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**REP. ORTIZ FILES BILL TO REQUIRE PREGNANCY COVERAGE**  
~ PREGNANCY COVERAGE IMPORTANT FOR WORKING FAMILIES, DEMOCRAT SAYS ~

AUSTIN-- State Representative Solomon Ortiz Jr. (D-Corpus Christi) announced today that he has filed HB 1957, which would require that all health insurance plans in Texas cover prenatal care, labor and delivery.

"Helping children and families should be the state's top priority," Ortiz said. "This bill is pro-women, pro-children, and pro-family."

"A safe and healthy pregnancy is the starting point for a strong family," Ortiz added.

Currently, it is virtually impossible for Texans to purchase individual health insurance plans with pregnancy coverage. HB1957 would require that all health insurance plans cover pregnancy.

Ortiz's bill comes at a time when more employees are working part-time and fewer companies are offering comprehensive health insurance.

"More and more working families are being forced to pay out of pocket for pregnancy," Ortiz said. "With health care costs as high as they are, many can barely afford to start a family."

A complication in a pregnancy or delivery, or the need for a C-section can bankrupt a working or middle class family without a health insurance plan that covers pregnancy.

"Texas needs to live up to its reputation as a pro-family state," Ortiz said. "We need to get ahead of the curve when it comes to prenatal care."

Ortiz's bill would add Texas to the growing list of states recognizing the importance of mandating pregnancy coverage.

"Anything that helps women carry a child to term is a good thing," Ortiz said.

"Meanwhile, we also want to reduce the number of unintended pregnancies," he added. "That's why I've decided to coauthor HB 1842, which promotes the Women's Health Program."

The Women's Health Program helps provide women with access to gynecological exams, health screenings, birth control, and counseling.

"All women need access to safe, affordable family planning services and pregnancy care," Ortiz said.

Ortiz represents House District 33, which includes part of Nueces County and the City of Corpus Christi.