



RYAN GUILLEN

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TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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GUILLEN HELPS REFORM FOSTER CARE *Legislative Overhaul to Improve Foster Care Now Taking Effect*

AUSTIN - Representative Ryan Guillen (D- Rural South Texas) is proud to announce that several measures he was an author of to improve the foster care system are now taking effect. The measures make institutional changes to CPS to improve care, add a total of \$500 million to the program, and fund the hiring of 1400 new caseworkers to reduce each worker's caseload and increase the time they can devote to each child.

"This overhaul was long overdue. The lives of foster children are of utmost importance, and they desperately need our help," said Guillen.

The CPS system has come under fire in recent years because of slow reporting of potential abuse, slow investigations, and inadequate care, especially for youth with mental illnesses, prompting many to call for major reforms to the system. Foster children have even been forced to sleep in government buildings because there was nowhere else for them to go.

Guillen has worked on several bills this year to improve the foster care system within the state. He was an author of H.B. 7, which assists children in CPS by providing additional funding to investigate alleged abuse and support mental health treatment, and improves care by requiring a greater focus on the best interest of the child. Guillen also helped the passage of S.B. 11, the senate version of a house bill he was an author of, which strengthens the foster care system by giving more authority to local communities to care for foster children. This community-based foster care allows for local governments and local nonprofits to take a leading role in caring for foster children in their local area, and they are often able to provide better care for the child.

Additionally, Guillen helped author two measures that provide assistance to caregivers of foster children so that they can provide better care to their kids. H.B. 4 provides greater financial assistance for qualified family members who care for foster children as opposed to sending the children to a foster home. These caretakers are known as kinship care givers, and they are generally able to provide better care and an easier transition for the child. Guillen was also an author of H.B. 88, which ensures that the caretakers of foster children are granted the same work-leave rights to care for their sick child as any other parent is given. Previously, work leave policies only required leave be granted for parents with sick biological or adopted children.

"We have a responsibility to provide a system that is reliable and safe for these children in the most vulnerable time in their life," added Guillen.

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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