

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

June 6, 2017

Mr. Roland Swenson, CEO
SXSU, LLC.
PO Box 685289
Austin, Texas 78768

Dear Mr. Swenson:

We first would like to thank you for previously speaking out against harsh immigration policies such as President Trump's Executive Order which bans citizens from predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States. It is because of your willingness to stand up for what is right that we write to respectfully request you consider relocating the 2018 South by Southwest (SXSU) Conference and Festivals to a different state until the recent anti-immigrant SB4 law is repealed.

Our request comes on the heels of Governor Greg Abbott's signing of SB4 into law on May 7, 2017. SB4 is one of the most extreme anti-immigrant and discriminatory state laws signed to date. Texas is home to the second-largest immigrant population in the country, with over 4.5 million immigrants including 2.2 million of Hispanic descent. These immigrants play an important role in contributing not only to the state's rich culture, but also to the economy. In 2014, immigrants in Texas earned \$118.7 billion and paid \$29.1 billion in taxes, leaving them with a spending power of \$89.6 billion. The state is home to over 336,000 immigrant entrepreneurs, with over 421,942 people employed by immigrant-owned firms in the state.

In America we believe that people should be judged by the content of their character, not the color of their skin, but that is not what SB4 does. As we saw in previous failed attempts by states that tried to adopt "show me your papers" legislation, these laws essentially legalize discrimination based on the color of your skin or the way you speak. If SB4 is implemented on September 1, 2017, Texas residents and those who travel to Texas to attend your festival may be subject to constitutional violations if stopped by law enforcement. SB4 would allow local police officers to question a person's immigration status during any detention or arrest, including a routine traffic stop. This will subject U.S. citizens and non-citizens to racial profiling and discrimination. Additionally, the law would remove elected or appointed officials from office who actively speak against local law-enforcement enforcing federal immigration laws or who do not cooperate with the new law. SB4 would also fine local municipalities up to \$25,500 for noncompliance with these new harsh policies and law enforcement would face jail time and fines if they do not obey federal detainer requests.

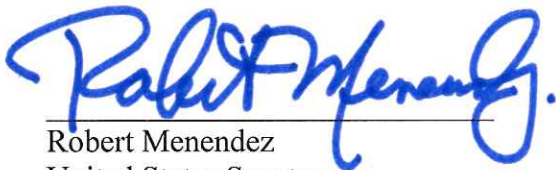
Instead of promoting policies that protect all of our rights, are inclusive, and encourage contribution and participation, this law allows prejudice to become policy. SB4 will stretch local police resources and drive a wedge between the community and law enforcement. Sheriffs from

the largest counties in Texas have spoken out against this law because it will further strain relationships with diverse communities and dissuade immigrants and legal immigrants from reporting crimes. In sum, SB4 harms public safety and trust by diverting precious law enforcement resources away from public safety and opens the door to racial profiling.

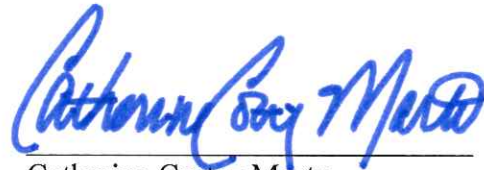
More importantly, this law stands diametrically opposed to the spirit of SXSW. Throughout its 31 years, SXSW has been a beacon of consistency, standing with artists and participants regarding equality, tolerance, and safety during events. SB4, however, would not allow SXSW to be a safe place for immigrants and Americans alike to visit, participate, and enjoy; the culture and safety of the event would be greatly diminished if your attendants are faced with the humiliation and harassment that this new law would inflict. Not only does this law stand against what SXSW stands for but also what we fundamentally stand for as a nation that believes in basic dignity and respect for all.

For these reasons, we respectfully ask that you consider relocating the 2018 South by Southwest Conference and Festivals to a different state until Texas terminates its harmful, shameful immigration policies. SB4 is the product of the anti-immigrant wave that has engulfed our country, and we need leaders like yourself to stand on the right side of history by rejecting the demonization of our Hispanic and immigrant communities. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator