



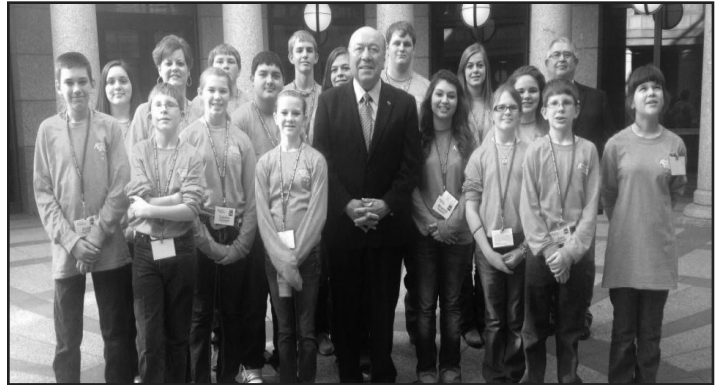
Education Is the Best Equalizer

Education 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. As Vice Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, I was able to put South Texas at the forefront of critical discussions and secure funding that will help stimulate our local economies. We worked to invest in our children and to keep a college education within reach of working families.

Investing in Our Children Through Public Education

For public school students, parents and educators, this session brought more funding and new initiatives to improve our public education system. With a \$130 million grant program to improve the quality of our Pre-K programs, this is definitely a step in the right direction. We fully funded public education enrollment growth with \$2.7 billion for about 93,000 additional students and increased assistance for fast growth and property poor school districts by \$104 million.

A new initiative this session created a \$22.8 million Math Academy and a \$17.8 million Reading Academy to support K-3 teacher training. The budget also increases the basic allotment by \$1.2 billion and provides \$40.7 million for Communities in Schools and \$12 million for Teach for America. This funding will help give our children the education they need to compete.



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa meeting with Rio Grande Valley 4H students at the Capitol in Austin.

Creating a Competitive Work Force Through Higher Education

Education is the best economic development tool we have. An educated workforce attracts jobs and economic investment. Our universities grow the profitability of our communities by luring companies to South Texas. This session, we secured \$61 million for the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley Medical School, \$30.6 million in tuition revenue bonds for construction of an interdisciplinary engineering academic building at the campus in Edinburg, and a total of over \$326 million for UTRGV.

This places UTRGV as the second-highest among UT System institutions in appropriated funds, an enviable position demonstrating the reality that our region is transforming through the creation of a new university and medical school that will increase access to healthcare, produce a more educated workforce, and create job opportunities.

We also directed \$7 million to the Texas A&M Corpus Christi Engineering Program, \$60 million in tuition revenue bonds for construction of a life sciences research and engineering building at TAMUCC, and \$10 million for the Texas A&M University Healthy South Texas Initiative.

We invested \$74.2 million in additional financial aid funding for our students striving for higher education, including \$62.7 million for the TEXAS Grants program that will fund about 90% of all applicants. These funding streams give our South Texas students greater access to college resources, increases affordability, and strengthens our ability to train an educated and competitive workforce.



Students from Texas A&M Corpus Christi visiting the Capitol to discuss their higher education priorities with Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa.

Protecting Our Children at School

I authored SB 66 that sets up a framework for schools to make epinephrine auto-injectors (epi-pens) available on all public school campuses and off-campus school events. Epi-pens are the first line of treatment against anaphylaxis, a severe and life-threatening allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and highly unpredictable.

This necessary measure can protect our students from life-threatening yet treatable allergic reactions they may experience at school. For 25% of Texas children, the first episode of food-related anaphylaxis occurs at school without a previous allergy diagnosis. Provisions in SB 66 are critical in ensuring that schools have the training and equipment necessary to respond to these severe reactions. The safety and well-being of our students is of the utmost importance.

SB 66 was named the “Cameron Espinosa Act” in memory of Cameron Espinosa, a middle school student from Corpus Christi who died after having a severe allergic reaction to ant bites he sustained during a middle school football game. 66 was his football jersey number.



