

Hispanic faith leaders urge Abbott to veto immigration bills

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Hispanic Texas Baptists are among the evangelical Christians urging Gov. Greg Abbott to veto two immigration bills introduced in the special session of the Texas Legislature.

Hundreds of Hispanic evangelicals signed a letter sent to Abbott Nov. 6 encouraging him to veto SB 4 and SB 11.

They also invited the governor to meet with evangelical faith leaders to “jointly craft just and equitable legislation, fostering the growth and well-being of our communities.”

[SB 4](#), sponsored by Sen. Pete Flores, R-Pleasanton, would expand the state’s criminal human smuggling laws by increasing the penalty from two years to 10 years.

[SB 11](#), sponsored by Sen. Brian Birdwell, R-Granbury, would create a new state crime for entering Texas from Mexico illegally and would authorize state police to arrest violators.

Endorsing the call to veto SB 4 and SB 11 are Jesse Rincones, executive director of the Convención Bautista Hispana de Texas; Rolando Rodriguez, director of Texas Baptists en Español; Anyra Cano, director of programs and outreach for Fellowship Southwest; and Victor Marte, Hispanic church consultant at Union Baptist Association.

Pastors who signed the letter include Johnny Tec at Agape Baptist Church in San Antonio, Oscar Rojas at Iglesia Bautista Getsemani in Conroe, Pablo Juarez at Kaufman’s First Baptist Church en Español, Jesus David Sanchez

at Iglesia Bautista Southmost in Brownsville, Robert Muñoz at Iglesia Bautista Calvario in Corsicana, Oscar Toledo at Primera Iglesia Bautista de Alvin and Fernando Rojas of Azle Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth.

“We believe that these bills, if enacted, will adversely affect our communities and churches and deviate from the principles of love and compassion towards the most vulnerable among us,” the letter to Abbott stated.

“The passage of these bills will inadvertently foster fear and create unwarranted obstacles for the crucial care provided by our church immigrant and refugee ministries. This legislation appears to erect barriers that hinder churches in fulfilling their sacred mission of welcoming and caring for our neighbors.”

The letter encouraged Abbott to “revisit these public policies and collaborate with us to develop alternative solutions that promote the safety and prosperity of our communities.”

“Unifying our voices, we affirm that advocating for Hispanics in Texas is rooted in our interpretation of biblical values, which call us to extend hospitality to the stranger, care for immigrants and children, and love our neighbors as ourselves,” the letter stated. “We believe these values align harmoniously with the foundational principles of our great nation.”