



The Senate of The State of Texas

Senator Pete Flores

District 24

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Governor Abbott Signs Three Criminal Justice Bills by Flores Into Law

Senator Flores has (3) strong criminal justice bills signed by the Governor

AUSTIN, TEXAS – Yesterday, three criminal justice laws sponsored by Senator Pete Flores (SD-24) were signed by Governor Greg Abbott; House Bills 467 (Craddick, HD-82), 1207 (Guillen, HD-31), and 2183 (Stucky, HD-64), will take effect September 1. Senator Flores issued the following statement upon their passage.

“As vice-chair of the Senate Committee on Criminal Justice, I was proud to author and sponsor several strong criminal justice reform bills,” said Flores. **“It was an honor to work with Representatives Craddick, Guillen, and Stucky on these bills, and others this session. HB 467, HB 1207, and HB 2183 are strong bipartisan bills that will ensure our criminal justice system has stronger penalties and enforcement authority. Increasing criminal penalties is not something I take lightly, but it is imperative we provide our legal system with powerful means to deter criminal activity.**

“As we draw to the end of the 88th session, I’m proud to have these impactful bills across the finish line and signed into law.”

Background:

The statute of limitations period for certain assault crimes is currently only two or three years, depending on whether the crime is a misdemeanor or felony. Oftentimes in cases where victims are family members of or are in various types of relationship with the defendant, the victims are unable to expeditiously report the abusive behavior given the continuing control their abusers exert over their lives. H.B. 467 seeks to address this issue by extending the statute of limitations period from two years to three years for misdemeanor assault, and from three years to five years for felony assault, committed against a person whose relationship to or association with the defendant is described as dating, family, or household as defined by the Family Code. This gives the victims and police adequate time to identify the aggressor and present the case to a jury of their peers.

The current statute of limitations for removing, disposing of, dismembering a body, or destroying evidence, which helps in a homicide investigation, is only three years. HB 1207 removes the statute of limitations for tampering with evidence when the evidence is a human corpse or would be used in a criminal homicide investigation. This change in statute will ensure that those who help cover up such heinous acts will be brought to justice no matter how long it takes to discover their actions.

The state's county jails have faced workforce challenges recently and are experiencing deficits in their workforce as they try to navigate the complexities of competing with employers who can offer more pay or better benefits. H.B. 2183 will ease workforce challenges for our sheriff's at county jails. This bill allows an individual to start at a jail under a temporary license. At the end of 12 months, if they have not achieved full licensure, the sheriff can petition TCOLE for a six-month extension on the temporary license to give them more time to complete it. If an individual in good standing leaves the jail under a temporary license, they are eligible for a subsequent temporary license in the future if they choose to seek employment at a jail. In addition, a person whose county jailer license has become inactive may be appointed as a county jailer on a temporary basis.

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