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Senator Garcia Files Bills To Protect Immigrants and Their Families

Austin, TX--Today, Senator Sylvia Garcia (D-Houston) filed three bills to protect immigrants and immigrant families. One bill, SB 108, will prevent police from actively enforcing immigration laws in certain "safe places." The others, SB 109 and SB 110 will repeal SB 4, the "anti-sanctuary cities" bill, passed during the regular legislative session earlier this year.

Despite protests from civil rights groups, law enforcement, and immigrants' rights activists, the Texas Legislature passed SB 4, an "anti-sanctuary cities" bill, that would essentially lead to law enforcement asking for people's documentation to prove their citizenship or permanent resident status in any place, at any time. "A broken taillight could lead to a broken family," said Garcia. "People of all races, ages, and socioeconomic statuses should not have to live in fear of law enforcement, or worry that at any moment, they could be asked to prove their immigration status to law enforcement. SB 4 will lead to racial profiling and unsafe communities."

SB 108 would create exemptions to SB 4 in "safe places" where people would be protected from law enforcement asking them to "show their papers." The list of safe places would include public schools, institutions of higher education, hospitals, places of worship, and courthouses.

SB 109 would not only repeal SB 4, but would also create sanctions for local entities that detain people unconstitutionally.

SB 110 would simply repeal SB 4, passed during the regular session.

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State Senator Sylvia R. Garcia represents Senate District 6 and serves as Chair of the Texas Senate Hispanic Caucus