

# Senator Judith Zaffirini



## Reports to the Families of District 21

### Dear Friends:

*Love and large-hearted giving, when added together, can leave deep marks.* The great American author, William Sidney Porter—known more commonly by his pen name, O. Henry—spent his twenties in Texas, including time in La Salle County and Austin. His words describe perfectly the generosity and compassion that characterize our great state and that I see offered daily in Senate District 21.

This shared humanity inspires me as I strive to build a better future for our children, our families and our communities. Constituents can count on me to continue to cast every vote by balancing the needs and priorities of our district with those of our great state.

Senate District 21 is home to more than 800,000 constituents in 18 counties, namely, Bee, Caldwell, Duval, Jim Hogg, Karnes, La Salle, Live Oak, McMullen, San Patricio, Starr, Webb, Wilson and Zapata; and parts of Atascosa, Bexar, Guadalupe, Hays and Travis.

Our diverse district, which stretches from the Rio Grande to the Colorado River, has been blessed with bountiful natural resources and unlimited human potential. It includes borderlands and ranchlands, small towns and fast-growing cities and the booming Eagle Ford Shale region.

Though our communities are separated by many miles, we are connected by our shared priorities, which include educational opportunities for all; public safety; transportation; jobs and a strong economy; wise stewardship of our natural resources; a fair justice system; and health and human services, especially for the very young, the very old, the very poor, persons with disabilities and veterans.

Uniquely positioned to advocate for my constituents in the ways that matter most, I currently am Vice Chair of the Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee and a member of the Administration, Business and Commerce and



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— Senator Judith Zaffirini

State Affairs committees. I also serve as Senate Chair of the Eagle Ford Shale Legislative Caucus and on the Texas Access to Justice Commission.

As a member of the Texas Judicial Council, I was appointed by Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Nathan Hecht to committees on Guardianship, Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities; Civil Justice; and Public Trust and Confidence.

Because communication, collaboration and preparation are the cornerstones of effective public service, this newsletter is intended not only as a progress report, but also as a call for action and a foundation for productive discussion.

Your suggestions and feedback are essential, especially because some of my best legislation was suggested by constituents. Accordingly, my staff and I remain committed to our open door policy and respond to every letter, email and telephone call.

Having recently faced Hurricane Harvey and unspeakable acts of mass

violence, Texas families continue to recover. I am confident, however, that together we can overcome any challenge because the *love and large-hearted giving* O. Henry described are more evident than ever across our district and our state.

My prayer is that the Lord will continue to bless us all with grace and good will, family and friendship, and health and happiness as we forge a better future for our children and grandchildren.

May God bless Texas!

*Judith Zaffirini*

Judith Zaffirini

State Senator, District 21

[www.zaffirini.senate.texas.gov](http://www.zaffirini.senate.texas.gov)

# High Ethical Standards: Cornerstone of Public Trust

Appointed to the Senate Select Committee on Election Security by Lt. Governor Dan Patrick in 2017, Senator Judith Zaffirini is a longtime champion for strengthening ethics regulations and eliminating judicial cronyism and corruption.

In light of recent election irregularities in Texas, the Lt. governor directed the committee to examine voting security protocols relating to the use of machines and paper ballots, the disenfranchisement of residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities and any instances of attempted election manipulation.

“Secure, fair elections are the foundation of our democracy,” the senator said. “It is crucial that we ensure eligible voters make their voices heard and election results are free from outside interference.”

A strong supporter of campaign finance transparency, Senator Zaffirini has sponsored and passed five bills that improve processes and procedures of the Texas Ethics Commission (TEC). While campaigning in Laredo, the senator observed a great need for better campaign disclosure training in her beloved hometown.

Replying to her Facebook post sharing this view, numerous officeholders, candidates, campaign treasurers and volunteers in Webb County



**INDUSTRY AND BUSINESS LEADERS** like Craig Rosenstein, seen here touring an oil rig with Senator Judith Zaffirini in La Salle County, are important partners as she champions the economic interests of Senate District 21.

expressed great interest in improving compliance with the law. This inspired Senator Zaffirini to invite TEC to conduct an ethics training workshop in Laredo—a first not only for the city, but also for the commission itself, as the workshop traditionally had been hosted in larger urban areas.

