

SENATOR

JUAN "CHUY" HINOJOSA

CAPITOL UPDATE

85th Legislative Session



COMMITTEES
FINANCE *Vice Chair*
SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION
TRANSPORTATION

THE SENATE OF TEXAS
JUAN "CHUY" HINOJOSA
DISTRICT 20

COMMITTEES
NATURAL RESOURCES &
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
AGRICULTURE, WATER &
RURAL AFFAIRS

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! With 2017 now over, I reflect on a difficult 85th Legislative Session that ended just a few months ago with tension and conflict. Legislation targeting immigration status, women, undocumented students, same sex couples, and even local government control, was prevalent. While many pieces of legislation passed, a substantial achievement was the many pieces of legislation that did not pass. Many bills that were discriminatory and not good public policy could have become law if we did not fight for what we know is right.

Despite a challenging session, I am proud of what we accomplished for South Texas and the entire State. We had important legislative victories and crafted a balanced budget that takes care of Texans. As Vice Chair of the Senate Finance Committee and one of only five Senate conferees on SB 1, the state's General Appropriations Act, I was involved in countless hours of budget negotiations that resulted in many of the cuts in the original version of the budget being restored. I was able to put South Texas at the forefront of critical discussions and secure funding to help stimulate our local economies.

While we could have done better by prioritizing jobs, increasing healthcare services for our most vulnerable citizens, and investing more money into education and our workforce, there was too much focus on ideology and politics. It is critical that we have the courage to put people first and focus more on the needs of our working families.

I am honored to serve the constituents of Senate District 20 and look forward to a new year of working together to make Texas a better future for our children.

Semper Fi,

Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
State Senator, District 20



Improving Our South Texas Infrastructure

We had important successes for South Texas with regards to infrastructure, many of which focused on continuing our regions' significant economic growth. Commerce and trade are vital to the development and prosperity of our modern economies and ports play a key role. The Harbor Bridge replacement project in Corpus Christi is now underway and \$50 billion in privately funded projects is being invested in surrounding areas that will lead to tens of thousands of new jobs in the Coastal Bend and billions in economic output. The expansion of the Corpus Christi Ship Channel has also just begun that will tremendously boost trade activity at the port, the 4th largest seaport in the country. Several of the bills I authored clarify tax laws to allow ports to maximize investment, streamline administrative processes, and improve port efficiencies.

Another key accomplishment was securing \$150 million to expand the Pharr Interchange to address the traffic congestion in the Rio Grande Valley, one of the fastest growing areas of the state. We also ensured up to \$10 million for the Raymondville Drain project, a huge undertaking of enormous significance that will provide storm water management to the entire Valley region and continue our economic growth. Over the last few years, we have worked tirelessly to secure sources of available funds that would not burden our taxpayers. To date, I have helped obtain \$17.1 million in state funding for the Raymondville Drain and am proud of our efforts to provide tremendous flood control.

Safeguarding Our Military Communities

Corpus Christi is home to the Corpus Christi Army Depot, the world's largest military helicopter repair facility that accounts for over 6,000 jobs in the Coastal Bend. Since it is critical to protect this infrastructure and increase the military value of the base, we worked to secure \$20 million to help our military communities statewide protect their facilities from closures or reductions through the Defense Economic Adjustment Assistance Grant Program (DEAAG).

I also co-authored SB 277 to reduce the safety hazards posed to military aviation facilities by encroaching wind farms and protect the economic livelihood of our military bases. SB 277 eliminates tax incentives near military air facilities for wind farm projects.



SENATE DISTRICT 20 FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS 85TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

PROJECT/INSTITUTION	AMOUNT
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine	\$56.6 million
Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi Lone Star Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program	\$7 million
Del Mar College	\$31.7 million
Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi Engineering Program	\$4.6 million
South Texas College	\$78.3 million
Texas Military Preparedness Grant Program for military defense impacted communities	\$30 million
Raymondville Drain Project (HCDD1), Texas Water Development Board	Up to \$10 million
DPS Law Enforcement Operations Center in Peñitas	\$3.2 million
Center for Urban Ecology at Quinta Mazatlan-McAllen	\$5 million
Funding for Property Value Decline School Districts (Agua Dulce, Alice, Brooks County, Driscoll, La Gloria ISDs)	\$75 million
Communities in Schools, Texas Education Agency	\$38.8 million
Texas Academic Innovation & Mentoring (AIM), Texas Education Agency	\$4.5 million
Carrizo Cane Eradication along Texas-Mexico border	\$3 million
Texas A&M University Health Science Center - Healthy South Texas Initiative 2025	\$9.1 million
TxDOT Port Capital Improvements for projects to improve connectivity to Texas Ports	\$40 million
Texas A&M University Kingsville Citrus Center	\$791,000
Border Infrastructure Budget Rider that allocates funds for improvements to facilitate traffic and improve the efficiency of border inspection and security processes at land ports of entry along the Texas-Mexico border.	\$60 million

Additional Legislation Championed by Senator Hinojosa

Overtime Pay for DPS

Our DPS Troopers will now be ensured they will keep the overtime pay they've earned as they work tirelessly to keep our communities and families safe.

