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**REP. GONZALES AUTHORS TEXAS PREVENTION FIRST ACT
Reduces Sexually Transmitted Diseases and Statewide Abortion Rate**

State Representative Veronica Gonzales (D-McAllen) has joint-authored the Texas Prevention First Act (HB 1842) which aims to reduce unplanned pregnancies and curb the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). Representative Gonzales stated HB 1842 will expand access to preventative health care services and education programs and save public health funds for Texans across the state. "I am proud to support the Texas Prevention First Act which will take essential steps to reducing unplanned pregnancies among our youth. Texas leads the nation in teenagers having babies, and one of every two deliveries in Texas is paid for with public dollars," said Gonzales.

The cost of helping women prevent unplanned pregnancies is a fraction of the cost of providing government services to indigent women and their babies. A year of family planning services costs \$170 for one woman, compared to \$8,500 for the first year of a Medicaid-funded pregnancy.

Because of the cost effectiveness of family planning services, the federal government will provide \$9 for every \$1 Texas spends on our Women's Health Program. At current levels, that program is projected to save the state \$278 million over 5 years. However, at current spending levels, when the Women's Health Program is fully implemented in 2009, the program is projected to serve only 12% of the eligible population. "Today's investment in promoting the Women's Health Program will benefit the State through significant savings to the State and federal government and dramatically reduce the abortion rate throughout Texas for years to come," said Gonzales.

"Supporting effective education and promoting statewide outreach for family planning services are essential to the successful goal to reduce unplanned pregnancies and ultimately reducing the need for abortions. The Prevention First Act is common sense, middle ground, and cost-effective policy," said Gonzales.

Rep. Gonzales' joined her colleagues, Rep. Mark Strama, (D-Austin); Rep. Rafael Anchia, (D-Dallas); Rep. Sylvester Turner (D-Houston) as a joint author for this legislation; and State Senators Kirk Watson, (D-Austin) and Jeff Wentworth (R-San Antonio) authored the Senate companion bill.