

José Menéndez

An Open Letter to the Citizens of Senate District 26



The Senate of The State of Texas

Senator José Menéndez

District 26

Dear Friends:

As we approach the legislative session, we're preparing our legislative agenda. We held a series of public input meetings around Senate District 26 to hear directly from you, our constituents, the people we work for!

Through that process, we've listened and learned. While education, access to healthcare, and rising property tax bills continue to be unresolved matters, the issues of crime, traffic, Veterans, gun safety, and income inequality are emerging as issues of major concern.

In this legislative update, we are providing a report on our work in the district, the status of important legislative initiatives, and an invitation to help us shape our legislative agenda for next session. We hope you find the information helpful and urge you to fill out the bill input form and send it in.

This year, we've attended 405 Neighborhood meetings and 2,051 community events, and we continuously want to hear from you. Please remember this office belongs to you, the people of Bexar County. If we may ever be of any assistance, we hope you'll give us the opportunity to serve you.

Queridos Amigos:

A medida que nos acercamos a la sesión legislativa cuando podemos comenzar a presentar proyectos de la ley, tuvimos una serie de reuniones de opiniones públicas en todo el Distrito para escuchar directamente de nuestra comunidad para quien trabajamos.

A través de eso escuchamos y aprendimos. Aunque la educación, el acceso a la atención médica y la incrementación de impuestos de propiedad continúan siendo temas importantes, los temas de el crimen, el tráfico, atención a veteranos, seguridad de armas y desigualdad de ingresos se están convirtiendo en temas de gran preocupación también.

En este boletín legislativo, proporcionamos un informe sobre nuestras actividades en el distrito, el estado de las importantes iniciativas legislativas, y una oportunidad para que usted nos ayude a configurar nuestra agenda legislativa para la próxima sesión. Espero que la información sea útil y pido a que complete el formulario en esta publicación y que me lo envíe.

Hasta el presente, participamos en 405 reuniones vecindarias y 2,051 eventos comunitarios, quisiéramos seguir oyendo de ustedes. Como siempre, esta oficina pertenece a la gente del condado de Bexar. Si alguna vez podemos ayudarle, espero que nos brinde la oportunidad de servirle.

Sincerely,

José Menéndez





Senator José Menéndez’s 2017 Legislative Highlight Updates:

DAVID’S LAW

- Cyber-bullying is a growing problem that our schools and law enforcement have failed to keep up with.
- After the death of 16 year-old David Molak in Bexar County, we passed a new law to give children, parents, schools, and law enforcement new tools to prevent, stop, and prosecute online bullying.
- Today, nearly every school district in Texas offers David’s Law information, and tens of thousands have taken the anti-bullying pledge.



MY PRIORITIES WITH THE BLUE RIBBON TASK FORCE (BRTF)

Families form the basis of our communities. Children are precious: they deserve love and support to grow and learn. They are our future. Therefore, our community has an obligation to make sure that these families and children have the resources to address the difficulties in their lives. I take these issues very seriously. I have accepted the privilege of carrying on the work with the Blue Ribbon Task Force to prevent child abuse.



Here in Bexar County, we have the second highest number of child abuse cases in the state. The BRTF recognizes that all members of society have a responsibility to ensure that our children are safe. We need to guarantee that our children are able to simply be children. The BRTF has partnered with Judges Sakai and Specia plus Peggy Eighmy, the first lady of UTSA, to help combat child abuse.

However, the county with the most child abuse cases in Texas has **twice** the child population of Bexar County. This is unacceptable and speaks to the volume of work that needs to be done.

One-third of all students in the nation will experience bullying at school. Every day, children choose not to attend school simply to avoid being bullied.

When children do not attend school, they don’t learn and our entire community suffers. In the state of Texas, school funding is tied to the attendance of students. When students miss class, the individual student loses out on his or her educational experience.

VETERANS RESOURCE CENTER

- In 2015 and 2017, we secured \$17 million with a portion going towards a new Veterans Resource Center at San Antonio College to make certain that our veterans have access to specialized resources and expertise.
- Named the “Victory Center,” this innovative approach can serve as a statewide model for veterans service.



