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TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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FREE PRE-K FOR STAR OF TEXAS FIRST RESPONDERS

HB 357 - Honors Sacrifices of First Responders, Passes House, Goes to Senate

AUSTIN – HB 357, a bill that would allow the children of first responder recipients of the Star of Texas Award to be eligible for free pre-kindergarten classes, was successfully passed out of the Texas House on **Thursday, April 20**, and is currently awaiting action in the Texas Senate. State Representative Ryan Guillen (D-Rural South Texas) is an author of HB 357.

"First responders who have received the Star of Texas Award have displayed their utmost commitment to protecting the citizens of Texas," said Guillen. "Providing free pre-kindergarten to the children of those outstanding individuals is a small gesture to ease the financial burdens their families may face."

HB 357 seeks to expand that range of eligibility to include the children of peace officers, firefighters, and emergency medical first responders who have received the Star of Texas Award, an honor given to those who have been seriously injured or killed in the line of duty.

Currently, a sizable number of children already qualify for free pre-kindergarten, including the children of active duty members of the armed forces and the children of members of the armed forces who were injured or killed while serving on active duty. By adding the children of Star of Texas recipients, the Texas legislature would be removing an extra financial burden faced by the families of first responders who have served Texas far beyond our normal expectations.

"It is the responsibility of all Texans to honor the sacrifices of our state's first responders," said Guillen. "HB 357 is an excellent way to continue to show our gratitude for their commitment."

Rep. Guillen is proud to see the House recognize the sacrifices made by the First Responders of Texas, and he urges the Senate to support this amendment to the Texas Education Code.

Representative Ryan Guillen serves ten rural South Texas counties in the Texas House of Representatives, including Atascosa, Brooks, Duval, Jim Hogg, Kenedy, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, Starr, and Willacy.

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