Held at Texas A&M International University, the workshop educated officials and volunteers from throughout Senate District 21 about topics including advertising, financing, and reporting campaign contributions. More than 100 persons attended and found the presentations both informative and helpful.

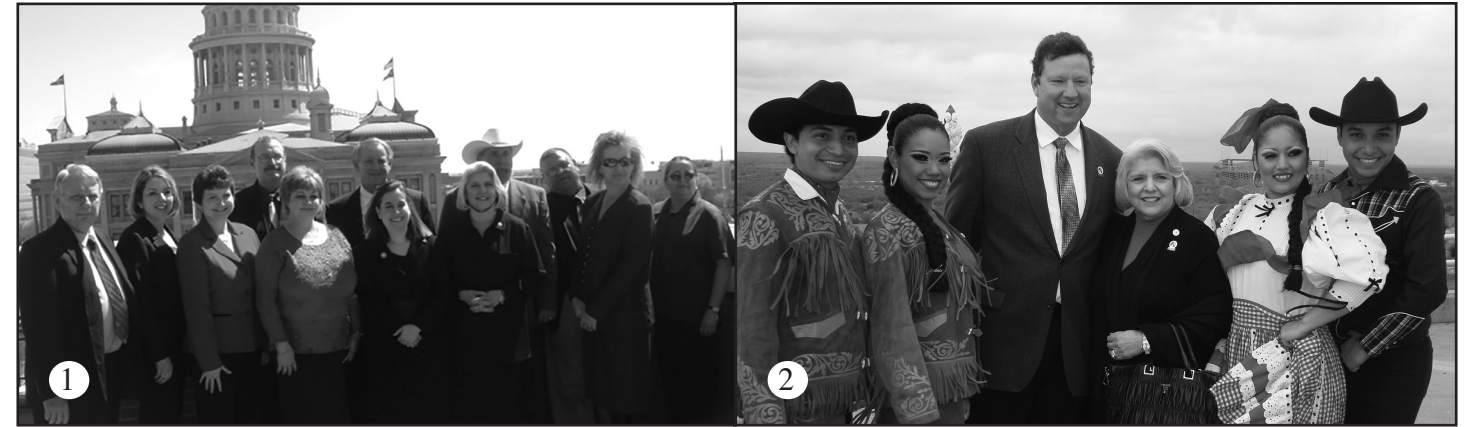
“Texas’ campaign finance laws are an important public accountability tool,” Senator Zaffirini said. “They can be confusing, but not understanding them is not a defense, nor is it an excuse to abdicate our responsibility to follow them.”

Senator Zaffirini agrees with English economist Josiah Stamp that “it is easy to dodge our responsibilities, but we cannot dodge the consequences of dodging our responsibilities.” Indeed, breaking campaign finance laws can result in fines of up to \$15,000, which can compound with each additional violation.

More important, such violations erode public trust and leave voters feeling disillusioned with the system that is supposed to reflect their will. “For the public servants who attended this training, I hope it clarified not only the standards for ethical campaigning, but also the consequences of failing to meet them,” the senator reflected.



**SENATOR JUDITH ZAFFIRINI** values interacting with constituents. Visiting her Capitol office are members of United Methodist Women (left photo, L-R) Barbara Mobley, San Patricio County; Mary Helen Frazier, Caldwell; Andrea Gibbud, Bee; Grace M. Pérez, Wilson; and Elizabeth Jiménez, Webb. She also travels the district to discuss local issues. Meeting with her in McMullen County are (right photo) former county officials. Left to right, they are Justice of the Peace James L. Rayes, Sheriff Bruce Thomas, County Judge Linda Lee Henry and Precinct 3 Commissioner Paul Koonce.



**SENATOR JUDITH ZAFFIRINI** prioritizes interacting with her diverse SD 21 constituency. Shown meeting with her at the Capitol are Karnes County officials (left); and at Falcon Dam in Zapata are County Judge Joe Rathmell and Folklórico dancers.

