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Governor Abbott Gets First Three Bills of the Special Session: SB 5, SB 20 and SB 60

*Texas Senate passes mail in voter fraud bill, Senate Bill 5, and House Bill 13
Legislation on local tree ordinances, House Bill 7, heads back to the Texas House*

AUSTIN – As announced by Lt. Governor Patrick, some of the first pieces of legislation from the special session are being sent to Governor Abbott’s desk. Three senate bills, SB 5, SB 20, and SB 60, have all been sent to the Governor for his signature. This legislation is the “sunset” legislation as well as legislation to protect against mail in voter fraud. The “sunset” legislation was authored by Senator Van Taylor (R-Plano) and the bill to prevent mail in voter fraud was authored by Senator Hancock (R-North Richland Hills).

“When a citizen’s vote is stolen, their identity, ideas, and beliefs – which only they have the right to express through their vote – have been stolen as well. This egregious fraud must be stopped,” said Senator Hancock. **“Sadly we’ve seen criminals make mail ballots a prime target for illegal voting and election fraud, as evidenced by ongoing investigations in multiple Texas counties.”**

The Senate additionally passed strong pro-life legislation (HB 13), sponsored by Senator Donna Campbell (R-New Braunfels) and legislation to protect private property rights (HB 7), sponsored by Senator Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham). House Bill 13 requires that certain health care facilities report complications from abortions and for the Department of State Health Services to publish this data. House Bill 7 would protect private property rights and lower fees and offer credits to offset these costs associated with removing a tree.

“So many of our freedoms flow from the constitutional right to own our own property, and that right extends to the trees on our land,” said Senator Kolkhorst. **“We must give clear guidance and protections to homeowners and businesses when they face a municipal tree ordinance, which is why it is vital to pass House Bill 7. This legislation strengthens property rights and strikes a sensible balance between the government and the governed.”**

“Today, we sent the Governor a great bill that protects the health and safety of women by requiring accurate reporting of medical data when there is a complication resulting from an abortion,” added Senator Campbell. **“Medical data is not biased and we can learn a lot about patient care from collecting this data. I applaud my colleagues in the Senate for their strong support and hard work in helping to pass this important pro-life bill.”**

HB 13 and HB 7 passed the Texas Senate by a vote of 22-9 and 17-14 respectively. HB 7 will now go back to the Texas House and HB 13 will be sent to Governor Abbott.

Texas Senate Republican Caucus Chair Paul Bettencourt (R-Houston) concluded, **“As a former voter registrar, I fully understand the need for strong voter protection measures. During my time in this role I saw a voter fraud conviction first hand. Protecting the integrity of the voter roll, with SB 5, is paramount for the bedrock of democracy. The Senate will continue to work hard to send conservative solutions to Texas’ challenges to Governor Abbott’s desk during this special session.”**

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