The Texas Capitol Vietnam Veterans Monument Dedication Ceremony honoring our fallen Vietnam Heroes and their families for their ultimate sacrifice of defending our freedom, and welcoming those who came home and fought with great courage and resilience.

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 we secured \$30 million to help our military communities protect their facilities from closures or reductions. This is critical to Corpus Christi that 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.

I successfully passed SB 318 to increase the cap on grants awarded by the Texas Military Preparedness Commission from \$2 million to \$5 million. These grants are awarded to communities with military bases to allow them to build up their infrastructure, increase the military value of their base, and benefit our military families.

Also, I passed legislation to create a statewide memorial day for our Gold Star Mothers. The gold star concept began during World War I when the mother of a fallen military service member stitched a gold star over the blue star of the service flag to honor her son or daughter who died in military service. These mothers serve as an inspiration to all Texans, who have handled their loss with courage, grace and strength. We now have a day of recognition in September to honor Texas Gold Star Mothers.

The Legislature continued its commitment to Veterans healthcare and allocated \$2.8 billion for mental health services across all mental health programs that adults and Veterans alike are entitled to; and specifically increased funding by \$20 million of the Texas Veterans Initiative and \$31.3 million for crisis mental health services.

SENATE DISTRICT 20 PROJECT FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS 84TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

INSTITUTION/PROJECT	AMOUNT	DESCRIPTION
The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley	\$91 million	Funding to establish the new Medical School opening Sept 2016
Texas A&M University - Corpus Christi	\$60 million	Life sciences research and engineering building
Texas Military Preparedness Grant Program	\$30 million	Grants for military defense impacted communities (Corpus Christi)
Texas State Aquarium, Corpus Christi	\$9 million	Improvements and new construction to attract more tourism
DPS Multi Use Training Facility in Edinburg	\$2 million	Specialized training of DPS officers in the RGV
DPS Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence at South Texas College	\$1.6 million	Education center to provide associates degrees and certificates for public safety and law enforcement personnel
TxDOT funding for South Texas International Airport at Edinburg for Emergency & First Responders	\$3 million	Hangar expansion
Texas Education Agency	\$12 million	Teach for America
Texas Education Agency	\$5 million	Texas Academic Innovation & Mentoring (AIM)
Texas Water Development Board	Up to \$10 million	Raymondville Drain Project (HCDD1)
Texas A&M University Health Science Center	\$10 million	Healthy South Texas Initiative 2025

Water Desalination The Future of Texas

Water security is one of the most pressing social and economic challenges for legislators. Water is the most important natural resource to our society. Our livelihood and health depends on clean accessible water as does the growth and development of our societies and economies. We need a water infrastructure plan that can handle our state's population growth as well as handle times of extreme drought. It is imperative that we take significant steps toward the planning and development of a future water plan.

Water desalination, the process of converting salt water into fresh water so it is suitable for drinking and irrigation, may be the future of our water supply since nearly all of the Earth's water is salt water. This is why I sponsored and passed HB 2031 that allows for the diversion, treatment, and use of marine seawater for desalination. This significant legislation will streamline the regulatory process and reduce the time required for and cost of seawater desalination consistent with appropriate environmental and water rights protections.



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa debating legislation on the Senate floor.

With the neighboring Gulf of Mexico, South Texas is uniquely positioned to lead the nation and take advantage of advancements in seawater desalination that could provide for a potential new source of drinking water and help provide solutions for the water infrastructure Texas critically needs.

Transportation

This session we continued to invest in transportation by appropriating \$23.1 billion while at the same time stopping all diversions from Fund 6 so we can focus on eliminating traffic congestion and expanding our transportation infrastructure.

Recently I was appointed to the Senate Select Committee on Transportation Planning to focus on our state's future transportation needs. Transportation is the lifeblood of our economy. I look forward to working towards expanding our roads and highways, advancing our transportation infrastructure goals, and improving the safety of our families.