## Zaffirini: Champions of Justice Must Remain Vigilant

Senator Judith Zaffirini was delighted when Lt. Governor Dan Patrick appointed her to the Access to Justice Commission and Texas Judicial Council (TJC). She also was pleased when Chief Justice of the Texas Supreme Court Nathan Hecht asked her to serve on TJC’s committees on Civil Justice; Guardianship, Mental Health and Intellectual Disabilities; and Public Trust and Confidence.

These appointments reflect her tireless efforts to reform the state’s guardianship system, eliminate judicial cronyism, end debtors’ prisons, provide resources to self-represented litigants and improve court security. She believes strongly, however, that more must be done to increase access to justice.

“Many Texans cannot afford legal representation in critical matters, including divorce and child custody, protection from family violence, landlord-tenant disputes, entitlements, civil rights, probate and elder assistance,” the senator said. She wholeheartedly agrees with Chief Justice Hecht that “justice for only those who can afford it is neither justice for all nor justice at all.”

Texans with mental illnesses may face even greater challenges. According to a recent study by the Meadows Mental Health Policy Institute, adults with untreated mental health conditions are eight times more likely to be incarcerated than the general population. Unfortunately, navigating the criminal justice system is costly, and this setting is less effective for treating mental illness.

“The vast majority of these persons are not violent criminals, but if they re-

main incarcerated for weeks or months without receiving adequate treatment, they are likely to get worse, not better,” Senator Zaffirini said. “Even after their release, they struggle to find housing, employment and mental health services and frequently suffer homelessness and recidivism. Texas can, and must, do better.”

Accordingly, the senator supports establishing specialty courts to manage such cases better and enhancing all courts’ ability to order outpatient mental health services in lieu of incarceration. What’s more, she will continue to champion improved access to justice for all Texans, no matter their circumstances.

## B.B. Wolf, Soup R. Mann—Not Guilty, Say Student Juries

Through their Access to Justice: Class in the Courtroom program, Senator Judith Zaffirini, Webb County Court-at-Law II Judge Victor Villarreal and other civic leaders have provided more than 1,000 Laredo students valuable insight into the justice system.



**JUDGE VÍCTOR VILLARREAL** presides over mock trials of popular characters, and Senator Judith Zaffirini writes the scripts. Shown with them at the trial of Soup R. Mann at Webb County Court-at-Law II are (L-R) Iris Guerrero, defense attorney; David Barrera, Lax Luthor; Joe Benavides, Feo; Lorena Rodríguez Rivera, from Entravision; Yaret Vázquez, Soup R. Mann; Jade King, Wunder Woman; and Manuel José Rodríguez III, prosecutor.

Twice a month Judge Villarreal presides over mock trials of more-or-less familiar characters such as Snow Green, Yack in the Frijol Stalk and Guerita Locks. Students participate as jurors, deputy court officers and members of the Court of Public Opinion. They receive complimentary programs, handbooks, gavel pencils, certificates and script-related treats.

These mock trials enhance children’s trust in the judicial system, increase their understanding of key legal processes, offer important social justice lessons and include fun facts. During B.B. Wolf’s trial, for example, they learned not to judge persons by their appearances and not to generalize about groups.

Based on the recommendation of its Public Trust and Confidence Committee, the Texas Judicial Council voted unanimously to make the mock trials available statewide. Senator Zaffirini has written 12 original localized scripts and related handbooks that can be adapted outside Laredo.

# Senator Judith Zaffirini: Safe Communities, Student Mental Health Are Top Priorities

The horrific shooting at the First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs, which left 26 parishioners dead and another 20 injured, shook Senate District 21 and all of Texas to their core. This mind-boggling act of violence was especially sickening not only because it was committed against children and families, but also because we expect places of worship to be safe.

Texans united in praying for the victims and survivors and mourning the heartbreaking loss felt by this small, tight-knit community.

