



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Legislators File Bills to Help Improve Campus Security**

**AUSTIN** — Many universities and school districts in Texas have full time police departments that employ police officers to protect our kids while attending school. These officers participate in a pension system that requires them to work up to 40 years before they qualify for a full pension.

Most other officers in Texas participate in pension systems that allow officers to retire after 20 to 25 years of service. Because of this, school districts and universities have a difficult time attracting and retaining qualified candidates to hire as police officers.

School district and university police departments have become either training departments where officers go to work to gain experience and then move on when they find a better opportunity, or these departments have become retirement jobs for officers who have already retired from other police agencies in Texas.

“We should do more than just talk about the safety of Texas school children. If school districts are going to have police departments, then the officers working there should be our best. School districts are running police departments on the cheap. Officers must work 40 years before they can even retire. Texas cannot continue with secret tiers of standards, training, and benefits,” said Charley Wilkison, Executive Director of the Combined Law Enforcement Associations of Texas (CLEAT).

Several bills have been filed at the request of CLEAT. Senator Roland Gutierrez (D-San Antonio) has filed SB 1270 and SB 1271. Representative Ryan Guillen (R-Rio Grande City) has filed HB 4141 and Representative John Bryant (D-Dallas) has filed HB 3869.

These bills are designed to fix the pension inequity of campus officers compared to all other Texas peace officers.

“If we are serious about protecting our children in schools and universities, it is time to be practical about how we treat the officers who are going to do so,” said Representative Bryant. “The difficulty faced by Texas school districts and universities in acquiring reliable, appropriately trained officers is the direct result of unreasonable, unspoken rules that provide little incentive and support to those who take on the important task of keeping our children safe at school.”

After Uvalde, there is an open debate about how Texas should protect our children when they are attending our schools and institutions of higher education. We need to ensure that campus police departments can hire the best of the best to protect our children. This means we need to demand that these officers meet high standards and that we pay them accordingly, including funding equitable pensions. CLEAT is committed to this goal.