Tax Relief for Texas Homeowners & Small Businesses

A significant accomplishment for the Legislature this session was providing \$4.6 billion in tax relief to our Texas homeowners and small businesses beginning in tax year 2015. \$1.2 billion in property tax relief will benefit homeowners by raising the homestead exemption from \$15,000 to \$25,000 and decreasing the property taxes they will have to pay.

We also gave small business owners \$2.6 billion in franchise tax relief, including a 25% rate reduction. Small businesses create jobs and drive our economy; they are the backbone of our Texas economy. For many small businesses struggling to survive, the franchise tax is an unnecessary and burdensome tax that limits job growth and economic investment. This will exempt over 52% of all small businesses in Texas.

Expanding the Coastal Economy

As Vice Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, I have worked to secure millions of dollars for our local infrastructure needs to help fuel the coastal economy. From funding for the Corpus Christi Bay Harbor Bridge Project and the Port of Corpus Christi Authority to maintenance of our State Highway System and roads, the Coastal Bend is at the forefront of growth.

By sponsoring and passing HB 1915, for the first time, Corpus Christi will be able to access 2% of the state's Hotel Occupancy Tax to increase beach cleanup funding by about \$2 million annually. Tourism generates an annual economic impact of \$1 billion for the Coastal Bend region. This legislation combined with the \$9 million secured for the Texas State Aquarium, will grow our tourism economy attracting more visitors and businesses.

Another critical piece of legislation for the coast came with Windstorm Insurance Reform. I worked with my colleagues to ensure that our families have access to affordable and accessible windstorm insurance coverage with a strong funding structure and an increased level of transparency and accountability.



View of the Corpus Christi bay in Nueces County, Senate District 20.

Investing in Healthcare

With children growing up without the security of healthcare, and many seniors getting by on fixed incomes, the rising costs and shortage of providers create significant challenges for lawmakers. South Texas has long paid a price because of a lack of healthcare services and access to that care, particularly in our rural and border areas.

This session I advocated for increased investment in healthcare, especially for prevention services, while also educating policy makers that these investments save money in the long run by preventing costs from being passed down to local taxpayers. As Vice Chair of Senate Finance, we crafted a budget that fully funds the projected Medicaid caseload growth and allocated over \$77.2 billion for all Health and Human Services programs to our Texas residents. This includes \$2.8 billion for mental health services, \$262 million for women's health services, \$118 for Child Protective Services, and \$60 million for graduate medical expansion (GME) to create more residency slots to increase our doctors in Texas.



My legislation focused on protecting patients and healthcare providers, and increasing healthcare services, access, and funding for our uninsured. We worked extensively with the disability community to increase community services for individuals with disabilities, including expanding crisis intervention centers statewide and funding for community-based services to ensure there are more opportunities available for housing, jobs, and healthcare services.

SB 207 which I authored, reforms the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) as it relates to investigations 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 due process and increase transparency of the OIG investigative process. This legislation outlines clear criteria for fraud investigations, including clarifications that fraud does not include unintentional clerical or administrative errors.



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa visiting with South Texas nurses and nurse practitioners who are working to improve access to healthcare for all our Texas families.

Protecting Our Youth From E-Cigarettes

It is critical that we protect our youth from the dangers of electronic cigarettes. Also known as e-cigarettes or vape pens, these are battery-powered vaporizers that turn nicotine, flavor, and other chemicals into an aerosol that is then inhaled by the user. These products pose a great risk for teens in particular, as adolescence is a critical point in the development of nicotine addiction.

While e-cigarettes are often marketed as a safe alternative to conventional tobacco cigarettes, nicotine in any form is highly addictive and can have adverse effects on adolescent brain development.

Because of these concerns for the health of our youth, I successfully authored and passed SB 97 that prohibits the sale, distribution, possession, and use of e-cigarettes to any person younger than 18 years of age. Texas joins 41 other states that already prohibit the sale of e-cigarettes to minors due to the harmful health consequences and the addictive nature of the nicotine.

Securing the Border

Throughout session, we advocated to make better use of taxpayer dollars by developing a smart border security plan to phase out National Guard troops and replace them with a permanent solution. I am pleased that through hard work and compromise we achieved just that.

