



TEXAS CRIMINAL JUSTICE COALITION



May 1, 2017

A broad coalition of organizations representing law enforcement, hospitals, counties and the judiciary support CS HB 2068 by Rep. Larry Phillips. CS HB 2068 would eliminate the Driver Responsibility Program while continuing critical state funding for Texas trauma hospitals.

Since its passage in 2003, the DRP has imposed civil fines and penalties on top of traffic and criminal fines, and channeled some of that revenue to Texas trauma hospitals. Funds from the program have supported the development of an improved trauma infrastructure, an increase in the number and geographic reach of designated trauma hospitals and a trauma mortality rate well below the national average. However, despite its serving as the main source of funding to offset some of Texas trauma hospitals' uncompensated trauma care costs, the DRP has been administratively complex and burdensome for judges, courts and sheriffs and challenging for those subject to its fines and penalties, particularly low-income Texans.

Texas hospitals and other stakeholders long have recognized the program's flaws and have worked to identify other sources of trauma hospital funding in order to reduce reliance on the DRP. CS HB 2068 would continue to penalize irresponsible drivers, including those convicted of driving while intoxicated, while giving counties and judges more leeway to adjudicate individual cases. Most importantly, funding for Texas trauma hospitals is preserved.

*"We believe that the repeal of the Driver Responsibility Program could be the most significant move in the last 100 years at the Texas Capitol. The program is an unfair tax upon the poor and indigent. We support the repeal of the program and CS HB 2068."* Justices of the Peace and Constables Association of Texas

*"CS HB 2068 will remove the unworkable Drivers Responsibility Program, continue essential funding for trauma centers and EMS, and allow the courts and law enforcement to appropriately protect public safety."* County Judges and Commissioners Association of Texas

*"The Driver Responsibility Program has been a double penalty on the poor for far too long. We applaud Rep. Phillips for his efforts to eliminate the DRP while continuing funding for our Texas trauma hospitals."* Smart on Crime Coalition

*"The Texas trauma system has grown significantly in both size and impact due to the funding received from the Driver Responsibility Program. We applaud Representative Phillips for proposing a viable option for eliminating the DRP without resulting in dangerous cuts to the state's trauma infrastructure."* Texas EMS Trauma & Acute Care Foundation

*“We strongly support CSHB 2068 as it eliminates the DRP and its unintended negative impacts on low income Texans, and at the same time, preserves funding to continue Texas’ commitment to critical trauma care services and needs. We believe this approach offers an unprecedented opportunity to address this long-standing challenge in a sustainable way.”* Teaching Hospitals of Texas

*“We believe CSHB 2068 is an effective compromise to end a program that has had unintended consequences and to preserve vital funding for Texas trauma hospitals and the patients who need them. We applaud Rep. Phillips’ commitment to protecting access to trauma care while eliminating a flawed and burdensome program.”* Texas Hospital Association