



Making a Dream a Reality

Creating Endless Opportunities by Establishing a New South Texas University and Medical School

Imagine South Texas with more jobs, lower poverty levels, higher educational levels, more healthcare services, more doctors, more access to those doctors and more resources to serve the unique and critical needs of our families and communities.

Senate Bill 24, landmark legislation to merge the University of Texas-Pan American and the University of Texas-Brownsville and to create a new medical school, will do just that. As the author of SB 24, it was my top priority all session long. The possibilities resulting from the passage of SB 24 are endless and the transformation of the Rio Grande Valley through education will soon become a reality. The transformational plan will result in a single University of Texas institution that spans the entire Rio Grande Valley, with campuses at Pan American and Brownsville, and a strong presence in Harlingen and McAllen.

SB 24 Numbers & Facts

- ★ The new university will immediately have 28,000 undergraduate students with a goal to grow to 50,000 students.
- ★ Research expenditures will exceed \$11 million.
- ★ The university endowment will be more than \$70 million.
- ★ Over 7,000 new high-paying jobs will be created in the Rio Grande Valley.
- ★ Graduate Medical Residency slots will increase to 150 per year and place future doctors in hospitals in Brownsville, Edinburg, Harlingen and McAllen.

The expansion of educational opportunities will create greater access to healthcare and the related healthcare businesses that the medical school will attract will be a great boost to our quality of life in the Valley and all of South Texas. Since education drives economic growth, an increased investment in education is the best economic development tool we have. There will be more jobs, more educational opportunities, less poverty, more healthcare services, and more access to doctors. It is also a huge step towards solving critical healthcare problems in the Valley, designated as a Medically Underserved Area with a severe physician shortage and limited resources.

Perhaps most importantly for the new university, for the first time, it will be eligible to receive millions of dollars from the Permanent University Fund (PUF), a major source of public higher education money



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa speaking at the Capitol press conference announcing the filing of Senate Bill 24, legislation to create a new university by merging the University of Texas-Pan American and the University of Texas-Brownsville and to create a new South Texas medical school.

that the Texas Constitution only allows "eligible" UT System and A&M System schools to use. Up until now, UT Pan American and UT Brownsville have not been PUF eligible schools. With the creation of a new university, access to these monies can finally put our universities in the Valley on par with other universities statewide. There will be more buildings and facilities, more classroom space, more teachers, more educational programs and opportunities and it would also become home to one of the two largest Hispanic Serving Institutions in the United States.

Thanks to the tremendous bipartisan support we had from legislators in both the House and the Senate, SB 24 passed overwhelmingly and is an enormous leap in establishing educational opportunities and acknowledging the rapid growth of South Texas. I am proud that our Valley community and delegation embraced a regional mindset and stood united to invest in education and in the people of South Texas proving that we can transform a dream into a reality.



Senate Bill 24 ceremonial bill signing with Governor Rick Perry at the University of Texas-Pan American.

Education is the Best Equalizer

Education is the ticket 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. But as our school population is exploding, and college tuition keeps rising, we cannot expect to succeed as a state if we do not make smart investments into our students, teachers, schools and financial aid programs. As Vice Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I worked to invest in education and keep a college education within reach of working families.

Major Changes in Public Education

For public school students, parents and educators, this session brought big changes to improve our public education system. As part of a sweeping reform package, we implemented changes to high-stakes testing, school accountability standards, and curriculum requirements.

- ★ **Testing** - Reduces the end-of-course exams from 15 to 5. Includes English I, English II, Algebra I, Biology, and U.S. History. Students will now have more time to focus on actual learning instead of just becoming test takers.
- ★ **Graduation/Foundation Plan** - Creates 1 diploma that affords all students a variety of postsecondary education and workforce opportunities. Students may earn an endorsement in one of 5 areas: 1) Business & Industry, 2) Arts & Humanities, 3) Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM), 4) Public Services, or 5) Multi-Disciplinary Services.
- ★ **Assessment Program** - AP, SAT, and ACT exams can now satisfy end-of-course test requirements.



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa meeting with constituents at the Capitol from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).

STAAR exams will now be annually released to the public to increase transparency.

★ **Ratings** - School Districts will now be rated on an A-F grading scale.

I worked hard during critical budget negotiations so that we restored \$3.9 billion from public education cuts made last session. The budget also provides \$30 million in supplemental funding for Pre-K programs and an increase of \$11.5 million for Communities in Schools and \$12 million for Teach for America. I also sponsored HB 897 so that school districts are now required to provide CPR instruction to students in grades 7-12 at least once before graduation. All of these reforms and additional funding will help give our children the education they need to compete.

