

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 8, 2023

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Flores Files Legislation to Target Gang and Criminal Enterprise Assets
Senators Flores and Hinojosa File SB 1788

AUSTIN, TEXAS - Yesterday, Texas State Senators Pete Flores (SD-24) and Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa (SD-20) filed Senate Bill 1788 which would create a new racketeering offense in Texas and provide law enforcement officers the statutory authority to target the financial assets of criminal enterprises and gang operations.

"The cartels and gangs are getting rich off of loopholes in Texas law," said Senator Flores. "There are costly, and often deadly gaps that leave our law enforcement officers and without the resources to build strong cases against these gangs and criminal organizations. SB 1788 will target these groups to hit them where it hurts most – their bottom line. It's no secret that these organizations have become more sophisticated and diversified which is how they have sidestepped our current laws. I am committed to expanding the arsenal of Texas law enforcement officers and prosecutors so they may take down the despicable groups who profit off of trafficking innocent human beings, drugs, and weapons. The days of these criminal organizations plaguing our state are numbered."

"We need to provide our law enforcement with additional tools to prosecute criminal enterprise racketeering groups that are well organized," said Senator Hinojosa. "This bill not only addresses building strong cases against gangs and criminal activities it also gives us the tools to prosecute criminals who use sophisticated financial methods to commit white collar crimes. This would include white collar crimes such as bribery and corrupt influence of public officials."

Background:

Texas has seen an exponential flood of international gang and criminal enterprise organizations terrorizing communities. Organized crime units consume millions of local dollars through their unlawful and illegal criminal activities.

SB 1788 aims to provide law enforcement officers and prosecutors with additional statutory authority to target financial assets of criminal enterprises and gangs that participate in racketeering. This bill will establish new penal prohibitions, enhanced sanctions, and increased penalties for certain offenses. These new tools will allow law enforcement to target key assets of criminal organizations; properties, investments, and other financial assets. This legislation is modeled after the federal *Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act*. Racketeering refers to any act of committing or participating in organized, coercive criminal activity, including trafficking, drug dealing, and illegal financial activities.

Senate District 24 is comprised of the following 13 counties: Atascosa (partial), Bandera, Bell, Burnet, Coryell, Gillespie, Kerr, Kimble, Lampasas, Llano, Medina, Sutton, and Williamson (partial).

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