2019 Legislative Focus: Children, Education, and School Finance

PUBLIC SCHOOL FUNDING

- Under the proposed budget the state’s contribution to local schools will dip to 37%.
- Less state funding means higher local property taxes for homeowners and small businesses.
- It is past time to rethink our entire budgeting process to raise state funding to at least 50%, which will lower local property taxes.

TEACHER PAY

- Texas teachers fall far below the national average and many teachers work second jobs to make ends meet.
- By raising teacher pay \$2,000 per year we can ensure that we retain the best and brightest educators. We can and should find the revenue to raise pay this session.

RETIRED TEACHERS

- Texas is not doing enough to support retired teachers by refusing to raise retired teacher pay. This not only impacts current retirees, but could hamper future recruitment efforts.
- As I have for two sessions in a row, I will push for a so-called “13th Check” to help raise retired teacher pay.

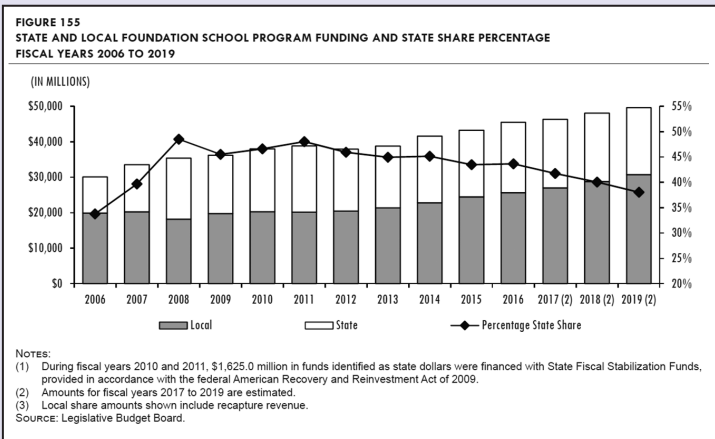


TRS-CARE

- Against protests from myself and some of my colleagues, the retirement benefits program our former teachers rely on was underfunded; as a result, premiums are out of control.
- This session I will work with friends from both sides of the aisle to restore TRS-CARE funding and bring premiums back down.

SCHOOL SAFETY

- Safe schools promotes the protection of students from violence, exposure to weapons, threats, theft, bullying, and the sale or use of illegal substances on school grounds.
- I do not support seeing more guns on campus but would like to implement more funding in order to help teachers, counselors, and administrators concentrate on the business of education and learning.



Building a Safer Community and Culture of Well-Being

NONDISCLOSURE AGREEMENTS (NDAs)

- I will author a bill that will prohibit nondisclosure or confidentiality agreements, otherwise known as “NDAs”, that keep employees from reporting harassment, abuse, assault, or other crimes.
- This legislation would be a part of making the workplace an environment in which people are treated with respect and dignity.

HEALTHCARE BUDGET / INSURANCE

- We are going to introduce new legislation that would force insurers to cover fertility preservation procedures for cancer patients and others who are facing potential infertility as a result of medical treatment.
- This was brought to us by the Alamo Breast Cancer Foundation asking legislators to help provide insurance coverage for fertility preservation procedures for cancer patients about to receive chemotherapy and radiation, both of which can cause infertility.

MEDICAID CUTS

- In 2015, Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) implemented a \$350 million cut to Medicaid reimbursements for much needed physical, occupational and speech therapy,

creating a devastating impact on our state’s most vulnerable populations.

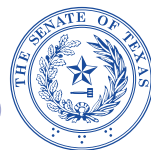
- These Medicaid cuts in Rider 50 are harsh because they affect low-income families and those with special needs.

CRIME

- Crime continues to be a major issue in many neighborhoods and there isn’t enough help for local police and first responders.
- This session I will work to reprogram some of the \$800 million+ we spend on duplicative “border security” to support additional neighborhood crime prevention efforts.

