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## Rep. Gonzáles Lands Ap- pointment to the Bi-national Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force

(AUSTIN) - Today, Speaker Tom Craddick (R - Midland) announced the appointment of Rep. Veronica Gonzáles (D-McAllen) to the Bi-national Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force.

"The ultimate goal of the Bi-national Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force is to protect our citizens - particularly our youth - along the United States/Mexico border. Underage and binge drinking often leads to adult alcoholism and to devastating health and social effects on our communities," said Representative Gonzáles. "I am proud to become a member of

this task force to aid in taking a giant step in the right direction to study the cause and effects of substance and alcohol abuse on the border so we can seek proper solutions."

The Bi-national Alcohol and Substance Abuse Task Force was established by statute under House Bill 3426. The Task Force will have five senators and five House members, each of whom represents a district wholly or partly located 25 miles or less from the international border with Mexico.

Included on the Task Force are three District Attorneys or their designees from different locations on the border, the Commissioner of the Department of State Health Services or a designee and the Public Safety Director of the Texas Department of Public Safety or a designee. The Chair and Vice Chair will appoint three regional residents with alcohol and substance abuse intervention experience, three public members employed by a local law enforcement agency with border juris-

diction, and three licensed physicians from different border locations. The Task Force will also appoint a member from the State Bar of Texas, one from the Mexican American Bar Association, and a member from a nonprofit organization with experience in alcohol and substance abuse in the border region.

The Task Force will study the contributing factors, such as hereditary causes, of binge drinking by both minors and adults and the effects this has on the health of the community. It will also examine the effects on the community of substance abuse among 14-24 year olds and drug traffickers using them to transport drugs into the United States.

"Rep. Gonzáles has broad experience with border affairs issues," Speaker Craddick said. "I am confident she will do an excellent job serving on this task force."

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State Representative Veronica Gonzalez (D-McAllen)