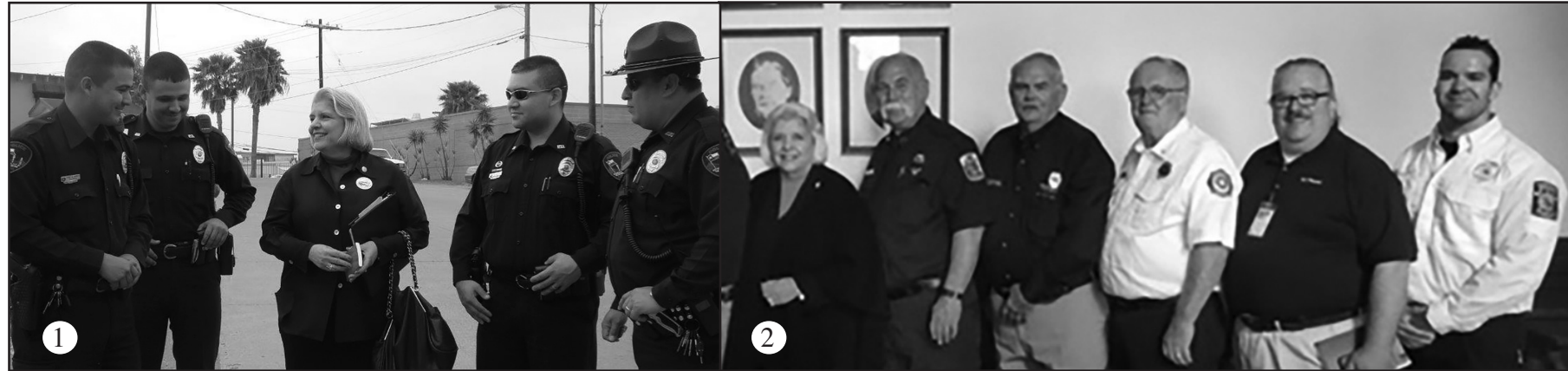
More recently, another catastrophic shooting befell our state, this time at Santa Fe High School. A gunman killed eight of his fellow students and two teachers and wounded 13 others. Again our children suffered a senseless act of violence when they should have been learning safely.

Having been at The University of Texas in 1966 when a sniper killed 16 persons and injured another 31, Senator Judith Zaffirini understands the immeasurable pain those impacted by these tragedies feel. Memories of that day and its aftermath are with her still.

Events like these have become an all-too-common occurrence in our state and our country. In the face of this crisis Senator Zaffirini hopes the Texas Legislature will rise to the occasion and implement concrete solutions. While everyone looks forward to the day when incidents of mass violence do not plague our schools, our streets and our places of worship, getting there will require action.

“Protecting the health and safety of all Texans is the sacred duty of our state government,” Senator Zaffirini said. “Accordingly, enhancing the safety of our communities and providing mental health services to those in need, particularly students, must be top priorities for our 2019 Legislative Session.”

To prepare for this task, she participated in Governor Greg Abbott’s roundtable discussion, along with several of her constituents from



**FIRST RESPONDERS** are heroes in their communities, and Senator Judith Zaffirini always appreciates hearing their perspectives. Those meeting with her in Starr County (left photo, L-R) are former City of Roma Police Officers José Belen García Jr., Juan Luis Ríos, Alejandro Luera and Mario Alberto Lujano Jr. Firefighters and fire marshals visiting her at the Capitol are (right photo, L-R) Gerald Weniger from Bexar County; Don McFarland, Guadalupe; Chuck Garris, Atascosa; R.J. Thomas, San Patricio; and Matt Valdez, Duval.

Sutherland Springs and other persons from communities affected by mass violence. The group examined ways to prevent such horrific tragedies in Texas.

After his meeting the governor released his School and Firearm Safety Action Plan. The senator supports many of his proposals, including increasing funding for mental health programs, investing in school security upgrades and requiring persons to report lost or stolen guns to the police.

She also provided the governor with her own list of bill recommendations, which she hopes to pass next session. Her suggestions include improving the state’s response to acts of mass violence; expanding access to mental health services, especially in schools; enhancing school safety; and promoting safe gun ownership.

