



# The Senate of Texas

**CÉSAR J. BLANCO**

TEXAS SENATOR  
DISTRICT 29

**Press Release**

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## **Senate Passes Rural Mental Health Legislation by Senator César J. Blanco**

**Austin, Texas** – Today, the Texas Senate approved Senate Bill 850 authored by Senator César J. Blanco. Senate Bill 850 will add a representative from a rural Education Service Center (ESC) to the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium (Consortium) to better connect rural school districts to mental health services and resources provided by the Consortium.

The Consortium was established in 2019 to leverage the expertise and capacity of the health-related institutions of higher education to address urgent mental health challenges and improve the mental health care system in this state concerning children and adolescents. ESCs provide school districts an array of services customized to the regional context, including services to improve students' mental, emotional, and social health. Under current law, ESCs are excluded from the Consortium.

“The Education Service Centers (ESCs) are on the ground providing school districts with critical mental health services,” said Senator Blanco. “By adding rural ESCs to the Texas Child Mental Health Care Consortium, Senate Bill 850 will help our ESCs deliver better mental health services and resources to our rural school kids. In addition, a rural ESC representative will provide the Consortium a unique perspective into the mental health needs and challenges facing rural kids.”

Texas is home to over 900,000 rural students, which grows by 30,000 annually. Although rates of mental health disorders are consistent between urban and rural parts of Texas, data indicates that rural children are more likely to abuse substances and attempt suicide and are less likely to have access to behavioral health care in a mental health emergency.

Senator Blanco also added, “Across West Texas, especially in our rural communities, there is a growing need for children’s mental health services and resources. This bill will be a bridge for our rural kids to a statewide network of mental health services and resources, including tailored delivery for rural school districts.”

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