



RYAN GUILLEN

★
TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
APRIL 18, 2018

FOR MORE INFORMATION:
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GUILLEN FIGHTS OPIOID EPIDEMIC *Opioid Select Committee Meeting This Week*

AUSTIN - The Select Committee on Opioids and Substance Abuse recently held a public hearing in Austin to discuss the impact of opioid and substance abuse on vulnerable populations such as pregnant women, new mothers, veterans, and those suffering from mental illness. Representative Ryan Guillen (D - Rural South Texas) emphasizes the importance of examining the opioid problem facing Texans so that it can be properly addressed in the next legislative session.

"When hundreds of people are affected daily by the overuse and misuse of opioids, something must be done," said Guillen. "It is our duty as Texans to find what the cause is and how we can help those who are suffering."

According to the CDC, between 1999 to 2016, more than 630,000 people died from drug overdoses in the US. In 2016 alone there were over 63,600 drug overdoses, and of those, 66% can be attributed to opioids. The Select Committee on Opioids and Substance Abuse hearing focused on studying the prevalence and impact of substance use and substance use disorders in Texas, reviewing the prevalence of substance abuse in specific populations to identify programs that would be helpful and seek improvements to those programs where needed, and reviewing policies and guidelines used by state agencies to monitor and prevent abuse of prescription drugs.

Representative Guillen emphasizes the importance of figuring out the best way to deal with the epidemic facing our nation, and will make it his mission in the next legislative session to create lifelines for those affected here in Texas. Guillen has already worked hard to pass legislation that would help those at risk of opioid overdose. He authored and passed a "Good Samaritan" bill in 2015 and 2017 that would have provided a defense to prosecution for people who call emergency medical assistance in the event of an overdose. Unfortunately, the Governor vetoed this legislation in 2015 and it failed to pass in 2017. Guillen vows to continue the fight in the next session.

"I am working with my staff, other members of the Legislature, and with public health officials to find out how best we can tackle this crisis in the next legislative session," added Guillen. "Together, we can find a solution to this dangerous threat."

Serving ten rural South Texas counties in the Texas House of Representatives, Ryan Guillen is known for his hard work, fierce independence, and relentless efforts for South Texas families. Recently, Capitol Inside called him a "House Bill Machine," and a "one-person assembly line for legislation." Since elected, few other legislators have passed more bills than Guillen. Sign up for updates at ryanguillen.com, facebook.com/representative.guillen, and twitter.com/ryanguillen



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