To develop legislative proposals for improving the state’s response to mass violence, Senator Zaffirini and her staff engaged in extensive discussions with residents of Sutherland Springs and those who provided, and continue to provide, services to affected persons. Their experience offered valuable insights and highlighted a number of strategies that should be employed in the unfortunate circumstance a similar event occurs in the future.

Several residents, for example, suggested increasing state oversight of charitable contributions intended to assist recovery efforts after a tragedy. It is important, they stressed, to ensure that organizers are not misappropriating funds and profiting from others’ suffering.

This oversight would include the state’s assistance in creating a plan for disbursing such contributions equitably to address the greatest needs. What’s more, funds should be provided more quickly and efficiently to homicide victims’ families to help cover interment costs.

Service providers voiced a need to implement programs that would encourage persons impacted

by mass violence to seek services, including establishing “press-free zones” and providing alternative forms of trauma counseling that address the needs of specific groups.

Senator Zaffirini also researched methods of improving early interventions to prevent tragedies. Because mental health services are effective only if

persons seek them, she recommended implementing a public awareness campaign to reduce the stigma around seeking counseling.

To augment the counseling resources available in public schools, the senator supports expanding programs to educate school counselors and incentivize them to work in underserved schools.

## Harvey: Communities Recovering

Hurricane Harvey devastated families and communities at varying distances from the Gulf Coast, including some in Senate District 21. Reports indicated 103 persons died in storm-related incidents, the most Texans killed by a hurricane in nearly a century.

San Patricio County was designated one of the most impacted areas in the state’s Hurricane Harvey Action Plan, and several counties in SD 21 were included in Governor Greg Abbott’s disaster declaration. Many families lost all their possessions.

While Harvey led to substantial loss and heartache, it also brought out the best in Texans, who came together to help their neighbors in need. “Thank you to the first responders and local and state government officials who worked tirelessly to address the

crisis,” Senator Judith Zaffirini said. “We also must recognize the countless everyday citizens who donated necessary supplies, made charitable contributions to support victims, volunteered their time to reconstruct buildings and comfort those in distress and opened their doors to persons without a place to stay. They truly are Texas heroes.”

Recovery in the Coastal Bend and Southeast Texas, however, is not complete. The senator is monitoring state and federal agencies closely to ensure they effectively assist those still working to rebuild their homes, businesses, communities and lives.

She and her staff always are available to help constituents. “If you or your loved ones were impacted by Hurricane Harvey and need assistance, please contact us via my Capitol office at 512/463-0121.”



**EXTRAORDINARY ACTS OF COURAGE** deserve heartfelt recognition. Senator Judith Zaffirini presents a Senate gavel and sound block to Stephen Willeford, the Wilson County hero who risked his life to protect his community when he heard gunfire at First Baptist Church in Sutherland Springs.

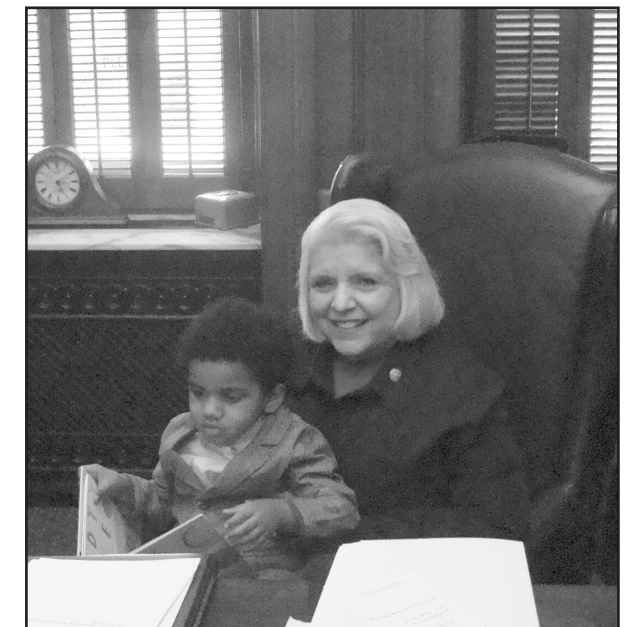
What’s more, she believes the state should study indicators of potential threats of violence and train educators to identify and ensure critical services for students who pose a risk to their schoolmates.

