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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

July 17, 2017

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Senator Kolkhorst Files Priority Maternal Mortality Legislation for Special Session

AUSTIN - Senator Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) has authored Senate Bill 17 to extend the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force and other policies to improve maternal health in Texas. This legislation is one of 20 items that Governor Greg Abbott previously announced to be addressed on the special session agenda.

"We must continue the critical work of addressing maternal mortality and morbidity in Texas," said Sen. Kolkhorst. "Today our state is working hard to collect, analyze and address the top causes, but there is so much more we can do. I look forward to collaborating with my fellow lawmakers in a bipartisan effort to bring Texas to the forefront of solving this nationwide challenge of pregnancy-related deaths and maternal health."

Senate Bill 17 will expand the work and role of the Maternal Mortality and Morbidity Task Force. The legislation requires the Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) and the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) to develop strategies for addressing the top causes of maternal mortality. The bill also requires HHSC to identify ways new to lower costs and improve maternal health in the Medicaid program, including a new initiative that would study and determine evidence-based best practices and protocols for health care providers to improve maternal health and safety.

Governor Greg Abbott praised Senator Kolkhorst for her leadership on this issue. "Pregnancy-related deaths are a devastating tragedy that leave many Texas families broken," said Governor Abbott. "That is why extending the maternal mortality task force to find solutions is of vital importance this special session. I am grateful to Senator Kolkhorst, Rep. Burkett, Rep. Thierry and Rep. Walle for leading the charge in the legislature, and am confident that with their leadership, we can begin taking the necessary steps to address this pressing issue and further protect women in Texas."