Increased Funding for Hidalgo RMA

Raises the cap on the fee for a permit issued for the movement of an oversized or overweight vehicle by the RMA to increase funding for road maintenance.



Childhood Cancer Awareness

To help increase awareness of childhood cancer, the Department of Motor Vehicles can now issue this specialty license plate. The funds collected from these specialty plates will go towards pediatric cancer research.

Debtors-Prison Reform

Allows courts to ask about a defendant's ability to pay during the sentencing phase. After making that determination, courts are now allowed to reduce or waive fines and costs and offer community service as an alternative.

Public Transportation Funding

Levels the playing field between cities competing for formula funds by splitting the "urbanized" category into a "large" or "small" urbanized area. It will help distribute funds more fairly.

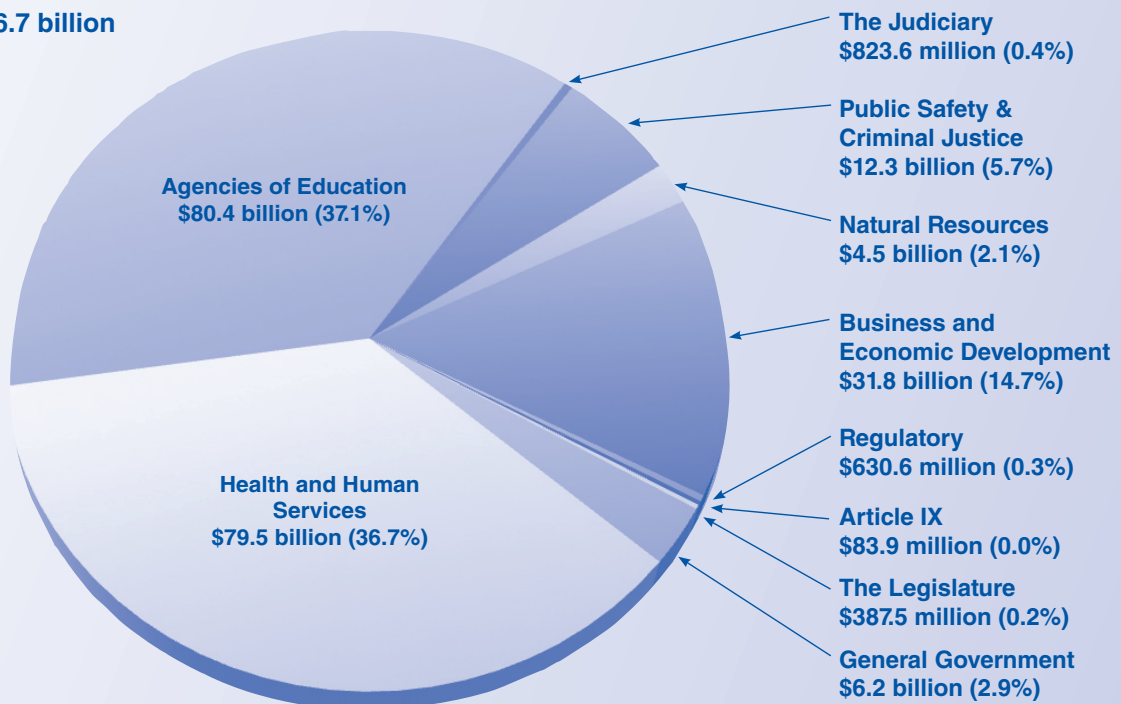
Workforce Continuing Education

Community colleges can partner and receive state funding for certain high school students enrolled in workforce training courses that lead to employment after graduation.

Summary of Committee Report Senate Bill 1, 2018-19

ALL FUNDS

TOTAL = \$216.7 billion



Source: Legislative Budget Board www.lbb.state.tx.us, Summary of Conference Committee Report for Senate Bill 1, 2018-19 Biennium, May 2017.