To enhance school security, Senator Zaffirini encourages investing in campus improvements. The installation of high-tech security cameras, for example, could alert school safety personnel if a person known to be prone to violence tries to enter campus.

She also supports establishing teams of school-security experts who would visit campuses randomly to assess their preparedness and recommend improvements. Such recommendations, however, should be implemented only after including students, teachers and parents in the development of school security protocols.

Several commonsense measures Senator Zaffirini espouses would promote safe gun ownership. These include offering tax credits for the purchase of gun safes and trigger locks, authorizing the removal of firearms and ammunition from the scene of a family violence incident; and requiring persons convicted of family violence crimes to surrender their firearms upon conviction. Such policies would save lives without infringing upon the rights of law-abiding gun owners.

“Persons with a wide variety of viewpoints must come together and work to find solutions that will save lives,” Senator Zaffirini said. “Those who lost loved ones in Sutherland Springs and Santa Fe deserve no less.”

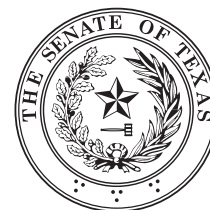


**IT IS NEVER TOO EARLY** to engage with your elected representatives! Vicente Zavala of southeast Austin is among the children who visit Senator Judith Zaffirini regularly at her Laredo or Capitol office. They receive a complimentary book and a framed certificate, signed by the senator, recognizing them as members of her Promoting Literacy Project.

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STUDENTS OF ALL AGES are among Senator Judith Zaffirini's most important stakeholders as she considers legislation related to education. Three Rivers High School students (left), for example, are among those who toured the Capitol during the last legislative session. Senator Zaffirini also enjoys participating in SD 21's many delightful local traditions, such as the annual Hebronville Vaquero Festival in Jim Hogg County (right).

## Committees Collect Information, Hear Concerns

The Texas Legislature may meet for a regular session only once every two years, but committees in the Senate and in the House of Representatives work continually. Vice Chair of the Senate Natural Resources and Economic Development Committee, Senator Judith Zaffirini also serves on the Senate Administration, Business and Commerce, and State Affairs committees.

"I not only prepare, but often over-prepare for committee hearings," Senator Zaffirini said. "Interim hearings offer opportunities to improve our understanding of critical issues and gain valuable insight from the many Texans who come to the Capitol to make their voices heard."

### Natural Resources and Economic Development

Texas businesses and residents have a shared interest in growing local economies and preserving the environment. Accordingly, Senator Zaffirini promotes responsible development of the state's energy resources while protecting Senate District 21's air, land and water.

During the 2018 interim, for example, Senator Zaffirini responded to numerous communications from constituents regarding proposed landfill projects in SD 21.

"My policy always is to study all sides of an issue carefully before taking a position," she said. "Engaging with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality, the Texas Railroad Commission and my constituents has

led me to question some aspects of landfill permitting processes, an issue that our committee is examining during the interim."

### Business and Commerce

The Business and Commerce Committee closely followed Hurricane Harvey recovery efforts, assessing the state's response as well as the aid provided by local governments surrounding the cities and counties under duress.

During one hearing, Senator Zaffirini asked Rockport Mayor Charles

J. Wax about the assistance the city received from neighboring jurisdictions such as Aransas Pass and Ingleside.

"Probably the best example of that was police protection. We had several municipalities that provided additional police vehicles and personnel to us immediately following the storm," the mayor responded.

Additional testimony confirmed that state and local officials repeatedly responded immediately to requests for help, regardless of their proximity to the communities in need. "When Texans work together, we are more likely to solve any problem," Senator Zaffirini said.

### State Affairs

The State Affairs Committee was charged with examining public pension systems and recommending ways to ensure their viability for current and future retirees.

The Vice Chair of the Texas Pension Review Board, Keith Brainard, reminded the committee that chronically underfunding a pension plan "postpones and increases the costs of the plan, costs that inevitably will need to be paid by future generations of taxpayers."