Higher Education: Creating a Competitive Work Force

An educated workforce attracts jobs and economic investment. Public and private interests look for capable employees and research resources that are readily available so they can locate their new enterprises. Our universities grow the profitability of our communities by luring companies and entrepreneurs to South Texas.

This session, I directed an increase of \$1.6 million to the Texas A&M Corpus Christi Engineering Program for a total of \$5 million in funding, \$1.0 million to the University of Texas-Pan American for the new Economic-Manufacturing Center, \$600,000 to the University of Texas Marine Science Institute, and \$10 million to the University of Texas Health Science Center San Antonio - Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC) in Harlingen for helping to establish the new South Texas medical school. TEXAS Grants also saw an increase of \$145 million so that the total amount of \$724.6 million will fund about 84% of newly eligible students. These funding streams give our South Texas residents greater access to college resources and strengthens our ability to train and maintain an educated and competitive workforce.

Senate District 20 Project Funding Highlights 83rd Legislative Session

INSTITUTION/PROJECT	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
Texas A&M - Corpus Christi	\$5 million	Engineering Program
The University of Texas - Pan American	\$1 million	New Manufacturing Center
Regional Academic Health Center	\$10 million	Funding increase to establish the new South Texas medical School
Corpus Christi Harbor Bridge	\$600 million	Construction of new harbor bridge
Bicentennial Overpass - McAllen	\$23 million	Redesign and reconstruction of overpass
Teacher Retirement System Pensions	\$330 million	Funding increase
Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board	\$1.1 million	Nurse Loan Repayment Program
Texas Education Agency	\$12 million	Teach for America
Texas Education Agency	\$3 million	Texas Academic Innovation & mentoring (AIM)
University of Texas Marine Science Institute	\$600,000	National Estuarine Research Reserve
Texas A&M Citrus Center	\$200,000	Citrus greening program
Texas Water Development Board	Up to \$10 million	Raymondville Drain Project (HCDD1)

Investments in Infrastructure to Protect our Growing Population

Transportation Priorities for South Texas

Transportation is the backbone of the Texas economy -- billions of dollars pass through our ports of entry and move along our roadways. A strong, robust transportation network is necessary for Texas to continue to lead the nation in the creation of jobs while at the same time delivering over \$1 billion in trade per day that crosses into our state from Mexico.



Harbor Bridge in Corpus Christi. Compliments of the Port of Corpus Christi Authority.

Providing proper transportation and infrastructure needs to our residents was a top priority this session. By focusing on investments in our roads, we secured:

- ★ \$600 million in funding for the Corpus Christi Bay Harbor Bridge Project.
- ★ \$23 million for the Bicentennial Overpass in McAllen. This funding is instrumental in making sure the current overpass, which is no longer in service, is redesigned and reconstructed to address the safety concerns which forced its closing several years ago.
- ★ \$450 million for Eagle Ford Shale Roads repair.
- ★ \$8.3 billion for the overall maintenance of our State Highway System (an increase of \$38 million from last session).

Due to the large backlog and complicated structure of the environmental review process, I filed and passed SB 266. This significant legislation will greatly expedite the development and construction of highways and other transportation infrastructure projects by fast-tracking the environmental review process required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), while still maintaining current standards and requirements.

Water: The Need to Fund the State Water Plan

A significant challenge for all legislators this session was the need to finance the State Water Plan. Water is the most important natural resource to our society. Our livelihood and health depends on clean accessible water as does the growth and prosperity of our society and economy.

The population of Texas is expected to grow by at least 82% by 2060. If we do not invest in our water needs, we will not be able to meet the demand for water in the coming years. Annual economic loss could result in a reduction of income of about \$11.9 billion, with over a million lost jobs. The State Water Plan has a

50-year outlook and is expected to cost \$53 billion; the State needs to come up with about \$27 billion of that.

Funding our State Water Plan is a non-partisan issue, it's an issue for all Texans. This session the legislature created a water infrastructure bank that would provide revolving loans for water projects. The success of this fund is contingent on approval by voters statewide in the November election to tap the Rainy Day Fund. This funding, in addition to the \$6 billion in evergreen bonds that I authored in 2011 and were approved, is an investment for future generations that cannot wait.

Honoring Our Veterans

As a Marine and Vietnam Veteran, I understand the difficult sacrifices that military families endure on a daily basis. That is why it is important that we honor our Veterans and take care of their needs in recognition of their selfless service and sacrifice.

