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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Republican Governor Greg Abbott has announced that he will sign into law Senate Bill 4, which gives sheriffs, state police, and local police the power to arrest anyone suspected to have entered the country illegally. If enacted, SB4 would become the most harsh, cruel, and reckless immigration law in American history.

This legislation has immediately drawn widespread condemnation from Texas Democrats, some Republicans, a multitude of nonpartisan groups, and the Mexican government. The **Jeff Davis County Democrats** oppose SB4 for the following reasons:

1. It is unconstitutional. In 2012, in *Arizona v. U.S.*, the Supreme Court ruled that the federal government is exclusively in charge of immigration enforcement. In hearings on SB4, 30 immigration judges, appointed by Republicans and Democrats, called it unconstitutional, stating that it should “offend those who treasure our constitutional protections.”
2. Mexico opposes the legislation. The Mexican secretary of foreign relations has stated: *The Government of Mexico categorically rejects any measure that allows state or local authorities to detain and return nationals or foreigners to Mexican territory.*
3. It would force non-Mexican citizens to return to Mexico, against the wishes of the Mexican government. In 2023, 83% of immigrants on the Texas-Mexico border were not Mexican citizens.
4. Non-immigration judges would be required to make immigration determinations.
5. Under US law, all entering the country have one year to apply for asylum, but under SB4, undocumented immigrants could be deported while their case is still pending. State courts would be prohibited from waiting for the outcome of federal immigration proceedings.
6. SB4 can be enforced statewide, by local sheriffs and police far from the Texas-Mexico border and could easily lead to wrongful detention of nonwhite Texans. According to Houston Democratic Representative Armando Walle:

SB4 is a sweeping overreach of state authority, allowing any law enforcement official to detain individuals and families merely suspected of crossing the border illegally. This legislation makes our communities less safe, codifies racial profiling, and will cost our counties millions in unfunded mandates.

7. The bill provides no remedy for those who are wrongfully detained or deported.

Money spent on SB4 and accompanying legislation could be better spent on a host of urgent priorities – for example, public schools, hospitals, neighborhood clinics, to support special education in public schools, and affordable housing, which are especially needed in rural and border areas.

Immigrants are an important, highly productive component of our communities, especially along the border. We need an immigration plan that respects the rights of asylum seekers and other migrants. Legislation like SB4 always has unintended effects, leads to racial profiling, and ultimately, violates human rights.

Our elected officials, who represent border communities and know border problems firsthand, have offered promising proposals to help resolve our immigration issues. The *Texas Secure Our Border Migrant Processing Plan* proposed by Democratic State Representative Eddie Morales (Eagle Pass) offers a practical, pragmatic approach to our migrant problem. The *Dignity Act*, a bipartisan immigration plan offered by Democratic U.S. Representative Veronica Escobar (El Paso) with a Florida Republican, addresses humanitarian and economic concerns at the border. If we set politics aside, we can find real solutions.

Calvin Glover, Chair
Jeff Davis County Democratic Party