Accordingly, Senator Zaffirini will work with her colleagues to pass a budget protecting retirement benefits. "It is crucial that the state honor its commitment to these tireless public servants, without whom we would not be able to educate the next generation of thinkers and leaders," the senator said.



THE HISPANIC ISSUES SECTION of the Texas Bar honors Texans who excel in addressing critical issues such as the judiciary and guardianship. Shown presenting Senator Judith Zaffirini its 2018 Legislator of the Year award in her office at the State Capitol are Betty Balli Torres, executive director, Texas Access to Justice Foundation; and Trey Appfel, executive director, State Bar of Texas.

## Constituent Issues are Front, Center for 2019 Session

When the Texas Legislature convenes on January 8, Senator Judith Zaffirini will be ready. Every session she collaborates extensively not only with legislative colleagues, but especially with Senate District 21 residents to pass legislation that addresses timely issues and solves critical problems.

Her priorities always are education in general, with a focus on early childhood and higher education; and health and human services, with a focus on the very young, the very old, the very poor, persons with disabilities and veterans.

As gaps in student achievement persist and income inequality threatens the American dream, high-quality and affordable early childhood and college education are increasingly central to the ability of families to thrive in SD 21 and across the state.

Accordingly, Senator Zaffirini intends to file anew legislation that would establish universal, full-day pre-K for all three- and four-year-old Texans, continuing nearly two decades of advocacy in this area, and also will author the state's first plan to offer a tuition-free college education for Texas students whose annual household income is below \$100,000. "If New York can offer free tuition to university students, so can Texas," Senator Zaffirini said.

Texas benefits from a robust and diverse economy, and Texans expect their representatives to balance pro-growth policy with consumer and environmental protections. By bringing their con-

cerns to the attention of the legislature, SD 21 constituents directly shape the policies that govern their lives.

Next session, for example, district residents will be glad to see their senator file a bill to eliminate legal loopholes that allowed predatory lenders to swindle southeast Austin residents out of their homes. What's more, they will see meaningful action that addresses their concerns regarding the permitting of waste facilities by state agencies, including legislation that focuses on the siting of landfills in floodplains.

The health and well being of all Texans will be a top priority during the 2019 legislative session. Although Senator Zaffirini's 2017 landmark legislation banned texting-while-driving in Texas, one in five car accidents still involve distracted driving, according to the Texas Department of Transportation. Accordingly, she will author a bill prohibiting all cell phone use while driving unless it is completely hands-free.

Persons under guardianship in Texas also will be reassured to see the senator continue her efforts to establish a guardianship abuse, fraud and exploitation prevention program. Potential legislation also would create specialty

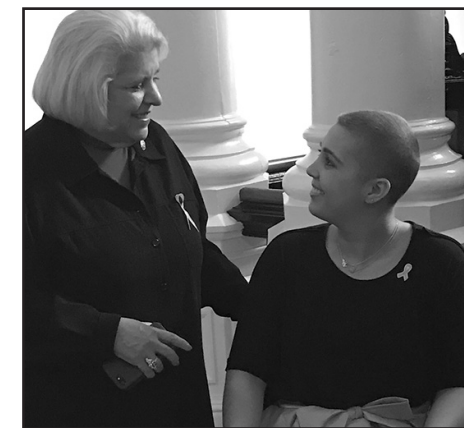
courts that prioritize the needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities, who too often lack proper assistance to navigate the legal system.

As premiums increase and health insurance companies adopt policies that are less focused on patients, improved access to affordable, high-quality health care for all Texans also will remain a core legislative issue.

Senator Zaffirini maintains an open door policy at both her Capitol and district offices in Austin and Laredo, welcoming constituents to submit ideas or discuss potential concerns. "My constituents elected me to be their voice in the Texas Senate," she stresses, "which is why I take my duties so seriously."



LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS dedicated to the public good are the backbone of every community. Members of the Boys and Girls Clubs of South Central Texas from Hays and Caldwell counties are among those who provide helpful insight and information to Senator Judith Zaffirini.



