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## **Sen. Rodríguez statement on open carry vote in the Texas Senate**

AUSTIN – After a lengthy debate, the Senate voted to approve the open carry bill. Prior to passing the bill, an amendment was added to prevent the law from being used to profile people:

*I voted against open carry, as I have against campus carry and other gun proliferation laws, because I do not believe the display of deadly weapons, especially handguns that have no other purpose besides injuring and killing people, makes us safer. In my view, it is quite the opposite -- the open display of handguns creates a hostile environment and makes it more likely the weapons will be used. That is bad for Texas.*

*Despite strong objections from law enforcement, which agreed that open carry will make their job more difficult, the majority of the Senate supported open carry. And if it remained unlawful, as it is now, police would have cause to question a person who was brandishing a handgun. But the fact is that once we make it legal to carry handguns openly, people doing so are afforded the same Fourth Amendment constitutional protections against unreasonable search and seizure that apply to anyone engaged in a lawful activity.*

*While I am a strong supporter of law enforcement, we have seen cases in which police have detained people solely on the basis of their race or ethnicity. I voted for this amendment simply to emphasize that profiling is not legal, even if, unfortunately, open carry becomes law over the objections of myself and many of my colleagues.*

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*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 Senate Hispanic Caucus, and is a member of the Senate Committees on Education; Health and Human Services; Veteran Affairs and Military Installations; Nominations; and Agriculture, Water, and Rural Affairs.*