Combating Our Deadly Opioid Crisis

In America, opioids kill an average of 165 people every single day. Prescription pain killers that are legal are being significantly abused causing overdose deaths and hospitalizations to skyrocket. Opioid abuse is at epidemic levels and has quickly become the deadliest drug crisis in American history. It is the leading cause of death for people under 50 and killed more people last year than guns or car accidents.

Opioid abuse is also linked to huge increases in crime, unemployment, and suicide, as well as increases in child abuse and neglect cases, and is a huge financial drain on our healthcare system. Opioids can be heroine, but are also prescription painkillers like Vicodin, OxyContin and Hydrocodone. While law enforcement is going after drug dealers, they are also targeting pharmaceutical companies and doctors who they say are flooding the nation with potent painkillers.

The problem is not having a system in place to check on pain clinics or patients. A person can go doctor shopping and get the same prescription from multiple prescribers or at pill mills. This is why prescription drug monitoring programs are so critical, and why we must reduce the supply



of prescription opioids that end up being used recreationally while maintaining adequate access for chronic pain patients. Another consequence of the growing opioid crisis is a significant increase in pharmacy burglaries and theft. In Texas there are no special penalty enhancements for offenses dealing specifically with pharmacies or other premises that typically store controlled substances. This means that the burglary of a pharmacy would be treated the same as the burglary of a convenience store without regard to the controlled substances that are stolen.

Since we must protect our communities from the wave of property crime that is feeding the illegal opioid pipeline, I authored and passed legislation to increase penalties for burglary or theft offenses involving a controlled substance. Effective September 1, 2017 it is a third degree felony for burglary or theft of a controlled substance if it is on premises such as pharmacies, clinics, hospitals or nursing facilities.

The Texas Legislature must continue to address this growing epidemic and create more safeguards to prevent doctor shopping, ensure prescribers check patient drug prescription history, and help identify those patients who are addicted or need assistance. Opioid abuse is not going away as our society relies more and more on prescription drugs for pain relief and other health issues. While I am proud of our hard work this session, more must be done to educate the public and prevent our loved ones from addiction and dying at an alarming rate.



of prescription opioids that end up being used recreationally while maintaining adequate access for chronic pain patients.

The Texas Prescription Monitoring Program (PMP) is a database that collects statewide information on controlled substances dispensed in Texas. The PMP allows prescribers (doctors, dentists, nurses, etc.) and dispensers (pharmacists) to check on a patient's controlled substance prescription history to ensure responsible prescribing and dispensing patterns. However, the current PMP lacks basic tools needed to maximize its effectiveness. Mandatory use of the PMP by our medical community is necessary to properly capture prescription data.

In an effort to curb our Texas opioid crisis, I authored legislation this session that became law September 1. It requires pharmacists to enter data in the PMP of any controlled substances they dispense within one business day. And more importantly, it will require mandatory PMP checks on a patient's prescription history before prescribing or dispensing any controlled substances starting September 1, 2019.

SENATOR HINOJOSA'S COMMITTEES

- FINANCE COMMITTEE - VICE CHAIR
- SUNSET ADVISORY COMMISSION
- AGRICULTURE, WATER & RURAL AFFAIRS
- NATURAL RESOURCES & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
- TRANSPORTATION
- TRANSPORTATION PLANNING, SELECT
- HHSC LEGISLATIVE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE



Creating a Competitive Work Force Through Higher Education

Education is the best equalizer and is the key to our children's future. With more education comes more opportunities to compete for higher paying jobs. With higher paying jobs we will have more economic growth leading to a better quality of life for all Texans. Our universities grow the profitability of our communities by luring companies to South Texas that create job opportunities.

As Vice Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, I worked to invest in our children, to keep a college education within reach of working families, and to grow our workforce. A tremendous achievement was the \$56.6 million appropriated for the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley School of Medicine. The original budget allocated only \$5.5 million to the medical school which proved an extremely difficult challenge all session to work to increase critically needed funding.

We also secured \$78.3 million for South Texas College, \$31.7 million for Del Mar College, an increase of 9.2%, and \$7 million in first time ever funding for the Lone Star Unmanned Aircraft Systems Program at Texas A&M Corpus Christi.

While higher education funding overall decreased, financial aid for our college students was a bright spot as we increased funding by \$71 million for the TEXAS Grant program. A total of \$786 million will serve 92% of all eligible students this coming biennium which is a significant increase from last session. These educational funding streams will give our South Texas students greater access to college resources, increase affordability, and strengthen our ability to train a competitive workforce.

