



Harvey Hilderbran

MEMBER

The Texas House of Representatives

State Representative • District 53

For immediate release
Date: April 21, 2005

Contact: Lindsay Graham
512/463-0536

HILDERBRAN AMENDS SB 6 TO ADDRESS POLYGAMIST ACTIVITIES

AUSTIN - Representative Harvey Hilderbran added an amendment to SB 6 this week that nearly mirrors HB 3006, the bill he filed in response to concerns raised by a polygamist sect that fled Utah and Arizona to settle in Schleicher County last year.

"My bill focuses on protecting children, so adding this language into the Senate's child protective services bill made perfect sense," Hilderbran said.

A second amendment the representative added to the Senate bill will clarify that the attorney general may report allegations of neglect or abuse to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services. While the attorney general probably already fits under the umbrella of a law enforcement agency, Hilderbran's amendment would make this clear.

SB 6 is currently in a conference committee to iron out the differences between the House and Senate versions. Hilderbran said that he will work with the members of the committee and the senate bill's author to ensure that his amendment makes its way into law.

In addition to amending the Senate bill, the representative will continue to pursue passage of HB 3006. His legislation was heard April 13 in the House Committee on Juvenile Justice and Family Issues, where it was left pending for further action.

Hilderbran's original bill and his amendment to the Senate bill would both raise the age of consent for marriage from 14 to 16 and outlaw stepparents from marrying stepchildren. He filed the bill after hearing reports that the group, known as the Fundamentalist Church of Latter Day Saints, had forced young girls into incestuous marriages.

The sect, which has been rejected by mainstream Mormons who have denounced polygamy for over a century, came under scrutiny in recent months when Jeffs was accused in civil lawsuits of sexually abusing his underage nephew and covering up widespread molestations by fellow sect leaders.