We invested in border security to increase our law enforcement resources and fund our border infrastructure needs. We secured \$3 million for hangar expansion at the South Texas International Airport at Edinburg for emergency first responders, \$2 million to develop a new DPS Training Facility in the RGV, and \$1.6 million for the establishment of the Regional Center for Public Safety Excellence at South Texas College.

A Personal Note from the Senator

Dear Friends,

While reflecting on this past 84th Legislative 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 will pave the way for an educated and healthy workforce and a successful Texas economy.

As Vice Chair of the Senate Finance Committee, I was able to put South Texas at the forefront of critical discussions and secure funding that will help stimulate our local economies. I dedicated myself to protecting funding for our local communities and to increasing crucial services to our most vulnerable populations -- the young, elderly, sick, and poor. I fought to better our South Texas communities by successfully passing important legislation relating to education, healthcare, water, transportation, jobs and workforce development, veterans, and criminal justice.

South Texas is increasingly playing a larger role in shaping our state's future. Now more than ever we need experienced leaders who have the courage to put people over politics and govern with compassion. Though the session is over, Texas continues to face



Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa in Committee.

critical challenges. We must continue to work towards a better future.

I am honored to serve the constituents of Senate District 20 and I look forward to working together to make Texas a better place to live for all our families.

Semper Fi,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "J-J. Hinojosa".

Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa
State Senator, District 20

"Governor For A Day"



SENATOR HINOJOSA SERVED AS "GOVERNOR FOR A DAY" AND SENATE PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE TEXAS SENATE IN THE 84TH TEXAS LEGISLATURE, SERVING AS THE PRESIDING OFFICER OF THE SENATE IN CASES OF THE LT. GOVERNOR'S ABSENCE.

SENATOR HINOJOSA'S STATEWIDE RECOGNITION 2014-2015 AWARDS

- ★ "LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR, 84TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION" - JUSTICES OF THE PEACE & CONSTABLES ASSOCIATION
- ★ "TRANSPORTATION CHAMPION AWARD" - TRANSPORTATION COORDINATION NETWORK OF THE COASTAL BEND
- ★ "CHAMPION OF TEXAS PHARMACY AWARD" - AMERICAN PHARMACIES AND TEXAS PHARMACY BUSINESS COUNCIL
- ★ "LEGISLATOR OF THE YEAR" - TEXAS PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION
- ★ OUTSTANDING LEGISLATOR AWARD - TEXAS VETERANS COMMISSION
- ★ MISSION HISTORICAL MUSEUM "WALL OF FAME AWARD" IN RECOGNITION AND GRATITUDE FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE "HISTORY OF MISSION, TEXAS"
- ★ "UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS PAN AMERICAN PRESIDENTIAL PILLAR AWARD" IN RECOGNITION AND APPRECIATION IN THE CREATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS RIO GRANDE VALLEY AND MEDICAL SCHOOL
- ★ "ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR AWARD" - BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF McALLEN IN RECOGNITION OF EXTRAORDINARY CONTRIBUTION, SUPPORT AND LEADERSHIP.
- ★ CORPUS CHRISTI CITY COUNCIL PROCLAMATION HONORING LEGISLATIVE WORK ON PASSING SB 900, WINDSTORM INSURANCE REFORM



contact

SENATOR HINOJOSA
ESTAMOS EN CONTACTO

AUSTIN

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

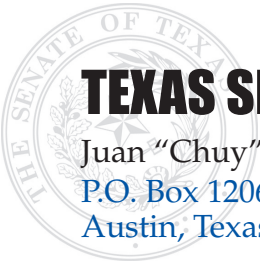
MCALEN

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

CORPUS CHRISTI

2820 South Padre Island Drive
Suite 291
Corpus Christi, TX 78415
(361) 225-1200
Fax: (361) 225-0119

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

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

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.

Semper Fidelis

JUAN "CHUY" HINOJOSA

TEXAS SENATOR



update

CAPITOL

FALL 2015