

Representative Chuck Hopson Casts Supports East Texas School Districts and Voting

AUSTIN — Representatives Chuck Hopson and Harvey Hilderbran successfully amended House Bill 2136 which



directs school counselors to report student referrals to the school districts administration. The school district would then have to make that information public. The Hopson amendment exempted school districts that have an enrollment under 5500 students, which includes all the school districts in Hopson's

legislative district.

"Texas school counselors tell me that up to one-third of their time is spent filling out paperwork, not helping our students," Hopson said. "Many of the counselors in my district called me on this one and told me that the bill, as written, would prevent them from spending needed time with students and would cause some students not to seek help based on fear." That fear is one that Rep. Hopson's wife, Billie, a former school counselor expressed Monday afternoon.

Unfortunately, there is still a stigma about getting counseling. This bill would continue that stigma and stop families and their children from seeking valuable help," said Mrs. Hopson. "In small towns and communities, it is likely that everybody knows what everybody else is doing. Or at least, they think they do." The Texas House also heard House Bill 218 requiring a voter to present certain forms of identification in order to vote. This bill would make it more difficult for Texas senior citizens to vote. Hopson joined leaders from the AARP, the League of Women Voters, and other groups Monday in opposition to an assault on Texans' voting rights. "Let's be clear about this: there is no voter impersonation problem or voter fraud epidemic in this state," said Rep. Hopson. "This is an effort by a small group of legislators to keep seniors from voting. I voted against House Bill 218 in order to protect the rights of thousands of voters in East Texas." Unfortunately, the voter suppression bill passed the House on Monday night. If it passes the Senate, it will require voters to present a photo ID card at the polls, in addition to a valid voter registration card, in order to vote. As a practical matter, this requirement would disenfranchise thousands of elderly Texans by denying them the right to cast a ballot because they no longer have a valid drivers license. The Senate has pledged to keep the bill from final passage if changes are not made. In 2006, the non-partisan Brennan Center for Justice found that 18% of seniors over 65, do not have a government-issued photo identification. For many seniors and even working families, getting a photo ID takes time, money and mobility that others may take for granted. "HB 218 is a poll tax—photo IDs are not free," stated Hopson. "This bill will particularly hurt seniors, but it will also place an extra burden on many Texans, effectively limiting their right to vote." Please contact our offices at 1-866-233-5100 or 512-463-0592 should you have any questions or concerns

Temporary restraining order protects consumers against product marketed as street drug alternative

DALLAS — Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott today filed a legal action against a Nevada company and its three Texas distributors for the marketing and selling of an energy drink as an unapproved street drug, claiming it is a "legal alternative" to illicit street drugs. The Dallas County District Court issued a temporary restraining order halting all Texas marketing and distribution of the drink, "Cocaine." Redux Beverages touts the canned drink as "speed in a can" and "liquid cocaine," with "warnings" that consumers who drink the product may succumb to "excess excitement, stamina, fun and possible feelings of euphoria." "Texans will not tolerate the peddling of unapproved drugs," said Attorney General

Abbott. "This advertising campaign entices young people with illegal drug references and false claims of health benefits.



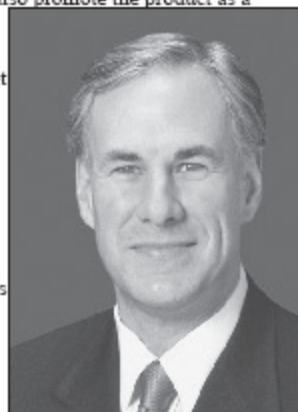
The Office of Attorney General will continue to aggressively enforce this state's consumer protection laws to ensure that Texans will not be deceived by the marketing of unapproved drugs." A temporary injunction hearing in the case is set for Wednesday, May 16, at 9:30 a.m. in the 44th District Court of Dallas County. The Texas Department of State Health Services recently detained a large quantity of the drink, valued at almost \$200,000, at several warehouse locations in the Dallas area. The agency then referred the

case to the Office of Attorney General for legal action. In a warning letter issued to Redux, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) noted that because the company markets Cocaine as an alternative to street drugs, including claims that it mimics the effects of recreational drugs, then Redux cannot also promote the product as a dietary supplement.

Furthermore, the FDA considers street drug alternatives to be unapproved new drugs that are prohibited in the marketplace

According to the Attorney General's filing, the company's claims that users can get high and feel euphoric make the product a drug, yet the FDA has not approved it for use as a drug. Without scientific proof as required by the FDA, the company also makes health claims that Cocaine lowers cholesterol, prevents hardening of the arteries, protects nerve fibers from glucose damage, and may be used in the treatment of depression or anxiety.

The Attorney General brings this action under the Texas Food, Drug and Cosmetics Act and the Texas Deceptive Trade Practices Act, which allow for penalties, respectively, of up to \$25,000 and \$20,000 per violation.



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