This session, I successfully sponsored and passed HB 194 that will now include businesses owned by Veterans with service-connected disabilities to be eligible for Historically Underutilized Business (HUB) status. These businesses receive preference for state contracts. All Veterans who fought for our country, incurred an injury and still had the resilience to come home and start a business deserve to have their businesses receive HUB status.

Also, I passed a concurrent resolution, SCR 17, urging the U.S. Congress to extend Agent Orange benefits to all Vietnam Veterans exposed to Agent Orange in any way even if they did not have boots on the ground in Vietnam. This resolution works to give continued recognition and deserved support to those brave Americans who served in the Vietnam War.

The Legislature continued and enhanced its commitment to providing funding for non-profit and local government organizations that provide housing services for Veterans by allocating another \$3 million to continue the Housing4TexasHeroes grant program. Also, the Legislature allocated \$10 million for mental health needs for Veterans through the Department of State Health Services, allocated \$30 million to the Hazelwood Act for Veteran's college tuition subsidies, created a \$248 million Permanent Fund Supporting Military and Veterans exemptions for Veteran's education; and chose to continue funding the Federal Claims Backlog of Veterans Disability Claims.



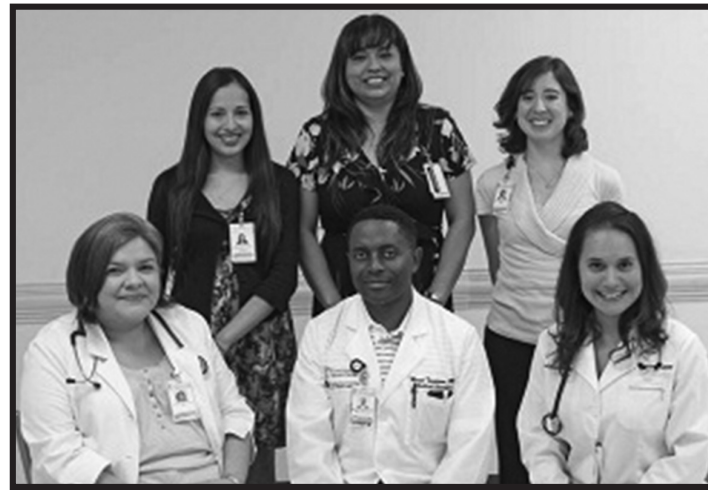
Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa speaking to Veterans at the Vietnam Veterans Monument Groundbreaking Ceremony on the Capitol grounds in Austin.

Healthcare is Not a Privilege But a Necessity

Lawmakers face significant challenges in healthcare policy to ensure we have the doctors and healthcare our families need. South Texas has long paid a price because of a neglect of healthcare services and access to that care, particularly in our rural and border areas. With our children growing up without the security of health insurance, and many seniors barely getting by on fixed incomes, the rising costs and shortage of providers has hit us hard.

This session I advocated for increased investment in healthcare, particularly for prevention services, while also educating policymakers that these investments save money in the long run by preventing higher costs from being passed down to local taxpayers. I also fought to protect healthcare providers who serve low-income families from further cuts and helped ensure struggling families have increased access to care. As Vice Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, we crafted a budget that fully funds the projected Medicaid caseload growth and allocated almost \$30 billion for all Health and Human Services programs to our Texas residents (see major funding programs in box below).

My healthcare legislation that I successfully passed focused on protecting patients and healthcare providers, increasing healthcare services, increasing access to



Medical students from the Rio Grande Valley.

services, and increasing funding for our uninsured. SB 1623 creates a Local Provider Fund that will allow our border counties, who do not have a hospital district, to utilize the federal 1115 Healthcare Transformation Waiver to fund healthcare services, to draw down federal funds to reimburse hospitals for indigent care and to help serve the largest uninsured population in Texas.

SB 1150 is a statewide Provider Protection Plan that will allow doctors, therapists, hospitals, and other Medicaid providers to more effectively focus on treating patients and our families rather than administrative burdens created by the managed care system. These protections will focus on modernization procedures and focus on "red tape" elimination, including prompt and accurate payment of claims, the prompt credentialing and contracting of providers and the ability to electronically submit claims.

I also worked hard on SB 1803 to reform the Office of Inspector General (OIG) as it relates to investigations and payment holds relating to allegations of fraud or abuse by medical providers in connection with the Medicaid program. While we need to detect and prevent fraud and abuse in the Medicaid system, we must also give our providers the due process they are entitled to and increase the transparency of the OIG investigative process.