MENTAL HEALTH - CRISIS STABILIZATION UNIT (CSU)

- Bexar County’s crisis continuum is insufficient and among the greatest void is the absence of a CSU. Without this critical resource, consumers, families, and law enforcement must seek assistance from high cost care providers in the most restrictive and costly settings.
- I would like to seek State allocation of \$5 million per year to match Bexar County’s \$5 million to fund a 5-year pilot program to establish a 32-bed CSU to evaluate, stabilize, and redirect individuals to the most appropriate and least restrictive care.



TEXAS
SENATOR JOSÉ MENÉNDEZ
 DISTRICT 26

Your Views On Issues Facing Texans

Date _____

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ ZIP _____

Telephone Number (____) _____

Email address _____

Legislative Issue/Idea

Pro

Proposed Solution

Con

Possible Collaborators _____

Would you be willing to testify? _____

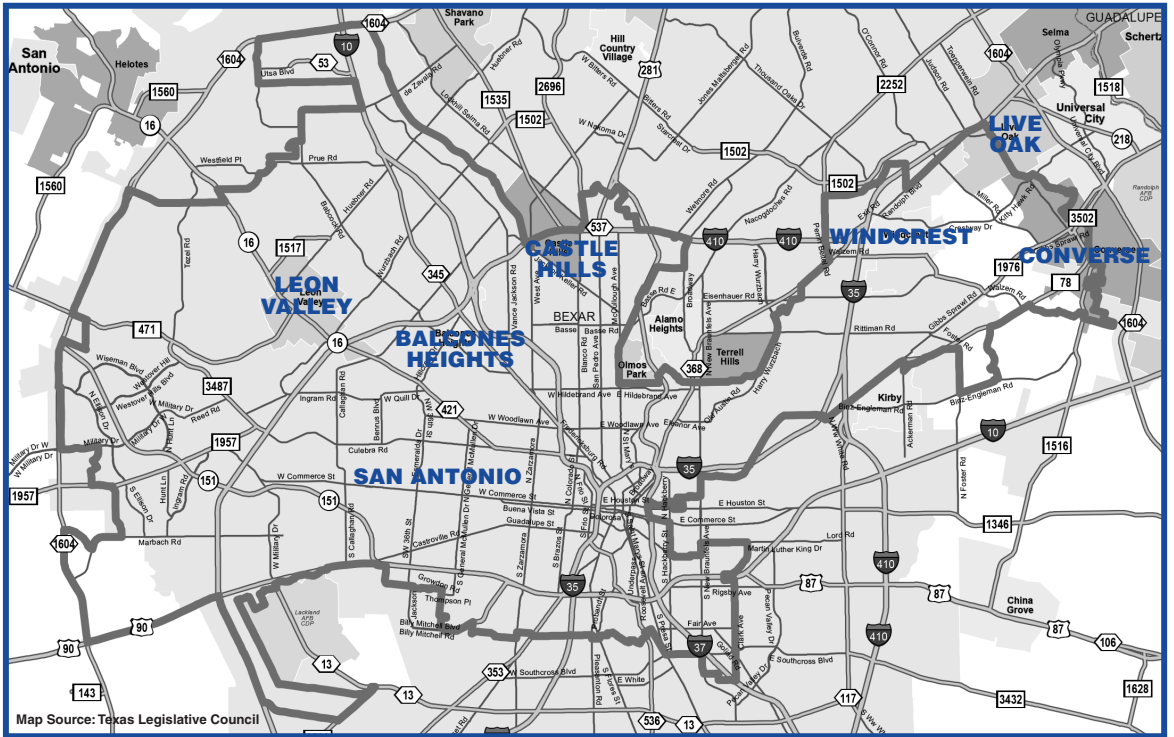
Would you need transportation to testify at the Texas Capitol? _____

**Deadline: Tuesday,
 January 8th, 2019**

**Visit the following link to submit your
 ideas electronically:
bit.ly/MenendezTxIdeas**



SENATE DISTRICT 26



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.