



## SENATOR PAUL BETTENCOURT

DISTRICT 7

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Contact Information

Lauri Saathoff | (512) 463-0107

Lauri.Saathoff@senate.texas.gov

### **Senators Bettencourt and Kolkhorst Stand for Religious Liberties; File SB 1609, Homeowners' Religious Freedom Act** *Senate sponsor Bettencourt says legislation defends right to religious expression, limits "overzealous homeowners' associations"*

AUSTIN – State Senators Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) and Lois W. Kolkhorst (R-Brenham) today filed Senate Bill 1609, which will prevent homeowners' associations (HOA) from placing burdensome restrictions on religious displays.

**"A fundamental tenet of American society is the freedom of religious expression,"** Senator Bettencourt said. **"Our God-given constitutionally protected rights must never be subject to the whims of overzealous homeowners' associations. SB 1609 will ensure that no homeowners association has the right to tell Texans how they are allowed to express or display their religious convictions,"** he added.

**"Homeowners should own their own front door in America!"** Senator Bettencourt concluded.

SB 1609 is the Senate companion to House bill 522, which was filed by State Representative Mike Schofield (R-Houston). SB 1609 strikes provisions under current law that limit homeowners' right to affix religious displays to their front door and prohibit an HOA from taking down any religious display on homeowners' property. Additionally, the bill also removes the provision of allowing an HOA to effectively ban religious displays by having control of the allowable materials, or not allowing any at all. Finally, the bill only allows the removal of displays that are patently offensive "for reasons other than religious content."

**"It is the role of government to protect and defend our rights,"** Senator Kolkhorst said. **"With this legislation, we are ensuring all Texans are free to exercise their rights without the overbearing hand of government getting in the way,"** she added.

Both Senators look forward to debate in the House and Senate on what is a fundamental American right.

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CAPITOL OFFICE:  
P.O. Box 12068  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711-0107  
(512) 463-0107  
FAX (512) 463-8810

COMMITTEES:  
INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS – VICE-CHAIR  
EDUCATION  
FINANCE  
HIGHER EDUCATION

DISTRICT OFFICE:  
11451 KATY FREEWAY, STE. 209  
HOUSTON, TEXAS 77079  
(713) 464-0282  
FAX (713) 461-0108