JILLIAN WILLIAMS, a student at Texas Lutheran University in Seguin, Texas, showed grit and grace while facing a terrifying cancer diagnosis. She met with Senator Judith Zaffirini at the State Capitol during Childhood Cancer Awareness month to bring attention to this important issue.

## Legislature Addresses Harassment

After the national #MeToo movement revealed the continued prevalence of sexual harassment in the workplace, *The Daily Beast* and *Texas Tribune* reported the Texas Legislature was no exception. In response Lt. Governor Dan Patrick directed the Senate Committee on Administration, chaired by Senator Lois Kolkhorst (R-Brenham), to review the Senate's sexual harassment policy.

A committee member and former Title IX Coordinator at Laredo Junior College, Senator Judith Zaffirini is particularly interested in addressing the issue. She and her staff researched the issue extensively and authored a position paper that included specific policy recommendations.

"It was apparent from our research that for any sexual harassment policy to be effective, it must ensure misconduct is reported, lead to meaningful sanctions and deter future wrongdoing," Senator Zaffirini said.

Subsequently, Chair Kolkhorst released an updated Senate policy that establishes a clear process for reporting sexual harassment. It applies to the lieutenant governor and his staff, senators and their staffs, Senate employees and the public. Though this progress is commendable and should reduce instances of misconduct, Senator Zaffirini believes the Senate has an opportunity to distinguish itself as a leader, as Texas so often does, by implementing solutions.

# Zaffirini Wins Record Number of Communication Awards

Senator Judith Zaffirini has received almost 1,000 awards and honors for legislative, public service and professional work, including more than 320 in communication. This year she received a record 33 awards from the Press Women of Texas (PWT), whose annual communication contest recognizes excellence in a variety of categories.

“It’s exciting to receive these awards from PWT, of which I have been a member since 1973,” Senator Zaffirini said. “They reflect a commitment to communicating effectively with constituents to serve their

needs.” Five of the first-place entries in the PWT contest also received awards from the National Federation of Press Women.

Senator Zaffirini’s legendary work ethic is reflected in her 100 percent voting record, having cast more than 60,000 consecutive votes, and perfect attendance in the Texas Senate since 1987, except for breaking quorum deliberately to prevent an untimely re-redistricting that the U.S. Supreme Court ruled violated the Voting Rights Act and disenfranchised voters in SD 21. Showing bipartisan effectiveness, she passed 109 bills in

the Republican-dominated Legislature last session.

AARP Texas awarded her the Legislative Leadership Award for working to protect the financial security of older Texans, especially those under guardianship. What’s more, Texas CASA gave her the Big Voices for Little Texans Award for being a champion for children, particularly by passing Senate Bills 1758 and 1913. These bills, respectively, improved transitional services for foster youth and sought to eliminate unconstitutional debtors prisons. Over the last three decades, the senator

Senator  
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2018-2019  
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has sponsored and passed 1,024 bills and 53 substantive resolutions, making her the most prolific legislator in Texas history.

Highlighted in 25 books and referenced in another 19, Senator Zaffirini holds B.S., M.A. and PhD degrees from The University of Texas at Austin. This beloved institution named her a Distinguished Alumna, an Outstanding Alumna of the Moody College of Communication and a Distinguished Hispanic Alumna; awarded her the Presidential Citation; and inducted her into

*The Daily Texan* Hall of Fame.

The highest-ranking woman and Hispanic member of the Texas Sen-



**FAMILY IS THE FOUNDATION** of Senator Zaffirini’s lifetime of public service. What she wishes for her own beloved family is what she champions in the Texas Senate for all families. Hers includes her husband, Carlos Sr.; their son, Carlos Jr., and his wife, Audrey; and her first grandchild, Asher Maxwell, shown at his baptism.

ate, Senator Zaffirini is the namesake of an elementary school in Laredo, the student success center at Texas A&M International University, the library at Laredo College, a residential center in Edinburg and a road at Lake Casa Blanca International State Park.

She and her husband, Carlos Sr., have been married for 53 years. Their son, Carlos Jr., and his wife, Audrey, are the proud parents of Asher Maxwell, who celebrated his first birthday in June, 2018!