

PROCLAMATION

BY THE

Governor of the State of Texas

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:

Pursuant to Article IV, Section 14, of the Texas Constitution, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, do hereby disapprove of and veto House Bill No. 2803 as passed by the Eighty-Seventh Texas Legislature, Regular Session, because of the following objections:

House Bill 2803 seeks to prevent human trafficking, an aim I whole-heartedly share and applaud the author and sponsor for advancing. I have fought against human trafficking throughout my service as Attorney General and Governor. But House Bill 2803 goes about it in the wrong way, pitting tenants against other tenants and landlords, and drawing in basic licensing rules that are unrelated to trafficking. Texas law already allows a landlord to seek forcible eviction upon a reasonable belief that a tenant is engaging in prostitution or human trafficking on the premises. Under House Bill 2803, however, one tenant could have another tenant dragged into court just by making an accusation to the landlord, of something as mundane as sloppy recordkeeping by a massage establishment. That is no basis for governmental interference with a private contract between the landlord and the finger-pointing tenant. And the landlord is caught in the middle, practically forced to file against an allegedly offending tenant to avoid the severe, artificial consequences from inaction. The bill would be ripe for abuse by a disgruntled tenant looking for a way to break the lease or harass the neighbors.

The unforeseen negative consequences of this bill could be substantial, with no potential remedy until some future legislative session would be able to fix the flaws in the statute. But even then, there is never any certainty that a proposed bill would pass. The better strategy is to prepare a more narrowly tailored bill to achieve the end sought while avoiding the potential adverse consequences.

Since the Eighty-Seventh Texas Legislature, Regular Session, by its adjournment has prevented the return of this bill, I am filing these objections in the office of the Secretary of State and giving notice thereof by this public proclamation according to the aforementioned constitutional provision.



IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have signed my name officially and caused the Seal of the State to be affixed hereto at Austin, this 18th day of June, 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Abbott".

GREG ABBOTT
Governor of Texas

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
O'CLOCK

JUN 18 2021

A handwritten signature in black ink, likely belonging to the Secretary of State.
Secretary of State