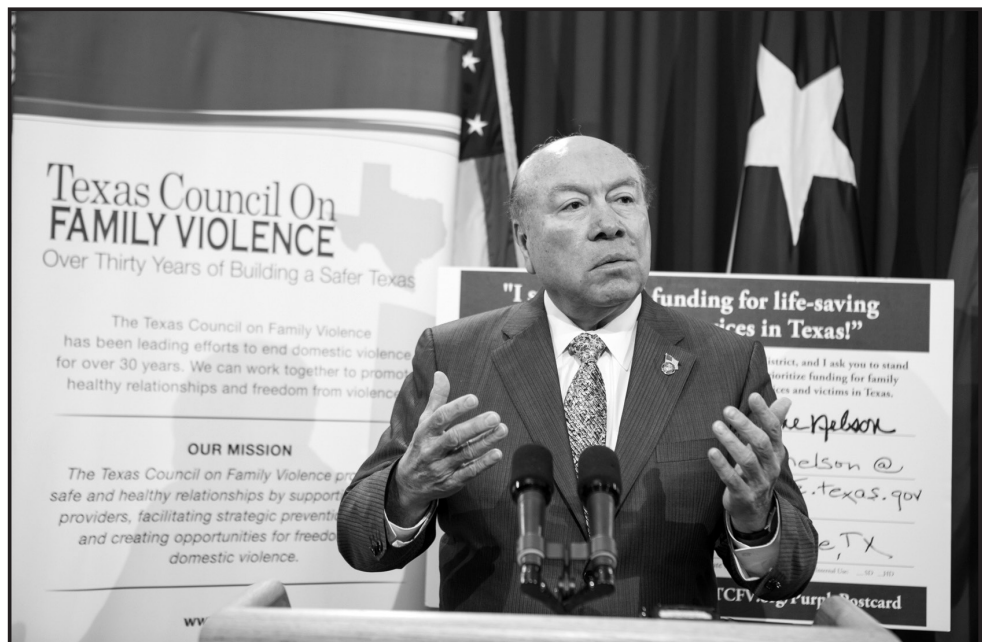
Since preparing Texas students for the growing technology workforce demands is a priority, I am also proud to have authored HB 728 that gives more computer science options to high school students statewide by directing the State Board of Education to develop and implement a rigorous computer science program that will count as an advanced math or science credit towards graduation.

Protecting Survivors of Domestic Violence

The current demand for family violence services and the continued need for safe places and resources are critical. In 2015, 158 women were killed by an intimate partner and in 2016, 39% of requests for services went unmet due to a lack of space and resources in shelters. The prevention of domestic violence is a priority of mine and we had important victories this session.

We obtained \$56.7 million for family violence centers statewide and \$3.5 million for the Battery Intervention Prevention Program (BIPP), a program that rehabilitates and holds offenders accountable for past abusive behavior. Also, \$600,000 was appropriated to the Office of the Attorney General for the creation of Domestic Violence High Risk Teams in local communities to respond to domestic violence and assess the worst, most high risk cases in order to better intervene and reduce the risk.

I was proud to author and pass SB 712 that authorizes a court to allow long-term protective orders for more than two years if the court finds that the offender commits an act constituting felony-level family violence, and HB 3649 to shield the information family violence survivors share with victim advocates from disclosure, ensuring their privacy so that they can seek assistance without fear of retaliation or their story becoming public.





Contact

SENATOR HINOJOSA
ESTAMOS EN CONTACTO

AUSTIN

P.O. Box 12068
Capitol Station
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 463-0120
Fax: (512) 463-0229

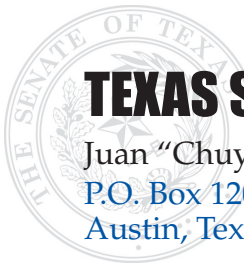
McALLEN

612 Nolana, Suite 410-B
McAllen, Texas 78504
(956) 972-1841
Fax: (956) 664-0602

CORPUS CHRISTI

602 N. Staples Street
Suite 200
Corpus Christi, Texas 78401
(361) 882-0900
Fax: (361) 882-0902

Follow us on Twitter: @TxChuy
Facebook.com/SenatorHinojosa
Toll Free: (866) 259-5016
<http://www.senate.state.tx.us>
juan.hinojosa@senate.state.tx.us



TEXAS SENATOR

Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, Texas 78711-2068

PRSR1 STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 2468
AUSTIN, TEXAS



JUAN "CHUY" HINOJOSA
TEXAS STATE SENATOR • DISTRICT 20

CAPITOL
85TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION
update

THE TEXAS SENATE IS AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER AND DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, SEX, RELIGION, AGE OR DISABILITY IN EMPLOYMENT OR THE PROVISION OF SERVICES.