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## **Local bidder bill vetoed by Governor** *Action hurts community businesses*

Austin - S.B. 408, which state Sen. José Rodríguez and state Rep. Cesar Blanco passed to support local business and allow counties optional additional criteria to use when evaluating bids, was vetoed by the governor today.

The local control bill would allow counties to do what cities already are allowed to do – use more than simple cost as the only criteria to assess best value to the community when awarding contracts.

The bill would allow counties to add local preference to bid submissions, but also require a finding that the local bidder offers the best combination of contract price and additional economic development opportunities for the county.

"This veto follows the state's trend of denying local communities the ability to make governance decisions," said state Sen. Rodríguez. "The governor's action does not protect taxpayers. Instead, it interferes with the ability of communities to determine and meet their own needs through their locally elected representatives."

Count Judge Veronica Escobar said: "I am disappointed in Governor Abbott vetoing a bill that went through a vigorous vetting process in both the Senate and House chambers. S.B. 408 simply provided county governments the same authority city governments have when making decisions on local bidders.

"In addition, the bill did not mandate county governments to change their existing policies, but granted them the authority to do so only after a finding that a local bidder offered the best combination of contract price along with additional economic development opportunities. The County of El Paso is thankful to Senator Jose Rodriguez and Representative Cesar Blanco for sponsoring SB 408 as they worked to ensure that El Pasoans tax dollars continue fueling our local economy. We look forward to continuing the dialogue around this issue leading up to the next legislative session."

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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.*