion.

"The state should lead by example on this issue and Texas taxpayers should feel confident that their hard-earned tax dollars are not spent hiring immigrants who are legally ineligible to work in this country," said Schwertner. "The bottom line is, if a contractor can't provide the state with reasonable assurances that their employees have the legal status to work in this country, then they don't need to be doing business with the State of Texas."

The proposal builds upon legislation passed by Senator Schwertner during the 84th Legislative Session, which required all state agencies and institutions of higher education to check their employees through the federal E-Verify system.

SB 23 also includes key protections for businesses that act in good faith to comply with the law, ensuring that they are not unfairly penalized for fraudulent documentation or errors stemming from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' E-Verify system. A nearly identical bill filed by Schwertner last session (SB 401) earned the endorsement of the state's largest business and commerce group, the Texas Association of Business (TAB).

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So far, the proposal has received a strong showing of support in the Texas Senate, with 14 State Senators agreeing to joint author Senate Bill 23 with Senator Schwertner:

- Senator Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston)
- Senator Brian Birdwell (R-Granbury)
- Senator Konni Burton (R-Colleyville)
- Senator Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels)
- Senator Brandon Creighton (R-Conroe)
- Senator Kelly Hancock (R-North Richland Hills)
- Senator Don Huffines (R-Dallas)
- Senator Joan Huffman (R-Houston)
- Senator Bryan Hughes (R-Mineola)
- Senator Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham)
- Senator Jane Nelson (R-Flower Mound)
- Senator Charles Perry (R-Lubbock)
- Senator Kel Seliger (R-Amarillo)
- Senator Van Taylor (R-Plano)

A medical doctor by training, Dr. Schwertner currently serves as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Health and Human Services. Schwertner is currently serving his second term as the senator for Senate District 5, a ten-county region of central and east Texas.

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