Major Funding Increases for Health & Human Services for 2014-15

- ★ \$259 million - Mental Health Service Expansion for behavioral health programs.
- ★ \$71.3 million - Texas Women's Health Program
- ★ \$166.2 million - Child Protective Services
- ★ \$124.7 million - Long-term Care Community Services
- ★ \$100 million - Community Primary Care Services
- ★ \$88.7 million - Community Care Attendant Wages

Senator Hinojosa Appointed Chairman of the Senate Intergovernmental Relations Committee

It was an honor to serve for the first time as Chair of the Senate Intergovernmental Relations Committee (IGR), an influential leadership position of a committee important to our South Texas region. This committee is responsible for local government issues and oversees legislation that impacts our local economies. Through this appointment I was able to put the Coastal Bend and South Texas at the forefront of critical discussions this session.

Most legislation in IGR deals with "local" bills that cover a wide variety of issues impacting local government. We heard bills in committee dealing with local housing guidelines, improving the affordability of housing, drought and wildfire preparedness, regulation of roadside vendors and solicitors, tax liens, assisting local governments in reducing costs associated with procurement, and local government transparency. We worked hard to ensure there were no unfunded mandates on local government and that our state provides our local governmental entities with a cohesive set of policies that allow for collaboration, efficiency, and transparency.

Senator Hinojosa's Committees

- Intergovernmental Relations Committee - Chair
- Finance Committee - Vice Chair
- Legislative Budget Board
- Sunset Advisory Commission
- Agriculture, Rural Affairs & Homeland Security
- Criminal Justice
- Natural Resources
- Transportation Funding, Select



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa chairing an Intergovernmental Relations Committee hearing.

A Personal Note from the Senator

Dear Friends,

While reflecting on this past 83rd Legislative Session, I am proud of what we accomplished for South Texas and the entire state. Although we continued to face a growing population, a national economic slowdown, and new political forces at play, we had more revenue dollars than last session that allowed us to make some significant investments. I personally had important and historic legislative victories and crafted a well-balanced budget with my colleagues that made substantial investments for education, healthcare, and infrastructure.

I fought to better our South Texas communities and families by successfully passing important legislation related to education, healthcare, water, transportation, jobs and workforce development, veterans, public safety, criminal justice, and environmental protection that you can read about here and on my website. SB 24 was a highlight of the session, legislation that will create a new university by merging UT-Pan American and UT-Brownsville and establish a free standing medical school in the Rio Grande Valley. This is an enormous leap in the expansion of educational opportunities that will create greater access to healthcare and provide a tremendous boost to our South Texas economy.

As Vice Chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, I dedicated myself to protecting funding for our local communities and to reducing budget cuts to our most crucial services Texas provides our most vulnerable families. Though this session is over, the issues we face



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa in Committee.

in Texas continue and challenges remain. It is critical that we provide an infrastructure of opportunity for our future generations to come.

Now more than ever, we need to have the courage to put people over politics and govern with compassion. The future is now. The policy decisions we make today are felt by our communities today. That's why we need to work together to create a better tomorrow for all of our Texas families.

Semper Fi,

J. J. Hinojosa
 Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
 State Senator, District 20

The Word on the Street



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa receiving the Doctor's Hospital at Renaissance "Healthcare Hero Award."



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa receiving the McAllen ISD Board of Trustees Award for outstanding legislative accomplishments for improving our South Texas communities.

Senator Hinojosa's Statewide Recognition 2013 Awards

- ★ *Texas Monthly* - Top Ten Legislator 2013
- ★ *Capitol Inside* - Best of the Legislature 2013
- ★ "Healthcare Hero Award" - Doctor's Hospital at Renaissance
- ★ "Champion of County Government Award" - Texas Association of Counties
- ★ Presidential Award Recipient - NAACP of Corpus Christi
- ★ Recognition for Extraordinary Accomplishments during the 83rd Legislative Session - County of Hidalgo
- ★ "Public Elected Official of the Year 2013" - National Association of Social Workers, Rio Grande Valley Branch
- ★ "Service Above Self" Award - McAllen Rotary District 5930 - Recognizing the extraordinary achievements of the UTPA/UTB Merger through Senate Bill 24
- ★ "Big Voices for Little Texans" Award - Texas CASA
- ★ "Nursing Legislative Champion 2013" Award - Texas Nurses Association
- ★ "Best Legislator" - Texas League of Conservation Voters



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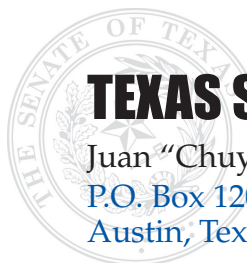
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Semper Fidelis

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